

**PRISON NOTEBOOK
V2957/88**

Gertrude Fester



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Dedication

*This is a work of praise and gratitude to you,
my Creator and Protector, during difficult and challenging times.*

*Writing this is an act of mercy, grace
and strength from Above.*

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Foreword

Michael Donen, SC

It was the worst of times. And yet, it brought out the best of human character and spirit in some people. A crime against humanity was being perpetrated. The apartheid regime was terrorising our people, justifying this in terms of so-called 'law'. Some people, like Gertrude Fester and her co-trialists, resisted. They were from diverse backgrounds, genders, races and religions. What they had in common was their spirit of resistance and, despite the odds, a belief that they could bring about a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic South Africa based on dignity and human rights. Such people were regarded as a dangerous threat by the regime. They had to be labelled as 'terrorists' in a show trial so that the regime could justify its existence and demonstrate its rule of law credentials to Cold War allies.

But these cadres had to be 'processed' so as to ensure the outcome that the regime desired. Its security forces used detention in solitary confinement, abuse, humiliation, intimidation and torture, both physical and mental, to induce 'confessions'. These were presented to the apartheid court by apartheid magistrates as 'voluntary statements'.

However, the world was not fooled by contrived legalities. The courage and virtue of the trialists and the justness of the war they fought shone through. The civilised world recognised that the regime, its forces and courts were the real terrorists. It condemned them all and honoured the trialists for their endeavour.

Gertrude's personal account of the struggle of the trialists and her own daily challenges is a stark reminder of day-to-day trials that brought out the best of human character during shocking adversity. How each trial was confronted and overcome is the subject of *Prison Notebook*.

Those who were not yet born during those times should read *Prison Notebook* to appreciate what our heroes had to go through so that we could attain the freedoms that we enjoy today. Those who lived through those times will be reminded of how lucky we are. All of us – government in particular – should read this book as a reminder of the debt of gratitude we owe them. Gertrude and her co-trialists, like many other stalwarts of the struggle, not only deserve to be honoured and respected for their sacrifice but also to receive their just reward which Section 189 of the Interim Constitution guarantees them as their right.

It was a privilege for me to be associated in a small way with the 14 trialists and an honour to write this foreword.

Foreword

Lynne Brown

Gertrude Fester captures an important time and place in the history of South Africa. Apartheid South Africa was a violent, torturous, exploitative and oppressive system to live under. As citizens, the choice was to fight or submit to apartheid. She chose to fight against the racist regime. This fight led to her imprisonment under Section 29 and she was tried under the Treason and later Terrorism Acts.

In the Western Cape, a province largely constituted of people of mixed ancestry (First Nation and slave among other), Gertrude has shown great leadership in asserting citizenship in the country of her birth. This struggle continues today, albeit in other forms of creating a voice for the indigenous people of the Cape.

Secretary of the United Women's Congress (1986–1988)
Former Minister of Public Enterprises

Introduction

During the many empty hours of solitary confinement, i¹ vowed that i would capture my experiences in a book. I had the title, *Behind Bars or No Heroic Tale*, as i really felt i was not as brave as others had been. This book was not forthcoming and was not to be for many years. I did, however, manage to write a play, *The Spirit Shall Not Be Caged*, which was first performed at a workshop, 'Creative ways women deal with trauma', at the Fourth Women's NGO Conference in Huairou, China, in 1995. I requested a small venue for about 35 persons. However, the small room probably had more than 100 women in it. I introduced the workshop by doing the play. This was a very difficult experience. To the right of me a woman cried aloud throughout the play and i struggled to maintain my composure. After the play we shared our various experiences, which contributed to a constructive discussion. After this i did the play or extracts thereof in many countries including Cuba, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Bellagio, Italy and as a PhD student at the Gender Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science. I edited the play version into a prose piece for this book.

The womanuscript² is the recollection of my prison memoirs as accused number 12 in what was commonly known as the Yengeni or the Rainbow Trial (treason charges against Tony Yengeni and 11 others, 1987 to 1990). The trial was coined the Yengeni trial after accused number 1, Tony Yengeni, and the Rainbow Trial because of the race, class and creed diversity of the trialists, who included five women. As far as i know, this trial may have had one of the highest numbers of women in a South African political trial. The number in the title of this memoir, V2957/88, is my prison number. I assume V is for vrou/woman. I was the 2957th prisoner admitted to Pollsmoor that year in August/

beginning September 1988 (unsure of exact date). Prior to that, i was at Wynberg police cells from May 1988.

Initially, i had a manuscript limited to just events during the state of emergency in 1985, consisting of snippets of prose and occasional poems of my experiences before and during the state of emergency and pre- and post-prison experiences. The first section was from 1985 until 1988, the time of my arrest. It started with the funeral of the 'Cradock Four'. The Eastern Cape always inspired many of us because of the commitment and solidarity displayed there during anti-apartheid political and community action. The first time i heard of this radical solidarity was when my sister, Solome, who trained at Livingstone Hospital in Port Elizabeth as a radiographer, explained to me about her experiences of the bus boycott there. People all just walked to work. Others again arranged lift systems for people. I was fascinated by this event and then later had the experience of witnessing this first-hand in Cradock and at various other stages. Currently, though, it is with much sadness that i note how our Eastern Cape heroes/heroines still suffer and how much poverty and underdevelopment there is in the Eastern Cape.

While in solitary i was inspired by Nelson and Winnie Mandela and our other political leaders. However, on a local, more personal note i was keenly motivated by Mamas Dorothy Zihlangu, Dorothy Mfacu and Mildred Lesia, our Western Cape leaders in the United Women's Organisation/United Women's Congress.³ They were also my political mothers. When i felt despondent and depressed during solitary, i thought of them. I recalled too that Breyten Breytenbach wrote *The Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* while in prison. So that was what i intended to do! Of course, there were times when in utter despair i felt sorry for myself and i justified my self-pity that they had not been in solitary but rather held under Section 50 of the State of Emergency Act. Nevertheless, being in solitary confinement was a test for me and there were a few times that i was surprised at my resilience and at other times just wallowed in self-indulgence. Nevertheless, i stuck to my commitment to 'write'/compose a play in my head (no stationery was allowed). I was also determined that no one would be arrested through anything i would say. This too i adhered to.

From the numerous notes i had from my awaiting-trial and trial status, i conjured up some memories in the section of this book on the trial. Hence this rendition of our trial and experiences is a personal

recollection punctuated with many blurred and confused sections. Consequently, it is not *the* trial experience but rather what i remember and interpret. It was a time of great stress and anxiety and hence this is a very subjective, although accurate, account of that period. We were 14 altogether.

The accused were:

- Accused no. 1. Tony Yengeni
- Accused no. 2. Jenny Schreiner
- Accused no. 3. Lumka Nyamza
- Accused no. 4. Michael Mzimkhulu Lubambo
- Accused no. 5. Richmond Mbutho Nduku
- Accused no. 6. Mongameli Wellington Nkwandla
- Accused no. 7. Mthetheleli Titana
- Accused no. 8. Gary John Kruser
- Accused no. 9. Chris Giffard
- Accused no. 10. Sitlabocha Charles Mahlale
- Accused no. 11. Alpheus Nowana Ndude
- Accused no. 12. Gertrude Fester
- Accused no. 13. Suraya Abass
- Accused no. 14. Colleen Lombard

The state witness was Mr X, Bongani Jonas. Jonas was an integral part of our trial. It was expected by the prosecution that he was to be the star witness against us. Much to the exasperation and chagrin of the prosecution, Bongani rattled on and on the first day about his various experiences. In detail he outlined his commitment to political freedom, his internationalist duty in supporting the then South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the people of Angola and Mozambique. He also elaborated on the pain he had experienced from the gunshot wound from the security police and how he had been tortured. It was during this protracted treatise that we realised that Bongani had just pretended to be collaborating with the security police. He had had no intention of testifying against us!

I vaguely recall that earlier during the trial we suspected that Bongani may be the mystery witness who was to testify against us. I recollect the elaborate plans we had made to counter this, including the proposal of my marrying Bongani as apparently spouses cannot testify against each other or something like that.

Again, our daily experiences and some of our many difficult times, including choosing our senior counsel, were also very subjective. A very major tension was whether we should accept the charge of terrorism as opposed to treason after the state offered it. The state could not provide 'more particulars' as requested by our formidable defence team and hence proposed the terrorism charge as an alternative. One of the strategies we debated was that we argue our status as that of prisoners of war. This too was a long and protracted argument, and the details are scarce. We eventually accepted the charge of terrorism as offered by the state. Apparently, some interpreted our acceptance of the lesser terrorism charge as a political compromise or cop-out. However, at that time capital punishment was still the punishment for treason, so we opted for the terrorism charge. Extracts of our numerous prison correspondences and drawings are incorporated in the section on the trial.

The assassination of comrade Chris Hani on 10 April 1993 was a major blow to all of us. Many of us doubted whether the negotiations would continue. Also, we were concerned, as we really did not know what was to happen during elections. The uprising and subsequent battles in what was then known as Bophuthatswana did not augur well for this new South Africa. This was despite the marvel of the negotiated Interim Constitution. However, the miracle of those peaceful long lines queuing up to vote, despite inclement weather in some cases and a shortage of ballot papers, still fills me with awe.

A sad aspect of this post-1994 period is that the many commitments we had fought for, including eradicating poverty, violence against women and children, racism and oppression, are still major challenges in 21st-century South Africa. We were working for a country where each person could realise her or his full potential. This has still not been achieved 28 years after freedom. *La luta continua!*

Being introduced to Australian Prof. Shirley Randall was a catalyst in many ways. It was through her faith in me that i was offered the position of professor in Rwanda. It was a profound experience living and teaching Transitional Justice to Gender and Development master's students at the Kigali Institute of Education (now the University of Rwanda), where i revisited some of my prison experiences. Transitional justice includes analysing mechanisms to achieve peace and justice, reconstructing a culture of human rights post-conflict and exploring strategies to promote restitution, compensation and rekindle conditions

and the environment of the pre-conflict society or improving on it. I was profoundly impressed by the commitment of the Rwandans to restitution, reconciliation and forgiveness. The determination of people i had encountered in Rwanda and their determination to make their country work was amazing to me. It was then that i decided to interview my interrogator, Captain Andre du Toit, and write about it to bring closure or rather contribute to my healing. Also, for the appendix of the book, i decided to do an update of each of the trialists and their current status. These sections are uneven according to the individuals' responses. Where interviews did not materialise, i complemented the input from the internet. I include in the appendix the questions i sent to Andre du Toit and the full body of his three-page email response.

In terms of this book project, I thank the staff of the Department of Military Veterans and the Human Sciences Research Council for facilitating its fruition. The most important contribution was encouraging me to augment the draft manuscript to include some autobiographical aspects which would give context to my political activism. For this I am most grateful.

One of the most difficult aspects of being held in solitary was my mental insecurity. I was seeing things, having panic attacks and occasionally lost the will to live. I was often confused, and this led to my doubting my mental capacity. In rewriting this manuscript there were times that my work was misunderstood, misinterpreted and completely distorted. This happened several times despite my numerous explanations and corrections. Was i not making sense? Was i not clear? Was my writing so poor and confusing? It became so bad that i dreaded every feedback, and this would lead me further down the abyss of psychosis. Every time it unnerved me more and more. This made me more insecure of my intellectual and mental capacity. These occasions led me to again question my mental health and sanity. In short, i was reliving a similar trauma as when i had been in solitary confinement.

For many challenges and trials during the period of the state of emergency and prison, there are many people that i should thank. While 'on the run' some, including my Hewat colleagues, Marina Lotter, Colleen Radus, Collette van Niftrik and Trish Baker, gave my comrade and friend, Lynne Brown and me, 'safe homes'. During this period i was extremely tense and Dr Peter Smith and psychologist Renee Van Veelen-Ramsden were always ready to assist me. Dr Fiona Anderson and Renee were there for me both pre- and post-prison. As health carers, they went

beyond their professional duty and supported me when i had no salary as the Department of Coloured Affairs dismissed me on the grounds of misconduct, even though I had not been found guilty. Later, in between jobs and until pre-Covid, Fiona Anderson continued to be a doctor, friend, advisor and philanthropist. During solitary confinement, Drs Tessa Katz and Trudi Rousseau were shining stars and beacons of hope in humanity during that very gloomy period. They are indeed brave and courageous women. During our trial period, Prof. Francis Ames and Pete Powers gave us counselling. There are no words to thank them.

Phil Cotton and the many friends i had met in Rwanda were always encouraging me with my ‘womanuscript’. Mwarakoze Cyanel Ndagukunda! (Thanks very much. I love you all.)

My UWO/UWCO comrades, too numerous to mention, were amazing. Nevertheless, i must mention Lynne Brown and Louise Naude (housemates in Obs). Louise took it upon herself to be my ‘Pollsmoor Visits Coordinator’ once i was able to receive visitors at Pollsmoor. Lynne, Zurayah Abass and Mavis Smallberg were amazing housemates at the initially ‘safe’ Maitland house, ‘Vyf en twintig Sonop’, a name Zurayah and Mavis had conjured up.

The unconditional support and love from my family, parents Solly and Freda Fester, brother Vivian and sisters, Len (Leonore), Solome and Kay (Kathleen), were and still are the fulcrum of my life. Solome seemed to have been the catalyst for Amnesty New Zealand to support me and lobby for my freedom. I also wish to thank the Brown and Osman families for giving me a second home and extended family considering Solome, Kay and their families are in New Zealand and Australia respectively. Gangans/a big thanks. I must once again thank my parents for introducing me to the God Creator, centre of my life. It was my belief in the Loving God that sustained me in prison. To God be the glory! Gangans Abotse.

‡*Oas/Gores*

|*Khūtse sida ‡oasa |khae*
Elo |khae re sida ‡gāsa
Sida ||nāusa ||khāti |khae
|Khae re sida dīs tsî |ūsa
!Gâi!ō ||ōb |khā sida |khae
Îda |hom |omi-ao kaire⁴

CHAPTER 1

Early life and politicisation

Birth and early years

It was a beach, Noordhoek, which first galvanised me into questioning the political situation. I clearly remember that day, sitting on the back seat of my father's blue Pontiac, number plate CA 64333. I recollect the incident clearly because it occurred during a family outing. We were driving around the Cape Peninsula. As we drove past Chapman's Peak, an expanse of pure white sand stretching southwards juxtaposed by luxuriant green bush on one side and a tranquil turquoise sea on the other soared vividly into my childish vision. I exclaimed with all my three-year-old enthusiasm: 'There's my favourite beach! Let's go there, Daddy!'

'We can't.'

'Oh, why not?'

'Well,' pausing hesitantly, 'the government says so.'⁵

'Why not?'

'Only white people can.'

'What are you doing about it?'

Silence...

I was shocked at this passive obeisance.

Exasperated, 'What are you doing about it?'

'The government is very powerful!'

'Well, when i am big i will do something about this.'

My mother related this incident 30-odd years later when i⁶ was detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act on 18 May 1988, held in solitary confinement, and subsequently charged with treason.

I was always puzzled by the different treatment given to girls/women and boys/men. My dad passed on when i was 12 years old. I heard the family coercing my mother to take us out of school to seek work. This was a common practice amongst most black families. If the breadwinner dies, children leave school to work. I still hear my mother's protestations, the only woman with a sea of patriarchs and older uncles gushing onto her: 'No, my daughters will all have professions. I will work my fingers to the bone.' She was the first feminist i encountered. She was from rural Matjiesrivier, and lived on the farm through which the majestic Vinknesrivier flowed at the southern foot of the Swartberge close to Oudtshoorn. On both banks of the river were the most magnificent comforting weeping willow trees. There were huge rocks which we used to cross when the river was in flood. To my childish memory it was one of the most beautiful places in the world, with the midnight blue Swartberge peeping between the willow leaves. Mom was one of a family of 14 children. She would often tell us how she wanted to go to high school. The Matjiesrivier area where my grandparents had a smallholding was declared white in the mid-1960s. All Mom's siblings were already adults and had moved to bigger towns. Papa had moved to Cape Town.⁷ Gran had passed on 19 May 1961 before the area was declared white and was saved this heartache. My grandfather then lived with my mom and occasionally with his other children. Grandpa was already in his eighties when he had to leave the farm and could not get accustomed to the city, where he pined away. Having to live in a city for the first time in his life after 80 years of independence in natural rural beauty was a sad way to end his life.

I was born on my dad's birthday, 4 July 1952. My elder sister, Solome, was named after him, Solomon John Herman, originally from Caledon. Apparently, there was some discussion that they change my sister's name and i be named Solome after my dad, Solomon. Well, that did not materialise. Not sure why not. I was not privy to that discussion and even if i were, i was just a baby and would not have understood. I am the second youngest.

My mother was Freda Leonore Wicomb, the third eldest of the 14 children of Robert Daniel Wicomb and Gertrude Martinus. These 14 were almost a cross-section of the world's population/rainbow nation. Mom and her brother David were fair with light eyes. Mom was called 'nooi' (Afrikaans for madam) by Papa Wicomb and many others. Some of my mother's brothers were darker with slightly wavy black hair.

Aunt Minnie had a pale peaches and cream complexion and the longest pitch-black Indian hair of the family. Una, the youngest, had black curly hair and freckles, just like i have. Today, the Wicombs have occasional 'samekoms' (family assemblies) where they celebrate their Scottish heritage that comes from a medical doctor who worked on a ship. Yet Papa Wicomb was an illiterate peasant farmer. So i am not convinced of the veracity of this myth of origins. When Wicomb descendants meet every second year, they hire the entire Calitzdorp Spa Resort. Many members of the family contribute to drawing out the various Wicomb family trees.

Granny Gertrude was from Prince Albert, on the other side of the Swartberge, 37 kilometres north of Matjiesrivier, where people called her Mosbieker (corruption of Mozambique, which may indicate Mozambican slave ancestors). Granny was a self-taught midwife. She assisted all the women giving birth in the entire rural area near Oudtshoorn – Zuurhoek, Cango Valley (where the Cango caves are), Vinknesrivier, Matjiesrivier and Khan se Draai – all the areas at the foot of the majestic Swartberg Mountains. When she did her midwifery duties, Granny was mostly dressed in her starched white nurse's uniform with the starched triangular head veil nurses wore at the time. She rode on her white horse, Rosmead, tending to all who needed her services, both black and white people. My grandparents called the whites 'baas' and 'nooi'. I just thought their names were 'baas' and 'nooi' until i grew older and understood Afrikaans and gained insight into apartheid and the workings of white wealth, power and privilege and the exploitation, oppression and impoverishment of blacks through legislation.

Our Fester family lived in a big house at the corner of First Avenue and Bodmin Street in Maitland, opposite a field and a railway line. I liked to hear the sound of the train, the few times i heard it. Otherwise, it was just there, part of the environment. Our family consisted of Vivian, the eldest boy with laughing eyes which became Chinese slits when he laughed. Lenore, whom we called Len, was always the tidiest person in the world – everything was impeccably neat and tidy about her and she had a beautiful handwriting. I always wished i could be as tidy as her.

Solome is one year older than i am, and i disliked the fact that we were often dressed alike in home-made dresses made by either Mom or Auntie Lenie Willenberg who lived further down Bodmin Street. But Solome and i were great buddies, one year apart. Aunt Lenie always said how sweet Solome was about the dresses whereas i was always full of nonsense. But

i recall the pins pricking me when we had to fit the dresses before the final stitching. Solome and i even had to have the same hairstyles and for Christmas or big functions our hair was washed and rolled in with brown paper to make curls. I was always sad that Solome's curls were always intact but mine just became a mess of unruly hair with an occasional curl, really quite unattractive and untidy. I also did not like the crochet socks we had to wear. The crochet cotton socks were hard and hurt me.

Kay/Kathleen was the baby and was spoilt by all of us. She had this very straight hair with a fringe. In one photograph that captures her laughing she looked Chinese. Someone once asked if she was Vietnamese. I had to look after her, but she was always disappearing. I would say jokingly to my mom that she has a mole on her foot and people with moles on their feet always get lost. I do not know where i got this bit of wisdom from. Kay loved drinking from her babymilk bottle until she was quite old. She would also lose it often and then cry: 'Where, where?' She called the bottle 'where'.

Our yard was full of many different types of fruit trees, including pomegranates, quince and fig. In the yard next to a side lane were loquat trees and vines. I remember fruit being a big part of our diet. We even had annual fruit birthday parties for Solome in February. There were kaalgat perskes (cling peaches) and masses of watermelon that Dad bought from some farm for a church fund-raiser. After the blue Pontiac became old and useless, we acquired a red kombi. At one stage there were 21 watermelons from the farm in the kombi. We children loved going on drives with Dad to the farms. Dad was the principal of the church school, St Stephen's School, for 47 years. It was one of the first schools for slaves in Cape Town. The school was in Cape Town city centre below the church, the St Stephen's Dutch Reformed Church (established April 1843).⁸ Daddy was the kassier-skriba⁹ of the church for decades.

My dad was born in 1890, whereas Mom was born in 1920 in the Vinknesrivier area in the Matjiesrivier district near Oudtshoorn. Even though Mom did not have much formal education, when she came to the city, she did various nursing and geriatric care Red Cross courses. She was thus able to practise as a private nurse for the Red Cross Society. She later spent most of her time doing community work: visiting, caring and doing chiropody for the elders in our area. She was always seen with a basket full of food for the old and infirm.

My father died when we were all still young and at school. We were always comfortable and never poor. When Dad died, we had to get

weekend jobs. I hated the way in which we workers were treated. At Friends in Salt River, opposite the Palace bioscope, Miss B and Miss E treated us in a slave-like fashion and we dared not for a minute stand still. We would be shouted at in a way that humiliated us in front of customers. My other jobs were in a hairdresser salon and a jeweller's shop, and the longest shift I worked was until 4am on Friday and Saturday nights at Zanzibar restaurant. We were very busy after 11pm when people came from parties for their snacks. My hands burnt from handling the hot rotis. There was a coal stove in the small kitchen, and with four workers in it the room was boiling hot and unpleasant to work in.

I did not know much about my dad except that he was very gentle, loving and kind. My parents loved each other very much, and i was embarrassed by their constant kissing and cuddling in front of us children. They were also very active in the community and well-respected members of the Kensington Welfare Society. My parents, together with a prominent resident from the area, WD Hendricks, were behind the formation of the Kensington Welfare Society. They were involved in fund-raising and also played a major role in the establishment of the Kensington Home for the Aged. There was a great need for such a facility in the community. My father and his brothers also all played cricket and established the Coronation Cricket Club. My father's contributions to the community are highlighted in William Pick's book on the history of cricket in the Western Cape (Pick 2015). The other organisation they played a central role in was a church organisation, Tot nut van het Algemeen (To benefit all the people), a charity organisation which still exists and that focused on the needs of the poor and building a more just society.

I learnt from political activist and poet James Matthews what an innovative principal my father had been. Matthews was in his class at St Stephen's School and spoke about my father in a speech he gave at the commemoration of 350 years of Christianity in South Africa in 2002 organised by our church and the Commission on Gender Equality (I was a gender commissioner then). The event aimed at assessing the impact of Christianity in South Africa: What did the church introduce in terms of gender relationships and the role and position of women and girls in society? Matthews emphasised what a gentle giant my father had been, a principal who took students out on field trips, which was very unusual at the time. He mentioned trips to the docks, and i recall that Matthews mentioned my father bought fish and chips for them on one such trip.

Uncle Robert, my dad's youngest brother, who lived the longest of the 11 brothers, is the one member of the family who was able to provide me with information about our ancestors. He said that Grandpa Fester was a very good blacksmith. So, when he left his boss's farm, he was given a horse and cart. I then enquired: 'Does this mean when he was freed as a slave?' Uncle Robert did not answer; he just stared at me. Most of the Festers were very dark. Photographs of the family show that Grandpa Fester had an almost midnight-dark complexion and straight Indian hair (perhaps they were slaves from Asian Dutch colonies). Grandma Christine Fester (née Carelse) had Khoi features and hair. They both died before i was born.

I did not understand why there was a sort of invisible line between our part of Maitland and the section that was closer to Cape Town, the boundary being Kensington Road. It was only much later that i realised that that was a white section of the suburb, and we were not allowed to go there. There was a lovely swimming pool in Royal Road that we were not allowed to use. We often went to the children's park behind the Maitland Town Hall and in front of the Maitland railway station. It was a children's paradise with swings, merry-go-rounds and many other really fun places. We would sneak in to play there and enjoyed ourselves. However, when the park attendant became aware of us, we were chased away. The park was empty, and it did not make sense to us that we could not play there. Although we occasionally plucked up courage to play in the park, we were too scared to venture into the swimming pool.

In all the fun and games of childhood, the freedom that boys enjoyed bothered me; it was blatant in some cases, but mostly subtle. I was puzzled: there was something 'wrong' or repressive (although i did not know this word at the time) about being a girl; that somehow there were things you could not do and definitely many things that you had to do. Girls had to clean the house and help with many chores while the boys played outside. I was confronted with the word 'tomboy' at an early age. This was a term applied to a girl who did something adventurous like climbing a tree or running fast. As a 12-, 13-year-old teenager, i hated dance parties because we girls were at the mercy of boys; we had to wait for them to ask us to dance. What a horrible feeling when your heart and feet were beating in sync with the music and you just had to stand there and wait.

There were unpleasant experiences of uncles and old men touching us in an unbecoming way and doing ugly things. I experienced this as

well but did not say anything about it to anyone for quite some time. When we were older, i alluded to it with my older sister, Len. She, too, had experienced this.

These are some of the restrictions, elements of control and unpleasant experiences that were linked to being a girl. What i need to mention, though, is that throughout my schooling we girls were always the top performers in the class in terms of academic achievement.

Occasionally Solome and i would go to the city by bus. It was a bewildering experience. Solome was much fairer than me. On some occasions, the 'non-whites only' bus would pass by the bus stop without stopping because of her (i assumed), and at times the white bus would not stop for us because of me. This frustrated us but also hurt us and there were times when we were late for church.

My parents believed that the Catholic schools in the area were the best schools. I was enrolled at St John's Roman Catholic School next to the church in Maitland. On the other side of the church was the whites-only Holy Cross Convent Primary School. Every Friday the students from both schools had to go to Holy Mass. So there we were – every Friday sitting in straight lines on either side of the church, with us sitting on the right-hand side and the white pupils sitting on the left. For some reason we did not look at one another. There was an unspoken antagonism between the two groups. We were also a bit of a motley bunch, some not having uniforms and quite a few barefoot. They were all neat and smart with Panama hats. So i felt inferior to them. Looking back at the situation now, it was such a contradiction. We were together in the church of God who symbolised love and yet there was polarisation and hostility between two groups of Jesus's children. This was the reality of Christianity in practice during the apartheid era.

My other favourite beach where we went annually with the Sunday school was Boulders Beach. However, it was declared a beach for whites only, also in the mid-1960s. That really saddened me. I do not remember picnics at the beach after that. District 6 was also declared a white residential area,¹⁰ and this brought an end to our visits to my Aunt Mary. The famous Crescent restaurant where black intellectuals and political activists met and ate was there. Mom and many of her sisters (Minnie, Katie, Una) had worked there when they first arrived in the city. The restaurant was near the Star bioscope. Aunt Mary Hendricks and family had to move to the Cape Flats. They lived at the top of Hanover Street in

a big house with a huge yard and a stoep. In their yard was a wonderful, enormous fig tree. I loved the purple-coloured sweet figs. De Nova Hats in Hanover Street, where we shopped annually for our Christmas hats, was closed down. The big movie house (we called it bioscope), the Avalon, at the corner of Hanover and Russell streets, was another place we went to often. It one of our favourite places. The Avalon and the nearby fish market, and several of our other favourite haunts, were all closed. The majority of people were forced out of District 6 and relocated to the Cape Flats.

Similarly, the entire Maitland/Windermere area changed – forced removals took away many colourful characters and a lot of our friends. In celebrating the vibrant, sometimes eccentric characters of Maitland, i immediately think of Kewpie and her team at the hairdressers, Mitzi and Patsy – the best and most popular hairdressers in the Maitland/Kensington/Windermere area. They did not allow themselves to be what today is called gender-defined: they dressed and wore makeup as it suited them – a combination of what would stereotypically be described as male and female clothes. Kewpie’s eyebrows were stark lines drawn with pencil long before eyebrow pencils became fashionable. They were really avant-garde. As i grew older, i learnt that the community called them ‘moffies’ – with a mixture of admiration and ridicule. They chose to be defined as gender non-binary and dressed and lived as they desired. I admired them but was puzzled by what they represented in a world in which i had been living for only six years. It took some time to learn that people are marginalised by society because they are different; different physically (as in being differently abled) but also because of their choices about lifestyles and sexual orientation.

Before the forced removals, Maitland and Windermere had people from all backgrounds. What was shocking was the abject poverty of some families and the hunger experienced by many. This was confusing to me. In our Geography lessons we were taught that South Africa was a rich country; that we had so many different and important minerals like gold and platinum and precious stones such as diamonds. I could not understand why people were poor, and why it was mostly black people that were poor. Our family was not that poor, so there seemed to be degrees of poverty and deprivation. I did not know the word ‘oppression’ then, but i did know words like ‘poverty’ and had an idea of what was fair and just. I also became aware later that, unlike other black people, we also did not need to carry a *dompas*.¹¹

In our area, many children had to leave school early because of poverty. I later learnt that the poorest people in the community were classified as Africans while we were coloured. It was the Africans who were forced to leave our area.¹² They also could not get jobs at the many factories in Salt River as only coloured people could get these jobs. Many of them did not know where to go as they said there were no houses for them in the Cape Town area. It was tragic, and my child's mind was in turmoil. Like District 6, our area had been an exciting diverse mixture of people living very peacefully and happily together. I do not recall any tension.

Every December my family and other relatives would go to my grandparents' smallholding for the Christmas holiday period. During these occasions we would hold concerts in which some of us cousins acted, while others played music on guitars and sang. As we grew older, we noticed that some of my cousins, with whom we had been close when we were younger, were no longer visiting the smallholding. We discovered that they were living as white people in Balfour Street in Woodstock where all the poor whites lived. I was becoming more aware of what was happening around me. I learnt that Aunt Madge never allowed her own mother, who was a bit dark, to come to their house through the front door. She made her own mother drink coffee and eat in the back yard so that her neighbours (mostly play whites)¹³ would think her mother was her servant. My sister Len told me that this was the reason why our mom was so disgusted with Aunt Madge. Aunt Madge worked at Garlicks, a rather posh department store in Adderley Street, Cape Town. Whenever we encountered Aunt Madge there, we would only nod our heads in recognition of each other. Her family so internalised white 'boere' values that one of its members even became a 'folk' singer who celebrated white Afrikaans culture. We would read in newspapers about the various privileges and opportunities they had as white people. My cousin Marilyn was a gymnast and often appeared in the newspapers. My siblings and I developed rather strange ambivalent feelings towards them. As I got older, I disowned them, while others in the family eagerly read stories about their success in the media. It is sad to recollect how this rather pathetic poor-white family internalised apartheid. The Afrikaner folk singer later claimed in his autobiography that he never knew he was black. But he was a 16 year old who occasionally serenaded his bewildered black cousins with boere liedjies (boer songs) and Jan van Riebeeck High School sports songs on his guitar on the farm.

O die Blou kom weer, ons kan nie langer wag,
O Die Blou kom weer, ons kan nie langer wag,
Die Blou kom weer, ons kan nie langer wag,
Die Blou is voor en die Wit verloor!¹⁴

He would also sing ‘Sarie Marais’ and ‘Al slaan my ma my drie maal op my kop, dan staan ek op’ (Even though I am beaten three times on my head by my mother, I will get up) – what violent words!

My awareness about poverty, justice, rights and privileges came from my experiences. I was acutely aware of the life of my cousin Mary Jane, who is the same age as i am. She is a wheelchair user and spent most of her life in the Turfhall Cheshire Home for the Disabled. Our lives and opportunities are juxtaposed: i am deeply aware of my privileges as an able-bodied person who became a gender activist travelling the world on the gender ticket, whereas Mary Jane just stays in the home.

Mom’s younger sisters, Aunt Una Munnik and Aunt Nettie Griebbelaar, belonged to the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK; Dutch Reformed Church), Die Slot, in Grassy Park. We belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) St Stephen’s congregation in Cape Town. There seemed to be no connection between their church and ours, which was strange to me as a child. As i became more aware of things, i realised that they belonged to the Coloured Sending Kerk while we were members of the white Moederkerk.¹⁵ Our church is the only ‘coloured’ congregation in the Moederkerk and the only one with the name of a saint, which is unusual in the NGK/DRC tradition. There are two legends about the origin of this name: one is that the Dutch Free Burghers did not like the fact that the erstwhile slaves were being christened and educated (the school was at the back of the church) and they then stoned the building. The other legend is that the majority of slaves who were Muslim resented the fact that their sisters and brothers were betraying Islam by embracing Christianity and stoned the building in protest.¹⁶ St Stephen was a Christian martyr who was stoned to death because of his belief in Jesus Christ; hence the church was named after Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

This NGK church of God whose members were made ‘equally in the image of the Creator’ reinforced and practised apartheid at the time. My father was a leading member of the church council, and the church had to send the minister of the church and a delegate from the council members to the annual synod. St Stephen’s Church had only white ministers. My

father once admitted that they were required to have white ministers only because the church was part of the Moederkerk. At most synods, the white minister would be accompanied by a coloured member of the church council. My father told us that on these occasions, when it came to lunch time, he would be told: 'Here is a tickey [two and a half pence] for you. You cannot eat with us. Go and buy yourself something to eat at the shop.' On one such occasion, the minister he was accompanying, Ds PS Latsky, was so angry that he walked out with my father to join him in eating his lunch. Similar incidents happened to others like Brothers Michael Prince and Job.

What I remember about Geography was that the teacher, Mr Cassells, introduced us to Western Europe and recited the names of all the capital cities. Thereafter he asked for a volunteer to repeat them. I had a good memory and then repeated all the countries with their capitals. Of course, it was quite a feat in the class then. However, i often thought of this, that i knew all the capitals of Western Europe, but i did not know the capitals of West Africa, nor those of the rest of the African continent.

1966

I am not sure where my parents were or what happened. But at the end of Standard 5 at St John's Catholic School in 1965, i had to go to high school. During the beginning of the December holidays, i found myself going by bus to St Augustine's Roman Catholic School, Parow, in the northern suburbs, equipped with my Standard 5 report, embellished with As and excellence in almost everything i think. I remember being quite intimidated. It was the first time that i was there, at this strange new school trying to find the office of the principal in this white Afrikaner area, Parow – unknown territory to a black girl. Also, as it was holidays, the place was deserted and eery, my loud echoing footsteps enhancing the menacing ambience. The silence, isolation and these unknown bizarre buildings stifled and smothered me further. Eventually i found the principal's office. I was greeted with smiles after this nun/principal glanced at my report and told me that i was most welcome. I had to report for the new school year in about a month. All this took only a few seconds, but it felt like eternity. Now why precisely i was on my own, a 13 year old applying for a position at a new school, confounds me in retrospect. Was it my parents' attempt to teach me independence? Also, i refused¹⁷ to go to the local high school, a minute's walk from our

home, where my three elder siblings had attended. It was good enough for them, so why not for me? Was this academic snobbery on my part? My parents wanted to teach me a lesson? *Je ne sais pas! U ta a.* I do not know! Sallie kan sê nie.¹⁸

In 1966 at St Augustine's, I excelled again (except in sport) and soon became the darling of some of the nuns... so much so that with the very serene and sacrosanct atmosphere of the place i even contemplated, in all my Calvinist Lutheran Reformation tradition, becoming a nun. There were novices in my class, and this encouraged me further. My piano teacher, Sister John Caroline, thought i was a talented all-rounder. I had to make, draw and paint cards with pictures of the saints, Catholic symbols and related images, which i enjoyed. One day when all Sister John Caroline's music students were at a special Saturday morning class, our clothes, and the colours we wore, were discussed. Sister John Caroline immediately commented on the matching blues and greys of my winter outfit and said that because of my artistic nature, i used colours effectively. Why this memory remains with me so clearly is perplexing.

Despite my contentment and happiness at St Augustine's, my academic future plagued me and i had to explore an environment which was conducive to this career. I then got it into my head that i needed to attend Harold Cressy High School¹⁹ in the Cape Town city centre. Cressy had the best academic results in both the Cape and the country as a whole, and the reputation of being one of the best schools designated for coloureds (together with Trafalgar, Livingstone and South Peninsula high schools). My father, the principal of St Stephen's Primary School in the city and linked to our church, was then asked by me to explore this. My father spoke to Mr Norton Hangone, principal of Salt River High School. He was acquainted with Mr Victor Richie, principal of Harold Cressy, as the schools were in the same circuit, i assume. He recommended me as a promising student. The Hangone children were also our friends. They lived one street away from us in Steen Street. Mrs Hangone always made delicious cakes and i recall stuffing myself at Marion, her daughter's, birthday parties.

This time there was no travelling to explore admission nor the emblazoning of a school report. I was just accepted. Harold Cressy, apart from its excellent academic reputation, also excelled at sports, Alexander Sinton in Athlone being its chief competitor. It was known as a 'politically aware school', as was Livingston High School in Claremont, the area which was declared a white area in the 1960s. The teachers

were all highly educated and members of the then Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM).²⁰ Later the name was changed to New Unity Movement (NUM).

In 1967 i started at Harold Cressy, joining lots of doctors', lawyers' and teachers' children who were dropped at the school gate in various Mercedes Benz models. There were a few children who lived in the neighbouring areas of District 6 and BoKaap, which were mostly working class then – unlike today with the influx of trendy whites moving into the place, much to the disappointment of the indigenous population – and middle-class Walmer Estate, mostly because of the proximity of the school. Many students came from the Bloemhof flats in Constitution Street adjacent to Cressy.

The content of our curriculum was mostly Eurocentric. There was a culture of hard work which i loved. There were fortnightly tests and we had to get 60% or 80% for Geography, taught by Mr MacKay who was originally from the Eastern Cape. (We all knew he spoke isiXhosa.) If we did not attain the recommended mark, we had to do 'five times' – write out the entire memorandum/answers to the test five times. We really learnt the content of the subject through this method. Regarding term and final year tests, what was most remarkable was that our examination timetable was never known to us beforehand. We received the timetable the day before the examination. This obviously meant that we were compelled to study beforehand. We also had a pep talk before the examinations from the principal, Mr VR Ritchie. We were encouraged to draw up study timetables and he guided us on how we should draw it up. This was a sombre affair and most of us took it seriously and adhered to drawing up our study timetables. Sticking to it was not always possible though, but i recall trying very hard. Mr Ritchie was soft spoken, demanding respect, and a very good maths teacher. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Cape Town (UCT). Subsequent to his retirement, i heard that he had been offering free maths classes somewhere on the Cape Flats.

At this 'politically aware school', our lessons were not exactly decolonised but they indirectly questioned human rights and the situation in the country. I remember Mrs Kies²¹ telling us we should boycott places like the Landdrost Hotel, which i think was subsidised by 'money for coloured business' or something like that. So my questions and perplexity about this country and the inhumane treatment and disenfranchisement of the majority grew clearer as a teenager.

There were some activities of oppression of students at Arcadia High in Bonteheuwel in 1967. There were then protests at that school. I recall the senior students calling a meeting which most of my friends and i were eager to attend. The room was packed with eager and curious students. Maeve Henneke addressed the meeting very eloquently and was politically clear, questioning the government and encouraging solidarity with the students of Arcadia High. We were to participate in a one-day 'stayaway'. Of course, i knew there was no way i could tell my parents or anyone at home, so i pretended to go to school and met up with Gail and Judy Hendricks and Leila Patel, whom i considered my best friends. We spent the day at Gail's house as i think both her parents were teachers and away from home.

I heard indirectly, i'm not sure how, that most of our teachers were members of the Unity Movement. As far as i recall, it was an exclusive group as i do not remember any recruiting. Mrs Adrian, our Afrikaans teacher from Elsies River, asked me once to make a cake as a donation for the fund-raising. That was as far as i recall any activity. They were good teachers in as far as they encouraged us to work hard and to excel at whatever we were doing. Also, in some way we were inspired to question things and develop a critical attitude.

I'm not sure how i went about making friends but all my friends were hard working and from middle-class homes. Leila was the one i liked most. Our classes were named after the initial of the class teacher – so i was in Std 7M – Mr Mackay, 8M was Mr Marks, 9K was Mrs Keys and 10M was Mr Peter Meyer from Walmer Estate, a good maths teacher and member of the New Unity Movement (NUM). Mrs Keys inspired us to love poetry. I recall learning DH Lawrence's poem 'Snake' and John Keats' 'Ode to Autumn' – all very colonial and Western. In Standard 9 we had an anthology of South African short stories. There was one by Sarah Gertrude Millin entitled 'God's Stepchildren'. She wrote about black people being God's stepchildren. We knew we were second-class citizens and everything in our lives emphasised that.

This system of naming our classes after the class teacher's surname may have been an attempt to move away from the usual A being the academic 'clever class' with the brightest young minds, and, depending on the number of classes in that standard, the E or F classes following the non-academic curriculum with practical subjects like Woodwork and Typing and not Maths and Physics. I recall doing a project for Mr Daniels, our Geography teacher, in 1968. The project entailed using my

sister Len's stones. She collected semi-precious stones and had a range of them. I remember going to the library to identify the stones and writing a bit about each and their characteristics.

We were the first students to write the external exams administered by the Coloured Affairs Department for Standard 8 in 1968 and we were warned subtly by our teachers not to write anything political. This remained with me – there were two education systems or truths: one the official government, which one does not critique, and the other what is really happening to us as people; our truth and reality as oppressed people. This was repeated in 1977 when i did my postgraduate teacher's diploma through the University of South Africa (UNISA) – what ideological apartheid garbage was written in their guides. We just had to write our assignments according to their guide and reference books. A few of us 'progressive' teachers were doing this degree and exchanged notes. A very bright colleague of ours failed her exams twice. We then advised her not to write what she thought but rather to adhere to the guide lecture notes. She passed at her third attempt.

Anne Harries, a teacher who took the extramural drama classes, was very innovative. Harold Cressy buildings were double-storey with a quad, gardens and water feature in the middle. She decided that we would have a Shakespearian production and stage it in the quad in imitation of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. There were auditions and i decided to go. I got the part of Olivia, the queen in *Twelfth Night*. We had two casts. We were to wear modern clothes and we had a pop band. Queen Olivia had her personal musician who played the violin and who preceded her wherever she walked. Colin Jones, former Anglican Dean of St George's Cathedral in Cape Town, was that musician.

Yes, i also did some stupid things. I went to the beach with the Standard 8a class but stayed in the bus all day speaking to Shamiel Jassiem. I was actually asked by Charles Poole to accompany him. What a silly thing to have done. Of course, Charles never asked me out again.

My father died on 26 June 1967, which was a Monday evening. I was touched by the sympathy displayed by Mr Mackay when he put a death notice in the newspaper. How did i feel about the passing of my dad and the funeral? All the attention was on my baby sister Kay, as she cried loudly and bitterly at the church during my father's funeral. We had no money as the estate was frozen. I did not know then what that meant except that we were struggling financially. How did i feel about the loss of my father? I thought my father and i had had a special relationship

as i was born on his birthday. I am not sure where the other sisters were, but i recall being alone with him, going on drives in our blue and beige Pontiac. He highlighted the beauty of the environment. Of course, i was sad. Memories evoked are of my going into the bedroom with my dad lying under a sheet. Mom said he was dead but when i came into the bedroom, there was a sudden movement of his body as if he was emitting the last breath. His face was grimaced into an unusual contortion. I think i kissed him goodbye. I could hear others crying loudly in the rest of the house but here we were, dad and daughter alone, in solitude, in utter silence and sadness. How did i deal with my dad's passing? I missed his softness, his gentleness even though he spoke loudly and sometimes stuttered; he never gave us hidings, unlike my mother. I returned to school after the June/July holidays and i suppose the only thing i could do in honour of his memory was to do well academically. Sadness. It is so long ago, and i do not know what to write. What do i remember about how i missed my father? I sometimes wonder if i would have done medicine as my father had encouraged me to do. I think it was common in our community and certainly amongst our family that if someone was bright, they were to do medicine, even if there was not an interest or aptitude. So that was the one thing i thought about much later. But at that moment i think i just longed for his silence and soft nature. We wore purple (a colour to indicate mourning) for Christmas that year – or was it violet? – light purple gloves and handbags and hats bought at the De Nova in Hanover Street. I am still trying to evoke some memories of 1967 and the death of my father.

I was a happy and confident student at Cressy. I also developed a consciousness of our roles as women and girls, and the discomfort i could not articulate earlier about how we were treated was burgeoning into a nascent feminism. I found that Maths became more difficult as i came to matric. I still managed to attain an exemption pass and qualified for university entrance. Having participated in the Cressy plays awakened my love for Drama. Drama was not offered as a subject at the 'bush' University of the Western Cape (UWC), reserved for coloured students. I had to get a permit to attend the University of Cape Town (UCT). However, Drama was a second-year subject that you could only register for once you had passed English I. I obtained a permit to attend UCT for the second year, but did my first year at UWC.

University highlights and challenges

As much as UWC was known to many as a 'bush college', it metamorphosised into a radical place of political activism and protest with many anti-apartheid leaders emerging from it. Prior to the 1970s there were already many protests, and one i recall was a protest by the male students who were forced to wear ties every day. In my first year at the university in 1971 we launched the Black Consciousness (BC) structure, the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), initiated by Steve Biko and Peter Jones. It was an important vehicle challenging the apartheid ideology of 'divide and rule' and attempted to unite groups that had been divided by apartheid into Africans, African ethnic groups, Indians and coloureds. It was such a mental and psychological liberation to be introduced to the ideology of Black Consciousness. I vividly remember the words 'blackness is a state of mind' and 'we must emancipate ourselves'. Bob Marley's 'Redemption Song' succinctly encapsulates the Black Consciousness ideology:

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery,
None but ourselves can free our minds.

I have too many memories of UWC to capture here. But among them is the poor quality of some of the Stellenbosch University staff who were our English lecturers. Van Vuuren just dictated period after period from UNISA guides. Our lecturers were mostly Afrikaners from Stellenbosch University, and those who lectured English were not really fluent in the language. The English texts were European, while the Sociology and Psychology texts were written by South Africans promoting the apartheid ideology. Denise Pedro and i got high marks for Afrikaans-Nederlands I, even though we were English speaking. I joined the Drama Society and we had cultural programmes. We planned to do Adam Small's *Kanna hy kô hystoe* (Kanna he comes home) the following year, but i had left by then. It was sad that the leadership of SASO were all male and really abused their power in the way they treated women. I was quickly learning about patriarchal power and abuse at all levels of society.

I was advised to do French privately in order to prepare me for the Drama course at UCT the following year. I now realise how much my mother had to pay for a private tutor. In fact, it was not necessary because the university offered a French introductory course which one

could do without having any background in French. At the time (1970s) it was a prerequisite to have a third language for a Humanities bachelor's degree at UCT.

I was introduced to the various aspects of UWC culture. But i chose not to adapt to all aspects of it. For example, i did not spend the majority of my time in the cafeteria playing 'Klawerjas'.²² I still am unable to play it.

I recall two historic events: in 1971 we hosted the SASO South African Black Theatre Festival that brought together SASO university students from throughout the country. The Natal delegation was led by Strini Moodley and Saths Cooper, who became two leading Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) political activists in the country. We held the festival in St Mark's Anglican Church Hall in Athlone. I suspect UWC did not have suitable venues for a theatre festival at that stage. We were completely anti-white because of the BC ideology, and when the white parish priest of St Mark's visited the hall, we chased him out. But that tortured me because of my Calvinist guilt. The next day i phoned the secretary of the church to speak to the priest. This was not possible, but i left a message apologising for being part of the group that had chased him out of the hall.

The other significant event was drawn to my attention by a segment on the Radio Sonder Grense programme *Praat Saam* on the 60th anniversary of the university in 2019. Former students who were current lecturers at UWC at the time were interviewed. They referred to the tie boycott protest and the requirement that women students had to wear dresses right up until mid-1971, which was during my first year at UWC. I recall one occasion when i was late for my lift on a Friday morning in 1971 and i had quickly put on a pair of trousers that was on my chair. As i put them on, i said to myself: 'Oh, it is really nonsense that at a university one cannot wear what one wants to.' So i proceeded to wear the trousers. I arrived late for the first lecture, which was Psychology I with Professor Kallie Hesse in what was then UWC's largest lecture room, A100. The entrance was in front of the lecturers' table. As i entered, a wave of whispers reverberated in the lecture hall: 'Sy't n broek aan' (She is wearing trousers). It appeared to me that the whispers were expressed with such disgust, shock and a mixture of surprise (and perhaps some delight) that i became self-conscious as i treaded up the stairs looking for a place to sit. My dramatic entrance and outfit did not go unnoticed by Professor Kallie, who frowned in all his Afrikaner Brandwag disapproval. I was greeted by students with frowns, a few

smiles and in some cases a ‘thumbs up, good for you’ grimace. On the following Monday there were about four other women in the Arts block with trousers on. I am not sure what happened in the Science and other blocks as they were very far from us. I may not have graduated from the ‘university of the left’, but at least i set some trend by being the first female student at the university to wear trousers.

Into the enclave of whiteness, loneliness and alienation

Just getting to UCT physically was challenging. I was sent maps and directions. But because of the Group Areas Act, that was an area that i had never ever entered. Maybe just the main road en route to some other black area. I was intimidated, insecure, i knew no one, and that first day i recall the long queues we stood in for hours, the friendly banter as students met people they knew from past experiences. I just stood quietly surveying this with keen interest: eccentric or outlandish fashions and avant-garde hairstyles. I suppose the laughter and friendly banter made me feel even more lonely. I did not see any other black students.

I qualified to do English II, Afrikaans-Nederlands II, Drama I and French Special. There was one other black person in my English class, but i sat right in front in class whereas he sat right at the back. So, with 400 or 500 other students there was no way that we crossed paths. English was the most complex for me. We did Old English (an entirely other language – the poem called ‘Dream of the Rood’ i remember), Middle English (Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*) and Phonetics – i enjoyed the assignment i did and the tutor congratulated me on my topic. She said it was usually what people did for their master’s or PhD theses. It was something like the ‘Influence of Hindi, Tamal, Gujarati and Urdu on English spoken by South African Indian speakers’. I used the case study of the family of my cousin who married into an Indian family whose parents mostly spoke in the vernacular Indian languages. English lecturer Philip Birkinshaw was a delightful lecturer who, with his animated style, enriched his lectures with stories of his travels in the United Kingdom (UK) and the places referred to in the literature. We had tutorials of small groups of about five to ten students in each section which really helped me come to grips with the work. There was also thorough preparation for tutorials by students. I recall a visiting lecturer being so impressed with the active participation of all the students. JM Coetzee may be a Nobel prize winner for literature, but he

confused us with his lectures on TS Eliot. We students all just looked at one another with frowns of puzzlement as he lectured. It seemed to me as if none of us could follow what he was saying.

In the Afrikaans Nederlands II class i was the only black student among a small group of Afrikaners. There was an earnest atmosphere, and everyone was very hardworking. With due respect to UWC, the foundation i had had there and also my laissez-faire attitude hardly equipped me for UCT. The curriculum was vast and included many aspects we did not cover at UWC. I think we basically did the same areas as at high school – the exception being Phonetics and Morphology in Afrikaans. My first year at UCT was challenging. I recall a combination of loneliness, adjustment to the huge amount of work, adjustment issues socially, and long travelling hours (third class from Salt River to Rosebank and then the walk up a steep Woolsack Drive that would leave me absolutely wet to my skin on some winter's days).

Other black and coloured students i recall, whom i met in my second year there, all did Comparative African Government and Law (CAGAL) and, as far as i could deduce from their conversations, they mostly supported the leftist Non-European Unity Movement. Most of us frequented the South Peninsula Educational Fellowship (SPEF) lectures held at Atheneum near Claremont station, where there were educational, political and other cultural programmes. These were coordinated by NUM member Dawood Parker.

Drama was the most fun and fascinating. We had movement by Jackie Singer, Gay Morris for acting, Peter Krummeck for costuming and the academic lecturers were headed by professors Robert Mohr and Mavis Taylor. I went for an audition for radio, but only a small group of those auditioning were selected. I actually do not recall an audition, just sitting in the long queue. I did not have one as i was black, but still thought i would like to do it. We were just told after a while that they had more than enough candidates.

The courses all Drama students (we could either do Drama as one of our course subjects for our BA degrees or a Performer's Diploma, with an emphasis on acting) did together were the academic sections. The Performer's Diploma students were those who participated in the plays at the Little and Arena theatres.²³

We studied plays over the centuries, starting with Greek theatre (450 BC). Coming to think of it, theatre was such an integral part of African rituals but that did not count. So, nothing African. Similarly, we

did examples of various good plays and even those from other languages translated into English. Drama II included Chekhov, Genet, Molière, Eugene Ionesco, Goethe, Strindberg, and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *Peer Gynt*. Again, nothing African.

It may have been in 1973 that we, the students of English, protested. We demanded the inclusion of African literature into our curriculum. It was already at that stage that St George's Cathedral was the iconic place for protests. We stood on the steps of the cathedral. I am not sure at which stage the police beat us and sent us scurrying in all directions. I do not know when UCT incorporated African literature, but i do recall receiving a very strict message from one of my high school class teachers in Standard 10, a NUM member. He probably saw me being part of the St George's cathedral protests. His message to me via another student was this: 'Get on with your academic work and get your degree. Stop this and don't worry about protests.' This for me encapsulated the stance by the NUM political activists: the time was not ripe as yet, the contradictions between the workers and the bourgeoisie were not antagonistic enough. So, no uprisings or protests at that historical juncture would succeed; Trotskyites through and through.

Diary of a teacher

As a teacher at a high school in 1975, we were confronted with all the contradictions, discrimination and exploitation of teaching – the syllabuses we were given to teach, the hierarchical nature of the school and the all-powerful, omnipotent reactionary school principal in all his patriarchal glory. As women teachers, we earned less than our male counterparts, even with the same or more qualifications. Whites who had trained at UCT with me also earned more, being paid what was called 'inconvenience pay' for being at black schools. Later, as a married woman, i could never have a permanent job and was classified 'permanent indefinite'; i had to reapply for my post at the end of every year.

How did some of us as progressive teachers survive? We taught English, used newspapers of the day to highlight propaganda and how the media reinforced the apartheid ideology. We put in extra hours and started film societies, used literature to explore totalitarian societies and exploitation, and used all our energies to produce plays. We had these annually and also used them as a vehicle for social justice issues. Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was a conduit to critique social,

economic and political aspects of our society. I also directed Bertolt Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* in 1978, which was a major challenge. The previous year i had consulted the Music and Physical Education departments, enquiring about whether they would assist me as it was a musical with many dances. All agreed and were excited. However, the following year found me really struggling on my own as i ended up doing everything. It was tiring but satisfying; the pleasure and skills and confidence acquired by the students made it all worthwhile.

One incident remains in my mind related to the production of plays. It was just before the staging of *The Merchant of Venice* and we had booked the Kensington Civic Centre (there was no school hall, as is the case in most black schools) for the performances and we had the dress rehearsal on 31 May. It was on a Wednesday, Republic Day during the apartheid era. I rehearsed the entire day with my cast as the final stages were imminent and we had paid for the hall. I also remember having a cold. The following day, Thursday, when i woke up my throat was so painful, and i felt very ill. I could not get up and got my mom to phone the school to apply for sick leave. The Friday morning, i felt better and returned to school. I saw the principal in the foyer, and he admonished me for being absent on the Thursday after a public holiday. I was so shocked as i had hardly ever been absent from school and was doing so much for the school. The plays also brought in a healthy revenue. Also, at some of our schools there were rather sad cases of a few teachers who did not see their role as teacher as a vocation and did minimal work in the classroom and occasionally did not even prepare their lessons. Kensington High had a few of those. When the principal scolded me in the public foyer in what i thought was an unfair way, i exploded. I then asked him: 'I wonder what you were doing on that rainy and cold public holiday? You and the majority of your staff were probably cosy at home. I was rehearsing the entire day at the hall with the students with no one helping me. I find it strange that you scold me for being absent for one day in years. You do not speak to those many men who are often absent on a Monday, not because they are ill but because they are still drunk. You do not speak to staff members who come to work so drunk that they do not mark their scripts, as we have found them unmarked in the cupboards. You do not say anything to those male teachers who actually bring alcohol to school and drink on the premises. Yet you scold me who does so much for the school. Not that i want your thanks. I do it for

the students and because i enjoy it.' The principal was dumbfounded and just walked away.

In 1976, the Soweto uprisings reached Cape Town. Students immediately questioned their situations as well. They then acted in solidarity. Mass meetings were called, Student Representative Councils (SRCs) were formed or demanded when that was refused, and discussions and debates on education and apartheid were firmly on the agenda. Inter-school meetings took place and students from different schools and areas communicated around establishing a political voice in the community. A national call was made, and our students heeded the call to march to the city in protest – it was no longer an issue of Afrikaans but against apartheid and bantustan gutter education in 1976. We followed in our cars as we were apprehensive about what would happen to our students. After a walk of about four kilometres, the police started shooting at the students with rubber bullets and spraying teargas. We challenged the black police who were beating our students when they were having a peaceful protest. We tried to explain and later argued with the police that they were being used as pawns in the white racist regime. For the rest of the year there was minimal teaching taking place. Schools had been closed but we teachers had to attend school daily. The schools returned to 'normal' and examinations were written at the end of 1976. With the death of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko while in custody during 1977, again protests and solidarity actions took place. Numerous people were arrested and many newspapers were banned

I got married at the end of 1978 and left Kensington High. My husband and i went to live in Lime Acres (in now Northern Cape) in 1979, where he got a job on Finch Mines as a surveyor. There was no high school in Lime Acres. Living there was a great revelation in terms of learning about the conditions of black people's lives, the poor schooling and lack of facilities in general. The extreme racism and poverty were also more prevalent in the rural areas.

An interesting and challenging experience was teaching English as a second language to Standard 6 and 7 pupils at Die Kuil Senior Sekondêr Primer in Daniëlskuil in 1978, in what is known as the Northern Cape province today. It is a small town about 60 kilometres from Lime Acres, where my husband worked. I hired a kombi and at 5am picked up two other teachers and some pupils living in Lime Acres in order to be at school on time for the 7am start of day. I suspect that my students had learnt English through the medium of Afrikaans in the past. I was

greeted with an enthusiastic ‘Goeie môre, Juffrou’ (Good morning, Miss) on that first day. They had no idea of what i was saying when i responded, ‘Good morning, Class. This is an English lesson hence we speak English throughout.’ Just blank stares gawked at me. I continued greeting in English until some caught on and i was then greeted in English. It was fun though, teaching the pupils to sing songs in English, playing word games and doing some drama so that most of them understood English and spoke with some confidence after a few months – even though it often meant some dramatic manoeuvres on my part, including sitting under the table, standing next to it, sitting on the table, standing behind the table and so on when teaching prepositions, and then later asking them to illustrate that they had learnt the meanings of the words.

In Daniëlskuil i also gained insight into the rigours of rural life. My ignorant urban bias was exposed, and it was a lesson to learn why the class smelt of firewood and smoke. I was shocked and disappointed in myself that i was so oblivious to the conditions and circumstances of my pupils. I also encountered the thinking of some people who lived in such areas. The school was on the border between the white area and the area designated for blacks. The principal instructed the pupils that during the lunch breaks they were not to make too much noise: ‘dan hoor die Boere hoe die Hotnots lawaai maak’ (The white people would hear the noise that Hottentots [blacks] make).²⁴ The female teachers at the school had to wear a peach uniform consisting of a slacksuit, skirt and waistcoat. It was also compulsory to wear pantihose, despite temperatures averaging 40 degrees in summer. School began at 7am in order to end at 2pm because the heat was unbearable during the day.

The Lime Acres village was tiny, with two small shops, a grocer and a butchery, where there were separate queues and sections for whites and blacks. I just ignored them. We did our monthly shopping in the nearest town, Kimberley. All facilities in the village were provided by the mining company, but the swimming pool had no water in it. The tennis court was acceptable for use. Most social activities revolved around the church; its services and weekly prayer meetings. I once went to a prayer meeting and learnt that that was where the local news was shared. In the prayers, references were made to what was happening in the community. It was there that i learnt through someone’s prayer that a colleague of mine (an unmarried woman) was pregnant.

Billy and i consciously chose only one-year contracts. Part of Billy’s contract was subsidised accommodation by the mining company, which

meant that by the following year, 1979, we had saved enough to travel through Europe for a year as we had initially planned. After touring some countries, we both registered to study in the Netherlands.

Europe

Europe was exciting the second time round. Instead of youth hostels, we stayed with friends for longer periods instead of the many shorter visits to numerous places facilitated by a three-month Eurail pass in 1974. We lived with Ethel Aranes and Robbie Kruger in Reutlingen, southern Germany, for about a month. Ethel told me about her studies, and i was impressed with the comprehensiveness of the course. Robbie gave me the prospectus of the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in Den Haag when i mentioned i would like to study in Europe. Even though the closing date for applications for the coming academic year had already passed, we nevertheless decided to go to Den Haag to try to get an interview. Robert introduced us to Dith Glasbergen, who lived in Zoetermeer on the outskirts of Den Haag.

We lived with Dith while i negotiated to get myself interviewed by Maria Mies, head of the Women and Development Studies master's course. My interview was successful, but the next challenge was funding. I applied for the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC). As the course was only to start in September 1979, we decided to live with my sister Solome in Cambridge, United Kingdom. This was exhilarating as it was summer and in June there were various free festivals and markets in the parks. I occasionally phoned the ISS to learn about the outcome of the scholarship application. Eventually we returned to Den Haag after i was informed i had received the NUFFIC funding. We lived with Dith until we found accommodation in Scheveningen, Den Haag.

The course was inspiring and the exchange with students from all over the world was just as stimulating. The Women and Development Studies course consisted of about 30 women from Latin America, Asia and Africa and two from the Netherlands. We shared the situation of women in our countries as a starting point, and i learnt that patriarchy was the common denominator in all our countries. We started a newsletter with the slogan 'Divided in Culture, United in Struggle' that a student by the name of Chhaya coined. I participated in plays highlighting the situation of foreign students in the Netherlands

and another with Diane Haylock from Belize about the sexism and harassment of women at the university coming from male fellow students. Women who did the course, like Jyotsna Gupta and Chhaya Datar (India), Rhoda Reddock (Trinidad and Tobago), Diane Haylock (Belize), Ireen Dubel and Loes Keyzers (Netherlands) and i are still close friends today.

My husband at the time studied Photogrammetry at the Technical University in Enschede, in the north of the Netherlands. We returned to South Africa in December 1981. Meanwhile, my husband and i gradually grew apart on most levels, even politically. I joined the African National Congress (ANC) aligned United Democratic Front (UDF),²⁵ and he the South African Congress on Sports (SACOS), which in some cases opposed the ANC. We separated and eventually got divorced in 1985.

South Africa: 1981

Meanwhile, on returning to South Africa in January 1982, i immediately joined the United Women's Organisation (UWO). I learnt that there was a vacancy for a drama teacher through my inspector father-in-law, John Thomas, at Hewat College of Education. Hewat was one of the oldest teacher training colleges for coloureds in the Cape. I applied and after an interview was offered the post. There were student protests at Hewat annually, culminating in 1985 with the state of emergency.²⁶ We had to convince our students that getting quality education was a means to challenge the oppressive regime. The student leaders had to be persuaded that they should not only make good political speeches in mass meetings but also do their academic work well. Getting a good education was part of the political struggle, and they could participate in community and education struggles simultaneously.

In August 1983, UWO contributed logistically to the launching of the UDF at Rocklands Civic in Mitchell's Plain. I was part of the Kensington UDF and the Kensington UWO. There were the usual political tensions at our college – the pro ANC ('populist' movement), the Azanian People's Organisation supporting the Pan Africanist Congress and the Non-European Unity Movement of South Africa, which later became the New Unity Movement. We had the state of emergency, boycotts and stayaways, and the students were completely divided – whether to attend class or to continue the boycotts and make South Africa 'ungovernable'. I often encountered students in the corridors crying, appealing to me

whether they should write examinations or not. I explained that that was a decision they alone could take. We had no teaching for most of 1985. However, we lecturers were instructed to set examination papers at the end of the year. I enquired on what content as we had done minimal work. We were instructed to give students handouts on the examination, including the relevant work in it. This compromised education standards.

We also had major extramural courses at Hewat. I facilitated our students' participation at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. We did impressive professional training of the students. First-year students did practice teaching at local schools, thereby giving them competency in teaching and classroom facilitation. The principals of the local schools would vie for our students to come to their schools. The British Council also regularly came to recruit our students. Lecturing to teachers has been one of my most rewarding jobs. I still meet former students and get accolades for my contribution.²⁷ I joke and say i do not have to wait for my obituary for former students and activists to say what i had meant to them.

CHAPTER 2

The United Women's Organisation/ United Women's Congress

When i returned to South Africa in December 1981, i immediately joined the United Women's Organisation (UWO). Prior to that, taking off time from my master's studies in Women and Development at the Institute for Social Studies in Den Haag, i often visited my friend Dith Glasbergen in Zoetermeer on the outskirts of Den Haag. She was a member of Boycott Outspan Actie initiated by a South African exile, Esa du Plessis, who was based in Leiden. Dith was a keen supporter of the South African anti-apartheid struggle. For some time, she worked as a nurse in rural Siloam in the north of the then Transvaal. At her Zoetermeer home there were always snippets of news and pamphlets about the struggle in South Africa. That is where i read about the UWO for the first time. It was established formally on 21 April 1981. When i returned home in December 1981, i immediately phoned the UWO office and spoke to the secretary. I learnt it was a federal structure with branches in the various areas. I was amazed, considering it was rigid apartheid at that time, that UWO membership and branches had been established in diverse areas: from black African²⁸ Gugulethu, white middle-class Gardens against the slopes of Table Mountain, the Cape Flats' Mitchell's Plain, Manenberg and seafront Muizenberg, working-class Woodstock to middle-class Wynberg. I was referred to the Kensington Branch because i lived in Maitland. In 1984, i was elected to the UWO Executive Committee as the Education and Training officer.

What was phenomenal about UWO was the space branches were given for organising. Each branch could take up the projects that suited and were relevant to their area. A central theme, such as the high cost of living, would unite all the branches in action. All campaigns were accompanied by political education. One of the key lessons of the High

Cost of Living campaign was that we learnt that the bread subsidy had been decreased, while the defence budget had been increased and that R1 million was spent daily on the war in Namibia. So we had insight into the apartheid government's determination to hold onto power in Namibia while impoverishing the already poor and exploited in South Africa. It was only much later that i realised that many of the members of the women's organisations worked in both the underground of the ANC and legally in the above-ground UWO/UWCO.

The women's structures were particularly radical and militant and were responsible for major organisation throughout the country. In the Western Cape, it was women like Dorothy Zihlangu²⁹ and Mildred Lesia³⁰ that had been active in women's struggles in the 1950s who organised at all levels in the 1980s. They were the founding members of UWO (1981–March 1986), which later amalgamated with the Women's Front to form the United Women's Congress (UWCO) in March 1986. UWCO dissolved in 1990 and its membership was incorporated into the ANC Women's League. These women's structures were very well organised, as leading feminist academics such as Sheila Meintjes and Shireen Hassim have indicated in their various publications.³¹

Grassroots women were concerned about apartheid, and the position of women and people in general, but also specifically about the future of their children and the country. One woman activist in organisations in Bongoletu, Oudtshoorn, explained her motivation for joining women's structures:

We joined a women's organisation which brings out problems of the women. 'Cos there's a lot of women who are not employed. We've got violence in the area. Lots of poverty... Don't know about this area, but in other areas they had abuse of children and the women demanded that these men be punished. But, also, in lots of cases women get beaten by their husbands. (Oudtshoorn, 43)

These sentiments are in sharp contrast to the position held by many academics and other writers who claim that women's struggles during the apartheid era were 'subsumed under the national liberation struggle and were beholden to men as leaders' (e.g. Beall, Hassim and Todes 1989). It is interesting that apartheid is not mentioned in the above extract. Perhaps it was a given that apartheid was viewed as a problem by the

women of Oudtshoorn. It could also mean that they were preoccupied with issues of violence and poverty besides apartheid.

Interviews I conducted with approximately 200 women from various women's organisations in urban Cape Town as well as rural areas near Plettenberg Bay, Knysna (Joodse Kamp), George and Oudtshoorn reveal that women organised largely because of their personal environment and issues. The rhetoric of motherhood was dominant in most interviews. I recall many occasions when the chair of meetings welcoming UWCO delegations would say: 'We welcome the mothers³² of UWCO.' Interviews with some women indicate just how central issues affecting mothers were to women activists at the time. Mercia stated that:

I think it's probably a cliché to say that we as women played a pivotal role. Ordinary grassroots women have played a pivotal role in the struggle, particularly often around issues like housing and access to water, and all kinds of everyday campaigns whether it's the high food prices and so on. And I think that's how we came into the struggle. *We first became politicised – even the word 'politicised' is too strong. We were moved to action because of our own situation more than anything else.* We were the ones who had to carry the brunt of some of the difficulties. (Mercia, 3, my emphasis)

Members of a Surrey Estate women's organisation who were interviewed raised issues around their children, socialisation and how they reared them, among other things:

Speaker 1: For me I consciously... wanted to raise my daughter to be this assertive person... you have this utopia of how a woman should be.

Speaker 2: Ahhh. Maybe that's too feminist, you know, that's coming on too strong. Because of your role and having to incorporate values and, I mean, the child has to survive in society.

Speaker 1: [inaudible] ... changed yet and now you're pushing this utopia or these values you put on your

child into that society, you actually feel sorry because now she must battle how to survive in a sexist society. Society in general has... stagnated, but now certain women, like my daughter and us, we haven't stagnated. Our daughters have risen above sexist stereotypes and now there's the conflict. (Surrey Estate, 46)

The organisational rhetoric of the nationalist movement and UWO/ UWCO in some cases celebrated and emphasised the important position of motherhood. This motherhood was not a narrow nuclear family role, but rather that of a community and public role where women highlight the fight for equality and social justice. Women were concerned about apartheid, their own positions generally and to promote equality and social justice, and often about the future of their children.³³ Through being part of an organisation, they could collectively challenge the situation.

Many white women, descendants of mixed slave and whites, as well as indigenous middle-class women who were much younger, and of whom a fair percentage were university students, stated that they joined a women's organisation to promote women's interests within the anti-apartheid struggle. Nomaindia Mfeketo gave the following background to and reasons for joining a women's organisation:

I heard about this meeting that was going to take place and I immediately thought I should go. Maybe it was what I was going through that time... All my problems centred around what couples usually fight about traditionally. All these new traditions... I even felt younger and stupid in this new home. Here the man was the head of the house. He was powerful. Men are the owners of you; you just become his property. But not only his property; also the property of the in-laws as well. No matter how you translate it. There was this fighting with myself, this inner argument. Why must I endure this? I can't... understand this. Why should I go through this? There I was, a *makoti* [young married woman]³⁴ who has to serve her husband and in-laws. They were genuine; they believed that this was right.

They did not mean to be mean – they just perceived things to be like that. (Nomaindia Mfeketo, 53)

The focus here is on the impact of traditions and culture, and on the fact that women in a patriarchal society are still often considered men's property. Nomaindia believed that these problems needed to be confronted and that was why she 'immediately thought' that she should go to the meeting of the women's organisation.

The new and challenging political activities and roles that some women found themselves in were challenged by men. In some cases, like that of the Wynberg branch of UWCO, these women had hardly ventured outside of their homes before joining these women's structures or did not have a history of participating in community structures. This was especially so for women from the branches with predominantly Muslim members and in the informal settlements that still had 'tribal relations' and warlords.³⁵

Women recalled the way in which they first had to get permission from the men to do their political work:

Do you remember how if we wanted to work with the UWCO branch members in Nyanga Bush [an informal settlement next to Crossroads] we first had to announce our presence and seek permission from the self-made chief [warlord] Yameni? And other squatter branches first had to ask permission before they met? (Tambo Village, 47)

The UWCO Masicidane (informal settlement next to KTC) branch reported to the General Council that the women had to seek permission to attend meetings (UWCO General Council Minutes, October 1987: 4). Members of this branch, composed largely of women who had recently relocated from the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, found themselves in an urban setting where traditional structures were unilaterally being revived by some elderly men. Mamdani succinctly summarises the phenomenon of the democratic structures that women initiated when they first settled in these informal settlements:

One only needs to look at the experience of self-initiated squatter settlements in South Africa: many began with an emphasis on participation (and democracy) and ended up with a warlord. (Mamdani 1996: 299)³⁶

Women were not only constrained by tradition, but also by religion. Women in predominantly Muslim areas like Wynberg also had to contend with the patriarchy associated with their religion, sometimes reinforced by women themselves:

She's a good friend of mine but she always used to say: 'We must remember that the men are just there a little bit above us.' Now, I mean this is not my idea of equality at all. It should be more teamwork with the men. In Islam we have that. But these equality *shari'as* have been removed by men. Men made other rules. They don't like women to be radical. Men used to say to me – 'Don't interfere with these married women' when I invited them to UWO/UWCO meetings. Many husbands also challenged me about this. They did not like their wives to go out at night. (Raghmat, 12)

We did not deal with women's liberation on the national scale but rather with the individual women's liberation because some husbands would never allow them to go out at night... The Qu'ran doesn't say that your husband must order you around... so imagine the surprise when on reading and studying the scriptures women found out that they don't even have to cook for their husbands [lots of laughter and shouting]. (Wynberg, 48)

Being in the women's organisation was a learning experience for all of us. As illustrated above, women in these organisations began reading the scriptures and interrogating all the patriarchal teachings that they were told were in the scriptures.

The irony of being in mixed progressive organisations was that sexual harassment and the undermining of women took place even in such organisations. Most participants in my research claimed that they found that it was always women who had to raise gender issues in mixed-gender organisations they belonged to, just like it was always black women who raised race issues:

No men in the branch ever raised gender issues. Even when there was sexual harassment it was us women who had to raise it. (Barbara, 33)

Experiences were remarkably different in women's organisations:

I think in general women were given space to develop in women's organisations, which you didn't find in mixed organisations. Especially here in UWO and UWCO, women come from different backgrounds and where women would take along other women to develop. But in the mixed organisation it's only the stronger women that would actually stand up and say something... or challenge males. Traditionally women don't challenge older men in mixed organisations. But when... you are in a women's organisation, that threat or pressure is not there... You can see women that have come from the women's struggle, how they have developed, that base was actually laid within the women's organisations. (Surrey Estate focus group, 46)

Various issues are raised here. Firstly, emphasis is placed on the supportive environment in women's organisations. I agree that women find being in a women's organisation easier and empowering. Even though the mixed organisations referred to were all democratic organisations fighting apartheid and promoting democracy, it did not mean that women were treated equally. The culture of most of the organisations was one of patriarchy and ageism ('women don't challenge older men'). Only confident women were able to challenge men. The power relations within democratic organisations reflected exactly those in the society that the organisations were purportedly challenging. But the issues around gender and power relations were not generally raised in mixed-gender organisations. Despite this, however, as a result of women's own experiences, issues around violence against women were often discussed in such organisations. Mercia described some of her experiences in the 1980s:

I grew up in District 6, coming from a very working-class family, and those are the things that push you into the campaigns and so on. And it was then, how do we as women look at our roles? To be keen to differentiate between our roles, the kind of socialised roles as mothers and women and so on. Often our experiences bring the

opportunities there themselves. I remember... we had a very good activist in Steenberg. She didn't come to the meeting that day. She had lots of survey papers, and we went to find out where she was. And when we got to her house she came and met us outside. She didn't want us to come inside the house because her husband was on the warpath and she had a blue eye. And she was beaten up by him because she was now in the organisation. She was out in the streets with us and he was very unhappy with this issue. That meant we could take that into the organisation. Why did she have a blue eye? Why was she beaten up when she takes up a different role? And so on, and so on. So we could begin to slowly politicise these issues. (Mercia, 3)

The reality of these women's experiences informed their activism. Mercia and her female comrades did not require any feminist theory about violence or patriarchy. It was their own experiences that afforded them the opportunity to either ask why or to see that violence against women and men wanting to control women were not individual matters, but rather a problem of a male-centred and patriarchal community. The strength of this and similar experiences that the women spoke of was how they transformed personal pain into a public domain, acknowledging that violence happened to many of them. Many husbands did not like the idea that their wives were 'out in the streets'. Men wanted to control women's activities.

Sexism was not confined to the homes; patriarchy was present in the organisations as well:

We know that X was raped by a UDF comrade, but it was covered up. Only the exec discussed it.
(Tambo Village, 47)

This statement illustrates too how women themselves often colluded with patriarchy and camouflaged violence against women within progressive structures.

Women shared what their demands were and why they thought that being in a women's-only organisation was required to realise their demands:³⁷

It's because they are the best in politics and fight for everything; we wanted non-sexism, non-racism and democracy – women to do and be what they choose. (Beauty, 27)

By bringing or attempting to bring together a wide range of women in WNC [Women's National Coalition] in terms of class, race, rural/urban to focus we would get rid of apartheid and all women's related issues/oppressions. (Carol, 35)

By mobilising and empowering grassroots women we kept women's issues alive on the national liberation agenda; we would have a new society where no oppressions would be tolerated. (Louise, 28)

These women not only believed that being in a women's organisation contributed to women's emancipation, but also that the strategy of getting different women together, mobilising and empowering grassroots women and ensuring that the liberation movement as a whole took cognisance of the position of women, would result in the type of new society they were fighting for. Lydia touched on quite a few issues that confronted women:

And... because gender... not meaning women only, you know, while the man carries on doing what he wants to do. So, both men's and women's roles have to change. So, I saw [inaudible] cook. I still see that he is cooking because he's got to feed himself and the children. It's not that he's doing me a favour, right. I mean, [inaudible] discovered after a very long time that he actually thought he was doing me a favour. So, men are still patriarchs by heart even though they think they're liberated. But that is a different way of seeing it, as I had to [inaudible] that women are in that, you've got to be at work. You've got to be in the struggle and also do the traditional things. And he'll moan there, you know. So, both men's and women's roles have to change [inaudible], ... I think we must ensure that our men that are not changing must

be re-educated to be able to give women their space. Because sometimes we have this idea, but in practice it's not like that. We still feel, like... For instance, myself, while I was in the struggle I couldn't rise above that guilt. I actually felt guilty if I couldn't perform all this. And you're not the superwoman. You can't do all of that. So, it had to be addressed at the home level. And it depends. Like I could address it in my home because I wanted to play my part in the struggle [inaudible]. But certain women didn't have that courage to be able to address it because they still had this stereotype of males who they are married to. And that's why it's fine now with women going into Parliament, women that... Even when COSATU [Congress of South African Trade Unions] changed and the gender issue was addressed in COSATU and women start becoming shop stewards we also found that the marriages were disintegrating. So, it's a whole re-education not just for the women. (Lydia, 21)

Lydia identifies a concern many women with progressive husbands or partners had – they sometimes thought they were 'helping' you or doing you a favour. The actual exploitation of women in the house and the sexual division of labour were not confronted during the struggle. This is despite the organisational rhetoric that was captured in Dora Tamana's speech, 'Men and women must share housework', at the launch of UWO in April 1981. Lydia's statement, 'So, men are still patriarchs by heart even though they think they're liberated', encapsulates the situation in the old and new South Africa. Lydia raised the issue of women's guilt for not being able to cope with being a political activist, a mother and a good comrade; in other words, a superwoman. Lydia also made reference to what happened when women in the trade unions became shop stewards. 'Marriages disintegrating' was fairly common during the struggle, and today as well, because more and more women are drawn into roles that most women did not have during apartheid.³⁸

Lydia draws attention to the fact that while the anti-apartheid struggle aimed at equality, non-sexism and democracy, the actual struggle was permeated with inequality and patriarchy. This was the foundation of the tensions that existed between the male-led political structures and women's structures from the 1950s to the 1980s. In

terms of the feminist demand for equality in the form of comprehensive citizenship for women, sexism and patriarchal attitudes still pose severe limitations on democracy and impact on women's citizenship in the new South Africa.

There was a remarkable change in women as well as the issues they focused on over the period of UWO/UWCO's existence (1981–1990).³⁹ Members of the Wynberg branch were initially very proud that there were so many demands that they put forth in General Council meetings of UWO and UWCO. However, some women felt left out. For instance, the 'main' UWO caterer at meetings, Raghmat Jaffer, had this to say:

We did not want to give input just as caterers. We are political beings and we wanted to give political direction as well and not just cater. (Raghmat, 12)

This is an important statement. Many white and coloured members of UWCO expected only the 'township' women to give 'political direction' in the organisation. However, it is clear from the assertion by Raghmat that some wanted to fully participate and not just play a role at the catering level. A similar sentiment arose among some women within the Wynberg branch during a discussion around the issue of the use of 'high English' in meetings that made some women shy to speak. One of the members explained how she mustered up the courage to speak:

The only time I spoke in that meeting was when I half argued with Mrs Jaffer; I didn't want to be stuck with just *braaing* [frying] chicken, I wanted to do more. (Wynberg, 48)

Wanting to 'do more' may mean something directly political. The world of politics was one that was associated with the public world; with the men's world. Some women still felt cautious about their involvement in politics. It took a long time for Nomajoni to mention the word 'politics' in meetings. She seemed cautious, but with a subtle pride she noted that she had broken the barrier:

I changed – I now will just stand up and speak about... you know, politics. (Nomajoni, 30)

Many women never mentioned the word 'citizen', but it is clear from their responses in interviews I conducted with them and their actions as members of the women's organisations that they wanted equality, and their experience gave them the confidence to demand it:

I had more confidence to stand up and sometimes raise feminist issues. I was glad that we'd address more women's issues. (Sarah, 18)

After the declaration of the state of emergency in June 1985, new and challenging programmes emerged in reaction to it. For instance, candles were lit daily between 8 and 9pm by protesters demanding an end to the state of emergency and the release of detainees, as well as a token of solidarity with those in prison. The idea was that each house would have one candle placed in a prominent place in their house. The courage of the women during the campaign is indicated by the following words of a former member of the group of women in the Wynberg UWCO branch:

The action of the police made us more militant. When we lit the candles, I was very nasty. It was 9 o'clock and the candles had to go off. But I let them burn... I didn't have one candle. I had a string of candles on the wall; 20 in all. No, I wasn't scared. I was alone with one of these vagrants helping me... Police were chasing the children and emptying buckets of urine from helicopters. This we only found out later. People were congregating outside with the youths. And from your stance as a mother, you went out to see what was happening. (Wynberg, 48)

The women in the Wynberg branch, like many others, admitted that they were more incensed because of the actions of the police. This helped mobilise even more women. In the case of the Wynberg branch where most members were mothers and older than the average UWO/UWCO member, their concern about their children also spurred them on. This is what happened all the time. The women became defiant due to their helplessness in the face of the all-powerful police, who in no uncertain terms displayed their omnipotence very arrogantly at most times. Women admitted that by being in the company of like-minded women they became defiant and confident enough to challenge the police.

I actually didn't care. I even physically attacked the police when they came to arrest my neighbour. (Zwelithemba, Worcester, focus group, 49)

Other women from Surrey Estate also drew attention to the courage demanded from women by the roles they had to play during the liberation struggle:

Speaker 1: Ja [yes], an extreme political awareness also developed in our branch.

Speaker 2: Ja... there were certain duties that were given to us. Like X was on the run and couldn't go to his homes. We had to find hiding places for him, or try to get him out of the country. So it was very challenging. Very new.

Speaker 3: And you must know this was like ordinary women, mothers, that could grow to that level of hiding cadres. And if you just listen to the stories – and sometimes even if you're so close, we never knew who had who in their houses. It was just this security conscious[ness]. There was a lot of planning and strategising. I mean, if you go back to the newspapers of that time, especially of the Defiance Campaign [1980s], and see how many front-page stories we made... Like that time when we put the red paint on Parliament, and when Louise went and chained herself to Parliament. (Surrey Estate, 46)

Caring about and supporting these activities was very much in line with women's roles as agents for action and change. However, the roles of women activists changed over time. Women became angry and began to challenge the police. It was also affirming for these women to have their photographs in the national newspapers and on TV. They were taking and claiming public spaces and were being acknowledged for it.

Speaker 1: I would be very happy if you could highlight the important political role that the women played in that period of the Defiance.

Speaker 2: And if you look at all the films and if you look at all the TV news footage we have been in, I mean [talking together, inaudible]...

Speaker 3: I've got wonderful pictures and press cuttings.

Speaker 4: I've got clippings of all the events. What I've done now for the Bellville branch, I've sandwiched a few of them. (Surrey Estate, 46)

The women also spoke about their private pains and fear of being interviewed by the police. They encouraged and inspired other women to take up the challenge of supporting the struggle and to come out of their homes. They did not have full citizenship legally; they were second- or third-class citizens after their husbands. But they were staking their claims to citizenship. They were also challenging narrow interpretations of their religion (Islam) and culture (rural tribal women). They were proud of their identities; most of them always wore their scarves no matter where they were.

The tasks for the women changed over time. Participants in the New Crossroads focus group had this to say:

The situation became more hectic; it was frightening but also a bit exciting. Even though we were scared we knew that it would change things for the better for our children. We do not want them to experience the hardships that we have experienced... As members of the UWO and UWCO various activities were arranged. There were marches organised to demand the release of all children, to demand an end to the state of emergency.

By 1988 there were so many women comrades in jail that we also organised a march to demand the release of women political prisoners.

Many times the marches ended peacefully when a memorandum of the demands or petition were handed over to a representative of the Minister of Justice, the local police commander, the Bantu Administration

Board complaining about the high rents and the poor conditions of houses or other public figures to whom the memorandum was addressed. However, as protests increased and the state started responding with brutality, marchers were shot at with pellets or rubber bullets, teargas and baton charged.

It was quite frightening the first time. (New Crossroads, 44)

But the women were open and shared their fear and apprehension. These were new and radically different experiences, and they were afraid:

Ja, ... we started off a Defiance Campaign and we had a meeting the night before and we knew we're going to take part in this Defiance Campaign. And, of course, the women were trembling now because they had a few teargas experiences and also the water cannons and they didn't want to go through that again. So, now... the women were forced to test the ground in the Defiance Campaign. And we had to get as many women involved in this thing. And there'd be all kinds of excuses [laughter] because they knew we're gonna go to jail... And we knew that we must be beaten up also. And the women resisted; well some of them just didn't pitch up that day. But the majority of the branch members pitched up. And, also, we had to ensure that those that are stronger must be on the outside [of the march]. And most of the women wanted to be on the inside because in the inside you're not going to be beaten by the batons. (Surrey Estate, 46)

The women were aware of their vulnerability and there was no judgement on those women who did not turn up. It was also very caring and realistic to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the various women and who would be on the inside and who on the outside of the marching group.

The marches were planned in every detail. The protesters knew their strengths and weaknesses, and also had contingency plans.

Speaker 1: And when they charged towards us, we all just knelt down and prayed.

Speaker 2: Oh, so many different prayers in so many different languages.

Speaker 3: As we got down onto our knees which totally disarmed the cops, you know. And the next thing you heard, like ten different languages, all these prayers... it's my favourite story... Most of the cops just stood there. But one came towards Annemarie and dragged her.

Speaker 4: But we were on top of him, all ten of us. We knew we had to get him down and away from Annemarie. We were all arrested.

Speaker 5: Two hundred in a cell. They first wanted to separate us, blacks and whites into separate cells. We refused and just stood there until they agreed to put us into the same cell.

Speaker 6: That was the first time we had a night court in the country.⁴⁰

Speaker 7: We had a workshop in the cell – decided what we were going to say and do. We decided not to answer any of their questions. (Surrey Estate, 46)

The women were aware of what they were going to be confronted with and had planned to kneel down to pray when the police confronted them. This gave rise to occasions where there would be thousands of women kneeling in the middle of the city of Cape Town in the sight of thousands of spectators. The marches often took place during lunchtime, and invitations to participate were distributed widely. So not only did some people join the marches, but others came as spectators. Some spectators also joined the marches.

Most South Africans are very religious and respond very seriously to prayers. The women were thus very strategic when they knelt and prayed whenever confronted by the police. As in many incidences in South African history and in other parts of the world, women did not hesitate to physically attack policemen. Women also stood their ground and did not adhere to the apartheid rules that black and white detainees

should be accommodated separately in prisons. They did not allow themselves to be intimidated by the police. Thus, these women acted completely contrary to what was expected of them – to be obedient and adhere to laws. They strategised and held workshops to plan their actions even while in ‘the belly of the beast’. They challenged the police and court authorities and on many occasions were eventually released from detention.

The sight of thousands of kneeling women being beaten up by policemen made the police very unpopular. In some instances, the children of police were ostracised at schools and their families by the community in the areas where they lived. Some policemen resigned from the police force because they were pressurised by their children and other family members who were being ostracised.

Virginia, a UWCO member, had a partner who was a policeman. She was very subtly ostracised. She was never told the venues for the meetings. Some even suspected her of being an *impimpi* (informer for the police). We were prohibited from meeting during the state of emergency. Nevertheless, meetings were held clandestinely. The police often arrived at meeting places and arrested all attending even though only a few key people were told where the meetings were going to be held. We met at designated public places like bus terminuses and shopping malls. Often minutes after arriving at the secret meeting place the police would surround it and arrest all of us. There was thus an atmosphere of paranoia because no one knew who the police informer was.

The women who participated in women’s organisations changed and were radicalised after the declaration of the state of emergency. Restrictions were imposed on their activity, and many were detained because meetings were rendered illegal. The women were militant and defiant in their responses, and explored new, different and creative ways of protest.

Race and class issues were the most dominant form of difference amongst women in apartheid South Africa. These were manifested in various ways in UWO/UWCO as well, one of them being transport:

Jude was reminding me how Nontobeko Zihlangu [office worker] would phone us. Nomsa and me would get this phone call from Jenny in particular saying: ‘Gardens can only send one person because the meeting mustn’t be dominated by whites.’ Every other branch had been told

to bring two delegates... On the other hand... I mean, this is very much a race thing, because then we'd be phoned and... 'please can you bring three cars?' (Debbie, Gardens branch, 5)

Debbie was really taken aback when they were told they could send one delegate but were required to provide three cars for the meeting. This illustrated the race/class tension that existed in the organisation, as well as an acute awareness that whites should not dominate meetings. Nevertheless, many white members of the women's organisations did make themselves available to transport other members of the organisation because they were benefiting from the apartheid system and had the resources. However, what was also interesting to note was the dynamics in meetings where some white members of UWO/UWCO consciously avoided dominating discussions in meetings. This was primarily because they recognised the importance of African working-class leadership of popular organisations. When an enthusiastic new white member participated eagerly in discussions in meetings, older members would intervene in some way to prevent that person's domination of the discussion. This illustrates the complexity of the situation, but also the racial power dynamics in UWO/UWCO branches.

On the one hand, UWO/UWCO was an organisation for 'all women', but the issue of power and control was very clear. African working-class women gave direction, while white and coloured middle-class women provided resources and other forms of support. There was a culture of 'giving the lead to African women' in the organisation. Hence, there was a sort of self-censorship on the part of some white and coloured women. This probably explains why Hassim (1990) and Horn (1991) correctly conclude that white women did not play a pivotal role in popular organisations in the 1980s. On the other hand, some white women would dominate the discussions in meetings. This occurred because there was recognition that they could contribute ideas around strategy and tactics that eventually led to their election to senior positions in the organisation. Women like Louise Naude and Madeleine Fullard eventually got onto the executive of the organisation.

First, I was involved with Rape Crisis and then I lived in a house with G and L [black women] here in Obs and they started getting involved in the UDF area committees and

affiliates. Then I joined United Women's Organisation about six months before the Women's Front and UWO merged to become United Women's Congress. I was in the Obs branch. Then one year later, I was elected onto the regional executive of UWCO. (Louise, 29)

There was always one place reserved for a whitey. (Debbie, 5)

There was never reference to race in UWO/UWCO because the primary objective was to build 'unity'. Whiteness and the privileges that whites and middle-class coloureds had were never directly confronted. There was never time and place to interrogate race and class politics during General Councils of UWO/UWCO. Euphemisms like 'branches on the other side of the railway line' or 'non-township branches' were used. In consequence, white and coloured members of the organisation seldom took on white or coloured issues at an organisational level, but at the branch level only. For example, the Kensington branch had a weekend workshop on different forms of feminism that reflected the key issues facing women. The Harfield/Claremont branch produced a booklet that contained a collection of interviews with people who were forced out of Harfield Road in terms of the Group Areas Act. The Gardens branch of UWCO embarked on a project with the domestic workers in the area that directly addressed race, class, exploitation and other key issues that affected black domestic workers in particular.

It was also strategic to have a racially representative executive. At all times the executive committee consisted of a majority of African women, one or two coloureds and at least one white, as Debbie stated. However, a concern that Carol raised exposed an important gap:

It was a concern that the Black Sash or none of the women's organisations were able to attract working-class white women. (Carol, 35)

This was obvious even in the Women's National Coalition (WNC),⁴¹ where most of the white women were professionals such as lawyers and researchers.

Despite the absence of working-class whites and the total silence around racial power and privilege in UWO/UWCO and the WNC,

some white and coloured women played strategic roles, albeit subject to the approval of the black majority. An illustration of how empowering participation in such organisations was is evident in the case of an extremely quiet, young and withdrawn white woman who was elected to the executive. Louise noted that it was only possible in a women's organisation and the support of others found in such an organisation that such a woman could become a member of the executive committee.

Can you imagine any other organisation but a women's organisation that makes X a secretary – gosh, it really gave her confidence. (Louise, 29)

Most women emphasised the empowering and supportive atmosphere in the organisation.

Nevertheless, there were tensions within women's organisations and between women's organisations and other organisations. Even though the aim of most women's organisations was to unite women, it did not mean that women themselves were united. Various tensions like class and language also impacted on them, as illustrated below:

Speaker 1: Yasmin and others like Musna were all shy to speak English. They said we all spoke high English. It's a good thing they brought it up. They didn't want to speak at first and then we found out that they are Afrikaans speaking.

Speaker 2: But listen to how articulate they are now.

Speaker 3: We could speak English but did not know how to express ourselves, which words to use in which sentence. We felt that if we used the wrong word people would laugh at us... We discussed this issue thoroughly and came up with the proposal that we would have a question and go round so that each one could speak. This changed the situation.

Speaker 4: It's nothing to do with being educated or not. I consider myself educated but when Mrs Jaffer and I went

to our first council, we were petrified to speak. It's all about confidence.

Speaker 3: I also think that the atmosphere in the branch after that was very supportive. I felt confident to speak and would even change to Afrikaans if I couldn't express myself in English. (Wynberg, 48)

So, even within the branches, in this case a coloured branch of UWCO, there were differences caused by class, education and language groups. In a polarised society such as South Africa, these differences impact on relationships in a particularly nuanced way. One's self-image and what languages one speaks and how it is spoken (like 'high English') illustrate the intricacies of power and inequalities amongst women and how these influence relationships, even in a 'progressive' organisation fighting for equality and democracy.

The racial and class diversity of UWO/UWCO accounted for some interesting debates that highlighted the differences between South African women during apartheid. Such differences persist in the post-apartheid era, as illustrated by the following:

I chaired a meeting last week, a public meeting here organised by the Centre for Conflict Resolution. There was a debate between Patricia de Lille⁴² and Allison Lazarus. Patricia... said in conclusion about this domestic violence and violence: 'There are two things women must learn – they must fear nobody. They must be able to get up and fear nobody.' And I thought to myself: 'Ok, that can be you and I.' I believe I have no fear. Then a woman from the New Women's Movement was in the meeting and got up and said: 'I'm a domestic worker. I used to be a farm worker and when I'm the bread winner and I have that boss, that rude boer boss screaming at me and so on... I, in my heart, have no fear of this man. I think he's a shit. But publicly I fear the loss of a job. I fear the loss of an income. I fear many things. So, it's really easy for you to say you must never feel fear. But if you are economically dependent and others are economically dependent on you, you feel fear. I feel fear. (Mercia, 3)

The woman from the New Women's Movement articulated the reality of working-class and poor women. It is easy for middle-class and powerful political figures like De Lille to speak about not fearing anybody. The reality for a woman who is dependent on husbands or bosses for economic survival is different. The speaker emphasised that not only was she dependent on the farmer for work but others (probably her children) were dependent on her in turn.

As much as there were class, power and race differences in UWO/UWCO (and in the new South Africa, as illustrated above) during the political struggle, most white members of these organisations felt accepted by the black members:

I was happy in the organisation. Women's issues were taken seriously, and I maintain that women's organisations are more important. I identified as a woman, felt accepted as a woman. Even though I was 'white' I felt women could achieve in the organisation. (Anne, 36)

That Anne felt accepted as a white woman perhaps indicates the atmosphere in the organisations. Black women were happy that white women were part of the struggle, while white women avoided dominating or 'giving' direction (see Hassim 1991). However, there were times when white women were asked to do certain tasks because it was more strategic for them to do these tasks. For example, white women were always asked to find the venues for large meetings because they were able to get access to the halls of universities, for instance. But no white woman would ever become the chairperson of UWO/UWCO. So, there were limited roles for them because of their race and class, and they accepted this.

Another difference between white and black members of UWO/UWCO was the impact of their access to resources such as cars and the impact of the demands placed on their time by home and work responsibilities on the tasks they could perform for the organisation:

We were always feeling stretched; too much work, too much to do in the organisation and too rushed outside the organisation... And I'm not coping with it all... And then there was Council always starting four hours late... That was frustrating. (Debbie, 25)

Also, I was half dead, trying to be the chairperson of a branch, have a child and be a single parent... The exhaustion of the '80s only hit me then. Then there was my love life. Haven't had one since my child was born.
(Louise, 28)

Women not only had the task of doing the housework, but also had to work hard in both the women's organisations and the other popular organisations in which they had membership. There was a culture of never complaining about work. None of the African women ever complained – even though they worked harder than the other women at home as well as in their jobs. They had to do their own housework, while many white and coloured members of the organisation had domestic assistants. There were also differences in the way that the women of the different race groups perceived the meetings. African women never complained that the meeting was too long – even if it was ten hours long. The white women usually left at 4pm if the meeting was scheduled to end at that time. Time was a major tension. On several occasions when a General Council meeting was scheduled to begin at 9am it would only begin at 11am because of people arriving late. The stark differences in women's lives obviously accounted for this. White women in the organisation either had no children, or if they did, they were supported by nannies, housekeepers and/or cleaners. Most white and some coloured women had cars to get to meetings. Township women had to use public transport or wait for any transport that had been arranged. In addition, most of the general councils were held on Sundays when public transport was limited. Punctuality was a major challenge in the organisation because of the distances some members had to travel to meetings and an unreliable transport system.

Although there was a general view that there was a supportive environment in the women's organisation, participation in these organisations also gave rise to frustration and strong emotions for some members because of the demanding tasks they were expected to perform for the organisations. Louise 'hated' everybody because her work as a treasurer was demanding.

As a treasurer one also has a mammoth task. There are demands for money, but receipts are either lost or never supplied. This creates major problems with the

reconciling of expenditure and income and having books audited annually. It was a thankless task being the treasurer and often people just ignored your pleas for receipts. After I was the treasurer, I just hated everybody. I just hated them. I didn't want to see them. (Louise, 28)

It was difficult to produce receipts in certain circumstances. Many township women travelled by taxi. These taxis never supplied receipts. The treasurer would become frustrated because the money given out for the transport costs of the various delegates from rural areas like Oudtshoorn and George to attend conferences could not be accounted for. They constantly had to explain to people auditing the organisation's books that in some instances there were no receipts for cash payments. On one occasion, the auditor stated that 'it has to be decided by the organisation whether it was to operate like a third world or first world organisation' (UWO/UWCO Auditors' report 1993).

As much as there was support in the organisation, women leaders often felt frustrated. In addition, both members and the organisation as a whole had to follow the broad political and ideological approach of the wider liberation movement. There were a few incidents where women had to appear before the executive and senior comrades for stepping 'out of line' politically or ideologically.

This hints at the Stalinism found in the organisation, referred to as 'democratic centralism'. During this period there was also a reluctance to negatively criticise the Soviet Union and its Stalinism. For instance, a paper that the Western Cape delegation wanted to present at the Malibongwe Women's Conference in February 1990, which had to be approved by the General Council of UWO, was altered to delete a criticism of the Soviet Union. In the paper, titled 'What we mean by women's liberation', references were made to the oppressed position of women in post-liberation states like Cuba (despite the 1959 Family Code that promotes egalitarian positions for women and men in the family), Algeria, Nicaragua and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In the USSR, it was stated in the draft paper (drafted by me after a workshop with the delegates), even though there were many women medical doctors, scientists and engineers, the status of medical doctors dropped once there were more women than men doctors. And, after working in ill-equipped hospitals for long hours, women still had to queue up for bread rations. The section on the USSR had to be deleted as

'we do not negatively criticise our Allies'. The paper was then accepted as reflecting the position of the organisation.

There was also a consciousness that women would not always be supportive of one another:

Ja. I mean, there was cooperative development with these [women's] organisations. Whereas, I mean, you go now to any meeting, you have to be able to shout loud. You have to be able to push yourself... you know, because you're up against the male competitive spirit. But you must also know not to forget that women can also oppress one another sometimes... Because if you're too assertive then you must almost like... step back a little bit if you're too forceful... Give other women a chance. (Surrey Estate, 46)

It was also very clear that one could not assume that all women are supportive, caring and kind. The kind and caring atmosphere that Anne emphasised earlier was not always there.

The women's struggles contributed to an enabling environment for women during the apartheid era, the transition from apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa. Several members of UWO/UWCO felt this way:

The Black Sash did not directly contribute to end apartheid, but women became aware of their potential strength and ability to act independently and in opposition to men. (Paula, 7)

Women did not succeed in challenging patriarchy completely; women became aware of their potential strength and ability to act independently and in opposition to men... and by... mobilising and empowering grassroots women. (Cape Town Central/ Sea Point, 39)

Women gave input into the Constitution and should be able to take their rightful place in society. The organisations have also built women's leadership;

most women MPs [Members of Parliament] and MPLs [Members of Provincial Legislatures] come from our ranks. [We contributed to] strong exemplary non-racialism input in the region; commitment to African working-class leadership; also a grassroots campaign focus. We women's organisations gave input into post-apartheid South African politics. (Madeleine, 8)

Women's organisations lay the basis for strong gender content in post-apartheid South African politics, for example the Constitution. (Naledi, 54)

The above illustrates women's participation in the political struggle. It also highlights their growing political consciousness and commitment. They started off as women interested in their role as women in the political struggle and ended up doing underground work and hiding children who were on the run from the police in their homes. There was a supportive atmosphere and non-judgemental attitude to those who were scared of the police. UWO/UWCO gave them the opportunity to examine religious texts and assess what their religion demanded from them. They were excited and proud of their defiance and participation in the struggle. Women were really empowered by being part of the women's structures.

Recollections of UWO/UWCO activities and campaigns

A quiet Sunday morning – UWO meeting

UWCO meetings were always long. This was mainly because of the long list of items on the agenda of meetings as well as the need to translate discussions simultaneously, often into between three and four different languages. In addition, there was often an item on the agenda on political education.

It was our monthly UWO meeting. This Sunday in early 1986 it was held at Whitey's⁴³ Crèche behind the police station in Gugulethu, or Gugs as the township was popularly known. Some of us were on time, but many were waiting for transport. I think the one main disorganising factor for all our meetings was the issue of transport. Public transport was even worse on Sundays. We arranged a lift system, but this also had hiccups. Inevitably, something went wrong and we ended up sometimes waiting for hours for others to join us.

The same thing happened on this particular Sunday morning. We were waiting for the majority to arrive, and Jen went to the kitchen to make coffee. She had just left when the police entered. They arrested us all in the main hall. They did not even bother to search the rest of the building, so those who were in the kitchen or in the toilet got off scot-free. We were taken to Gugulethu police station just around the corner. For some reason, we as a group of women just did not take this 'arrest' seriously. We giggled non-stop. They wanted all our names, addresses and professions. Here we had great fun. We all sat in a long row and then loudly gave our names and asked whether we should spell them and then proceeded to do so. Debbie Bradshaw (Gardens branch)

said she was a biochemist by profession. Then she also asked if they knew how to spell it and she spelt it without their answering. Again, all sniggered unceasingly. This irritated the policemen tremendously. Another challenge for the police was that we were a non-racial crowd, which meant we had to be placed in different cells according to race. They may not have had enough cells. Our chuckling increased. The perplexed police released us in their frustration.

'MPs out' campaign

*Ukuhamba Kukubona*⁴⁴

In the period immediately after the 1976 Soweto Uprising there were many tensions between the various political movements. This really increased as we approached the 1980s, and especially after 1985 and later with the formation of the mass democratic movement. There we were, secret members of the ANC working legally as the United Democratic Front (UDF), which had been launched in Mitchell's Plain in August 1983. On the same day, the South African Congress on Sports (SACOS) was launched in Hanover Park under the banner 'No normal sport in an abnormal society'. Other organisations that played a prominent role at the time were the banned Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), as well as the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the New Unity Movement (NUM). Another important political grouping in our communities was, of course, those we called 'puppets' of the apartheid government, like the Coloured Labour Party that participated in Tricameral Parliament. The UDF was formed to counter this Tricameral Parliament, and to unite the diverse opponents to apartheid.

The Tricameral Parliament, and those who chose to participate, divided friends and families. Some of our very eloquent early anti-apartheid comrades, like Carter Ebrahim (former teacher, very eloquent and articulate) from Walmer Estate, shocked all of us when he joined the Labour Party. A congregational minister of religion and family friend, the Reverend Andrew Julies, also joined the party. This gave rise to quite a bit of tension, and many people broke ties with them. I am not sure if i would have greeted them if i had seen them then. Many of us just moved in different circles and never encountered them. The fact that they were prepared to be part of a 'coloureds-only' structure and that the tricameral structure (whites, Indians and coloureds) left out the

majority of South Africans and made them foreigners in their land of birth was unforgivable and criminal to us. Surely it was sheer political and financial opportunism because those who were participating as leaders were earning huge salaries and getting perks from the apartheid government; they deserved to be called ‘collaborators’.

The tension that existed at the time was not only between anti-apartheid activists and collaborators, but also within the progressive movements, that is, between members of broad anti-apartheid coalitions such as the UDF and the National Forum. The Salt River, Woodstock and Walmer Estate civic organisation was affiliated to the New Unity Movement and/or the Cape Action League. We in the Woodstock branch of the United Women’s Congress (UWCO) were affiliated to the UDF, a popular front supporting the ANC. Nevertheless, there were times when we jointly participated in campaigns.

One instance of this occurred when the tricameral government indicated that it was planning to build houses for the coloured MPs in our area. Apparently, this was going to cost millions – about R24 million for six houses. In the light of the immense poverty in South Africa and that these MPs did not have the mandate of the majority in South Africa, we argued that this was illegitimate and we did not want them in our area. We formed a coalition to engage in what we called the ‘MPs Out’ campaign through which all the bodies of the areas were united, including the sports structures that were affiliated to SACOS. Another community issue that led to collaboration was the practice among some middle-class families in the area of sending their children to ‘private’ white or Model-C schools, as these were termed.

The challenges of working with organisations that had ideological differences meant that work was protracted in diverse ways. There were many debates on strategy and tactics, although I think that occasionally they were petty differences. One of the examples of a protracted debate is illustrated by an occasion during which we were drafting a pamphlet. According to one of our members, JS, who was on the committee drafting the pamphlet, they spent three hours just deciding whether the slogan at the bottom of the pamphlet should be ‘Forward to People’s Power’ or ‘Forward to All People’s Power’ (or something like that).

During the ‘MPs Out’ campaign, we also expressed solidarity with the plight of political prisoners. In our demand for their release, one of the symbolic actions we took was to place lit candles on our window sills at home between 8 and 9pm on certain nights. I do not recall for how

long this campaign was carried out. But what we as a group of UDF-affiliated organisations, including District 6 Youth, decided, was to take a drive through our areas to see how much support the campaign had. We were pleased that many households heeded the call for solidarity action. But it was also a shock to us that one of the leading members of our new political alliance did not have a candle on his window sill. It was a very big corner house and we drove around several times to check, but there was no candle. We were very disappointed and we were then reminded of our critique of this political formation: that they were just armchair politicians – a lot of political education and verbal banter but no action.

It became clear during the various states of emergency that the leadership of some of the progressive organisations was reticent to participate in more militant activities. In some instances, people resigned from organisations that they considered to be avoiding relevant political action. What these organisations excelled in was to have regular political education classes for their membership. This concerned a member of one such organisation. According to him: ‘There we were having a workshop on “Nicaragua and the challenges for the Ortega government” while Thornton Road [Athlone] was burning.’

We travelled in two cars, both Mazdas (average teacher’s car during that period), during our drive through the area to check candles, one belonging to a District 6 Youth member, Tasneem, and the other belonging to UWCO. After a while we noticed that a police van was following us. We had a lit candle in our car. It was our symbol of solidarity, but also an act of defiance while we were checking the extent of solidarity with the campaign in the community. We knew we were doing nothing illegal. During the state of emergency, I had experiences that were quite ambivalent. I had tendencies of bravado but also fragments of fear. The police were to be feared with their draconian state of emergency powers.

We may have been about ten people altogether, but travelling in two cars so that we did not constitute an ‘illegal gathering’. One of the emergency regulations was that more than ten people gathering together constituted an illegal gathering. We initially thought that the police van being in the area was coincidental. We took elaborate turns and detours to check whether they were indeed following us. Subsequently, it was confirmed: yes, the police van was following us. When we turned into the very wide Grandvue Road in Walmer Estate the police overtook us

and stopped across the road, blocking us from going any further. We dutifully stopped.

Two coloured⁴⁵ policemen alighted from their van and so did we. I think it was with a combination of apprehension and boldness. The screeching of the police van breaking boisterously across the road had attracted people's attention. Hence people came out onto their stoeps to witness the event. The police tried to threaten us with arrest but we had all done the 'Know your rights' workshop. We knew they had to charge us first. They mumbled something about the lit candles in the cars and we vociferously informed them that it was not illegal. A shouting match ensued: we knew our rights and the policemen were not very articulate in English. However, one policeman was more confrontational while the second policeman hovered in the background.

With the growing crowds and occasional cheering and applauding by the neighbours, we were defiant and drunk with bravado. The repartee increased and Zurayah Abass accused the police as coloureds of allowing themselves to be abused. She added that they were doing the dirty work of their white apartheid bosses. When she repeated the word 'stupid', the one policeman retorted that he had matriculated and was not stupid. We all then shouted that that was 'gutter education' that does not encourage critical thinking. Zurayah then apparently said something about 'f... stupid!' This made the policeman see red. He immediately threatened to arrest her for swearing and insulting an officer of the law. He then started pushing her towards the open police van door. At this stage I jumped onto his back, pulling him away from her. He then turned to arrest me for 'assaulting an officer of the law'. The cheering and applauding from the crowd were now rapturously loud. The two enemy camps glared at each other, momentarily indecisive. Silence.

The pregnant pause was broken by the second, quieter policeman, who whispered, 'Laat hulle gaan, man' (Let them go).⁴⁶

As they walked towards their van and drove off, the people of Grandvue Road applauded enthusiastically.

During this period there were also school boycotts taking place in protest against the 1985 partial state of emergency and police brutality towards students. UWCO member Lynne Brown was accused by the principal at the school where she taught, Joseph 'Stalin' Marais at Salt River High School, of single-handedly initiating the school boycotts and was threatened with dismissal. I recall the front page of the radical *South* newspaper at that time, in which principal Marais was quoted

regarding Lynne's leadership of the boycotts. At the time, there were protests and anti-apartheid activities in virtually every significant sector of society. Lynne would probably dispute the fact that she single-handedly initiated the school boycott. 'MPs Out' was just one of the many community actions taking place in Cape Town at the time. It was also the same time that there were massive arrests of people, including school children. The stories surrounding the children were varied: from kids going to the shop and being a spectator to some or other uprising or protest and then getting arrested with everyone else – children as young as nine and ten. In retrospect, this surely was illegal.

Cradock

Imagine 18 hours travelling on a bus! My butt felt as if i had been given 20 of the worst cane strokes by Mr Felix at St John's Primary School. We were on our way to Cradock for the funeral of the Cradock Four on 20 July 1985.⁴⁷ The Western Cape UDF organised three buses to take us to the funeral. Each of us had to pay a nominal amount for a place. I recall the really very long drive to Cradock. There was no stopping of the buses at Beaufort West, as had been the case in 1956 en route to the women's march in Pretoria. I am reminded of Amy Thornton relating her Beaufort West experience. She explained that on that trip, the buses were stopped by the police. She was the only white woman on the bus and this was of a great deal of interest, curiosity and disgust to the white policemen who arrested them all. The police could also not understand why they all wanted to be in the same cell.

I suppose the UDF could not afford a luxury bus, the discomfort making the drive seem even longer. What i remember most vividly was how sore my body was, the hard seats and long hours. And the exuberant singing and the bus shaking from the vigorous toyi-toyiing⁴⁸ by some:

Asim'bonang a
Asim'bonang 'u Mandela Thina
Laph'ekhona
Laph'ehleli Khona
Laph'ehleli Khona
Hey wena
Hey wena Nawe
Siyofika nini la'siyakhona

We have not seen him
 We have not seen Mandela
 In the place where he is
 In the place where he is kept
 Hey you, hey you as well

When will we arrive at our destination? The bus shook even more when toyi-toyiing and singing proceeded into *Malibongwe igamalama Khosi Khasi!*,⁴⁹ celebrating the power and resoluteness of the women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956 to state they did not want passes instituted for women and an end to passes in general.

We arrived just in time for the funeral. There were buses and people from all over South Africa. I do not know whether we had just planned badly or expected to buy food when we arrived in Cradock, but at that time none of us on the bus had any food left. I assume people just thought we could buy food anywhere. As we drove into Cradock there was not a single shop open. The funeral took over all activities. All spaza shops were also closed in the township. But hunger was not a concern. The atmosphere was pulsating. The red, black and yellow UDF colours were prominent, but what was more impressive were the numerous green, black and gold ANC flags. People blatantly, proudly and defiantly wore ANC t-shirts: the ANC had been unbanned by the people.

There are hills surrounding the Cradock township of Lingelihle. As you looked up to the surrounding hills, what was so stark was the silhouette of the police in casspirs and all sorts of repressive-looking machines and cars – and maybe hundreds of soldiers, stock still, immovable, just staring down at this jubilant, energetic, singing, dancing and toyi-toyiing crowd. I remember the brilliant scorching sun against the sky contrasting with this black, serious, stationary toy army.

I had never toyi-toyed that long and so far in my life. We literally toyi-toyed from the hall to the graveyard. Of course, i may have been tired; i was never quite the athletic type. In 1967 i was reserve for both the relay and for shotput. I played a bit of netball but was shooter, which did not require too much mobility. From hockey i do recollect many blue marks on my legs. But that day in Lingelihle the sheer adrenalin of the power of the pulsating crowd, the indulgence of loudly and defiantly singing ANC songs, of solidarity with these brave people of Lingelihle

propelled me into the most vigorous and vibrant toyi-toyiing of my life, second only to toyi-toyiing in the wet winter Wynberg police cells to get warm in order to sleep during solitary confinement.

We were in time to hear the impressive Victoria Mxenge articulating that the murder of the Cradock Four was ‘a dastardly act of cowardice’ – truly, a woman worthy of that victorious name: an elegant and brave woman who was also a smart lawyer. Her lawyer husband Griffiths and she were both assassinated by the apartheid machinery.⁵⁰ Other equally inspiring speakers were Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Dr Allan Boesak. Boesak recounts the invigorating atmosphere as follows:

We could see the dust rising as the comrades danced and toyi-toyied. The anger was palpable, a living, breathing thing. As I entered, a cheer went up and I was lifted shoulder high and carried into the stadium. But here’s the thing: next to me was this white man, not known to many. But they lifted him up as well, showed him to the crowd and proclaimed him loved and accepted. In the midst of all that pain and anger. They may have been blinded by tears, but not by hatred. It was almost as if they knew what I was going to say. In lifting Beyers [Naude] on their shoulder, they lifted up their hope that white South Africa might yet listen and understand the things that make for peace. They held him up for all the world to see that they understood the difference between him and the security policemen who murdered their leaders, the politicians who gave them their orders and the whites who simply did not care. I drew such strength from amazing moments like these. (Boesak 2009: 171)

We all drew strength from the power of the people of Cradock that day. However, some of the defiant feelings conjured up by that glorious celebration were tinged with the sadness of the tragic murder of our four comrades. That day there surely was the unstoppable march of the revolution: *El Pueblo unido jamás será vencido* (a people united will never be defeated). Despite having minimal sleep on a bumpy drive all night, renewed energy and commitment to the political struggle flowed in my veins. It was electric and we could not escape the Cradock Four spark that ignited everyone there.

After hours of singing, dancing and toyi-toyiing enhanced by inspirational speeches, the thousands were to be fed. Our Western Cape group lingered around, surveying the logistics and challenges of the meal to come. We realised that this process would take hours and many people came from further than us and may be more in need of food. We decided to return to Cape Town with hungry bellies. The fire of the funeral passion filled the bus and our bellies.

In the Eastern Cape, a consumer boycott had already started, that is, the boycotting of all white-owned shops. One of the central messages of the funeral orators was to show the government our solidarity and the extent of our purchasing power. A national consumer boycott of all white businesses was to be instituted.

We could have been without food and water for more than 15 hours by then. Our first stop was in Beaufort West main road outside a shop. A white man, the presumed owner, stood outside. He glowed with pleasure at the three full buses stopping outside his shop. As people alighted and headed straight for the shop, i shouted, ‘Comrades, what about the consumer boycott?’

It was magical seeing scores of people stop immediately and make a u-turn in silence. There was a tap nearby and the majority went to drink water. The puzzled and disappointed look on the shopkeeper’s face was unforgettable!

Consumer boycott

‘O lala, het dji gehoo? [Did you hear?] In Mitchell’s Plain this woman came home with a Pick ’n Pay bag with shopping. The community forced her to eat the whole raw chicken! She apparently died later that day.’

‘But did you hear the one about the man who had to drink a whole bottle of fish oil, né?’

‘Yes, I heard that man was from Manenberg.’

These and other stories about the controversial ‘enforced’ consumer boycotts (according to some) were prolific on the Cape Flats. In all of these rumours, the ‘militant and cruel radical youth’ supposedly played a key role in enforcing this boycott. In certain cases, so the stories went, some of these people had died. Throughout this period at public and house meetings where i spoke, i would listen to these stories. I would then enquire politely who these people were, from which suburb, when they had died or got ill and what their names were. I have never had

the satisfaction of ever getting a single name. Hence, we doubted the authenticity of these stories.

In 1985, in the Western Cape and many other places, a black Christmas was commemorated in solidarity with the suffering of millions in our country. There was no painting of the houses or new or washed curtains and excessive feasting and drinking. It was a sober Christmas in keeping with the authentic message of the Christ feast.

1985 state of emergency in the Western Cape

Lynne and i were baby-sitting at Colleen's home in Observatory. It was a Friday night. The state of emergency had been declared in other parts of South Africa but not in the Western Cape at that stage. I had heard that at that time many youths from other movements joined the United Democratic Front (UDF) and related structures. The protests in the Cape increased and this area was really becoming 'ungovernable', what with the Trojan Horse⁵¹ incident in Thornton Road and the Pollsmoor march starting at Hewat College of Education. The march was initially planned to start at the Athlone stadium, but when comrades arrived there, the entire place had been cordoned off with barbed wire and police. Someone then proposed Hewat as an alternative.

How the following events actually unfolded is vague. What i recall was that BT (Beatie Hofmeyr) at that time was working either as a journalist or in some way linked to media internationally. She informed Colleen, who in turn told us, that at midnight that night, a state of emergency would be declared in the Western Cape. The security police (also known as the Security Branch, or SB) had in the past often popped in at our house in Grant Street, Observatory, searching for Miranda Mquanazi and Zou Kota. Of course, Zou and Miranda would never use fellow activists' homes as a 'safe home'. Perhaps it was part of the intimidatory tactics of the SB to search our home – just a subtle message that they 'know about us'.

On 25 October 1985, the state of emergency was extended to the Western Cape. This was a few months after the state of emergency had been declared in other areas like the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region (Gauteng) and the Eastern Cape on 20 July 1985. According to the Newspaper and Imprint Act 63 of 1971, there could be a ban of newspapers; hence the *Rand Daily Mail* was shut down. Police had sweeping powers and the absolute power to detain persons

without a warrant and without the prospect of appeal or representation. These powers were enforced under the Internal Security Act 74 of 1982. This meant that the apartheid state constitutionally legitimated the use of excessive force in order to apprehend ‘questionable’ and ‘security-threatening’ targets.

The minute we heard the news of an imminent state of emergency, we then rushed to our homes, packed a few necessary clothes, teaching materials and other essentials. We went to stay in my family’s Maitland house, which fortunately had been vacated. En route we collected Zurayah Abass in Salt River, who was part of our Woodstock UDF area committee. The police also went to her family house in the past. We were really scared. We had all had brief skirmishes with the police in the past, but this was the first time they had the draconian powers under the state of emergency. We did not know what lay ahead for us. Our family house in Maitland was a new safe house we occasionally used for meeting. Comrades from the underground brought their children along as they had nowhere to go.

*Ring a ring a rosy
Pockets full of posies
Hush now, Hush now
We all fall down!
Eiertjie gelê
Opstaan!*

Three-tins/drie blikkies/three toti

*upuca
ndize ndize
ugqaphu, umama, utata⁵²
No silly childish ditties for them
No fun frolicking
Bok bok, waar is jou hok, Bok?*

I do not ask any questions.

Either their parents or guardians have been detained, killed or had left the country?

The two of them have been dropped here
at this temporarily ‘safe house’.

They stare at me with wide curious eyes
darting across the room as i move
They do not say a word
but watch me
while i
in my simplistic isiXhosa try to make them feel at home.
But how can two children of about five and seven years old feel 'at
home' in a stranger's home?

They do not even speak to each other at all
Silence encloses them
As if to render themselves invisible – ensuring them safety from harm
Where have they come from?
What have they seen?
What have they experienced?

They do not know where their parents are or what has happened to
them.

And here they sit in this alien home,
not sure why they are here,
how long they will be here
or where they will be taken to...
elsewhere?
or to remain here?

And neither do i...
I just have the instruction –
'Please look after them until some plan has been devised.'
'We've lost their parents.'
No i do not know what that means.

I do not ask any questions.
Too much information is a security risk
In the event of my being detained
I will not have anything to tell the Security Police under torture.

The children stare...
Eyes big, wild
uneasy... curious eyes contrasting with their shy quiet bodies

Did i give them toys to play with?
colouring books to colour in?

They stare...
a dribble of saliva slavers down the corner of the mouth of the
younger child...

It is only later when i give them some food that they relax.
Was that a slight smile that i saw...?
Yet their eyes remain probing with perplexity,
frowned forehead in search of answers
incomprehension
their big silent eyes eagerly search my every move
as if there are answers in my actions

Time passes...
They in their insecurity, fear, curiosity and ill at ease
and i like a faithful comrade obey without questions.
We become comfortable in our cocoon of silence
Maybe even contentment on their part
as
Time passes...

My memory is blurred
Or was it a deliberate mechanism not to remember in case i got
detained?

Too much knowledge is a security risk
How long were they with me?
Where did they sleep?
What are their names?

Langa police station
is the next assignment
Was i anxious?

What did i have to say?
How did i prepare?
Walking deliberately into the enemies' territory with confident
composure and a polite smile

Pretending all was well
while inside me was hell.
Anxiety and fear gripped me.
Again the decades obscure accuracy
Time mystifies the mission.

Was i as the middle-class 'madam' presenting an affidavit on behalf
of my maid?

The children required ID documents.
Time passes...

The children are whisked away
as suddenly as they were brought
no announcements
no explanations
My mission has been accomplished
A new task awaits another
in some other city?
Another country?
While the children
remain big eyed,
bewildered, puzzled, fearful and insecure?

How did they travel?
Remain in South Africa or
Zambia, Botswana, Tanzania?
Did they attend Solomon Mahlangu College?
Meet their parents in a happy reunion?

They are adults now
Maybe confidently fulfilling their roles in the new South Africa?
Have they healed after their unhealthy childhood?
They deserve happiness
rewarding their fractured fearful childhood

After a while
There was a sort of silent intimacy and comfort
at my home
Do they remember?

Barbed wire at the Strand beach

'All God's beaches for all God's people.' This was what the bumper sticker stated which was used as part of the campaign to take our rightful place in the country of our birth. A sort of mini defiance campaign that imitated the 1950s Defiance Campaign initiated by the ANC took place in Cape Town immediately after the state of emergency had been extended to the city in 1985. We would go to certain 'whites-only' places en masse and just enjoy ourselves. One such outing was to the whites-only Strand beach – a beautiful stretch of long white beach. I recall there were buses arranged to transport people to the beach. I cannot remember why we did not join the group travelling by bus, but Lynne and I ended up going to the Strand in the little yellow Mazda. When we arrived at the start of the Strand beach area, we just saw masses of police. Further on there were rolls of frightening barbed wire cordoning off the beach. Police were marching along the perimeters of the beach with their big Alsatian dogs. We then nonchalantly went to the beach. The police stopped us. Of course, we demanded to know why. The police informed us that there were 'routine exercises' taking place and we were not allowed there. Also, there was no sign of the many buses and thousands of people that we had expected to descend on the beach. Yes, just like we too had people 'inside the enemy's camps' to give us news, the police too had their *impimpis* (spies) inside their ranks who had probably informed on our plans. Like Mark Behr, for example... what a radical young person he pretended to be while a student at Stellenbosch University! I remember when I visited the campus as the UDF speaker for some project, he told me how difficult it was to organise on that campus. I really felt sorry for the 'committed activist within this right-wing campus.' Years later while at a literary conference on Robben Island, he confessed to being a police spy.

First arrest – 1986

Enthusiastic and energetic

our first blitz

A field of Namaqua daisy yellow after the August rains

all 600 of us

in our brand new yellow UDF t-shirts

excited apprehensive

pioneers in this Ravensmead⁵³ field
scattered were a few brave dots of the outlawed black, green and
gold.⁵⁴

It was a celebratory Sunday morning
the bright spring sun could not outdo our sparkling spirits
we were on a mission
to bring down apartheid
and numbers gave power.
There we were from all parts of the Cape
Colours, creeds, classes...
All ages... a preview of the new South Africa to come.
Firstly the briefing:
How we approach people – Introduce ourselves,
politely explain our mission
We were collecting signatures for the UDF's
Million-signature campaign
against apartheid
What it is and why
Then the addition
After seeing some UCT male students with their hippy images:
No creased clothes and uncombed hair –
This does not go down well with working classes

Equipped with phone numbers of lawyers on standby
Recapping minimal rights under the state of emergency
Each team assigned to certain streets
Persons in origin diverse but united in struggle for sure
all in Ravensmead to do UDF work door to door.

Serious in our task, diligent in duty
we battled with some unfriendly belligerent and surly cold doors
Grateful for the next receptive door and welcoming smiles
This experience was as new to them as to us.
Later after ten signatures relaxed and more self-assured
I knocked politely and asked whether I could explain
the UDF million-signature campaign.
Newly found confidence obscured for me the sneer
My polite rehearsed sentence... shattered

As the door is slammed shut
Silenced by the hostile policeman.
I stood stock-still
Numbed by the unfriendly reception.
I staggered slowly towards the gate
Desperately straining to regain my lost poise.
My nervous giggling punctuated my explanation
to the rest of my street team.

My sharing was abruptly seized
by the screeching tyres of police vans
converging on us.
Like unwilling cattle to the slaughter
we were pushed and prodded into the back of the vans.

I move dreamlike
I see this on TV, in movies, read about it
it does not happen to respectable, law-abiding citizens like us –
the van is bleak
we sit on cold metal floors
packed sardine-squashed
all nervous
no one says a word
uneasy glances exchanged
Everyone with his or her own thoughts
first time in the back of the police van
I feel dazed
emotionless
not fear
too shocked
with the novelty of claustrophobic police van
Not knowing what to expect
and later, as an afterthought:
What if my students see me?
my mother sees me?

The drive to the police station
jolt us
as we fall from side to side

caused by
staccato speeding
and sporadic breaking
we are knocked slide bumped bruised
Occasionally bodies buffer callous metal

Momentarily Parow⁵⁵ police are caught off guard
In retrospect i think how they must have debated
What to do with this motley few
A first for them and first for us
Blatant ungovernability
Deliberately and unashamedly challenging the state
20 years of no methodical political door to door
And now this!

Promptly agitating the community.

There are not enough cells for this disparate group –
Separate Amenities Act to be applied here as well:
‘All prisoners should be held separately according to their race
and sex...’

UDF executive member Graham Bloch
speaks on behalf of us:
‘What is the charge against us?’
No response.

I recall from the ‘Know your rights’ workshop, we have some rights.
According to Section 50: State of Emergency
We are allowed to make one phone call.
‘I would like to make a phone call, please,’ i politely assert.
The policeman prances in all his patriarchal power...
‘There is rules, you know.’

In my frustration i explore my limited power
Retorting:
‘You mean, there ARE rules.’
I bend adroitly as he rushes towards me with harsh hand
Missing me as he slaps the hostile air.

In our insecurity
we also see their insecurity in conferring what to do.

Parow police usually enjoy a sleepy Sunday afternoon shift
Today rowdy agitators disrupt their peace.
It was best to release them
considering a charge could not be articulated
and cells too few for accommodation.

Our comrades soon collected us.
As we entered the Ravensmead hall heroes, wild cheers welcomed
us –
After our encounter we were a bit shaken and dishevelled
but relieved!

Arrested again

‘Morning
could i give you a pamphlet?
It is about the state of emergency and our powers as people.’

‘No? Ok then. You have a good day.’

‘Thanks, madam

Thanks, sir.’

‘Yes, sir. It tells you all about the draconian police powers and the
state of emergency

And explores our options as ordinary people.’

This may have been the second or third time i was arrested.
But it was the first occasion that i was arrested alone.
It feels far more intimidating – compared to that very first time – yes
it was scary but as we were quite a few – maybe 15, 20?
There was power in numbers. Now alone

...standing in the police office
at Salt River railway station and thinking:
‘Shit i have to teach in one hour’s time.
What will happen?
How long will they detain me?

How long can they detain me?
I do not know the regulations;
the powers of railway police.
They claim they have extra and other powers.
Boastingly they proclaim:
*'They could arrest me for trespassing.
Railway property is private property.'*
I was not within my rights to distribute pamphlets.

*Where was i standing when they arrested me?
Was i standing on railway property?
What are the parameters of railway property?
The pavements next to the train station or the road...?*

Arrested alone
Threatening, frightening, insecure –
Compared to that very first time
There was safety and security in numbers...

I still see their khaki uniforms
their big bodies hovering over me,
I feel like a helpless abused child
Frail, powerless
Their shouting thumps me painfully
I cringe and become even smaller...
More vulnerable

Momentarily i think of my students
my standing confidently in front of the class

The policemen's shouts, threats and insults deafen me.

I experience the full intersectionalities of Afrikaner white male power.
And the little black girl cringes and cowers so that the floor can
protect her.

I pray, *'Please let me not be detained longer... i need to teach this morning.'*

Did i apologise? Plead ignorance of laws
Appeal to their egos

Promise never to repeat it?
Empty mind

A few hours later
In the classroom
Teaching with tenacity, passion
Our children are our jewels!
The committed teacher always tries her best
Teaching effectively is part of liberation struggle
No matter what!

Above-ground work

It was December 1983. Thandi Rangu, ANC rep in Sweden, invited me to represent the ANC Women's Section at various levels in Belgium. They sent a ticket that i had to pick up at the Wynberg Travel Agency. As it was December, i decided to couple the trip with a holiday in the Netherlands where i had studied. My friends in Holland, Ireen du Bel and Leontine Bijleveldt, both women activists in their various fields in the anti-apartheid and Dutch women's movements, were excited that i was visiting them. They also invited Lynne Brown to accompany me. At that stage Lynne was the secretary of UWO. Ireen also proposed that we could then address the master's students in Women and Development at my alma mater, the Institute of Social Studies, where i first met Ireen in 1980.

Lynne and i were met at Brussels station by Godfrey Motsepe, ANC chief representative to the European Common Market, the precursor to the European Union (EU). Because we were going on holiday our baggage was rather large. When Godfrey saw our baggage, he was somewhat shocked. He exclaimed that we had to learn to travel like revolutionaries. Up to today i still think of his words as i try to minimise my baggage but have still not succeeded in learning how to 'travel like a revolutionary'. Later when we met comrade Thandi she was very angry. She saw Lynne's presence as a security threat. I had had no means of communicating with her prior to our journey to inform her that Lynne was accompanying me. In all my communications with comrades in Europe, Africa and elsewhere abroad, it was always a one-sided affair. I got contacted, and i had no means of contacting them. This created some tension in the group. Even though i explained to Thandi about Lynne's

political involvement, she remained angry. Lynne was not allowed to accompany us to the speaking engagements.

Depending on which structures i addressed, different names were used to introduce me. For official meetings with the European Economic Market and the Belgium government, my real names were used. My speeches and other engagements all had the same objective. I was to focus on the position of women and children, their plight under the repressive conditions of apartheid South Africa, but also on their involvement in the struggle against apartheid. For me, and of course the ANC in general, it was important to highlight to the Europeans, other dignitaries and representatives of various corporations, NGOs and governments that as much as the majority of black people were oppressed and victims in South Africa, there was agency on their part and that we were survivors working towards our own liberation.

I also had to emphasise to what extent the ANC had a presence and was supported in South Africa. The ANC had representatives at all levels, even within the security forces of the enemy⁵⁶ camp like the police. It was also crucial to illustrate the level of organisation, means of mobilisation, political education and, of course, creative ways of celebrating the ANC and popularising it under repressive conditions, and how the ANC was also capable of recruiting new members for its underground. I highlighted the various ways in which the ANC was challenging the apartheid regime. I had to emphasise how, in our daily struggles and lives, we as ANC members within South Africa (as was the case with those ANC members living in exile) were preparing to be the government in waiting. Education, training and the development of skills were part of an overall strategy.

The speeches and questions that followed in all the engagements i had went off very well. As i was involved at many levels in a number of organisations active inside the country, it was easy to respond to the numerous and diverse questions and to convince the audiences of the effectiveness of the women's, education and liberation struggles. I emphasised how the political analysis we engaged in led us to conclude that the problems that we had to overcome, apart from apartheid and poverty, included ending the oppression of women and children. At that stage in my life, dismantling patriarchy was part of my feminist ideal. However, in the organisation we did not use the word 'patriarchy' as an analytical tool at the time; so i used the phrase 'women's oppression'. Within feminist structures, however, as an individual i used the term

'patriarchy'. It was only much later (1990) that the mass democratic movement began to use the word 'patriarchy'.

My first speaking engagement was the European Economic Community (EEC, precursor to the European Union). My speech focused on a summary of the conditions of women and children at all levels, including the rural areas and the bantustans. But the main focus was on women's agency and the community structures we were building. Questions focused on education options for black people in general, and women in particular, land, water and agriculture in rural areas and the possibility of positive utilisation of the bantustans, and issues on health and early childhood education. My official duties included addressing the general meeting of the European Economic Market – over 100 men dressed in black suits and ties. I presented the guest keynote speech.

I then had individual consultations with representatives of West Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, France and Belgium. The questions varied from anti-apartheid support from the Netherlands to exploring strategic cultural and artistic cooperation with France and Italy. Luxembourg representatives were interested in how i had acquired formal education considering that i was oppressed. The questions ranged from detailed and complex to really mundane, depending on how *au fait* the reps were with the South African condition.

After the official duties at the European Economic Community were completed, we focused on civil society.

It was obvious that the ANC structures were very well organised in Belgium. We addressed community organisations, trade unions and religious and other structures throughout the country. This entailed extensive travel from the northern Flemish-speaking Brugge to the Walloons French-speaking south. What i learnt about Belgian society on this trip was insightful. It led to me gaining a better understanding of their 'divide and rule' strategy in the Congo and the segregation of Rwandan society, and the forced carrying of identity cards similar to the South African *dompas*⁵⁷ because of Belgium's own segregated reality. I would address Catholic trade unions and other structures separately from Protestant ones. I had to meet the French/Walloons-speaking trade unions separately from the Flemish-speaking ones. In other words, not only were Belgians segregated along language barriers, but also along religious lines: Catholic and Protestant.

What our audiences found illuminating was how we worked at the various levels and how we managed to incorporate new non-racial branches

and recruits from all race groups despite the rigid apartheid laws. We explained how, as much as we, as the United Women's Organisation and the newly established United Democratic Front,⁵⁸ were legal organisations, our policies distinctly and unequivocally demanded the unbanning of the people's organisations, the ANC, PAC and the SACP. We informed them that our membership included people who openly supported the ANC. I was able to describe to our audiences how fascinating it was to see the changes in grassroots people's perceptions of our day-to-day working. The apartheid regime's dogma in demonising the ANC as the devil incarnate, anti-Christ communists, evil, cruel and everything negative only partially succeeded in shaping the views of the movement among mainly some religious South Africans. However, our work in these legal above-ground structures led people, through a process in which we drew from their own material reality and that of others, to the realisation of the inhumanity of apartheid. In most cases, such people would then openly support the very organisation they had been so opposed to. What I also emphasised was that many of the founding members of UWO such as Mildred Lesia, Dorothy Zihlangu, Mama Malindi (whose husband Zoli was the chief volunteer for the Defiance Campaign in the Western Cape in the 1950s) and Amy Thornton were all active ANC members from the 1950s. Mildred Holo, who led the Women's Front Organisation that merged with UWO in March 1986 to form the United Women's Congress, was also an ANC Women's League member in the 1950s.

The visit to the students at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Den Haag, also led to a vibrant and dynamic exchange of ideas. The students at the ISS were funded by Dutch Development Aid and came mostly from what was then called the Third World. Under 2% of the students at the ISS were from North America and Europe. The Women and Development course was one of the most popular courses among students at the ISS. In the aftermath of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–1985), many countries instituted progressive gender laws and policies; some, perhaps out of genuine concern for marginalised women, whereas others may have been merely pragmatic, knowing that there was extra funding for women-centred projects.

In the Women and Development class we addressed women from a range of countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bangladesh, India, Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Philippines and Thailand. The ISS accepted students who were from country representatives, government officials, NGOs and members of liberation movements. It was hence a fascinating

place with the various debates. The Ethiopian students, for example, challenged the ISS authorities as there was no country such as Eritrea, yet students had been classified as coming from Eritrea. Similarly, there were debates with the Chilean refugees and the representatives of the Chilean government at that stage.

After our presentation, women from various countries shared their understanding of the experiences of women in their own countries. It was the glaring parallels in the experiences of women in all the countries that came under discussion that reaffirmed our belief that exploitation, patriarchy, poverty and the abuse of power by ruling elites were similar globally.

Most of Ireen's friends belonged to the anti-apartheid solidarity movements and Boycott Outspan Actie. We also visited our friend Dith Glasbergen in Zoetermeer and addressed the Zoetermeer Tegen Apartheid structure, of which Dith was a founding member. Through sharing our knowledge of the experiences of the most marginalised South Africans, we contributed to strengthening their resolve to support our struggles. Questions also revolved around the issues of marginalisation of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community (LGB),⁵⁹ rural women and children, women and access to land, finance and education and people with disabilities.

Amsterdam

In about June 1986 i received a telegram from Ireen Dubel. It was a request: because i was working in education and had done a lot of research on education, they wanted to invite me to deliver the keynote address for a conference on women and education in Amsterdam. This was for 9 August 1986, a day when South Africans commemorated the 1956 march to the Union Buildings by women. This was not unusual as i had received several similar invitations in the past.

Before replying, i had to put in a request for unpaid leave to the rector of Hewat College. At that time, Abu Desai was acting rector. After some deliberations on the 'what, wherefore and relevance' of my proposed travels, it was agreed that i could get leave from work. There was minimal information on the length of the paper, which university it would be presented at or other details. I nevertheless thought i should just write the paper as the other details would probably soon be confirmed.

I arrived at Schiphol airport late at night in the week preceding 9 August. I was met by smiling and giggling Ireen and Leontine. I was a bit puzzled by their giggles and then suddenly serious demeanours. They needed to speak to me. If i did not agree to their request, i was welcome to return to South Africa. This, of course, puzzled me even more.

It was en route to Amsterdam that i realised the reason for the lack of information and their sudden sombre bearings. Then the explanation started. There was to be no conference on women and education. They had just used the conference as an excuse as they knew i was involved in education and was a feminist political activist. What was actually happening was that the ANC Women's Section in Europe was commemorating the South African women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria where they demanded no passes for women. This took place on 9 August 1956, and they were hence commemorating the 30th anniversary on 9 August 1986. There was to be a march on that day through the main streets of Amsterdam to the hall where the commemoration would be held. It would be in the form of a rally and i would be the keynote speaker highlighting the situation of women and children in South Africa. This was being coordinated by the ANC Women's Section in collaboration with the women's group of the Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland (AABN; Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement). The AABN was responsible for the flights and hosting of the local South African women activists and coordinating the pre-march and rally activities as well as facilitating the appointments and transport to the various venues. This would include popularising the event, meeting with various institutes, NGOs as well as radio and newspaper interviews.

I did not hesitate for a moment and agreed. It was decided that for all personal interviews i would be introduced as Julia and for the radio and newspaper interviews, as Nosipho. Because of the social welfare system in the Netherlands, some political activists chose to do full-time political work; hence there was support for our activities, such as arranging meetings and providing other logistical support.

I cannot recall all the interviews and NGOs we visited. I do recall though the long drive to the radio station at Hilversum one night. It was decided that the interviewer would ask questions in Dutch but i would respond in Afrikaans. The questions revolved around:

- What is the significance of the women's march 30 years ago for South African women in contemporary South Africa?

- What were the key aims of the march?
- What lessons can be learnt from this march for women today?
- In which ways are conditions for women in South Africa similar or worse than in the 1950s?
- Are conditions for all women in South Africa the same?
- Why do you say that apartheid affects women classified as African in a more negative and exploitative manner?
- Are women of different races working together? How, and can you provide examples?
- What can the role be of outsiders like the Dutch to support South Africans fighting apartheid?
- How do you see the future of South Africa?

The interviews with the various structures addressed similar questions to those above with just various emphases depending on the organisational profile. For church women the role of religion was important and questions were asked around whether the church could play a formative role in ending apartheid and promoting a reconciliatory role. Lesbian⁶⁰ organisations would question the male dominance, hegemonic heterosexism and the invisibility of lesbians in the ANC. Human rights structures questioned how a new democratic government would eradicate poverty and ensure the inclusion of marginalised people like those in remote rural areas and those who are differently abled. One of the conditions of the interviews was that no photographs were to be taken of me. Once again, the programme was demanding, with no or minimal recreation.

On 9 August the march was well attended, and the hall filled to capacity. What struck me was the range of people who attended in terms of age. There were various speakers before me including from the ANC, ANC Women's Section and the AABN. I sat in the audience. After a while there was a bit of a gap in the programme with a rather astounding silence. With a sudden realisation, i made sense of the repeated call: 'Julia from South Africa will now share her experiences from her everyday life and grassroots organisations of which she is part.' I looked up and it was only then that i saw that the people on the podium were looking at me and beckoning me to come on stage. With a cold comprehension i realised that i was the 'Julia' that they were waiting for.

Once on stage with a very attentive audience, i was inspired to relate the experiences of the women with whom i work in the UWCO and

the UDF, the challenges of their lives and struggles as well as aspects of women from the rural areas, workers' and students' lives and their hardships. I explained that the Cape Province where i live is a coloured labour preference area and hence i did not experience as many restrictions in my life and had more privileges than women classified as African. I did not, for example, have to carry a pass and could actually move around fairly freely. Coloured people had more access to jobs in our province and even though housing was a problem, it was better than for people classified as African. At schools, all white children received all books free of charge, coloureds received some free books but the Africans who were the poorest and most exploited had no free education and books. It was the state of emergency⁶¹ and i outlined the draconian power of the police, the indiscriminate and arbitrary arrests and inhumanity of the police towards peaceful protesters. Then there were the deaths of various people including young people from a Cape Town suburb called Athlone, near to where i taught. The manner in which the devious action of the police was executed dubbed it the Trojan Horse massacre.

Thereafter a dynamic exchange of questions and debates followed. Most Dutch were particularly politically aware and there were *solidariteitsgroepe* (solidarity groups) for nearly all countries under siege where there were human rights violations. There was even a group for the mobilisation of ambulances for animals. Hence most of the questions were from informed positions.

Again, most questions dealt with current struggles of people in general and especially women and also women in the rural areas. Many enquired about future scenarios and the ANC's vision for the future. There was the occasional comment about the influence of the communists from the East, but i countered that with a question about why they were undermining us and our own experiences. We do not need communists or any other people from other countries to influence us about what we want and demand in our own country. The final question was: what can we as Dutch do for South Africa? I then responded with what i think was not a very popular answer. I stated that i noted how racism had increased in the Netherlands since i had lived there in 1980. How do we together work towards a non-racist world, in South Africa, the Netherlands and elsewhere in the world, was my answer.

I returned to South Africa a day or two later. As i handed my passport to the passport authorities, i must confess i was a bit nervous. The walk

past the customs officers was not a very comfortable walk. I put on my best Drama 2 from UCT drama school to show how confident i was but with a cuckoo clock of a heart.

Tension in West Germany – June 1987

Just like there were various political movements – the ANC, PAC, AZAPO, NUM, etc. – so too were the supporters and funders of the anti-apartheid or South African solidarity movements in Europe divided ideologically. We were informed that the situation in West Germany was completely polarised between the Anti-Apartheid Bewegung (AAB; Anti-Apartheid Movement supporting the ANC) and the Arbeitskreis (AK; supporting the more Left socialists like the Cape Action League and New Unity Movement). It was for this reason that an invitation was sent to South Africa for two leading women activists to present the structures and highlight the working relationships on the ground in South Africa. The aim was to encourage a more amenable relationship between the two structures in West Germany.

The invitation read something like this: ‘In order to minimise the polarisation between the two structures, Anti-Apartheid Bewegung and the Arbeitskreis [which apparently was hostile], it was decided that two representatives from the structures inside the country be invited to share their experiences of working together internally.’ Hence, the two organisations inside agreed that two women be sent.

I had a good working relationship with Rita Edwards⁶² and Mercia Andrews, two leading feminists in the Left movements. I believe we had a mutually respectful relationship.

I am not sure of how the process was decided, but Rita Edwards, who represented the Cape Action League (CAL), which became the Workers’ Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), and i, who represented the ANC-aligned UDF, were delegated to attend. This was a tour with a very tight budget because it was financed by community organisations. We travelled via Luxair, which meant nearly a day’s travel by coach to Stuttgart, West Germany, from Luxembourg. In most cases it was arranged that we be accommodated at private people’s homes. This was a pleasant arrangement but also taxing in that there were demands on our time. We had a really hectic schedule. We often did three or four speaking engagements per day, which meant the day was really demanding. Then there was still the travelling between the various

venues or occasionally different cities on one day. Most of the time we were in one city for one day and often it meant travelling from one part of the city to another.

It was pleasant living with ordinary activists, so we learnt from them, and i am sure it was reciprocated. We would, for example, arrive home late after a challenging day. Our hosts, if they did not attend the meeting, would be curious about how the developments went. Then we would be compelled to discuss our day with our hosts. They were usually eager to gain insight into the situation in South Africa. This meant long discussions, explanations and occasional heavy political debates into the wee hours of the morning. And then the next morning early appointments. In general, this was a very inspiring experience and one that sharpened and questioned my political analysis but it was frenetic. I also recall there was not a single free day just to unwind or maybe to see other sights of the cities instead of just the insides of offices, meeting rooms, churches and halls.

In terms of the contents of the meetings, we would ask the audience which aspects they wanted us to concentrate on. In most cases the questions and subsequent discussions were polite and seeking clarity. The discussions were vibrant. The audiences were inspired by our input and very eager to ask questions and exchange views. I do think it was not a very common experience for them to be at a meeting having representatives from different organisations. I believe the mission was successful as the AAB and AK seemed to be more tolerant of each other at the meetings.

Because Rita and i were acquaintances and there was a mutual respect for each other's political work and integrity, we really complemented our inputs in terms of content. The emphasis in most cases from the audiences' questions was that of the oppression of especially women in the rural areas, and the informal settlements, suffering of people from apartheid laws and poverty. We were careful to balance our inputs. As much as people were suffering and victims of apartheid, we stressed the agency and creativity of people. Yes, there were children and thousands in prisons, but this also created militant cadres. Rita was critical of her structures as they did not promote a separate women's movement which we in the ANC did. Issues of patriarchy and violence against women were raised by me and i too critiqued our structures for being very patriarchal and paying lip service to our impressive policies around gender and sexuality. I also always stressed that indigenous African

culture also had aspects of patriarchy, countering the argument that colonialism and apartheid created the oppression of women. I am not sure to what extent i divulged the details of cases of violence against women within the democratic movement. I always believed one should be open to self-critique, but this is not always acceptable. Often there are ambivalent feeling about one's organisation: to what extent do we expose the negatives of our structures in public?⁶³

When i lived in Reutlingen and Tübingen (south of Germany) in 1982 for a few months, i spent some time at Tübingen University. There i learnt that South African political leader Neville Alexander had initiated the Marxist party. He has always been held in high esteem in Germany, and hence there was a big following for this socialist movement and the Left in South Africa. Even though in most cases the audiences supported the Left rather than the ANC position, there was also always a cordial and respectful atmosphere.

I do though recall one meeting with a trade union movement in Stuttgart in which the dominant audience was pro-ANC. This was the only time there was a slight tension created between Rita and me. The applause that i received was inappropriately enthusiastic and i felt a bit awkward. As much as i am a loyal ANC member, i believe in dialogue and if we are united in our common end goals/anti-apartheid and working towards a socialist state with no exploitation and capitalism, we should explore means of collaborating.

Apart from the exciting political exchanges of the various meetings, trade unions, church groups, local Arbeitskreis and AAB, the mission to Germany was an exhausting one with no time for ourselves. What also needs to be held in cognisance is that both Rita and i had full-time jobs in Cape Town. We arrived safely at home, excited but really exhausted. Here the customs did not even bother to check on us, where we had been and what we had done in West Germany.

CHAPTER 5

Underground work

Harare 1988

I was asked by my cell leader, Bongani, to go to Harare and take some documents. Again, like with other trips, i created some women's conference where i was to present a paper on education. I think the rector at Hewat College of Education where i lectured English and Drama to teachers in training was ambivalent about these international invitations. Not many Hewat staff were invited to present papers internationally and after all – it was in the teaching of English that i would be talking on... not unrelated to my everyday job. Whenever i took leave, i prepared enough work for the students to be constructively engaged during my absence. This i would inform the rector of and present it to him when i asked permission for unpaid leave. I always tried to be proactive as the rector would inevitably raise issues of outstanding work, upcoming examinations and/or the practice teaching and my task of ensuring the preparedness of the students for these tasks. I think writer and novelist Richard Rive and Jerome van Wyk were some of the other lecturers who also regularly had international appointments. I am not sure about the other staff members. I took special leave which meant i would not get paid.

I was informed by Bongani that my ticket had been bought by comrades in Harare and sent to a local travel agent where i had to collect it. I did not know who i was to meet, what i was carrying, and what the arrangements were once i arrived at Harare airport. I always assumed that the less one knows, the better off one is in case of some problem or if i were to be arrested. Very late one night, before my departure to Harare, another comrade arrived at my house with Bongani. He also gave me

some documents and a small parcel. I have never seen this comrade before and with his beret drawn deep onto his forehead and the fact that it was night, and i had a single lamp on in the corner of the dining room, there was no way in which i could even remotely remember what he looked like. Of course, we were introduced but i did not even bother to remember his name. I knew it would be a *nom de guerre*. Later when i joined the Yengeni trial the jigsaw pieces fell into place: the midnight visitor to my home with Bongani Jonas was Tony Yengeni.

Whenever i had underground work to do internationally, i usually packed formal clothes. I took slacksuits and other smart clothes. Apparently this formal and professional look was one of the reasons why i was chosen to do specific underground work as i did not look like a political activist. I was going for a few days only and had a small case. My reason for travelling to Harare was that i was going to do research into education. I needed to have contacts in Harare. I recall Rudo Gaidswana from my studies at the International Institute of Social Studies, Den Haag, where we did our master's degrees in Development Studies in 1980. We sort of linked up as southern Africans and did the Africa regional seminar course together. I heard that she was at the University of Zimbabwe – so a good person to put on my landing card if required. I telephoned the University of Zimbabwe and enquired about Rudo. Yes, i was told, she was a staff member. I was given her contact details. I was unsuccessful in reaching her. I knew that if i was questioned about my research, i could work out what my research areas were. It had to do with the training of teachers and developing a more Afrocentric curriculum. Also, some gender issues had to feature prominently. I just had to get a title for my paper.

I realised i would not know what to write in my landing card in the space allocated for an address in Harare. I recalled that there was the Meikles Hotel in Harare. I decided that this would be the hotel i mention on my arrival document. While packing, i had to work out where to store the documents and parcel i had to deliver. I realised the role feminine hygiene goods could play. The tiny documents which looked like passport photographs i placed in my sanitary towels.

How does one walk to exude confidence and nonchalance? How do i hold my head? I smiled easily with the airport staff to comfort myself and exchanged a few greetings. I passed through the customs at Jan Smuts Airport, Johannesburg, without any problems. I sat down in the plane with what felt like a heavy weight lifted from me. It was with

gratitude that i smiled at the airways staff as if they were responsible for my safe landing when we arrived in Zimbabwe. At Harare Airport everything was unremarkably sparse. No security problems. There was the customary driver standing in the arrivals' hall with my name on his board. The ornate 'welcome to Zimbabwe' sign across the airport road did not stop my palpitating heart from doubling its pace. I spoke politely to the driver.

We went to a very modest hotel. I was led into a plain ordinary room with nothing exceptional: twin single beds, the customary bedside lamps and wardrobes. Blue patterned bedspreads with a striped pattern that i can still visualise. A tall man was standing at the window, his back towards me. He turned around when i entered the room. I instantly recognised him. It was Chris Hani. I was overwhelmed. We talked about general introductory things; how the journey was. My heart was beating wildly. I took slow breaths to prevent myself from enthusing unsophisticatedly. I tried to keep my voice from not reaching top decibels and i struggled to contain the excitement in meeting this legend. I was really amazed at meeting him. I had read, heard, discussed, learnt so much about this man whom i admired immensely. And he was standing in front of me. In my efforts to appear nonchalant, i started crying. I stammered an apology. Diverse emotions flowed through me. The excitement of meeting Chris Hani, the nervousness and tensions of the previous weeks in preparation for this journey, the anguish as i walked through the South African customs, the two-hour plane journey full of anxiety, arriving at Harare and responding to the questions: why i am here and what for? I was suddenly emotionally depleted, tired, but elated. And i continued sobbing. Here i was: a cadre of the underground movement in the Cape, a woman leader both underground and above ground, a lecturer and international guest speaker on women and children under apartheid in diverse countries. And i was snivelling in the presence of comrade Chris. We exchanged the usual pleasantries. He then asked for an update on the situation in general in the Western Cape. I outlined the activities of UWCO, new structures, members, activities, and the situation in general in the Western Cape. Gosh, i did not think of updating myself on the new branches. I was not on the executive at that time, but was coordinating the education and training subcommittees, as well as the choir – trying hard to make it representative of the organisation and not just township based: for a start Madeleine Fullard (Observatory UWCO), Avril Hoepner (Claremont UWCO) and

i joined. I desperately tried to recall new events. There was always so much happening simultaneously. I knew that there was a new branch next to KTC, which former executive member of UWCO and former Deputy Minister of Housing Nomatyala Hanganana had established. I could not think of the name of our latest branch next to KTC, except that it was something like Macinedane. I was so embarrassed that i could not pronounce the name of the branch and got ashamed that my isiXhosa was not better. Over the years it has not improved.

When i spoke isiXhosa in UWCO meetings, members just switched to English. They obviously did not like my struggling like that. But i explained that that is the only way i could learn isiXhosa. Because Macinedane was new and the majority of residents were freshly from the rural areas, i recalled the monthly reports from this branch at UWCO council meetings on Sunday mornings. I shared this with comrade Chris. Those areas developed rural and tribal tendencies. The women in the branch complained to us that they could not meet freely. They first had to get permission from the elderly men. This was shocking to me considering it was the women who had established the place. It was like what happened in Crossroads. Again, it was women who had started it.⁶⁴ When outsiders or researchers wanted to interact with people, they wanted to speak to the leaders. It was then that some men and traditional leaders immediately took centre stage as leaders. A UWCO leadership delegation went to speak to the male leaders of this area.

From the questions comrade Chris asked, i realised he wanted to assess progress on the development of the building of mass mobilisation and establishment of the mass democratic movement. While i wrote the report, i realised how exhausted i was. I wished i had been better prepared to provide a comprehensive report. I also realised the stress and the consciousness of what i had been going through. I was experiencing, like so many of my comrades, total exhaustion. We were all working at various levels. Most of us had demanding full-time jobs. As a lecturer it was my aim to always be very well prepared for my lectures, to inspire the students to become critical beings and dedicated teachers. Being in education was not just a job but a vocation. We had to prepare the next generation to be critical beings, to be able to assess what the truth is when they, for example, encounter the media; how they could contribute to a better society, not just for themselves but for the greater good in South Africa. Through my teaching activities⁶⁵ and relationships with students, i developed close relationships with

the student' leadership and the Students Representative Council (SRC). Throughout the 1980s there were annual student boycotts, and our college was one of the general student leaderships in the Western Cape. Because of the numerous boycotts and students' general educational but more importantly political demands,⁶⁶ we decided to establish a Staff-Students Liaison Committee. This was to improve the communication and understanding between staff and students. There were many experiences of major tension between staff and students. I had to really encourage the SRC leadership to be good and conscientious students and an example to the other students. In one-on-one discussions with student leadership there was a sort of 'unspoken' assumption that they supported the ANC and one of their demands was the unbanning of the ANC. They saw me as an ally. We discussed why our work should be better and exemplary. There were also some debates on the slogan 'Liberation now, education later'.

Before i left Harare, i was asked to write a report on the future projected developments. As i was doing my report, i realised at how many levels most of us in leadership were working. How taxing it was on us and yet we knew that it was our duty and responsibility if we wanted to work for change for the better in South Africa. So as much as we were often exhausted, we never regretted our work.

I was introduced to Bruce, a white comrade whom i was to meet again years later in the provincial legislature.

Bruce was to be my Harare contact. We discussed ways of communicating. He gave me a book on Zimbabwe, exactly the same edition that he had. He then explained how we would use the book. In composing a letter to him i would choose words from the book, use reference points for each word and hence compose a letter. Each word would be referenced by firstly page, then line on page and then the position of the word in that line. So my 'letter' to him would be something like:

1. 123, 13, 9
2. 100, 27, 5
3. 12, 25, 1
4. Etc.

I would preface the letter with something about the edits and additions to be done to an imaginary chapter or book, making the list of numbers seem innocent.

I spent three days in Harare. I was fetched in the early morning from my hotel and taken to the nondescript twin-bedded bedroom where communication would continue. Once we had gone through the explanation and description of events in the Western Cape, both rural and urban, the analysis began. What were the potentials and shortcomings? How could shortcomings be remedied? Then some political and forward-looking strategies and future activities were discussed.

In my discussions in Harare, i explained that UWCO had several rural branches and as executive members we each had responsibilities of working with some of them. My responsibility was Zwelethemba township in Worcester. The formidable Miriam Moleleki was the key organiser and activist in that area. I would meet with her and sometimes the branch to assist in whichever way was required or just to exchange strategies. I would also represent UWCO in the UDF delegations in establishing rural branches. These were very demanding. I think, for example, of our trip to Beaufort West, a four- to five-hour drive from Cape Town. I would drive there and back. We left Cape Town early the Sunday morning. We would go to a school designated beforehand. We used existing contacts, such as political activists, teachers and religious leaders with ready and available networks. The aim of the UDF was to establish a broad range of affiliates; hence accessing middle classes and previously politically uninvolved persons was crucial. In this case, and not unusual at all, i recall waiting for hours for people to arrive at the meeting. It was a Sunday and maybe we had to wait until after some went to church and had their Sunday lunch. We would each introduce ourselves in turn and speak about our appointed topic. Mildred Lesia, political activist from the 1950s and community leader as well as founder member of the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA) with Mama Zihlangu, would first speak. I was often designated to speak to religious groups and educators. Lynne went along and she spoke on young women in the political struggle.

Then an interim structure was established locally, and the core group was responsible for further mobilisation and organisation in Beaufort West and environs in general. Of course, we would also be there as reference persons and communication with what was happening elsewhere in the country. As we strengthened relationships with rural branches, we also identified likely comrades to recruit into the underground. After numerous meetings we then returned to Cape Town. I cannot recall why we were delayed in Beaufort West. Lynne and

i took turns to drive, and it was in the early hours of Sunday morning on the N1 to Cape Town. I took over as the more experienced driver, but i was so tired. I recollect being so exhausted. I hallucinated and saw elephants crossing the road. I then stopped the car. I took water to wash my face. This happened several times. Both Lynne and Mhe were sleeping. It was one of my more difficult journeys. It was on that long stretch between Laingsburg and Touws River. There was no garage where i could stop to rest. Although i did not discuss all the details, this was the type of briefing i gave to comrade Chris in Harare.

After the briefing sessions, i was then prepared to return to South Africa. One of the tasks was to take money into the country and administer it according to the needs of the underground ANC cell. In retrospect, we did not discuss what i was to say if i were stopped at customs and asked why i was carrying so much cash: R20 000 in R50 notes. Or even where i had received it. I was given a navy-blue sling bag which i had to use as hand luggage. I dutifully filled in the forms as accurately as possible at both the departure and arrival desks at the airport in Harare and then Jan Smuts Airport in Johannesburg. I did not want to draw any attention to myself. Once again, i walked past the customs at Jan Smuts slowly and nonchalantly while my mind, heart and head were tossing like a cork on tempestuous waves. I smiled when my eyes met those of one of the customs officials.

Once at home i opened an account at the local bank for the Women's Education Project. Bongani came to see me, and i gave him the documents and informed him about the money. This money was used for the hiring of cars and other needs of comrades. Bongani was the only person with whom i had contact.

Even though we had the cash to hire cars, there were new regulations and only credit cards were accepted. This was a rather challenging part of the underground work. There were a few instances in which my personal car had to be used. I never questioned why. Other times i hired the cars. It may be the circumstances but there were so many accidents with my, other comrades' and the hired cars. In one case i was blacklisted by Budget cars. One of the charges besides being liaison for the ANC cell in Cape Town with Harare and Lusaka, was that the blacklisting by Budget was used against me. It was found that i had not been driving the car hired by me. The security police also found the card for the Standard Bank account for the Women's Education Project at my home when they searched it.

Imprisonment

The offices of Essa Moosa and Associates in CBD Athlone near the movie house were always full. Full of persons from all backgrounds, all requiring Essa Moosa and Associates' expert legal opinion. People from informal settlements, community leaders, prominent people in the community, initiators of NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs), political activists, businesspeople from the Western Cape Traders' Association. In fact, a real treasure trove of humanity – from narrow eyes and Khoi features, to bold blue eyes with Caucasian Aryan features. And you never knew whom you would see there. If it coincides with visits to Robben Island you may see Winnie Mandela or Albertina Sisulu in the corridors. They were always friendly to everyone with their gracious smiles despite the challenges of their lives that the apartheid regime imposed on them. Winnie Mandela was always so regal looking with her *doek* tied elegantly around her head; that was before she got into the weird wig-wearing phase. I recall a few years ago on Cape Talk Radio the issue of Africa day was discussed and commemorated. The radio announcer asked a caller what her wish was for that Africa day. She immediately retorted: 'That Winnie Mandela and Manto Tshabalala Msimang do not wear their wigs today.' I totally agree. They look wonderful without that Western contraption. Sometimes people would arrive at Essa's office without appointments. And yet, Essa, Wagley, Ebbie and others would squeeze one in to hear what the next trouble or emergency is and were always willing to assist.

I have no way of knowing when precisely i first heard of or met Essa Moosa and his extremely competent team of associates. It must have been as a member of UWO, either in an executive or council meeting. Whenever there were concerns of any nature, and not necessarily only legal issues, the direction was: 'Consult with Essa.' Or, 'Please go to Essa's office and enquire.'

Sometime in early 1985, Essa Moosa requested that i come to his office. He informed me that most of the people that had been arrested were being questioned about me. Essa suggested that i should leave the country and go into exile. I immediately said no to exile, thinking of the many sad and some disillusioned exiles i had met in various countries. Pinky in Netherlands told me he had 'resigned' from the struggle and was living comfortably with his Dutch wife. The longing to come home was palpable. I decided to go underground or 'be on the run' as we called it.

The people's lawyer: For Essa Moosa

As a teenager my perception was one of awe
'Lawyers!' – the word alone intimidated me
I envisaged these learned specimens with black gowns billowing in
the wind –
filled with knowledge
Phew! LAWYERS –
Huge black leather cases rammed full of the knowledge of the LAW!
Lawyers uttering eloquent words of wisdom punctuated with
obscure, obtuse Latin phrases
Lawyers... arguing erudite cases
Strutting across the front of the court room
(From watching too many USA films)

Lawyers arrogant, learned, intellectual,
More than a cut above the ordinary human being.
To be feared...
To be in awe of...
Unapproachable...

Then in the mid 1980s this myth exploded...
I met gentle approachable caring
Essa Moosa the people's lawyer and some of his colleagues
later
NADEL – the National Association of Democratic Lawyers!

Essa committed himself to the democratic struggle
We would go there to his office

Anytime of the day – mind you even at night
With our queries or concerns

In our meetings when we required advice
Ask Essa... Go to Essa's office, or one of Essa's associates – they will
help
He/they always know the answers.

In fact, now in retrospect and reflection
in humility
I have to acknowledge
That we took advantage of him, his offices and their resources...

There we were
We'd do a mass blitz in first Elsie's River, Ravensmead and later
Crossroads
all 600 of us – from Gugulethu and Gardens, Macassar, Muizenberg,
Mitchell's Plain, Maitland
Us UDF Comrades all clad in UDF t-shirts.
And, of course, this was after Mildred Lesia gave us our briefing
'Comrades we must respect our people. Please do not go door-to-
door in your t-shirt picked up out of the washing basket,
Also, no dirty broken jeans.'
(She would look meaningfully at Jojo from Obs UDF) –
'And comrades, please,
Comb your hair!'

'Speak respectfully, introduce yourself,
politely ask whether you can explain
the UDF million signature campaign.
If they agree request if there are other people at home so that you
could speak to all simultaneously...'
(And i immediately think of my door-to-door in Salt River when the
man of the house quickly responded to my question:
'No there's no people in the house – only my wife.')

But back to the blitz – all of us would be armed with a list of lawyers'
names and phone numbers – in case something happens
And on top of that list was Essa's name...

We don't know how you did it
Inundated, overwhelmed, suffocated by our requests, demands,
concerns
– Reasonable and unreasonable.

There we were
Panicking, stressed, sometimes overreacting, frightened, just
scared...
And there you were – always with a smile...
Soft spoken and gentle
Oh so gentle
Caring yet resolute and wise in your reassuring manner and
directives to us.

On a more personal note, you summoned me to your office
'You have to think about it,' you said.
'The Ashley Forbes and Lizo Nkosi trialists
Are all being interrogated about you.'
Then gently – not alarmist
'Either go underground or into exile.'
I remain inside. Underground.

During our trials and tribulations, you were there
Caring, available and approachable
(Sad reflection of what is happening now to some comrades in
political offices –
Some have metamorphosised into arrogant indifferent persons... so
unlike what we strived for...)

But even later – as judge – you still were that approachable being
We had the freedom to approach you – even on matters mundane.

Again with queries around the Dorothy Zihlangu Trust we could
consult

We were never too grassroots, too ordinary, too poor to approach
you.

You treated us with care, compassion, and concern

Shakespeare said
'Some are born great,
Some achieve greatness
And some have greatness thrust upon them.'

You achieved greatness
Humble lawyer, the people's lawyer
Who never lost the common touch.
You remained great. Unchanged.

We thank you
And also your family for giving so much of you to us.

Zurayah Abass, Lynne Brown and i had already moved from Observatory to Maitland. We were not sure to what extent the security police knew about the Maitland house. However, we could take no chances. With all the stress and tensions, minimal rest and sheer neglect of my body, i had excruciating back pains. I then took a week's sick leave to recuperate and sort out plans for my 'underground' sojourn. Not long after we moved to Maitland my cousin Soraya anxiously came to us. She too lives in Maitland. The police had raided her home. When they found nothing, she overheard the one security officer saying to the other: 'Maar watter groot wit huis in Maitland kan dit dan wees waar hulle bly?' (Which big white house in Maitland can it be where they are living?) She was sure they were referring to us. I agreed with this.

Lynne and i then started our journeys to 'safe houses'. We firstly had to pack very judiciously. All the necessary texts and teaching materials for our work were packed into the cars and then clothes and other barest necessities. Fortunately, Lynne had recently acquired a new car, a green Honda, which i could then use. So, the programme was: try to disguise yourself. This meant wearing make-up in some way to disguise oneself, wearing scarves and hats, totally other clothes than usual and recreating in general a new and different image. We thought of changing cars every two or so weeks and drew up a list of 'safe homes'. We chose to stay at colleagues' homes – each stay not longer than a week. We went through our Hewat staff list and experienced a range of divergent homes and cultures where we lived. Everyone was kind, and i recall Marina asking us if we had any washing to be done.

Even though i was supposed to be ‘underground’, i still did my political work as usual. While travelling in disguise in Athlone i was surprised when a comrade greeted me enthusiastically by my name, thus exposing to me that my ‘disguise’ was not really an effective one.

We took many precautions. Firstly, we never used first names, names of places or venues while speaking on the phone. We knew all our phones had been bugged. My being on the run coincided with renewed security amongst us on the UWCO and Federation of South African Women’s executives. This followed a series of arrests of many of our members. Jenny Schreiner introduced the daily ‘phone tree’ or ‘phone chain’. We would in turn each phone one member in order to monitor whether we were all safe and no one had been arrested. One person (top of the tree/first link in the chain) would phone another, speak in code that all is well. This means person A would phone person B on the tree, who in turn would phone the following person. This would occur until the phone calls reverted to the starting point. If person A received the call, it meant all was well and there had been no interruptions or problems amongst the ten or so executive members. However, if the phone tree broke and the full circle had not been completed, we would assume something had happened to one person in the chain. Then all plans and venues were changed in case the person had been arrested and buckled under duress of torture. Our instructions were to not admit to anything for at least 24 hours – giving people time to escape or change plans, whichever was appropriate. But we knew that we were all different and we did not know what type of torture was being put on people.

Arrest

I was arrested on 18 May 1988 and held in solitary confinement at the Wynberg police cells until 30 August 1988. Since Essa Moosa had warned me that all treason trialists nationally were being interrogated by various members of the security police about me, i had been careful not to stay at the same place for more than two weeks. Essa wanted me to go into exile, but i had met too many disillusioned and sad exiles filled with longing for home. Besides, i had crucial work to do inside the country. So i opted rather to go underground inside South Africa. However, despite the state of emergency and being prohibited from holding meetings, we were determined to continue the struggle against the unjust and illegal regime and explored new and different ways of mobilising and organising.

The UWCO executive relaunched the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW, Western Cape) in April 1987 in order to broaden our struggle by drawing in new comrades. With Mama Dorothy Zihlangu as the first president and Lydia Mahlangu (Atlantis Women's Organisation) as paid organiser, i was an executive member responsible for education, with Andrea Fine and Elsabe Geldenhuys (from Rape Crisis), Lynne Brown (UWCO) and Cheryl Carolus (UDF) as additional members. The original FSAW was formed in 1952 and consisted of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), the white Congress of Democrats, the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Congress. This was the structure which initiated the Women's Charter in 1954 (preceding the Freedom Charter of 1956) and executed the women's march to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956. By relaunching the FEDSAW/FSAW (both abbreviations are used), we aimed at 'broadening the struggle' and later incorporating women through our work together and eventually bringing in women support for the ANC. FEDSAW coordinated the first Women's Cultural Festival at the Samaj Hall, Rylands Estate, Athlone, in April 1988. As stated earlier, the state of emergency prevented UWCO and the UDF from having meetings. This strategy was to mobilise masses of ordinary non-political organisations apart from the many already affiliated to the Federation. Black Sash was a close working partner but could not join the Federation because it was already a national federal structure.

I was so exhausted after the festival because it had been a massive event that began with the Friday night gumba (dancing and singing) and ended on the Sunday. I was responsible for coordinating the various cultural programmes. I also wrote and directed a play, *Homage to Miriam Makeba*, which highlighted aspects of her life, struggles and music and started with a poem by Gcina Mhlope titled 'Say No, Black Woman, Say No'. It was a multimedia revue-type production with audio-visual images and songs and dance. So there i was, coordinating with the various groups that were presenting plays, poetry and dance as well as being part of the logistics planning of the actual event. Apart from cultural programmes, speeches and workshops, such as one on how to repair a puncture, the Saturday also offered a fete. Various organisations had stalls and sold their assorted wares and had literature promoting their issues. In other words, it was also like a plain old-fashioned bazaar with goodies like cakes, food, drinks and koeksisters. So Black Sash, Rape Crisis, the UDF, and many youth and civic structures all had to

apply for stalls and pay for them as a means of income for us to pay for the hire of the hall.

It was at this event that the mass democratic movement and ordinary community structures first encountered the LGBTIQ+⁶⁷ community at an official organisational level. At one of our preparatory meetings where we discussed the various organisations that applied to be part of the festival, a letter was read from the Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA) asking for a stall. Then one of the township women asked what GALA was. There was a sort of awkward silence, initially from the lesbians who were in the closet and the middle-class academics present. Eventually someone said: 'Oh it is the Gay and Lesbian Activists. They are also applying to be a UDF affiliate.' The next question was: 'So what are lesbians and gays?' After the explanation about same-sex relationships and choices, the nonchalant response from another township-based woman was: 'Of course, that is fine. They are organising against their oppressions, and we must support them.' Or something like that.

The festival was a great success, and i was completely drained. We stayed at my mother's house during the period of the festival. It was just easier and less complicated. As we were so exhausted, we did not have the energy to find another safe house immediately after the festival. Also, it was so comfortable in my mother's house with my mother spoiling us with our favourite foods. We enjoyed being there and procrastinated our move to the next safe house.

On Eid (17 May 1988) i received an urgent message from Nomaindia Mfeketo that we must meet with her. We went to her home in Gugulethu and she gave me a message from Bongani Jonas who was in detention at the time. He had smuggled out the message for me. He said that he did not understand why the Special Branch had not arrested me yet because they seemed to know a lot about my activities and involvement in the struggle. He thought that there was a chance i might be assassinated and said that i should avoid driving around alone, especially at night. He also gave me a story that i should use in the event that i was arrested. I should verify that Nomaindia and i are friends as we have been together on the executives and central members of UWO and UWCO since 1982. I met Bongani at her house at the time when they were in a relationship. He mostly visited at night because he was married and Indi's neighbours were related to his wife's family. That was where i occasionally saw him. End of story. We left Indi's home for Zurayah's home to join the family's Eid celebration. I was so tense and developed a severe headache. Several

people asked me what was wrong because it was clear that i was very tense. I did not stay long as my headache was too acute.

The next morning, after a fitful sleep, my mum came running into our bedroom in the dark at about 4am.

‘Oh my God,’ she whispered, ‘The entire house is surrounded by white men with big guns.’ Without thinking, i jumped up and said, ‘Oh, i will run to the back and go through the gate in the fence to our neighbours.’

Lynn said, ‘Do not be silly. They are looking for a reason to kill you. They will shoot you.’

We stood, perplexed and still, in the dark room, confounded, momentarily bewildered, wondering what was best to do. Three women, petrified, insecure, with various degrees of fear. My mom was shivering. I really felt sorry for her. This experience was so far from her reality. At that moment the front doorbell rang, reverberating in the dark silence of the early morning. An immense calm took over. I immediately went to the door, switched on the passage and stoep lights, and opened the door. The entire door frame was taken up by an enormous white man, with reddish-hued hair and a fine moustache in a cream safari suit and knee-length socks and brown shiny shoes. It was autumn and quite cold already, especially in the early morning. So, despite the anxiety i felt, i was a bit amused at this safari-clad man in the freezing cold. I politely and almost nonchalantly asked him what he wanted. He introduced himself as Steenkamp and said he was looking for Gertrude Fester.

‘Why?’ i asked.

‘I am arresting her.’

‘On what charge?’

‘Section 50.’

I shouted to my mum and Lynn: ‘Oh, it is only Section 50!’

‘You will have to wait as i have to first pack a little case.’

Mom and Lynne were hovering around me, absolutely quiet or whispering when a word of advice was given about what to take. I moved, robot-like, to the bathroom and packed a case of bare essentials. During the packing i managed to hide my bank book in the shower under a folded blanket on a shelf. While i was packing and showering, the security police searched the house. There was not much there, but they took my college briefcase; it just had work-related goods and my herbal tea. This i recall, because after a few days in prison Du Toit gave the tea to the prison kitchen to give to me in his attempt to woo

me. So, instead of black coffee from a big bucket, i at least had some chamomile tea.

I do not remember kissing or hugging my mother or Lynne goodbye. I walked casually to the front door. As i walked down the stoep i remember not taking the steps but energetically jumping down the ledge, shouting loudly, even cheerily, at the crisp morning air: 'Please phone Essa Moosa.'

To this, one of the many SBs standing around retorted: 'Oh, we will do an Albie Sachs on him.'⁶⁸

As i walked onto the road, i saw the row of about seven or eight cars. As i passed, i saw a UWCO member seated in one of the cars. We acknowledged a sort of greeting. Had she been arrested or was she an *impimpi*? Again we glanced at each other in slight greeting before i got into one of the other cars as directed by Steenkamp.

Plein Street Cape Town

There i was, in a VIP convoy of about eight cars at around 5am. It was still quiet in the streets of Cape Town. We stopped at a building in Plein Street where i was taken to an office with two desks, many chairs and a television. There were several white Afrikaner men walking around. I am not sure when the interrogation started. There were about seven interrogators sitting in a row. One was called Theron. I cannot recall the names of the others. I was really frustrating them with my absolute silence and blank stares at them, and my occasional 'I do not know' in answer to their questions. This was the standard answer to all the questions. They played video footage of our various events and meetings where i featured prominently. This was really shocking to me. How and under what circumstances were these videos taken? By whom were they taken? This really unnerved me. But i pretended to be calm during all this. And quiet. They stopped the video replay whenever a new person appeared and asked me who they were. Silence on my part. After no information was forthcoming from me, they then showed video footage of me engaging with several other people. They wanted to know the names of the various people i was speaking with in the videos. I just smiled in response, sometimes breaking my silence with: 'Oh, you know how difficult Xhosa names are. That is why we just call them "comrade".'

At all times they were very polite. I saw through their tactics. At one stage they tried to convince me that we had the same aim of transforming

South Africa but that it was only our methods that differed. In fact, they said, we could actually work together considering our similar outlooks. Silence. They continued:

‘You could walk out of here as if nothing had happened.’

Another added: ‘Yes, and it could even prove to be very lucrative for you. All you have to do is tell us about what people are planning.’

I glared at them in silence. This time i gave them a look of disgust, slowly looking at each of them in turn. Their polite manner was slowly changing into a more aggressive stance. Questions were flying from one side of the room to the other. I remained silent. I was aware of the fact that i had to try to remember what they were asking and then attempt to piece together what they did know, or what they assumed or pretended to know. There were many questions coming from the seven men seated at the table. Other white men were walking in and out all the time. I realised that this was part of their plan to intimidate me and in terms of what to do next.

At some stage i was taken to another room. While i stood in the empty echoing room, a man appeared with a gun, seemingly playing with it by throwing it up in the air and then catching it. He was dressed in black with a leather jacket. It was Mostert. I am not sure whether we greeted each other. Being alone in a room with Mostert tossing a gun around frightened me. For the first time i really got scared. Mostert was notorious in the townships for his cruelty and abuse of activists. The room was silent except for his footsteps as he walked all around me like a predator closing in on his prey; i also caught the slight whiff of the gun oil whenever he threw it up into the air and caught it. The noise of his steps grew increasingly louder as he closed in on me. He stopped and smiled at me:

‘You know this gun can go off at any time, by accident of course.’

Silence from me. I was magnetised by his every move. This prowling around me lasted for some time. I can now imagine my eyes, big and noncommittal, glaring at him in my resolute silence, no matter what he said or gestured. He left after a while, clearly irritated with this silent moron.

A phone call was then put through to the room i was in. I was instructed to answer it. It was Mr Pratt, the rector of the college where i was lecturing. He said that the June examination question papers had to be submitted that morning. This may have been a pretext he used to get into contact with me. He asked me where my question papers were. I explained that they were in my black briefcase. At this stage i was unaware that the security police had confiscated it with several

other things of mine. He asked several other questions in a seemingly business-like fashion. Of course, the members of the Security Branch were listening in on this conversation. At one stage i was unclear of what my answer should be. I apologised and said that i was a bit confused. Mr Pratt said he understood. I realised he was drawing out the conversation regarding work for as long as was possible. I cannot recall how our conversation ended.

The interrogation resumed. Now it was no longer the friendly cops trying to recruit me to work with them ‘because we believed in the same things’, according to them. I recollect being exhausted – it had been more than seven hours of interrogation and intimidation. I asked if i could go to the toilet. At the toilet i saw that i had started menstruating and it was at that moment that i realised that i had left my carefully packed overnight suitcase at my mom’s home. They then sent someone to fetch my suitcase and sanitary towels. Then Lena, a young and plain-clothed woman, appeared on the scene. She was part of their security apparatus. It was the first time they were adhering to their own laws. Legally, a woman must be present when a woman is being interrogated. She obviously was very junior because she only obeyed orders, eagerly and ingratiatingly responding to all their instructions. She accompanied another white man (they ended up being my constant driver and security companion, even to the toilet) for the entire period i spent in Section 29 detention.

Lena and my ‘driver’ took me down to the basement. I am not sure whether at this stage i was handcuffed or not. Being handcuffed and chained were occasional, depending on their moods, to what extent i ‘cooperated with them’ or maybe just to show me who was in charge. We drove along De Waal Drive (the M3) southwards. I realised we were going towards Wynberg. We stopped at the Wynberg police cells where i was ‘booked’ in. I was required to hand in all my valuables, including my watch, which i signed for. The Wynberg Police Station was dark because it was winter. It was also not built to allow natural light to filter in. We went towards the back of the police charge office and magistrates’ courts to a densely built-up area with narrow lanes. All the buildings were unpainted and either grey cement coloured or very dark face brick. The lanes were damp with puddles of water, and were unkempt, unfriendly and cold. I walked like a somnambulist down long, dark corridors. Barred gate after barred gate had to be unlocked. We were all silent, and the only sound was the unlocking, clanging and locking of

iron gates gratingly loud and cacophonous. At the end of the corridor a big set of barred gates led into another long corridor with cells on the left-hand side as we entered. There was another long corridor that was grey cement coloured. The cells were identified by the painted dark grey steel doors that were all closed. We eventually arrived at a small table with a policewoman seated on a chair facing the cells. This steel door was open. The second gate with bars was unlocked. I was led through a small courtyard to another set of steel doors and a gate with bars. I was then led into a cell. My case was searched and everything – cream, soap, deodorant – except my pyjamas and set of clothes was left in it. As the barred doors closed behind me, the loud echo deafened me.

Prison notes

The following are merely morsels of memory and unclear and confusing in parts. This was the beginning of my solitary confinement under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. It began on 18 May 1988 and ended on 30 August 1988. This took place 30 years ago, and i am only now compiling my recollections of this period. I think now of the words of Flory A Beek, which are applicable to me in many ways:

The emotions of the past overwhelmed me to such an extent, that I burst out in tears again and again. After my first attempt, I cried so much my husband... said, 'Stop, I want you to stop now...' It is said that time heals, but it does not. One learns to cope with tragedy a bit better. (Beek 2008: 1)

Day 1: 18 May 1988

I still recall that first day in the dark and dimly lit cell. The cement floor was grey. My cell was starkly furnished with a single bed. I recollect waking up, lying on the bed. Momentarily i was not sure where i was and i had to scrutinise my environment. I was lying on a single bed with grey sheets and grey blankets. After a while i realised where i was and immediately decided to fill all the empty times of solitary confinement. I have to be creative. I will compose poems and stories to entertain myself; but, of course, also as a mechanism for survival. What about a song to the tune of 'What will this day be like?' from the *Sound of Music* when

Maria has to go to the Von Trapp family as a governess? I recall she said when God closes one door, he usually opens a window elsewhere. I wonder when my open window will come?

What will this day be like?

I wonder?

What will my future be?

I wonder.

It could be so exciting to be out in the world to be free.

My heart should be wildly rejoicing, oh what's the matter with me?

I've always longed to adventure,

To do the things i never dared, but here i'm facing adventure

Then why am i so scared?

A captain and seven interrogators.

What's so fearsome about that?

Oh! I must stop these doubts and these worries, if i don't i just know i'll give in.

I should dream of the things i am seeking, i'm seeking the courage i lack.

The courage to face the SBs with defiance,

Show them i'm worthy and while i show them, i'll show me so.

Let them bring on all their questions

I'll do better than my best

I'll have confidence

And put me to the test

And i'll make them see i have confidence in me...

Not too bad a song!

First thing i will do every day when i wake up is state the day and date. Then listen to the sounds. If only the dust on the mesh on either side of the bar could let some light in – it may be considerably lighter... it remains dark longer as it is winter. I must carefully listen to the sounds outside and detect some type of routine; i am sure some pattern may arise... according to sounds. I must deduce from these aspects – sound and light, what is happening judging from the sounds. Then i can gauge what the time more or less is...

OK starting now...

What day is it today? Oh yes.

Day 4: 21 May 1988

I must keep my wits about me. Know what day it is and work out the time. Sjoel! I must have been exhausted. I slept the first three days.

Was it or was it not? Ahgg... hmmm.

What a bizarre sense of relief! No more being on the run. No more watching the rear-view mirror. No more moving house every third or fourth day! Or even once a week or every two weeks or so, depending...

What a place to be? I knew being part of the mass democratic movement and United Women's Congress could land me in prison. With the state of emergency, we were not even supposed to meet. But yet one never really imagines it, hey? Especially when we were doing our 'Know your rights' workshop at Silvermine reserve in the form of a picnic. I mean, being in prison and that under Section 29? Section 50⁶⁹ would have been ok! Bearable!

This filthy floor – cracks, dark grey cracks in grey cement floors. Cracks filled with dirt – mottled with blotches of dark shades of grey, black dirt. Beige gloss painted wall, and again light and darker blotches of dirt where the worst obscenities have probably been scrubbed off. Perhaps also more phallic-centric comments; like on my sheet: a big penis drawn in ballpoint pen. Gosh, if the worst has been scrubbed off...

Lights on 24 hours a day – even though it is a faint light from the centre of the ceiling, covered with chequered wire.⁷⁰ 'Fokken mandjesligte' (Fucking basket lights) a fellow prisoner had shouted yesterday, probably as he too undoubtedly did his inventory on arrival. Small barred openings for windows, at the ceiling height. So no great view here! Barbed dust-veneered wire on either side of the bars – blocking any bit of pale winter sun from seeping in.

I'll sit here on the cement block alongside the wall on the far side from the door. I will just ignore the guard's repeated instructions that i must sit on the bed so that she can see me. At least i'm out of view from them now. And it's so cold. It's winter and just my type of luck to be detained this time of the year. And the toilet, ja, ne? Deliberately dehumanising us prisoners. Imagine the toilet opposite the barred doorway. With the steel door open so that i can be watched, all those who pass look in. So naturally curious. And that bloody guard sitting there smirking at me all the time because i'm an 'artikel neën en twintig' (Article 29). I wonder who all have been arrested – or anyone else from our organisation.

Mama Zihlangu, Mama Mfacu, Indi, Lynne? Did they arrest you later? Oh the sound of keys. On your guard. No weakness to be shown in their presence. At least they announce themselves with that big bunch of keys...

What are the other 'must dos'? I must exercise and eat – even if the food is unpalatable. I must ensure that i get enough sleep. Exercise and exercise. Is it not interesting? It is as if i do not exist. This policeman unlocking the door, just walking in and past me. No acknowledgement of my existence.

The shower is in the exercise yard. Just to add to my torture – ice-cold water and a sore finger. I have to press this button in order to get water. But it is difficult. Is this their way of economising on water? My finger gets too sore pushing this button for water, so showers will be short. And with this cold weather there's no difference between raindrops and the shower!

Again invisible. This person just walks into my exercise yard. And i'm showering. No bloody respect for anyone. Yes, how does this work? Bringing my food, he waits until i'm naked under the shower. At least one can challenge the police here – not being scared of anything.

Yes, i have a private exercise yard. Imagine a chequered sky view. There are bars from wall to wall covering the exercise yard. What a big cage!

Food. A bucket of black coffee. I get an enamel cup and i have to scoop up the coffee. Thick slices of brown bread, cut so skew, with some jam on. Eat. Not exactly five-star but eat it. Eat it. And try to enjoy it. Mmmm.

All washed and dressed up smart for the day. Breakfast done. Ok, what am i feeling now? Shall i compose something? Come to terms with my new reality? I will use their own vocabulary: endorsed out, group areas, forcibly removed, homeland, etc.

This is the reality

I have been forcibly removed out of my cosy and cushioned cocoon
To a group area reserved for terrorists – solitary confinement
I have been endorsed out of my community environment
Into the homeland of my cell
Where everything is dark and grey
And even a smile is scarce.

For 24 hours a day i am watched, perused, in case of some wrong move
Whatever or whenever i eat, shit, stand or sleep, this is recorded and
telephoned to who knows whom.

I immediately think of the so-called Africans in my country
When they walk into a supermarket or shop
The floorwalkers are on guard
'These are the people who steal!'
Their every turn is watched

So too am i watched
My every twist and turn
But for a wee while.

Thousands, millions drudgingly eke out this existence every day of
their lives
in apartheid South Africa
Without a pass to humanity
But not for long!

Ok poetry time over now. Wow! I wonder whether if i were outside if i
would be able to compose this in my head.

And now.

Exercise time again. Wow, visitors. Hello birds, thanks for your
entertaining songs.

It is still 21 May 1988 – oh yes. The workshop's taking place tomorrow
– wonder if anyone's thinking of me. Don't feel sorry for yourself.

DAY 5: What day is it now?

Day 5: 22 May 1988

Friday night and lots of noise. So much activity. Ahhh yes! It's late in
the day – Wynberg Mall is nearby. There were so many active sounds
outside. Then i worked it out: it is a Friday! Oh, it is late-night shopping.
What a revelation! Yippee that's it!

Day 6: Saturday 23 May 1988

Hey, listen. Listen carefully and work out what is happening. Lots of
people. Lots of noise. And music. People are laughing and having a good
time.

What can it be?

Ahh. Maynardville – it's the Community Chest Carnival. Now let's work out what i hear.

Hurrah! It's carnival time!

It's Saturday night –
And the carnival music in the park
Blares from across the road.
The main carnival music (supposedly to attract passers-by)
Is at first harsh and strident, then softer,
Then crackling with interference
Depending on how the wind blows.

I try to discern the various sounds –
There's the shriek of either excitement or fear
From the swings;
Stallholders advertising their wares – trying to outdo their
neighbours' stalls;
And the bang! bang! of the shoot yourself a prize stall!

I can almost see lovers walking hand in hand
Eating either ice cream or mielies.
Parents indignantly digging in their pockets
As children swear this is the umpteenth last round on the
swings.
And the more fastidious in some dark corner
Diligently, carefully trying to eat an enormous hamburger in a
delicate fashion,
With onion rings dangling down the sides of their mouths.

The main music stops.
'Here is an important announcement!'
Someone gaggles an unintelligible message.
Ag shame! Either someone's child is missing
Or there's a fabulous prize to be won.
The main music resumes
And each stall either with its own music

Or Clang! Clang!
Bang! Bang! sounds.

This conglomeration of cacophony
Bombards me where i sit
Alone

In my dark dreary cell.
Not cry and pretend all is well.
Don't be depressed. Come now.

Do deep breathing... mmm, that's it, be calm.
I will say a poem from high school.
'Dover Beach' by Matthew Arnold, Standard 8 in 1968.
'The sea is calm tonight
the tide is still
the moon lies fair upon the straights.
On the French coast the light gleams and is gone...'
Deep breathing...

What can i sing? What do i need to lift up my spirits...
I think i will toyi-toyi a bit:
*Amajoni*⁷¹
Amajoni Amajoni Amajoni Amajoni
ma sey masye umsebensa Amajoni wa sa Afrika
Amajoni
Now this has to have a toyi-toyi come on
toyi toyi

It's so cold. What can i do? I cannot sleep. That's it! I'll jog myself warm.
1, 2, 3... 50, 55, 56, 57... 119, 110, 111, 'n Boer maak 'n plan maar ek het
een (A farmer makes a plan but I have one). 300, 301, 302, 500, 501...
Lekker warm en moeg nou (Nicely warm and tired now).

Day 10: 28 May 1988

So many empty hours. Well. At least i can have a rest here, whatever rest
means in a prison cell. 'Be thankful for small mercies,' Mum used to say.
Outside i would have been going from one meeting to another, doing

one task after the other. Up early for the 5.30am pamphleteering stint at Salt River station, dash to work, back again for lunchtime pickets. Oh, i really should stop crying. I can hear the keys. Wipe your tears. Don't let the enemy see that they're getting the better of you. Ah, medication time. Do you remember *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*? I will never forget Jack Nicholson's face when the Big Guy started talking. Wow, that was some acting! Nicholson's expression when the Big Guy – who had never ever spoken and whom all assumed was mute – said 'thank you' for the gum! Wow! What a wonderful moment!

Gosh, i never thought this would happen to me. Even though we prepared ourselves for it! I remember that Silvermine picnic/'Know your rights' workshop. I remember Zurayah was too nervous to be part of it and walked in the woods while we did the workshop. Three days later she was detained with Colleen at the Transkei border. Even the UDF wasn't allowed to meet then; our area committee came up with the idea of going to restaurant-meetings, an expensive undertaking. You really had to order something to eat after five cups of coffee and three hours later.

I remember how remote all the issues seemed at the 'Know your rights' workshop. We didn't actually take it too seriously. But, well, just in case: 'Don't answer anything for 24 hours!' Not bad, Gertrude. It's been ten days now. Listen to the questions, analyse them. Work out what they know and what they pretend to know. That's an old strategy of theirs to pretend to know more than they do. Also, to say that some comrade said this or that. So glad our other comrades informed us about this when they got out. Make certain admissions to obvious things only if you cannot stand the torture. Pretend you're cooperating if the torture becomes too unbearable.

Ah, exercise time. Not anyone can boast a private exercise yard with wired mesh on top!

I'll entertain myself while i jog; that's it. Do the alphabet game – every round a new letter of the alphabet and words starting with A for first round, B for second and C for third. That's it. I'll do the alphabet jog to make it more exciting:

*Apple, ants, artichokes, augurs, anger, anguish, animal, ant,
Butterfly, beauty, beetroot, books.*

*Queen, quince, Q is really problematic
Tsetse fly, tomatoes, tattersalls,*

*Xero, xylophone what else? what else? like Q problematic
Y – Yahweh, yacht, yo yo, yoke,
Zero, Zeus, zestful...*

Sjoe! I will have to work on Y, Q and Z... not many words starting with them, especially Q, ne?

Oh, look, visitors sitting on my prison bars and mesh on top of my cage. Welcome! Welcome, birds. They're sitting on the bars of my cage.

MOCKING-BIRDS I

Why do you mock me, mocking-birds?
Cheerfully perching on the bars of my cage
Chirp-chirp conversing with your mates
While i jog around my
30 minutes, 5 by 2 freedom for the day?

You frivolously flirt with your mates
Beaks gently caressing
While i pant around another round.

You flamboyantly flaunt your freedom
Flitting from bar to bar
While i huff and puff one last desperate round –
My greatest challenge for the day
Full of nothingness.

Then you stretch out your wings and fly up
into the open sky
And i –
I stop jogging
and try not to cry.

Next activity in this day full of nothingness. Well, at least i have some entertainment, reading the Bible. Some spiritual fulfilment but also interesting events that manifest God's will in some way. But also men's will – emphasis on men. Earlier i was reading at random but now i've set myself a task of reading the entire Bible. I will read from the beginning to the end, that is, if i am here that long. I'm now at Genesis, umm, 19

and Lot gives his daughters to the men – they have not known men yet – as a prize. What is this?

What a cheek! He sacrifices his daughters. The men of the town want his two visitors whom i think are angels. Lot offers, mind you, offers ‘his two daughters to them in exchange and do with them what you want to. They have not known men as yet!’ Imagine! Exchanging the two young daughters. Sacrificing them in fact!

That’s where all the patriarchy stems from – the holy book, hey? In fact, all the holy books are similar. All reinforcing patriarchy. I read once that Buddhism is least patriarchal. But some Buddhist women who tried to become monks highlighted the differences and challenges for women. So, yes, even within Buddhism women are of a lesser order.

Day 25

Now can you imagine? I was taken for interrogation to Loop Street. I just sat there – did not say a word. Yes, i will listen carefully. He pretends to know a lot but i can see through his sham. Gosh, they’re paranoid; i cannot even go to the toilet without that woman, Lena. No privacy whatsoever.

So then why did i have to be stripped when i was returned home, i mean, to my cell. How can i ever call it home? Stripped. Maybe to humiliate me, break down my defences.

What an experience!

Did that woman really mean to fool the SB? Did she support me?

INSISTERHOOD

His booming voice bellows out instructions

Bullying you into instant servitude.

Deursoek haar sell!⁷²

You move robot-like;

The correct buttons have been pressed.

He shouts again:

Deursoek haar cell. Search her cell

Kom nou, deeglik, deeglik!⁷³

One of you gives him a subtle glance

(Is it conspiratorial or contemptuous?)

I cannot see as i stand, stock-still

Surveying busy woman’s hands scrutinising woman victim’s property

Trek haar uit! Deursoek haar!⁷⁴
 The orders blast again
 And i,
 I don't wait for you to once again peel off my humanity, my dignity
 I hastily strip, defiantly scattering my clothes
 All over the dark damp cell
 You watch me
 While your fingers expertly feel
 Every fold, every seam
 Of my clothes.
 Your mouths hang slightly open.
 You too are pawns in this pecking order
 Pawns to him in his male arrogance and omnipotence
 Deursoek haar beddegoed!
 Search her bedding!
 You strip the bed lazily, languidly.
 Haal af die kussingsloop!⁷⁵
 You raise your head slowly,
 Staring him straight in the face.
 'Daar is geen kussingsloop nie!'⁷⁶
 I look at you knowing that there is a pillowcase.
 You stare back at me
 And for one moment,
 A split second
 There is a sense of camaraderie between us...
 Dare i hope?
 Dare i dream?
 Insisterhood?

Day 30: 12 June 1988

Have faith, Gertrude, they can't keep you here for more than six months. Yes, they can! They can renew the Section 29! That's what the captain said if i do not cooperate! I'm just another statistic. What is it now? Thirty-five women held under Section 29?

Is there speculation about where i'm being held? Do they talk about me?

Do you miss me, sweets? Comrades, are you demanding my release? Maybe i'm mentioned at support group meetings or at a political rally focusing on women political detainees? It's quite ironic, my sitting here.

How often have i made speeches stating: 'We demand their unconditional release! Section 29 is a draconian law. Detainees are held who knows where, cutting people off from their loved ones and families.' (I'd make a point of saying loved ones!)

Dear God, where are they? Indi, Lynne, Mama Zihlangu, Mfacu? Are they well? Or have they been detained? Why did old Du Toit say that i should give my sister power of attorney and not Lynne? He knows how close we are.

Where are they, Lord? Please God, keep them safe from these brutes.

The Lord's my shepherd; I shall not want. Though i walk in the valley of the shadow of death, i shall fear no ill. I shall fear no ill. I shall fear no ill.

Is this your way of punishing me, you, God of Love?

I must get out of here. I must. I cannot stand it. I can't breathe. I can't breathe!

Oh no! A panic attack coming. Control it. Breathe slowly, in and out. In and out.

Day 35

Composition time now. I think i will compose a song to my heroes and sheroes:

Winnie and Nelson have been apart long
Wilton⁷⁷ and Irene had no nuptial bed
And all their courage, commitment too,
Inspires me, so strong i'll be...

I'm so alone and very, very cold,
What are you doing out there in the sun?
It's part of life, this struggle and strife
With me in here and you out there

Visiting hours again. Wow, an entire family this time.

MOCKING-BIRDS II

I run up; i run down
I touch this toe; i touch that toe;
I bend and stretch; bend and stretch.

I swing this leg, then that leg.
 And you all sit in a straight line,
 A black jagged line against the grey blue sky –
 Gleefully watching me
 An extended family's outing to the zoo
 Watching the monkey doing her antics.
 It's a pity you didn't bring along a banana
 It would've made a welcome change to my sparse prison diet.

Day 40

What a stupid way to have acted! Imagine being shy and hiding the handcuffs. There i was, being escorted by my two security police. Passers-by give me casual glances. But everyone's really too busy with their own lives. What a rat race! They do not see how eagerly i'm taking in their faces, even smiling occasionally, and yet, being shy. My track-top partially obscures my handcuffs. And i see a familiar face. Granted, i don't know him very well, having seen him on the other side of the pews at church. He's walking on the other side of the street. His face creases into a smile. I return the smile. Why am i shy? Deliberately hiding the handcuffs? Does he know i'm a detainee? Does he read newspapers? If he does not then he doesn't know i'm under Section 29. He probably doesn't even know what it is! That's the problem with some of these Christian types. Everything's God's will so that they can ensconce their political apathy! How does it go again? Helen Kies introduced us to Yevgeny Yevtushenko's poem:

Telling lies to the young is wrong.
 Proving to them that lies are true is wrong.
 Telling them that God's in his heaven
 and all's well with the world is wrong.
 The young know what you mean. The young are people.
 Tell them the difficulties can't be counted
 and let them see not only what will be
 but see with clarity these present times
 Say obstacles exist they must encounter,
 sorrow happens, hardship happens.
 The hell with it. Who never knew
 the price of happiness will not be happy.

Forgive no error you recognize,
 it will repeat itself, increase,
 and afterwards our pupils
 will not forgive in us what we forgave.

Let's reschedule the roster for the day. After exercising there's poetry-time. I'm quite impressed with myself. Doing all that in my head. Back to the roster: then i'll wash my clothes.

Thereafter i'll hang my clothes on top of the bedframe instead of on the bars of the door. Let's see what that old Jantjies has to say when i obscure her view of me on the fucking toilet!

This fucking Jantjies really irritates me. She's a bloody arse-creeping coloured. Yes, coloured. Sycophantic, servile. Sersant. Ingratiating herself for fucking promotion, i suppose. Of all the guards, she's the only one who insists that i sit on the bed so that she can see me all the time. 'Hoekom so?' (Why?) 'Omdat Kaptein so sê' (Because Captain says so). I have to sit staring at a sell-out fucking coloured policewoman. Imagine all the other fucking boere, blue eyed, blue eye-shadowed guards, simply sit with their one-purl-one-plain knitting or *Rooi Rose*, which they conceal when their superiors come. I'm sure they too must be bored. But this fucking coloured bitch... (Sjoe, don't use such sexist language. You're always admonishing others not to use such language.) Yes. But, she's a bitch. Bitch. Bitch, fucking bitch. Bitch. Bitch. Oh, stop fucking crying. Crying all the fucking time! Don't let them do this to you! She's a fucking bitch. Bitch. Oh God, where are you? Be with me. Comfort me. Oh God, even you've left me. Now i'm absolutely alone with this bitch. Bitch!

Pull yourself together, man. Come on. Say one of your poems or sing one of your compositions. You know how you love singing.

I'm so alone and very, very cold
 What are you doing, out there in the sun?
 It's part of life, this struggle and strife
 With me in here and you out there.

Winnie and Nelson have been apart long,
 Irene and Wilson had no nuptial bed
 And all their courage and commitment too
 Inspires me, so strong i'll be

Chorus:

I'm so alone and very, very cold...

What are you doing, out there in the sun?

It's part of life, this struggle and strife

With me in here and you out there.

I'm sure there were five verses. One with other couples, then the heroines, Dora Tamana, Mama Zihlangu. Then the women in prison. Mama Mfacu. If only i could be as brave as they were. But they were under Section 3. Section 29's worse! Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Now don't start your *tjanking* (crying) again. I'll sing and do expressive dancing.

Zen zeni na

Zen zeni na

Zen zeni na

Zen zeni na

Zen zeni na

Amandla Ngawethu

Amandla Ngawethu

Amandla Ngawethu

Amandla Ngawethu

Amandla Ngawethu

What have we done?

The only sin is the colour of our skin

Yes, i will jump up. No more playing victim here! Maybe start dancing and singing little ditties.

If people could see me now, they'd certainly think i'm crazy. Or some poetry?

'Dover Beach' by Matthew Arnold:

The sea is calm tonight.

The tide is full, the moon lies fair

Upon the straits; on the French coast, the light

Gleams and is gone.

Gosh we learnt all these English poets at school! No African poets! How terrible! Which ballet steps do i remember? *Pas de deux*. I was also lomp. How I teased myself that i was a baby elephant doing ballet.

Some Keats.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun
Conspiring with him how to load and bless

Umm... something... something

My favourite
Gerard Manley Hopkins' 'Pied Beauty'

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

Ahh how colonised our education was. No African poets.

In fact, i do not know any of their poetry out of my head. Will have to learn some Ben Okri when i get out.

I know what i will do. It is so cold here. I'll ask for water to do my washing.

Hot water please to do my washing! *Warme water asseblief vir my wasgoed!*

Why do these people pretend to be deaf? Sersant!

Sersant!

Sersant!

No answer.

Yes, they do this on purpose. Just to annoy one!

*Kan ek nou die warme water kry asseblief? Ek wag al lank al. Die vloer moet geskrop word.*⁷⁸

Baie dankie.

What a treat?

I will put my frozen cold feet into the warm water. Gee man, life is great. Bliss, oh bliss, warm water. Mhhhhmm.

Maybe continue my singing. I'm so alone and very, very cold.

'Hurrah, it's carnival time'

'This is the reality'.

Scrub, scrub, scrub floors.

This cell's probably never been so clean. It probably doesn't know what's happening to it. Well, i don't have much say about my whereabouts but i sure as hell can clean up my environment – besides it's taking up time. And that's what i need here. Oh, here is a bee. Hello, Ms Bee, thanks for coming to visit me. I do need some company you know. It gets very lonely here sometimes.

Wish i could go for interrogation. That drive on De Waal's Drive along Table Mountain. It's beautiful and the scenery – the beautiful green trees – all shades of green. At least i'll be speaking to people. But then again, once i'm there i prefer my mind to torture me. Like Emma Mashinini said in her book, is it *Strikes Have Followed Me All My Life?*

'The boere did not torture me. They knew my mind was torturing me...'

Visiting time

Morning Ms Bee. Thanks again for visiting me.

Sjoe! Bee, are you not going to move or something? Can you sense me? I'm so happy that you're here. I'm glad you're my friend. I like having friends. I hope you enjoy being my friend.

Gosh i cannot spend all my time talking. Scrub, scrub, scrub. But then i can talk to you and scrub.

May i have some acknowledgement of this conversation? Are you also happy to be here with me? I had another friend a week ago. It was a moth. But you know how moths are. Friend Moth didn't move for hours – maybe two days. They're very quiet – something to do with the changing into the butterfly perhaps? Metamorphosis you know. But after a while i realised that Ms Moth was dead. It seems as if i am actually succeeding in getting this grime off this cement. That's all it required. Just some good old-fashioned elbow grease. It is almost looking quite decent in here. Pity i cannot get off some of that graffiti. How are you, Bee friend? Don't tell me you're dead too! Why are you not moving? What does this all mean? Does it signify something about my life? That i'm going to die in here? The captain was right. I'm going to rot in jail. I'll never get out, will i? Please, God, help me. Let something happen so that i can get out.

I still have three months to go before this Section 29 expires. And it can be renewed. The captain will see that it's renewed as i'm not cooperating.

Sometimes i feel like dying. There's always the toilet bowl to drown oneself in. No, don't let them break you.

Snap out of this negativity.

Let's dance or say recitations from St John's Primary School.

I'm a little teapot, short and round. Pour me out, pour me out.

'Oh Lady of Fatima Hail... Dum da da dum.
The Hope of the human race.'

Holy Mary, day by day
Watch beside me
Guard and guide me
Holy Mary
Day by day
Watch beside me guard and guide me...
Lest we stay on life's highway
can't remember the words not
la lal dall dal

on my knees
Humbly we pray
Hear my prayer pity
hear the convent vows enslave me
Holy maid
Lend your aid
dah dah dah

Fairest flowers i'll bring you

Sweetest songs
I'll sing you
Prayer and praise shall not cease
If you grant release
Meditate meditate

Deep breathing...

Time to tidy up.

I will pack my case and then unpack again. Tidy up cell – must occupy myself with various tasks. I must calm my unsettled state of mind.

What can i sing? St Stephen's songs now. Did my Catholic St John's bit last time...

'Heer skenk genade vir elke uur' (Lord have mercy for each hour).

Oh i can do a spiritual dance.

Alternate it with some other work. I can start scrubbing floors with a new vigour.

I'm a little tea pot short and round. Pour me out, pour me out.

What's that at the cell door? What can it be? Trees. Trees here in the cell. Trees moving into the cell.

What's this tree moving into the cell? Oh, it's only Dunsinane coming to Birnam Wood – what is it again?

'Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him.'

Till Birnam Wood move to Dunsinane? No, i am not Macbeth?

Is this a dagger i see before me, the handle towards my hand? These are from Macbeth: no, i am not Macbeth.

I see someone coming into the cell. Is it my father?

My father. Methinks i see my father.

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio... than there are in your philosophy.' No i am not Hamlet.

Is it a good ghost or one wanting to lead me to damnation?

Sigh!

'When sorrows come – they come not single spies. Or is it single speared? – But in battalions.' Gosh, remember how i had an argument with Richard Rive? I said it was single speared or what – anyway he was right!

The sentence, 'When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions.' Yes, it was said by Claudius in Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene V. In the play, Claudius uses the line when talking with Gertrude. It is focused on the fact that when a bad incident occurs, it doesn't happen alone. I argued that it was single speared as i was creating the military image of weapons. But Rive was right: single spies.

You've got to memorise what you told them today. Stick to the story. Remember the details. The link between them – Indi and Bongani were in an illicit relationship. That's why he always came at night. No, i didn't suspect anything. The reason why he always came at night was because he didn't want the neighbours to see him. Apparently one of her

neighbours was related to his wife. No, they were members of UWCO. Our work is the empowerment of women.

I must say i found the photo albums and the videos quite entertaining that they showed me.

And what a collection of photographs. Even some Harold Cressy students – the Williams brothers. Keith and his elder brother – forget his name. Quite a collection they've got here.

Of course, i didn't let them see that there's a sign of recognition on my face when i saw a familiar face!

I did a singsong of:

'No, i don't remember their names. I have seen some of them at meetings – yes, of course, i see the video with my talking to them. Then i played the racist game. Yes, some of them i know. Yes, but you know how difficult it is to remember all the comrades' names. These Xhosa names – they're just so difficult.'

'I just call them comrade. I never was one for names.'

Oh, i really challenged Du Toit today.

I just said: 'Come, come now, Captain, surely i don't have to answer that question.' Mmm, probably sitting with pulling off this fluff from the socks for an hour if not longer. Yes, i just said to him:

'It can't be a danger to the state if Jen's a lesbian. Why do you want to know that? Surely that's her personal choice. I refuse to answer that question! Imagine – what rubbish! Is one's sexuality a danger to the state? Imagine asking if we have cats? All the stereotypes. Single women are lesbians and they all have cats. Now how can one be questioned as a political detainee and then you are asked if you have a cat? Really now!'

Then he said he wanted to be in the new police force.

And, of course, i really was angry.

What do you mean you want to be in the new South African police? So, you realise your days are over. We'll first have to have a Nuremberg type of trial. Then it will be decided. What do you mean we don't need a trial? What do you mean when you say no human rights have been violated? And what do you think you are doing to me right now? You think that apartheid is not too bad. It's easy for you to say. White Afrikaner man! You're benefiting from apartheid. Violating my human rights.

Can you imagine – here i am still sitting for probably two or more hours taking fluff off my socks?

Ms Bee – are you too dead – like all my other friends?

Oh dear, don't cry for your dead friends. Gee.

And now this friend is dead too. What does it all mean? Does it mean i too am to die?

What emotions am i experiencing now? Am i scared to die? I just did not picture myself dying here in a prison though. No, no negative thoughts. Dying is part of life and while there is life there is hope. So snap out of it!

I have so much pain though. My rheumatism is very bad – the cell is wet and cold all the time. When i wake up my body is so sore i cannot move. I will slowly do exercises to move each limb.

Make them flexible.

Day 60

Dear Doctor

Where were you all these years?

That you do not understand 'what' i am? You're too polite to say 'race'

And the 'treason' and 'terrorist' labels confuse you further.

Don't you realise that the reality is much more complex

Than the textbooks that they fed you on?

Your education resulted in your own illness

Your myopia

You cannot and do not see the situation in South Africa in perspective

You speak politely to me

But to another who does not speak your language/your English

You shout impatiently

Or is that the behaviour of the *herrenvolk* you've been indoctrinated with?

Dear Doctor, in a narrow medical sense, you're fine...

But in a holistic, human sense, you fail miserably.

You dare not,

Cannot prescribe anything that may infringe the work of the security police, your masters.

You say Cape Town is a pearl

But you do not see the flaws on the underside

The beauty of the mountain and sea – luxurious homes contrast with the informal settlements where people live in poverty and hunger

You cannot heal your own myopia
You cannot heal the iniquities of S29
Even though you're a doctor

Your gutter education taught you to be what you are

Dear Doctor
I do not know whether i sympathise with you more
Than i despise you.

He is very intrigued by me. On the one hand it seems as if he is quite in awe of me. But then the treason part he clearly is puzzled about and actually detests.

Sing-song time again!

Amajoni
Amajoni Amajoni Amajoni Amajoni
ma sey masye umsebensa Amajoni wa sa Afrika
Amajoni

Let's toyi-toyi to get warm.

Bored, bored, bored! What can i do now? Cell is scrubbed clean. Washing has been done. Prayers and meditation done. Dancing and exercising completed in all my clumsy ways.

At least i have a Bible to read. 1 Kings 11

Solomon's Fall:

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women; the daughters of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sodonian and Hitite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord said to the people of Israel, 'You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods'; Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart.

Now Solomon in all his wisdom had 700 wives and 300 concubines.
Now is this to depress me further, or not?

More androcentrism! Like that Paul chap and his misogyny: Ephesians 5:22 – ‘Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. As the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church.’ Oh, the duties of the wife. How to be a good wife. Something that I probably never was.

Day 90

Lines composed during interrogation

Your office is impeccable.

Book shelves lined with great revolutionaries,

Karl Marx to Kim il-Sung

You apologise flippantly for the girlie calendar on your door

Hang your coat over it in deference for the feminist prisoner

You're full of self-importance

Proud that you've got your degree in Police Science cum laude

Some lame excuse why you couldn't do your honours

Is it because your prisoner has a master's degree?

You've even taken down the photograph of PW and replaced it with
your UNISA BA degree

You – promoted to major after this last scoop of terrorists

I do not confess

I do not sing away my acts of terror

You wish me to create

I – a danger to the state?

Arrested under Internal Security Act

And you expect me to endorse this fact?

I sit

Silent

You've dropped your veneer of gentleman

You've forgotten how you've tried to impress me with your gabble
about Radio Pulpit –

What a good Christian you are

Quoting from your bible

You now sweat profusely,
You loosen your tie
Your hair is dishevelled

And now
You threaten me
You hover over me
Your sweat drizzling on me
Your hot rancid breath on my face
I cringe

Your threats deafen me
How when you're done with me, the arthritic pains will not be the
only ones that i'll have
How you will break my bones
You have the power to keep me locked up as long as you want to
Ten years are nothing
How i will rot in prison
Forever... forever

I cringe
I believe you
I squirm further into my chair

You turn away
Straightening your tie
Dab your wet brow
Then you pull straight your clothes and
Try to compose yourself.

I in my fear and pain
Eyes greedily yearning
To gulp up some distraction
Focus away this vulnerability

And there on your shining desk

Next to your nuclear family photo smiling with white South African confidence into the friendly sky

A shabby handmade pencil holder,
edges of glued paper peeling off
And with a child's scrawny handwriting
The words boldly and proudly announce:
'THE WORLD'S BEST DAD!'

Day 100

I enjoyed my daily jogs with my alphabet games here in my private exercise yard. What a privilege to have my private apartment.

Wow! Hello sun – you're down to the... Let's count. Oh! The 25th brick! One of these days i'll feel the sun on my body. But maybe i can reach it now. Let's stretch and see if i can. Not yet. But one of these days. But then one of these days i want to be out. Let's exercise with a toyi-toyi:

Phanzi de Klerk, phanzi! Phanzi du Toit, phanzi!

Phambile, Makhosikasi, Phambile!

Amajoni!⁷⁹

I'm a soldier, hey, where's my AK47?

Viva Nelson Mandela, Lilian Ngoyi, Dora Tamana, Dorothy Zihlangu, Dorothy Mfacu, Mildred Lesia.

I'm a little teapot...

Phew! This place is filthy!

Besem, asseblief! (Broom, please)

Let's sweep, sweep, sweep this place clean, clean, clean...

I'm falling down this tunnel. This black hole, it's sucking me in. I'm going down, down. God help me, please. You're supposed to be omnipotent and ubiquitous but you're not here. You're not even here. Even you've deserted me.

Suddenly everything went dark around me. My heart was pounding so hard against my chest it hurt me; my heart was like an iron ball being swung into my rib cage. With every impact pain shot through my entire body. My eardrums were being battered and i immediately got dizzy and nauseous. Not sure what was happening. My vision was blurred, while my head ached intermittently from heat and then cold. I felt i was going crazy or dying. I tried to do deep breathing to calm down, but there was no air for me to breathe. I panicked. My heart was now

beating violently, wildly and my entire body was shaking out of control. The sweat running down my forehead hurt my eyes; the palpitations increased. Now my entire body pulsed. Pounded. There was no air. No air. I could not breathe. Just falling, falling further down the tunnel. Dark. Frightening.

I emerged out of this blackout or whatever it was not having any idea of how long it had been. It was during the morning when i first asked for the broom. It was getting dark now. I did not know how long i could still tolerate solitary. Yes, i more or less know what they know. Maybe i should just confirm it.

It has been a few days that i have been contemplating that i should 'cooperate'. Being in solitary was really getting to me. I am experiencing pseudo-hallucinations more often now. I was taken to Dr Toviaah Zabow, the state district psychologist or psychiatrist. He sounded as if he cared and was compassionate; but, of course, i know i must trust no one. He explained that my brain has been accustomed to being very active and being in solitary for more than three months is now causing the brain to create pseudo-hallucinations. He recommended i get books to read. But the SBs did not follow his recommendations.

My mental state is becoming more precarious. Hallucinations and blackouts are becoming frequent. I have to do something. I must work out the strategy... what do they know? What evidence do they have? What have others said? What are they faking that they know?

They have my passport. They can see the various country stamps. I know i can at least just confirm what they have proof of or what will not incriminate any of my comrades in the underground cell. There is no stamp for Zambia as we flew from Zimbabwe without our passports. We had to submit our passports and then proceeded to another plane to Zambia. So no need for this in my confession... only Zimbabwean trips. Okay, they cannot arrest Chris Hani. So i will admit to meeting him. They do not know what Bruce's real name is (neither did i at that stage), so it does not matter. They have the bank book with the money i brought into the country. So, this i will confess. They have records from Budget car hire of the car i hired using my credit card. Budget car had also blacklisted me because of the various accidents comrades had been involved in with the hired cars. This is what i will confess.

Du Toit is clever. He would leave me in the cell for an entire month without letting Lena Engelbrecht fetch me for interrogation. At least interrogation entailed a lovely drive along the M3 with various vegetation

and beautiful trees, green grass and foliage. We would pass my old alma mater, the University of Cape Town, see aspects of the mountains and Newlands Forest. All very exotic after the grey, dark cell. But he just leaves me here in the cell. I have worked it out. First an entire week with no interrogation. Then one afternoon i would be fetched, and because i would say nothing be sent right back to the cell again. Then two weeks. Then a month. And he knew i was going a bit crazy...

I very carefully and clearly must work out 'my confession'. I repeatedly asked when Section 29 was ending. Du Toit said as soon as i was willing to 'confess my misdemeanours to a judge'. Du Toit also reiterated that he could keep me in Section 29 indefinitely. This i could not tolerate. I asked to see a judge to make my confession in order to be released from Section 29.

Parliament Towers, Plein Street, Cape Town, some afternoon in August 1988

'No, that is not true. I did not say that!'

'Are you telling me that you are willingly and without coercion confessing?'

'Well, i was told if i confess then i could be released?'

The judge with longish salt and pepper hair sat godlike and sternly behind his desk. Another white man – security police, interrogators, doctors, psychologists, all white men, and now the judge too. For the last three months these were the only people i was confronted with. The exceptions are the silent scrutinising women guards at Wynberg police cells, and Lena Engelbrecht who accompanied the other white security police who fetched me for interrogation. Apparently, a woman has to be present with a woman prisoner.

The judge's office was boringly ordinary: bookshelves, standard government office furniture, cupboards – it could have been in the office of a white school principal or a Home Affairs bureaucrat. I was asked to sit on a chair which was quite a distance from him. I do not think i had handcuffs on. No, i am sure i had no handcuffs on. It would not look good in front of the judge.

I was told that if i confess to a judge, i could be released from Section 29. At this stage i did not have the energy to counter Du Toit any longer. I just wanted to get out of solitary... i confirmed some of the things he knew about my visits to Zimbabwe to meet with Chris Hani, the money

i brought into the country from the bank accounts and stuck to my story about Bongani and Indi having a relationship. Nothing else – i stuck to my promise to myself of not implicating anyone... they shall remain nameless even now unless they want to be 'outed'...

'So you are here without any coercion?'

'Umm... Yes.'

'Please state your case clearly! You have come here willingly.'

'Well, i did not know about you and the procedures. I was informed by Captain du Toit about you. And that i could be released once i had confessed to you.'

'And you want to willingly and voluntarily make a confession?'

'I did not know about you and making a confession. I was informed by the captain that if i come to a judge and confess, i could be released.'

'And you came here willingly?'

'Yes. I have. The captain said if i do i can be released from Section 29.'

'Sorry, that is not willingly.'

I needed to get out. My head twirled and my tongue was thick and heavy. What should i say to this man to be set free? I needed to say the right things. My hands pained from wringing them.

'You are only here because you want to be released.'

'Yes, i want to be released but i am making the confession willingly.'

'What do you expect after you have made the confession?'

'Well, if i make the confession you will release me from Section 29.'

'So you are only making the confession in order to be released?'

'Yes. Ummm... no. But if i make a confession the captain promised that i could be released.'

'So then, this confession is not being made willingly and out of your own free will?'

'Yes, i am making it out of my own free will. Then i will be released.'

'I will not accept your confession because it is not being made freely.'

'Yes, it is being made freely and voluntarily.'

'Sorry you may go now.'

'But you have not listened to my confession!'

'You may go now.'

'No, please, i want to make a confession. I beg you. I want to make a confession freely and out of my own will.'

He stands up, his presence fills the whole room and i shrink into a mouse.

'Please, sir.'

‘Thank you. You may go now.’

I am stuck to the chair with superglue. My nails claw into the wood on either side of the chair.

My body shudders as the cries burst from my body.

‘Please, i want to make a confession.’

He opens the door.

‘Please, i need to make a confession.’

The captain has been standing outside of the room; probably heard this din. His face puffs up and reddens when he sees me crying. I appeal to him to ask the judge to accept my confession. His face looks as if it is going to explode. I see a *brul padda* (bullfrog). He takes out his handkerchief and vigorously wipes his forehead. His pace quickens and i struggle to keep up with him, my body still shaking vehemently.

Two antagonists: prisoner and perpetrator/interrogator/torturer are now allies in anger.

‘How dare the judge not accept your confession! What happened?’

I cannot speak as my sobs choke me into inarticulate silence.

‘Don’t worry. I will get you a lovely lady judge who definitely will take your confession.’

We walk towards the car: i in silence while he mumbles, groans and grunts like a looming volcano. Du Toit then arranged that i see ‘a lovely lady judge who will not ask questions but will just take my confession’.

A plain woman judge in a brown jersey – somewhere around the end of August 1988

She sat with pursed lips, sergeant major-like, a racing horse focused directly in front of her. Short-cropped straight sprigs framed her face. My mind went to the UNISA lectures held during the holidays at Cape Town High School. The professor whose name i cannot remember looked exactly like this woman. We were a postgrad Education class doing Fundamental Pedagogics. I sat at the back of the class on a small bench meant for two. All of us were teachers doing this course in order to get the professional qualification. I sat at the back of the classroom, comfortably with my feet on the desk in front of me... taking notes, listening attentively like a conscientious matriculant before exams. Somehow i was not looking at the lecturer – just writing notes and focused on my notebook. I became aware of the silence in the class. The tiny-eyed, mouse-faced lecturer with her teeny-weeny squeaky voice was silent. I looked up to see her glaring

at me, her tiny eyes stretched wide with indignation, eyebrows arched vehemently, her lips pursed even harder, accentuating a spiral of wrinkles around her mouth and nose. Silence!

Perplexed, i sort of uttered, not camouflaging the amusement i felt: 'Is she staring at me and whatever for?' I looked around at my silent classmates as if they could enlighten me as to what was happening. Silence.

Pursed lips hardly opening in the high-class white South African English she uttered: 'I refuse to continue until that student sits appropriately!' *C'est moi* (that's me) and i apparently was sitting inappropriately with feet resting on the front bench. I slowly removed my feet, one after the other, slow-motion, movie-like, while retorting at my loudest: 'Is this a kindergarten class or a postgrad class?' The Fundamental Pedagogics lecturer continued the minute both my feet were decently on the ground.

Here, 13 years later, i am sitting in front of a 'lady judge' with a similar demeanour as the mousy-eyed lecturer, same sprigs of grey hair with fringe and haircut below the ears; an antiquated, wrinkled, mummy-like version of Elizabeth Taylor's Cleopatra, all muscles tensed up in her face so that a friendly colleague would utter, 'Careful now with those tensed-up muscles. You are aggravating your wrinkles.' She too stared at me.

I sat down dutifully opposite her, moving quietly and respectfully so as not to upset her in any way. She, after all, stood between my freedom from Section 29 and continued inhumane incarceration. No, i did not care that she did not do her duty effectively and according to the rules. I did not care that she did not ask me whether i was willingly and without coercion making a confession. I was just too pleased to sing out my confession according to the message i had received from Bongani inside prison the night before i was arrested. Of course, i had to add a few frills that were evident from my passport: the different countries travelled to and i added, even though i had no country stamps in my passport (an arrangement between Zimbabwe and Zambia), my frequent trips to Zambia and meeting with Chris Hani. No, i did not tell her that the first time i had met comrade Chris i was so overwhelmed, humbled and in awe of this great revolutionary that i had burst out crying.

So, madam brown crimpelene jersey woman judge took my confession so i could be released from Section 29 to 'awaiting trial' status.

I was looking forward to my freedom. But nothing happened. Well, not nothing. Books happened. At least i received copies of *Reader's Digest*. I engulfed these eagerly. In fact, the staff were shocked that i went through them so quickly when i asked for the next one to read. No, i did not ask about my release from solitary. At least i had books, and like a good prisoner, you do not create waves. You do not antagonise your enemies. They alone have the power. They can make my life hell by leaving me here. Or they can release me. Smile. Be pleasant. You cooperate. You are polite. Sweet, even ingratiatingly so sometimes. I was living out my Stockholm syndrome, a condition in which i, like hostages in the past, develop a psychological bond with their captors during captivity. I wanted to please them so that i could be released from Section 29. Behave, behave, be a model prisoner.

Arriving at Pollsmoor

Lena and her assistant took me to Pollsmoor Prison in Tokai. The conversation they had in the car on the way illustrated that they had realised that the days of the apartheid regime were limited. Lena asked me if i could visit her when she was put in prison. She said i must please bring her some chocolates. We arrived there late in the afternoon, about 3pm. They left me at the entrance. There was one prison staff member on duty. She was busy booking in another prisoner. I stood watching the procedure. Body searches were compulsory, i assume. But this was the first time i witnessed a prisoner removing her underclothes and being instructed to sit on her haunches. The warden then put on rubber gloves and inspected her genital orifices. The prisoner was docile throughout this event. I cringed.

Then it was my turn. I was pleasant but maintained an attitude of quiet and dignified reserve. The forms to be filled in were comprehensive, including the religion and church one belonged to. Then it was my turn to be strip-searched. What precisely i did i am not sure, but my body language made it quite clear that i was not going to allow myself to be humiliated through a genital search. It may have been my attitude. But, in some way, even though i was the prisoner and she the prison authority, the class differences were there; just like it had been with Du Toit and his lack of an honours degree when i had a master's. He was always explaining to me why he could not do his honours. Was this power game deliberate or subtle? All i know is that while she was doing the body

search i looked her directly in the eyes, saying nothing. I may even have had a friendly smile on my face. Polite, amenable. I realised then how silence had been my strength on many occasions. I looked at her and wondered what it was, but at that moment i felt that i had more power than her. She suddenly stopped short of doing the genital search. Was it the way i looked at her that may have made her infer: 'Don't you dare do that to me?' Was it class, education, being English speaking, urban, colour and other intersectionalities or her being someone who was also classified as 'coloured' by the regime? But i knew at that moment that i had more power than her.

She then laughed and produced a steel plate of food which was still hot.

'We kept your food in the oven for you. We were expecting you earlier but did not know what time you would be arriving.' I smiled and thanked her. We were then on an even footing as people.

The food was dried out after being in the oven for too long. There was a beetroot salad which was hot too, as well as unrecognisable meat and overcooked vegetables, mostly cabbage. Cabbage, the start of a daily diet of cabbage for the duration of my stay at Pollsmoor. What was interesting was the path we took to my new abode. We went down a long corridor with several locked gates. There seemed to be two or more sets of locks for each gate. My warden would unlock on our side, and another warden would unlock at the other side of the gate. But this was done so quickly and unobtrusively that, even though i casually and discretely watched intently, i was unable to work out what the sequence was. More confusing and confounding corridors followed until we veered off to the left, to what i worked out was the main complex. I do not know who informed me or how i knew, but i was taken to what was called the Blanke Hospitaal (hospital for whites only). It was a self-contained section with five little cells. I was taken to the second cell. All the cells were painted a very pale lime colour and were spotlessly clean and sterile. This was a bright contrast to my grey and dark Wynberg prison. These cells did not have a double steel door, and there was more natural light. This was a welcome change for me. The closing of cell doors echoed with discordance in the large emptiness of the hospital. For the first time in more than 100 days, i was absolutely alone. In the past Lena would even accompany me to the toilet. It also occurred to me that the SBs were disobeying their own laws. As a Section 29 prisoner i was supposed to be watched for 24 hours a day. There was no one to keep watch over me.

The cell and the entire section were empty and sparse. My cell could have been about two metres by five metres. There was a single bed with no place for much more. There was a speaker on the wall, but it was disconnected. I later learnt that it was for a radio. I felt lonely and as empty as this place was. Apart from the guard watching me all the time at the Wynberg cells, there was sometimes singing or shouting, swearing and an equal amount of cursing and cavorting in that prison. Then there was the crying of children from Friday to Monday mornings. There was also the traffic and the noise of people doing their late Friday night shopping at Maynard Mall. And there were also the birds that occasionally visited me. It was strange that in that dark, dank place in the middle of winter the birds would be there regularly making a merry noise, and sometimes doing fancy acrobatics on the bars above my exercise yard. Here the silence was cracked only by every move i made, actually echoing. I sat down on my new bed.

I ate the food in silence.

I had a *Reader's Digest* to accompany me for the evening.

Day 120

Blanke Hospitaal, Pollsmoor.

They probably don't know what to do with me. The police cells at Wynberg were in demand, what with their arresting kids all the time. How i hated that – crying children really traumatised me. How the police promised that they would phone their parents – one excuse after another. The children would then speak to a new policeperson who came on duty – they hopefully gave their phone numbers. It pained me. A weekend of crying kids, calling for their parents. What type of job is this? How could police really promise these kids to follow up their parents and they never do.⁸⁰

They transferred me here to Pollsmoor Prison. So here i am in the Blanke Hospitaal. As there are no sick whites, i am here alone. Even though it's warmer – i'm not exposed to the rain – it's colder in the sense that i see no one. They're breaking their own rules – i'm supposed to have a guard watching me 24 hours a day. Perhaps that is another issue – there may not be enough staff. Ja, what with some whites being conscientious objectors, not going to the army. Maybe there are some police too who do not want to do their apartheid duties. Could be...

Why am i finding this so difficult to recall?⁸¹ I keep on changing the subject. Do other things. Is it too painful to recall how they forgot about me? How they didn't bring my food. Forgot to take me for exercise. Didn't bring my medication? I did not exist!

How i banged on the door, shouted, pleaded, pressed the feelingless emergency button until my finger was sore. In any case, i realised that they had disconnected it. No outside contact. But i kept pressing that button, hoping that someone could come. They just cut me off from humanity – first in Wynberg they addressed me as 'Artikel 29'. Article 29 negated my person – took away my name and now they just don't do anything about me. Maybe if some white patient got ill, they'd have to bring her here and then see me. Captain didn't even come around to ask, 'Klagtes?' (Complaints?) Not that they'd ever do something about it. I remember the first day i got here. I was lying on my bed – could be about 5.30am – when this captain comes to my barred gate (I learnt later that she was a captain) and mumbled something inarticulately. I just stared at her.

What is it now that i am writing this down – that i have to play a few games of solitaire before i could continue typing this experience? I need to numb the pain with distractions. When am i ever going to get rid of this pain? Every year when i perform my *The Spirit Shall Not Be Caged* play, i think it's going to be easier. And of course i tell this to everyone. And i believe it. But somehow it's the first time i venture after all these years into the Blanke Hospitaal. And i need to tell myself i am. I exist and i survived. And i'm here, am i not? I've picked up the pieces and i've gone forward. I live. I survived – therefore i am.

About the captain. She had a black lackey sergeant with her the first time i saw her, when she came to my cell at five-ish to ask if there were any 'klagtes'. A few minutes after they left the sergeant returned to give me the captain's instructions. I was instructed then that when Captain or Major comes around tomorrow morning (usually at 5am or so), my bed has to be made, cell has to be tidied up, i should be washed, dressed, with my hair combed and to stand at the barred door and greet 'appropriately'. That means stand to attention at the barred gates. And when Captain comes, i have to salute like in the army. One salutes to the hierarchy. Fat chance. I just lay in my bed.

Yes, they forgot about me. Captain or Major did not appear; black coffee and lumpy pap or Jungle Oats was not brought for my breakfast, no 500mg Prothiaden to ease my troubled mind. Later, no exercise.

How i banged on the bars with my enamel cup. Then, no lunch, supper. Thereafter i do not remember. I vaguely recollect being in some type of daze. Maybe caused by the panic attacks, hunger and emotional shock of being a no one. A nobody. I did not exist. A persona non grata. It was too much for my conscious mind.

Sometime later a prison staff member came to apologise for forgetting about me. When i asked how long it had been, she would not say. I still wonder today.

I have no idea how many days i was kept there. There was a big exercise yard. There was a beautiful warm sun, and with the sun my mood was lighter.

I was moved to another section. Only two of us were in that section. Visibly uglier, and not as pristinely clean and attractive as the Blanke Hospitaal section; apartheid in action even in the prison facilities. White prisoners must have better facilities than black prisoners. Maybe white crimes are not as bad as black crimes.

I cannot work out which section of the prison i was moved to. Despite all the confusing corridors, i think it may have been towards the south of the prison. In this section there was another political prisoner, Farieda Khan. We exchanged info briefly. I think she said she had been in exile. It was lovely to have someone to speak to. I never really saw her because our cells were adjacent to each other and the cell doors on the same side. We never did joint exercises. So, i may have been in in-between status although i was not informed. I cannot remember too much about her. I could have been there for about three days.

Section 29 was officially over for me, even though no one formally said anything. I was accused number 12 in the *State versus Tony Yengeni and 13 others*. I also began to understand the impatience of Captain, sorry, now Major du Toit. The trial had already started while i was in Section 29. He had to get me out so that the full trial could be in process.



Author with fist in the air, outside Supreme Court; released on bail.

Photograph: Rashied Lombard



Author with her mom outside court on her release on bail.

Photograph: Rashied Lombard



Accused numbers 8 to 14: charges withdrawn.

Photograph: Rashied Lombard



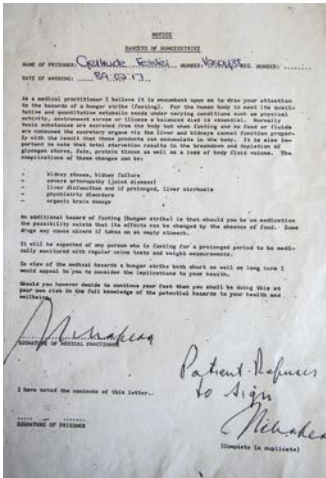
Author's painting done while on trial: 'Women making merry'.



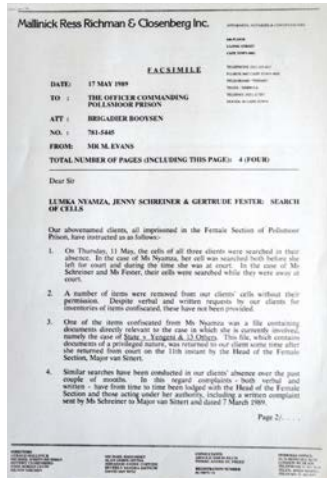
Trialists – photograph taken in cell at court.



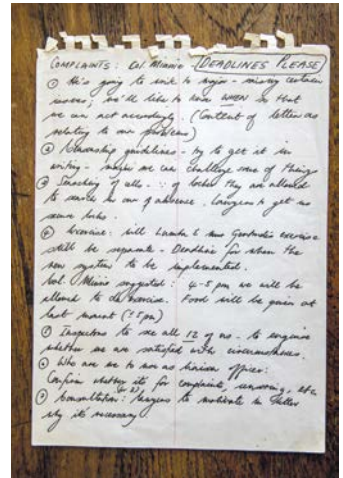
Note from lawyers to prison authorities: illegal interrogation of author.



Note on hunger strike – we (as patients/prisoners) collectively refused to sign.



Letter from lawyers to prison authorities – searching of cells.



Handwritten list of complaints by trialists written by author to Col. Minnie's.



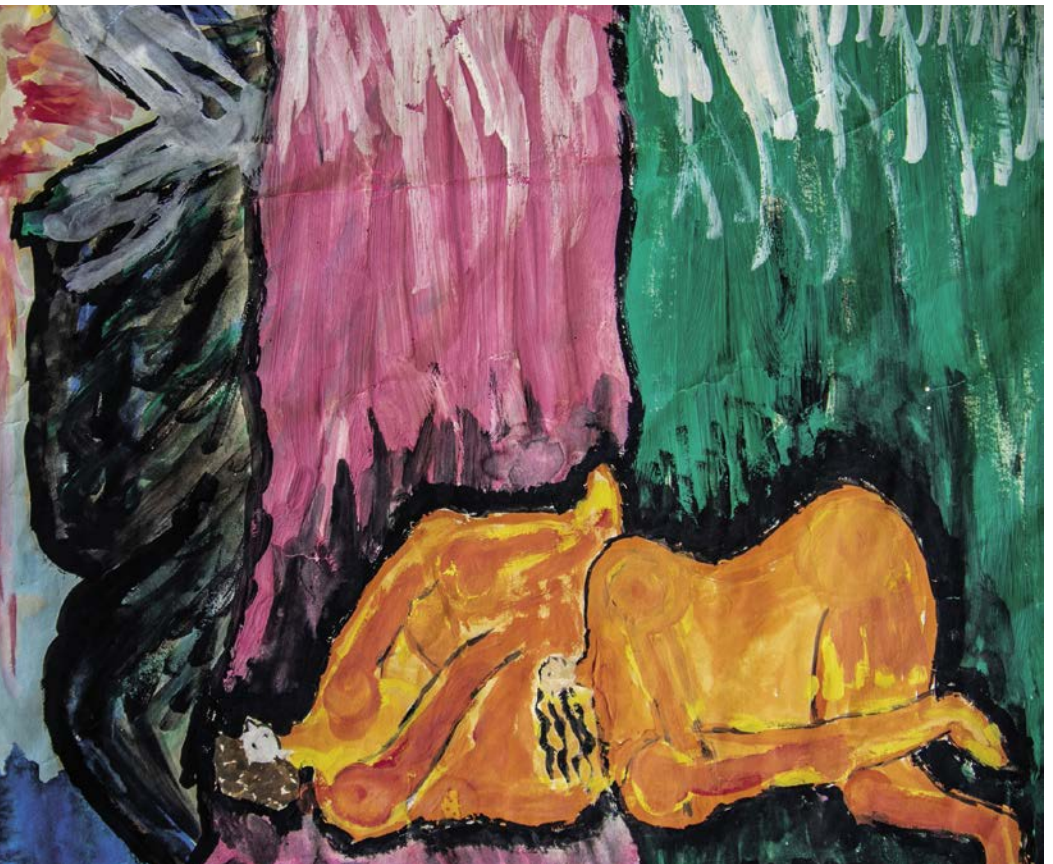
30th anniversary of MK; centre, with black t-shirt: Minister Kader Asmal; to right: Comrade Chris Hani, Jame Nkulu and author. Photograph: Paul Grendon



Sketch done by author – The spirit cannot be caged.



Sketches done by author for Prison Note Book.



Colour painting done in prison by author of two women with Table Mountain in background.

CHAPTER 7

The trial

More or less Day 106, around beginning September 1988

I was fetched by Lena and driver and taken to the Wynberg courts. It was here at Wynberg when i first saw all of them. I think i was a bit bewildered. I came out of solitary confinement and with only Farieda Khan's voice the last three days. Suddenly i was in a courtroom with people and magistrate and staff... lots of people, noise, sounds. All deafening... bewildering.

Too many people, all speaking to me simultaneously, greeting me excitedly, shouting, smiling, laughing, happy to see me. Overpowering, i was shocked into an almost comatose state. Happy smiles... i smiled in return but was still not feeling the happiness and relief yet... Suddenly after months of seeing minimal people and mostly being in solitary i unexpectedly find myself at Wynberg courts with people, police, officials, comrades and co-trialists' families. I am sitting with two rows of people as accused. I had no idea of how many we were and there was Jenny Schreiner too, sitting further away from me. Sitting next to me was Zurayah Abass and then Colleen Lombard next to Zurayah. There were all these people, waving, smiling, showing me a good luck sign in the court but i recognised no one i knew. It was full. I think there was singing of freedom songs at some stage, but it was all too disorienting,⁸² overpowering as well as exciting. Lots of talking, people waving at me happily and excitedly, sounds, noise, again dumbfounding, confounding and deafening me after so much silence. Here i was, part of the trial as accused number 12. I was placed between Alpheus Ndude and Zurayah Abass. What i could work out was this: the hearing was twofold – that

i have been added to the trial and that there was a bail application for me. It was denied. So here i am, thank God, an on-trial prisoner. Thank, thank God! I would never have lasted for much longer in Section 29.

Of course, now i also understand why my solitary confinement had been cut – they were waiting for me. The treason trial that i am now part of had already started some time earlier. The lawyers probably thought it would be easy to apply for bail for me after Section 29. Both Zurayah and Colleen were out on bail. However, bail was refused for me. I was just happy to be out of Section 29.

The charge was treason. As is well known, a treason trial entails a conspiracy to overthrow the state. This implies automatically that the state must prove that there is a link between each of us. They must prove how we were working together to overthrow the apartheid state. I certainly did not know most of the accused. I knew three women, Jenny and Zurayah in the women's group, United Women's Congress, together with me.

Not sure whether i met Christine Berger here. She was assigned to me as my lawyer. I think at some other occasion all these legal situations had been decided. But then in any case there was no way i could even decide about who my lawyer would be. I was too exhausted and drained to think of anything extra... so it was good that these decisions had been made, certainly for me. I would not know where to start, and my family, to whom i had no access as yet, would be none the wiser. It was all bewildering, perplexing; i was seeing people and old comrades and many new and strange people. I looked at the lot that sat in the two rows of the accused benches with me, mostly all strangers. I think we sort of smiled at one another at various stages of this hearing.

I was returned to Pollsmoor in a police van with Jen and Lumka. It was the end of the road with Lena and the other guy who had been with me in all these months – my driver and personal security. Meeting Jen after a long time was strange. In the past we were executive members of UWCO and spoke mainly UWCO business. Here we were accused of trying to overthrow the state and aiding and abetting the ANC. How did we react to one another? I cannot remember. Meeting Lumka (accused number 3) for the first time was interesting as we were to be cell section mates for the next year. I ended up helping her with her studies and her English homework. I cannot remember the drive home or what we spoke of in the van, but getting back to prison, we were first body searched (this is a routine). Then later as the court process proceeded, we had

many files. After some time when we were also searched and our files scrutinised, it was the basis of lots of arguments. They searched through them too slowly and could possibly read the contents. We challenged them that we would ask for a mistrial if they looked too closely into our files. We were escorted to our sections. Jenny was taken further down the corridor to section E, the white section, and Lumka and i were taken to F section.

At our section one first encounters a big foyer. Then there was a big cell for about 20 or 30, with double bunks dormitory style. The prisoners were all sentenced and worked as kitchen staff. I learnt to know that there were various hierarchies of prisoners; one for the prison staff and then of course amongst the prisoners themselves. I recall a rich woman from Langa who had her husband murdered. I cannot remember under which circumstances we met her. How come we were even allowed to mix and meet with her is puzzling. She was a sentenced prisoner, and we were on trial. Jenny knew her and Lumka as well. She always looked smart and somehow seemed to walk freely in the prison. Her nails were always smartly and elegantly painted.

Later i got to know most of the kitchen staff. They were always neat and smart, or as smart as one can be wearing the prison outfits. They all wore floral dresses. They were definitely privileged and part of a hand-picked group of women prisoners working in the kitchen and cleaning the prison authorities' offices.

In terms of the prison staff in charge of our section there was one whom the other staff called 'Muis' (mouse), a small woman (and apparently she gossiped/'pimped' about other staff to the prison authorities and hence others did not like her) and Sersant Conradie from Upington. I forget the third woman's name. They were all from rural areas and very unaware of what was happening in the country. They explained to us their facilities, all separate and not as good as the white staff's facilities. They also played in the netball team – but all separate. We then challenged them why they were accepting it and that they are part of upholding an illegitimate apartheid system. They would be quiet. But it was obvious that they were pondering on what we had told them. I enquired about their training as staff. It was really basic, and they did not learn any psychology at all. I found this puzzling considering the nature of their work. We did quite a lot of political education with them. I was surprised that they knew so little about the political situation in the country. They explained that they were not allowed to be part of political structures. They did not see

anything wrong with all the restrictions and limitations of their jobs. Gradually one could see how they slowly started questioning aspects of their lives. The biggest puzzle for them i could discern was that people referred to us as terrorists, but we were average everyday people like them. They even liked us by the way they treated us.

Lumka and i had the whole section to ourselves, about six cells apart. We had great fun within the confines of the prison. We enjoyed our exercises and being outside in the exercise yard in the sun. We connived together to give food to the women in the punishment cells. Also, we shared and chatted about our lives. I remember Lumka sharing how they sometimes did not have food in the camps. She made food once and either she or someone else used baboon meat for the dinner. They did not tell the others what meat it was. Yes, we also laughed a lot.

Hurrah! Yes i am so happy to be on trial in a new section with Lumka further down the passage and an exercise yard with much more light. It is nearly spring and the darkness of winter has evaporated slowly. The light gives me a new positive outlook, obviously contributing to this lightness of spirit and hope. 'Light after darkness.' After hard work comes the reward? *Post Tenebras Lux?* Is this the motto of Hewat or is it Harold Cressy? One of the education institutions i either attended or taught at.

Lumka and i could use the bathroom together only after the kitchen staff were outside doing their various chores. Thereafter we did our exercises in the yard. Lumka was very fit and she showed me many of her exercises. I did what i could remember from gym. The prison staff were quite impressed with us and many asked me how we knew all those sequences of movements. For a short while Lumka and i were the only two in this corridor, even if it meant being separated by about six cells. But one could shout down the corridor and even occasionally have a conversation, so that was fun for me... just speaking to another like-minded human being.

Now for my cell: three metres by two; small, barred windows on the south side and a barred door to the passage. Then a thick steel door which was locked at night and at midday during double-lock time (12 to 2pm) – sometimes even longer. There is a small speaker from which the radio is transmitted from the central office: blaring music shocks you awake every morning at 5am. We made felt covers lined with newspaper to absorb the sound a bit. Jenny coordinated this and got us the sewing materials to do it. I embroidered a paisley design on my yellow felt cover – needle used under supervision i recall.

An average day: Schedule of events...

About 5am – either Captain Müller or Major van Sittert with their farcical *klagtes* bit came to our cells.

6am – lumped porridge – oats gone wrong or choking lumped mielie pap.

7am – showers. Wow! Out of the cell. We had to walk down to the bathroom in the next corridor. All this was orchestrated very carefully. We shared this bathroom with others but when it was our turn to use the bathroom, no other prisoners were in sight. All this manoeuvring was rigidly coordinated.

About 10am for 30 minutes: exercise in the outside yard in the sun.

I could see the unchequered sky for the first time in months.

I could see a big square of blue sky.

Blue skies with tufts of cotton wool.

Grey-white cottage pie skies.

Tips of Kalk Bay and back of Twelve Apostles mountains.

Double-locked any time from:

11am–1.30 (or even later): Double-lock time with thick steel door and barred door locked. Lunch was indistinguishable fruit in this reddish fruit jam on a thick slice of bread. What was most amusing was the tension on the faces of the staff when, after counting us (the prisoners), our numbers did not tally. They would anxiously request where Lumka or Jenny was... as they were missing. There were times i did not say they were at the doctor or for legal consultation, just to make them sweat a bit.

Cells opened between 1.30 and 2pm. Cells were sometimes opened much later which meant there was hardly any time for dinner and then being double-locked for the night.

3pm – dinner and then double-locked in the night.

Dinner menu – cabbage, probably from the prison gardens. Every second day with samp, alternating with mealie meal – Day 1 curry cabbage, Day 2 tomato cabbage and Day 3 plain cabbage and the cycle begins again.

According to Ivan Toms, one of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) conscientious objectors to go to prison in the 1980s, we were occasionally served ‘dynamited chicken’.⁸³ Now can you imagine how hungry you get. If you keep your food for later, if you are in a communal cell, it is bound to be stolen or there can potentially be fights over food in these overcrowded cells. ‘Are the prison authorities deliberately contributing to situations of tension and strife?’ I often wondered.

But the best part about being ‘awaiting-trial’ status – visitors! Twice a week! And books! Some would deposit ‘money on our property’ (that is, at the major’s office). As regards the books: Sersant Gouws insisted on taking my books to the schoolroom. ‘Maar hulle lyk dan soos skool boeke’ (But they look like schoolbooks), she explained when i queried where my books were that visitors had left for me. Our access to newspapers – well that is another case, either cut to smatterings or strict censorship with a black khoki pen, blacking out all we ‘were not supposed to know’! Then we wrote letters of protestation. Oh, the brigadier, major and captain must have been *gatvol* (irritated) because of all our letters of complaint. I asked Major for the list of regulations on what our rights are. There i was, writing them all down. Yes, outside prison we take photocopying machines for granted – there i was, hours and hours of writing out all the rules in order to know my rights. And then to memorise them to be able to quote them verbatim during contestations. This was another power game with the prison staff. They did not always know all the regulations, and if one was to quote clause 5 of section 2 and then either read the section or quote it, they would immediately acquiesce.

Yes, but the best part still was visitors twice a week. I had a support group outside and they organised a roster, with persons alternating their visits. UWCO member Louise Naude coordinated my roster.

Another big, big issue: food! You would think we fantasised about sex in prison. No, it is food! One has lots of fantasies while in prison, but the priority was food, glorious food. Lumka and i fantasised about rice. We never ever had rice – only samp and mielie pap. It would have been bearable if it had been made with more TLC, but yech! Unpalatable! So Lumka and i decided to order rice with our weekly shopping. We were allowed shopping if we were in the good books and had money on our property. Once i heard an advert on the radio for delivering pizzas, so i decided to test the staff. I asked them to order one for me but they thought it was not in the rules.

Around Day 120: Mid-September

A few days later we had to go for legal consultation. Most legal consultation meant all 14 of us had to attend. This was compulsory. But as i will reiterate time and time again... nobody just missed it... anything to get out of the cell. So all of us attended everything.

There may have been a day or two when someone was ill and did not attend. There were also a few occasions when there was individual consultation. For example, once the court case started and particular questions in court were about Jenny's, Tony's or others' activities, there would be that individual's legal consultation. The prison authorities really had to get their logistics in order; transport from two different sections: female prison for Jen, Lumka and me, and Chris from the white male section.

The legal consultation took place at Maximum Security where the black male comrades were imprisoned (all in one large cell). Maximum was about a five-minute drive from our section. The first time we arrived there we were escorted to the room assigned for legal consultation. En route there we encountered some male prisoners polishing the corridor floor. They were so excited when they saw us. There were echoes reverberating around that section, 'Kyk, daar is vrouens hier' (Look, there are women here). I also met a cousin of mine, Deon Wicomb, who was a warden at Maximum. He is from Prince Albert and his father was a policeman.⁸⁴

Our legal consultation room was suitably arranged. There were small tables or desks all arranged in a square with chairs behind. It meant we could put our court files and documents on the table and work in comfort. We could also see one another clearly and this facilitated good communication. I always arranged the desks in my classrooms like this, expediting communication. The door to our room had a big glass panel at which a warden stood on the outside watching us. The window was big enough so that the entire room was visible to the guard. Our first meeting was a bit of a 'get to know one another'. There were usually two or three lawyers present at all our consultations. When we entered, the men were already there. Lumka naturally went to sit next to her husband Tony. Jenny and I just went to sit where there were places available. I decided I would try to sit with different comrades so that I could learn to know them. It took some time for me to get to know them all. I eventually developed close relationships with most of them.

Zurayah and Colleen (accused numbers 13 and 14) were out on bail; they hence came from home. What was convenient for us was that Colleen and Zurayah always brought us special treats. Later it became customary that we would order certain things that we wanted. It was a bit of a strain on them as all 12 of us requested different things all the time. They occasionally also brought us letters, books or interesting

things to read concealed in their files. How these were concealed in their court files was quite miraculous. On entering prison, the prison authorities are supposed to search them but could only page swiftly through their court documents. I wonder though whether there were occasions that the prison staff just ignored the goodies brought in by them. Maybe as fellow human beings they did not want to deny us at least some good things in life.

Lawyers had to be present at our legal consultations. We were represented by four firms: Essa Moosa and Associates (the struggle lawyers *par excellence*), Mike Evans was from Malinicks, Jerome van der Schyff was from Vassen and Associates. I am not sure from which firm Christine Berger, Jenny's and my lawyer, came.

The first session, apart from getting to know one another, was a sharing of Section 29 experiences. Then each of us was requested by the lawyers that we had to write in full as far as we could remember about Section 29 experiences. This was to be used in our defence in case of any violation of laws. Then we discussed which security police were assigned to each of us.

The following list highlights who tortured and who interrogated whom:

Michael – Wagenaar and Nel (I wrote 'racist pig' next to his name in brackets)
 Bongani Jonas⁸⁵ – Wagenaar, Nel and Goosen
 JayJay (Titana) – first Van der Merwe and Nel (threatened to kill him)
 Later JayJay (Titana) – Wagenaar and Liebenberg
 Mbutu – Nel, Smith
 Zurayah – Abels, De Beer, Mostert
 Gary – Benzien, Goosen and Liebenberg
 Tony – Benzien
 Gertrude – Du Toit, Kruger, Liebenberg, Theron, amongst another seven interrogators, also Mostert
 Titana – Van Gos-Williger, Nel, Goosen, Bensien, Leibenberg, Mostert
 Chris – Naude, Nel, Liebenberg
 Wellington – Wagenaar, Kruger

Our lawyers were all junior counsel. We learnt about and got some insight into the legal profession and the system. As the charge

was treason, we were informed by our lawyers that we needed to consider having senior counsel (SC) or 'silk'. The legal expenses were apparently enormous, but i assumed it was paid and coordinated by the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF)⁸⁶ based in London.

The lawyers explained in more detail why we needed senior counsel. This was the start of a series of discussions about the need to equip ourselves politically and legally for the trial, the need for political education in general and also the strategy of perhaps getting together regularly and out of the cell at least once a week. It was then decided that we would have 'legal consultation' twice a week, one day being political education. We were not allowed to meet without lawyers so they had to check whether there would be funding for that. This was then arranged, and the lawyers drew up their roster.

I assume it was Tony, accused number 1, and commander who initiated the discussions. Most of us were quiet initially as we were getting to know one another and the context of prison. It took some time before there was full participation by all in the form of contributing to discussions and proposals. But it was always uneven, university staff and shop stewards, but all brought their unique insight and knowledge and we learnt from one another. The three shop stewards, Michael, Wellington and Mbutu, were always close. I had a special close relationship with Michael, who was quiet and did not speak much. He had a lovely personality. We also mostly used English as a medium, which meant that some isiXhosa speakers were at a disadvantage and did not always contribute as much.

As the charge against us was treason, it was incumbent on the state to be able to link each of us. The lawyers then decided that they would ask the state for 'more particulars', that is, how are we all connected in trying to overthrow the state. Our lawyers informed us that usually SC was used in cases of treason. The first few weeks of discussions were around the SC and the need for it or not. This became a protracted discussion over months. We worked out the roster of discussions required and drew up our work programme: our lawyers would brief us on the various SCs; we would then look at their records and the history of the SCs; what happened in various political trials and what worked politically and not. It was a very interesting period. Many of us developed an interest in the law and there were even plans for some of us to start studying towards a law degree; I was one of them, but this was not to be.

Early October 1988: Education proposals and assessment

A special meeting was convened to assist us in the planning and preparation of our future tasks. So as usual all were present.

The first discussion was around our personal preparation for trial. We should, apart from the consultations with all 14 and with lawyers, also embark on either reading and discussing in cells. Counsel could join us in this education. There were a few who really were in favour of using Colin Bundy in some way. His name was often mentioned. We could have discussion over two days. We were encouraged to prepare questions beforehand – what we know, what questions to raise. Some also wondered which was better: functioning as small groups versus bigger groups. Others believed our education groups had not been properly reassessed, hence they did not produce the correct atmosphere.

People were reminded of the following: the function of report-back; deeper training sessions articulating views in small groups; the function of chairs to promote inclusive discussions. Sometimes discussions were not effective as we failed to stimulate maximum participation.

There had been some mistakes in the past: regarding our papers – first decision to be sent out. Papers had to be typed and returned. Whoever took responsibility to disseminate and had to undertake to do it properly, otherwise they were also sent back promptly.

We were informed that there would be a hunger strike in future to demand the release of political prisoners. We had to be prepared to be part of it.

Mid-October 1988

It was like a breath of fresh air. With her delightful, garrulous and friendly demeanour, Yasmina Pandey joined us in our section. I think her cell was midway between mine and Lumka's. She was there for a few weeks as co-accused in the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) commander Ashley Forbes Trial. The previous year (1987), Ashley Forbes, together with 14 others, including Yasmina, Jeremy Veary, Leon Scott, Nazeem Lowe, Peter Jacobs, Niclo Pedro and Wally Rhooode, were in Pollsmoor Prison awaiting trial on 'terrorism' charges. In the meantime, Ashley and Yasmina applied to get married while on trial – and it was then that I appointed myself as the 'mother of the bride', doing the motherly tasks

and dressing her. It was such fun and the planning and discussions of what to do used up quite a lot of our energies. It was a time of great frolic and fun within the limitations of prison life. We really enjoyed ourselves and the laughter and bubbly personality of Yasmina added extra spice to our lives. The night before the day of the wedding (23 October) i applied henna onto her hands and made some pretty flower-like designs. We were hoping for some wedding cakes and other treats but somehow these did not materialise. She was released on 27 October 1988. I think they made a deal with the state that charges against Yasmina be withdrawn. For a short while we also had Febe Potgieter under Section 50 in our section.

This was written for Yasmina and Ashley:

Yasmina's laughter and commitment to the struggle and Ashley were like a breath of fresh air in the stale stagnant stench Pollsmoor atmosphere.

For Yasmina and Ashley:

All that is good we wish for you
 Dear – we know that surely as the sun shall rise⁸⁷
 Even though darkness
 Threatens our lives
 Let our spirits like birds soar above their bars
 Eventually our efforts will make us free

Another script found – also for Ashley and Yasmina:

As surely as the sun shall rise
 You, Ashley and Yasmina, shall be together
 Even though dark thunderous clouds prevail
 Storms of oppression pelt perilously against us

Your fate inextricable linked to the freedom of this land
 As surely as the sun shall rise... (so clichéd)
 Together in a world in which we work
 The wealth shall be shared by those [who] work it.

Your fate, Ashley and Yasmina
 And though they detain you, and separate you from those you love,
 Our love and dedication shall rise above
 their barbarism, their barracks and their bars.

Your love, your ideas and your commitment to each other and the people of this land

Their cancerous system of apartheid and exploitation

Cannot incarcerate the will of the people to be free...

And the sea gulls shall soar high into the open sky

The sea gulls are still alive

The sea gulls are alive and still singing

Their cancerous system cannot incarcerate our ideas, but apartheid will slowly destroy itself

Cancerous cells

Spreading malignantly evil?

Cells spreading insidiously spreads to other cells, destroying their growth of destruction – This however will be terminated by the growth in our united commitments

Apartheid will be crushed, hastened by our determination...

Day 170: 3 November 1988

I spent time drawing in the art book i had which someone had sent me. There were exercises on how to draw caricatures. I then drew a caricature of myself lying in the sun. Lynne wanted to know when she saw that drawing with the poem below, what made me so happy, as i sounded elated. I explained that one of the key things about being in prison is that one has rapid mood swings. I think it is termed being emotionally labile.

THE SPIRIT SHALL NOT BE CAGED – POLLSMOOR PRISON

This is a celebration to LIFE

To LOVE to the CREATOR of us all

To the BEAUTY of LIFE

I want to sing

shout

dance

whirl

twirl

teasing the sunlight

my spirit effervesces champagne

in finely cut crystal glass

mineral waters bubbling,

sparkling out of the bowels of the brown earth
shimmering
glistening
glowing of the moon on azure seas
I cavort on hills, frolicking like young lambs
I stretch my arms out wide
I grow tall as trees
I take a deep breath of beauty
I embrace the whole world wantonly
becoming one with it –
mingling my mind
midst morning dews
As the spirit shall not be caged
They can imprison my body but not my soul;
Nor my ideas my commitment to freedom together with millions of
others
I draw a deep breath of beauty
red sun
turquoise moon (3/11/1988)

21 November 1988

Political Education at Maximum: first issues discussed were the details of senior counsel.

In terms of procedure, we had to understand what the role was and why we needed senior counsel. Also, what is the role of SC in terms of practically questioning actual court functioning and examination? Besides senior counsel, we also looked at other court cases – how they worked and what succeeded and what did not. We had to see what we could learn from them. Other aspects discussed during this time were the role of expert witnesses. Again the example was highlighted of Colin Bundy. He wrote about the trial of Lizo Ngqungwana⁸⁸ and also testified in court.

28 November 1988

In terms of preparation, the key question was: should we first determine whether we needed SC? These discussions were protracted, and everyone had to share their opinion. Later it was unanimously

decided that we needed SC, considering that the charge was treason. Once we have SC, do we advise/inform them of decisions of the group and then discuss the viability thereof? Or how does it work? There were so many questions and curiosities. Our lawyers were always well prepared and researched and contributed to making it all very thought-provoking and dynamic discussions. We all learnt a lot and got insight into legal procedures.

We also analysed various trials and examined which political trials used SC throughout or for short periods at a particular section of the trials. We learnt that most used SC throughout the trial. Others occasionally brought in SC to cover a certain section, like prisoner of war (POW) status.

For the Petane case the state also used SC just for certain sections, for example, Rothwell on POW status.⁸⁹ Whether we should use the POW strategy as a tool was one that took up many hours and energies.

There was a discussion of the roles of SC and that of the defendants. We acknowledged that SC all have the legal and technical insight but how would it work if legal aims contradicted political aims? We explored whether there had been any conflicts in the past between SCs and defendants. Whose positions carried more weight in that case?

On examining the case of Barbara Hogan, it was found that SC Bizos participated for mitigation only. There was also SC King, which means she had two SCs. We could not determine whether she used the two SCs throughout. What are our needs? Do we need two or more SCs, was the question. For the Delmas trial, SC was used throughout.

We also discussed other SCs' contributions and to what extent we should consider them as suitable and possible SCs for our needs. We never considered finance. That was left to others. I do not know. Maybe Tony or Jen had those discussions with lawyers but i had so many issues to consider and reflect on (my own state of mind was but one), i was just relieved not to have that burden about worrying about finance. I recalled in the past my visiting Allan Boesak when we needed money. I was always in some way on the executive or involved with finances. I had to single-handedly organise Mama Zihlangu's funeral and went to him for funding, or other concerns which i had coordinated. So yes, i was convinced that the money would come from somewhere: the Norwegian or Danish council of churches, or the German and Dutch anti-apartheid movements or churches and all coordinated by IDAF.

We considered which trials Arthur Chaskalson had presided over; apparently these were the Rivonia and Delmas trials. What were the outcomes and to what extent could what Chaskalson achieved not be done by junior counsel (JC)? We could not discern to what extent SC was imperative to use and if JC could suffice. Our counsel thought that SC was important, and some of us agreed.

I am not sure who first mentioned the name of 'Lang Dawid'⁹⁰ de Villiers but the general consensus was that it would be strategic to have an Afrikaner with his experience as SC for us. It was then decided to also have Pius Langa,⁹¹ and Michael Donen⁹² as SCs. The three of them agreed and we all had visits from them in turn and met and discussed issues. We were all very satisfied with our choices.

Much later:

In discussing our trial strategy and how the state would be able to link all 14 of us we considered how the state would be able to prove this conspiracy link. We realised it would have to be a fabrication on the part of the state. In fact, the responses to our lawyers' request for more particulars was not forthcoming. The state delayed for some time. Later they came with the proposal that they would revert the charge to terrorism charges as opposed to treason in exchange for not providing more particulars. It was then that we realised the weakness of the state's case against us.

To accept the 'lesser charge' of terrorism as opposed to treason was extensively debated as terrorism may be considered as being less political. What followed then was protracted, tense-filled and difficult debate and reflection. Some thought that if we accepted terrorism, it would be a cop-out or a sell-out. On the other hand, it was also reasoned that if we were to be found guilty of treason, it could mean capital punishment for Tony. There was anger, fear, much pain and confusion when we debated this.

We were immediately dubbed the 'Rainbow Trial' by the press because of the wide representation in terms of race and class – university lecturers, shop stewards, workers, community workers and of course also in terms of religion. You know everything in South Africa has to have a race thing about it and then other forms of differences as well. Then there's the gender issue. As far as i know, it is the treason trial with the most women in? Five women in the trial of 14 accused.

Being back at our cells was a relief from the difficult and demanding political discussions and debates. I certainly was eager to get into the exercise yard to get rid of the tension of the political discussions. Perhaps all of us were relieved.

Day 226: Beginning December

Thirty minutes of exercise in the exercise yard.

The exercise yard is in the middle of the complex so this quad is formed by very high walls – the cell windows are so high up that one cannot see into them. What we can see though are the punishment cells – a single row of cells with windows at eye level.

We also gave food to those in the punishment cells. As we jogged in the outside yard, we had to pass the punishment cells. I would jog slower as i passed there, enquiring who was there and why. Of course, this had to be done when the sergeant was not looking. Fortunately, the summer sun made some of the staff sleepy and they fell asleep. Or maybe the staff pretended to be asleep to give us some freedom? Who knows? So we had limited free reign. We would pass and ask those kept in solitary what they were being punished for. Reasons we learnt were that one cut her hair into a fringe with a blade. Another's 'crime' was that she had instant coffee in her cell.

They were to have only rice water for two weeks. We managed to pass on food. On a few occasions we risked just walking past briskly and even chatted if the sergeant was asleep. Usually this was not for long. Maybe in their humanity some of the prison staff pretended not to see this communication?

I mentioned earlier that Lumka and i longed for rice. We decided to buy some with our weekly shopping by staff. I'd like to share a recipe with you. It's called Paella a la Pollsmoor Prison!

INGREDIENTS:

An essential ingredient

1. Good behaviour!

Then you are able to have a flask of boiled water.

2. Money on your property. Visitors can deposit cash with the officer in charge, where a record is kept of it.
3. On good terms with your warden, so you can ask her to do shopping and provide a tin opener and sharp knife for preparations.
4. Shopping list with the following:
Salami or chorizo sausage (I do not recall the staff actually managing to find chorizo)
Tinned prawns, oysters, mussels, shrimps, etc.

Dried veggies like peas, onions, carrots, green, red and yellow peppers
Tastic rice (maybe i should use this in an advert for them)

METHOD:

Slice the salami/chorizo sausage (knife courtesy of Sersant Conradie)

Open tins of seafood under supervision of Sersant Conradie or prison guard

Cut dried veggies into small bits

Pour all dry ingredients into flask of boiling water

Leave for three hours. Put flask under pillows to have maximum warmth

Three hours later:

Open flask, turn upside down above a stainless-steel prison plate.

Tap gently on base of flask so that food can fall out.

And Viola – Paella a la Pollsmoor!

To be eaten on a stainless-steel bowl and spoon (no forks allowed), courtesy of Pollsmoor Prison. Enjoy!

Other privileges were:

After a while we had newspapers which were more intact. This was after a series of letters of complaint from us – newspapers were cut to shreds or long sections blacked out with khoki pens. So gradually the situation changed, firstly with minimal and then later no censorship. We convinced them that we had to read about politics in order to prepare for our trial. Letters from our counsel also informed the prison authorities that as a political trial we needed to know what was happening politically in the country. This letter was the turning point! The information was to be used in our defence. What we often did was threaten the state with a mistrial if they did not conform to our reasonable and important requests as in the case of access to information through newspapers.

Another privilege was access to videos. However, i recall only watching two. I cannot remember which they were. I was in charge of ordering videos. I would conscientiously read all reviews and provided an impressive list of videos that my co-accused could choose from. Mind you, we were more often than not being punished for insubordination. Then our video privileges would be withdrawn. There were times

when there were altercations or rather one of us would be taunted by staff. She would retaliate and then her video or flask with boiled water privilege was taken away. In solidarity with her, other comrades proposed that we too should give up our privileges. Yes, there were our emotions or irritations with one another. Or rather, shall i own it? Mine. Not sure about theirs? I did not ever have arguments with co-trialists or staff though. It was my survival strategy – pick worthwhile battles. I knew i should not waste my energy. I knew there had to be solidarity; that we all had to survive – we were already under trying and challenging circumstances. To what extent were some of those fights provoked and/or unnecessary? I often wondered. How do we understand solidarity? We in our women's section did not discuss this as strategy.

There are many diverse experiences of prison. The complete loss of control and power in general is frustrating. There is also a military atmosphere. We are supposed to salute the staff when we pass them. Of course, we never did. The same accounts for the staff. If anyone above them in rank passes, they too stop to salute. Naturally we political prisoners just defied these rules relating to saluting. But we still were confined to our cells for most of the day, with limited movements, food, washing and exercises, which were all controlled and timed.

That our cells are often being arbitrarily searched is always unnerving. No money is allowed in cells. Any money visitors bring must be kept on your 'property' (which is in the major's office and recorded). Other objects being searched for are books, food, cigarettes or anything that can be exchanged or bartered. If any of these objects is found, one is sent to punishment cells (in isolation) for a few days and put on a diet of rice water only. The length of punishment obviously depends on the severity of the crime. The young girl mentioned earlier who had coffee in her cell shared she had been charged for sex work, 'prostitution'; she looked 15 but she told us she was 18 and was on a rice-water diet for five days.

Another of the experiences of solitary confinement and prison that is most upsetting is being body searched. This can take different forms: either one's body is patted thoroughly by hand or, worse, one can be strip-searched. Every time we left the prison for court or legal consultation and returned, we were searched through body tapping. This meant every weekday during the year with sessions closed during court recess over December and the Easter holidays.

Selective solidarity

One of my co-trialists may have been upset with me. She had applied to go to church as well (she did not tell me beforehand). As i know all too well – anything to get out of the cell. I applied at the very beginning as a Christian to go to church. Permission was granted.⁹³ I would dress myself, take time and try to get a little posh, probably from the few items of clothing that i had and without the assistance of a mirror. No mirrors in prison! So there we went, always with my personal prison guard and with great distances between the rest of the prisoners and me. My guard and i would enter last, sit far from others and leave first. There was no way i could communicate with anyone in any way. But it was great just to be there singing songs of praises with about 300 or 400 women chanting enthusiastically. Prison is a great place for religious conversion. I wonder whether any research has been done on it. To what extent was this religious fervour sustained once out of prison?

But another of us also applied to attend church. She raised it in our general legal consultation meetings. She had been refused the privilege and hence it was implied, and i think subtle coercion by some members of our group, that i had to give up my privilege in ‘solidarity’. But i reasoned with myself: she must have written ‘atheist’ on her form. I wrote ‘Christian’. But i also enjoyed the outing, the dressing up, and, of course, the praise and worship and found the services important for my spiritual sustenance and growth.

How do these ‘solidarity’ issues have to work? What is compromising with the enemy? To what extent should there be ‘total solidarity amongst prisoners’? Irrespective of issues, principles? What must the basis be? I cannot recall whether we had these discussions in the general group but i reflected on them as they are important to be considered.

We all wanted to study as we had no idea for how long we would be inside. Jen also thought she would get 25 years; i thought maybe ten or so. So we explored various options. But it seemed as if the prison authorities jeopardised our attempts all the time. My cheque for registration at UNISA was returned as some documents were not sent on time.

Then walking around, as you know by now, any excuse to be out of the cell. And this reminds me – one develops amazing skills in prison. I became the ‘prized pickpocket’. No, not stealing from other prisoners, but from the enemy! And what was my booty? Pickpocketing the small flags! The South African apartheid flag which adorned most desks!

Once i had shared with the others during legal consultation about my newfound skill, i had been dared by them to rid the prison of these flags, so there i was, on a mission. First step, to get out of the cell, see the doctor, the captain, go to the school room, anything. Of course, my requests and attempts to get out were not always accepted but i managed to get out occasionally. These flags of different sizes (so of course i could mostly manage only the smaller ones) were displayed on all desks or whichever place they could be proudly and arrogantly displayed. There i would be, speaking to the adjutant in her office, finding the right angle of her head away from the flag. I would position myself in such a way as to either obscure the flag or so that my hand could reach out for the flag the minute her head was angled away from it. I also always had a big bag, stuffed with food goodies that i could dish out to others if the opportunity arose and, of course, to hide my pilfered goods. I would burn the flags later in my cell. Where i managed to get matches i cannot recall. Another taboo: no matches allowed. I wonder how the smokers managed or how it was arranged to light their cigarettes.

Yes, smuggling is a big part of prison culture and as a prisoner i had to adapt to the culture of the place. In my walks to the prison shop i also discovered ‘snuff’. So in keeping with the culture i bought some and used it for a short while. One of my favourite walks was to the Pollsmoor shop. I copied this list of Pollsmoor shop prices for my future needs:

Melrose cheese spread – R3.70
 Royco Cup a Soup – R1.35
 Ricoffy (750g) – R7.75
 Brookes lemon juice – R1.00
 Steradent (100g) – R2.10
 Pears deodorant spray (100g) – R3.45
 Prestige can and bottle opener – R3.70
 Tampax (10 regular) – R1.35
 Johnson’s baby powder (100g) – 95c
 Mango atchar (Pakco 250g) – R1.95

I cannot remember the price of the little round silver-coloured box of snuff though. I think i used it as it reminded me of the people on the farms in Matjiesrivier, District Oudtshoorn. The people there regularly used snuff and *pruimtabak* (tobacco), which they chewed.

Also, i felt that just for fun i had to be part of the Pollsmoor culture to be using snuff. I do not think Jen or Lumka used it. It was on one of my lone days walking around the prison that i went to the shop and decided to buy snuff. At the shop they would just take our prison number and deduct the money from our property in Major's office.

With the December holidays approaching we were very concerned about the long periods without 'our little outings' to Maximum. We discussed this for a long time. Yes, we realised that our counsel was working very hard but we did not like the idea of remaining locked in our cells for such a long period. I think recess was between 16 December and then after Christmas. Zurayah and Colleen brought us lovely goodies to entertain ourselves over the Christmas break.

Later in November it was double-lock time at about 4pm and the prison was quiet, even serene. Suddenly there were these echoing sounds reverberating through the prison walls, calling my name:

In the dull oppressiveness of double-locked silence
 I heard someone calling my name
 Shouting goodbye
 I yearned my ears, my body to the slivers of freedom
 The voice shouted again –
 Comradely recognition blurred into consciousness
 They are being released!
 Amandla Comrades! i responded
 Ngawethu! they answered
 La Luta Continua!
 Viva! Viva!⁹⁴
 The silence from its sleep was shattered,
 Our voices echoing in the fascist corridors!
 Strong, bold
 Confidently
 Cracking the very walls

Wow! I recognised Nosipho's⁹⁵ voice. So she and others have been released! But apparently, they were held under Section 50, state of emergency. There must be thousands of us in prison. But not for long!

I wonder when it's my turn to be released.

Day 200: Beginning of December

So here i am, almost Christmas and i am determined to be the 'trifle queen' in prison too. Like i am outside. If others do not acknowledge my talents, i have to advertise them. Yes, i call myself the trifle queen in our circle. I make quite a few trifles at Christmas with all new and innovative recipes for various friends and family members.

I have a good relationship with the wardens. I think Sersant Conradie and i had a good relationship and yes, she could not understand how i could be charged with treason and terrorism. I had to explain repeatedly that i am in the liberation struggle in my organisation to free all South Africans, including her. We chatted about inequality, and she then again admitted pensively that the white staff have better housing and other facilities, and the salaries are also vastly different.

I would always order something extra when i made a list of my weekly shopping for the staff to do outside. I would also order exotic things which they could never find at the usual shops in the area, like French soap, *Rogers et Gallat*. Maybe at Cavendish they could be found. But i was introducing them to a wider range of life. Shame, they struggled to find some of my items. En route to the bathroom, under my towel, i would keep provisions and put them into the communal cell. I remember a lovely tray of yellow cling peaches i had bought for the women in the common cell. But our luck was out. That afternoon the cells were searched. But no one said anything. Even though all knew that i had bought the tray of peaches. The staff took away the tray of peaches. I wonder what they did with them. Those were such lovely farm-fresh peaches. No one spoke about it. Nor did staff question me. There is a code of honour in prison.

Around Day 220: 16 December 1988

Let me dance in anticipation and celebration. Yes i know i am emotionally labile, vacillating between depression and glee but let's enjoy the ups and dance while i have it.

But this Christmas and New Year we each were also graced with two 500ml bottles of champagne, no, we are supposed to say sparkling wine or rather *Méthode Cap Classique* (not sure if the French had already clamped down on us then about our using the word

'champagne'). Again details about procurement. I am not sure how Zurayah and Colleen got it in. But i think each of us got two bottles, one for Christmas and another for New Year. Imagine 24 500ml bottles! Gosh, i cannot even remember how we got it into our women's section after the meeting at Maximum. Maybe staff ignored it?

Once we got to the cells, there were still about 30 minutes before double-lock time. I stood around the cell and walked around in our section trying to find a place to hide the bottles. There were still nine whole days before Christmas which means nine or even more possible opportunities for searching the cells. I then decided to hide them in a common area so that if they are found they cannot be linked to me. I went to the bathroom and found a bucket. I then looked around for some prison sheets or towels to be soaked in the bucket. So that was where the two bottles were safely hidden until the assigned time to drink them.

As Christmas was approaching i was determined to make trifles for prison friends. Why should this be different if i am in prison? I then decided to compile my shopping list: sponge cake, tinned fruit peaches, cream, ready-made custard, blanched slivered almonds and jelly (raspberry, lemon and greengage in order to alternate the various colours). I am not sure where i received the big bowls from but i made a few trifles, including one for the kitchen staff who had a communal cell nearby. We had to pass their cells for the communal bathrooms. Then of course for Jen in E section and us in F section. There was no legal consultation during that period which meant we would not see or have access to the men in our trial. Hence i did not make one for them.

An essential ingredient for amenable livelihood is a civil relationship with staff. I always tried to have a civil relationship (even occasionally friendly; i hope i never ingratiated myself?) with staff members. This facilitated favours like access to tin openers, knives and always having a flask of boiling water for the odd cup of tea at 4pm, cup of soup when hungry and my Paella à la Pollsmoor.

I got all my ingredients for the trifles. I made them with tender loving care. My sister, Len, always says when the food she has made tastes very good (as usual), that the food is made with love. So, yes, these trifles were made with love. I assume one of the staff must have brought me special bowls in which to make them as it was Christmas. Well, the trifle turned out fine, except it missed the important ingredient of some Old Brown Sherry!

Day 230: 24 December 1988

So on Christmas Eve, i sat on a colourful kikoi i had bought in Kenya. I placed this on the floor of my cell, took my guitar and tried to play a Christmas carol or two. Someone had sent me a beginner's guitar music book. I had little plastic bowls with crisps and other goodies and all seemed well in the world as i sipped my champagne. The light from the passage gave my cell a gentle glow. I was given special permission not to have my cell double-locked, with the thick steel door remaining open after my panic attack.⁹⁶ The soft light from the passage shone into my cell. It was almost pleasant if i had not been in prison. I sang joyously and played the guitar.

This experience in celebrating the true meaning of Christmas was a particularly peaceful time for me. I also did some meditation and prayers. At the end of this interlude, i realised that the empty bottle was concrete proof of my misdemeanour. I had to get rid of it. Suffice to say that amidst loud singing of Christmas carols in the wee hours of the night, i got rid of it. I first smashed the bottle by hitting it against the steel toilet, then flushing the bits of glass down. This was accompanied by extremely loud singing to camouflage the breaking of the bottle and incessant flushing. Of course, my boisterous and passionate singing did not escape the night staff, who quickly came to investigate, but all signs of an illicit champagne bottle had by then disappeared. It was just a joyous Christmas celebration with raucous singing.

Day 260: 26 December 1988

Political education

Were we elated to get out of our cells after the long internment? Of course, greeting our male comrades was with great excitement. But, of course, i was very surprised (and a tiny bit resentful) on learning about their Christmas lunch and other food delights! They did not tell us earlier but on that day i learnt some unexpected news. They actually had a two-plate stove in their cell and for Christmas they had either a roast leg of lamb or whatever but definitely appropriate Christmas lunch. Why this news of the two-plate stove had not been shared before was a mystery to me. After the exchange of other news and gossip, our

minds, well certainly my mind, turned to the meeting at hand. Comrade Pius Langa wanted to consult with us, and that on Boxing Day!

He, due to his various political and legal commitments, was unable to continue being SC for us.

I think some of us suspected this as the meeting was scheduled in the middle of the Christmas holidays. It had to be important. Yes, we were sad but he was making major interventions at his other positions. We took a sad goodbye to our comrade and former SC, Pius Langa.

In fact, spending time with him and the other SCs had been a major learning experience. We all learnt a lot about the legal system during this trial. Earlier we did not know about the distinction between senior and junior counsels. Reading and discussing other political trials also gave us new discernments about trial strategy.

As it was the end of the year and we were out of the cells, we decided we may as well enjoy being out the entire day – ‘entire day’ meaning not later than 3.30pm. Then it was already supper time (3pm) and double-lock time. As long as a lawyer was present, it was ‘legal consultation’. It was decided that we use the time for the assessment of our education programmes.

What we focused on that day were some of the following: the way we have worked, what worked and what did not work well, how it can be remedied, the way forward, relationship with lawyers. On the whole, it was very constructive. We focused on future strategies in preparation for court.

28 December 1988

We managed to get a lawyer for two days later. This is one of the days when we were able to have political education. The topics covered for the day included: lecture presentation, how we need to build ourselves and why that is imperative as well as maximum participation. We also discussed the group meetings which took place in our cells and sections. Of course, this did not pertain to Chris. I wonder if he was not very lonely. In terms of the inputs, we agreed that we had to try to improve contents, hence also shorter and more concise inputs. This could facilitate more discussion and analysis. Other concerns discussed were self-criticism and discipline.

We also deliberated on the relationship of the group with the defence team. There had been differences of opinion. I cannot remember what it

was but i had a brief tension with my lawyer, Christine, over something but i'm not really clear on what it was. It could be related to her arranging more individual sessions for others and hence more freedom for some members of the group. I sometimes thought 'all are equal, but some are more equal than others', a real *Animal Farm* as depicted by George Orwell. I think i had better relationships with Vincent Saldanha and Jerome van der Schyff. We also emphasised increased security. I am not sure if it was discovered that the prosecution had access to certain information. Before this session ended, we requested if we could have another 'legal consultation' for political education on 4 January 1989.⁹⁷ We would cover topics like theory of revolution, policies and history of the movement, and sharing ideas/books.

We discussed the theory of women's oppression and what the driving forces of women's revolution were. The majority, or rather those that were most verbal and articulate, agreed that Marxist theory is not gender-blind. I knew there were many different opinions on this. Some were very defensive of Marxist theory being inclusive of gender issues. They were just very dominant and confident in their views. Others kept quiet. I did not believe in this and this was evident throughout our time together, as will be illustrated at a later workshop. Other discussions included the question around who was most oppressed? Workers/national oppression? Women? We did not use the term 'intersectional'⁹⁸ analysis' as yet, but emphasised the triple oppression of women, as black, as women and as workers. Ironic, even though some were members of the United Women's Congress (UWCO). How come they did not raise this? (Except me; i differed with this. Was it the power of the group that silenced them? I wondered.)⁹⁹

Concerns also explored how women were exploited at work and how they are oppressed within the South African context. It is related to national oppression, for example the many female coloured factory workers in the Western Cape, exploited but also privileged above African women workers, as well as sexual oppression. The case of the 'double day of women' highlighted issues around redefining motherhood and fatherhood and the role of family and how this illustrates women's oppressions. Engels articulated this clearly more than a century ago, that the family was the central nexus of women's oppression.

Exploring alternatives and alternative structures was seen as a strategy to overcome this: the need for crèches and childcare. Violence against women and aggression. Some believed Marxism was profound

on violence. There was tension in the group during this and many other discussions. (In my notes i found some scribbled to someone – it may have been either Gary or Chris? ‘Have you decided not to speak today?’ I scratched out the other notes hence the words were not clear. However, the words ‘I feel coerced’ are legible and visible.) During communication when there was tension or disagreements, we often wrote notes to each other. We usually scratched them out in case they were seen by others. Also, anything very sensitive about the prison life or staff was scratched out. Another strategy was also if we disagreed or there was some tension, we just would not say a word for the entire session, and scribble notes all the time to one another.

The next discussion point was on equal participation of women in political life. I do not have many notes on this. Maybe i was speaking on this point as i feel very passionate about it. We further discussed how we choose a specific issue to organise around. The points raised here emphasised that other issues must not detract from the most important aim, which is the liberation of the African masses.¹⁰⁰ According to the dominant interpretations of the group, Marxist theory includes all spheres of oppression including women’s oppression. One contribution was on superstructure: political and ideological analysis. The basis of analysis is economic (I have written in the margin – the question of bourgeois ideology. Ideology has its own dynamics).

To this discussion was added the various categories of feminism – bourgeois, radical, liberal, separatist. The discussion was directed by what some knew about women’s magazines. F magazines; not sure what this should be – feminine or feminist – as a just wrote FM: the list of magazines and texts included *Fair Lady*, *Speak*, *Cosmopolitan*. I think these diverse magazines represent the different strains or types of feminism. The various issues women take up were also referred to and various organisations like the National Council of Women (NCW),¹⁰¹ Black Sash and Rape Crisis were alluded to.

Day 256: 31 December 1988

We were really lucky that some of the lawyers made themselves available so that we could get out of the cells and have political education at Maximum. So even on this last day of the year when many were on holiday, we had our faithful lawyers present and we could be out of the cells.

Our agenda included evaluating our education. Articles on newspaper coverage were popular. Someone would read. I think we took turns and then this person was to summarise key issues and we would discuss them. There were also inputs as groups; questions as groups and we would allocate questions to commissions, although commissions changed. I am sure Tony proposed this following topic: the theory of revolution. We had one-hour discussion in groups; we discussed the national democratic struggle in plenary and there was sufficient time for different discussions.

Other topics proposed for future sessions were religion, colonialism of a special type (comrade Joe Slovo coined this concept) and current events. This included strategies in Africa, constitutional guidelines, the Middle East, policy on cadre of a new type, relationships between leaders and rank and file membership, revisionism and history of other struggles. We then discussed how we could improve on our report-back skills. News analysis would be a regular item on the agenda.

That evening before double-lock time i went to the common bathroom to retrieve my hidden bottle from the Pollsmoor bucket. Again, i set the scene for appropriate celebrations, colourful kikoi on the floor, little bowls with crisps and other snacks, my guitar in hand, and popped the sparkling wine. I enjoyed some singing – also did some prayers and meditation as we were going into a new unknown year and asked for strength and guidance from above. Yes, it was the same raucous fun and songs on New Year’s Eve, 1988. This time the staff ignored the boisterous singing and cavorting from Gertrude’s cell.

Day 257: 1 January 1989 (*Sunday Times*)

We often shared interesting newspaper articles. On this first day of the year the issue of justified violence by the ANC was discussed – the question of justified violence to counter the state’s violence. What would be strategic to consider? The discussion was prompted by the quotation from ‘Perspectives’ by Lawrence Schlemmer, director of Wits Centre for Policy Studies:

More equivalents of the strategic coup of talking to Craven might be expected. There is a sound game plan, but it is pitched at an unrealistic goal. As long as the ANC promoted violence... (*The Sunday Times*, 1 January 1989)

We had a constructive discussion and emphasised the correctness of our position. The respect for human life was emphasised and the commitment to liberating our country.

6 February 1989

We were excited that the court case was at last starting. It was with relief that we learnt that Justice Selwyn Selikowitz was to be the presiding judge. He had made progressive rulings in favour of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), that the security branch should stop harassing the ECC. Hence, we were happy considering some of the other judges we could have been confronted with. SC for the state was Hendrick Klem.

We planned our strategy for that first day. We would all wear ANC colours. This set the trend for our outfits, always planning what to wear the next day: khaki uniforms, African traditional or Western. We came up the stairs into the court singing Nkosi Sikilele 'iAfrika. We also agreed not to plead: guilty or not guilty. We were greeted by an array of a full gallery of enthusiastic family, friends and comrades. I searched eagerly for my mom and sister who live in Cape Town. My other sisters, Solome and Kay, live in New Zealand and Australia respectively. Solome joined Amnesty International and they organised a regular flurry of letters of support (as well as demanding my release unless charged¹⁰²), which kept me entertained. I searched fervently but could not see any of my family. I was so disappointed, even angry. Angry that they did not bother to attend. I judged them apolitical and apathetic. Friends and comrades waved ardently and blew kisses, which I reciprocated. I tried to camouflage my sheer ambivalence of anger and disappointment with smiles. The isiXhosa translator, Mr Siko, was excellent. We really thought he proved to be sympathetic to our cause as the trial developed. At times we noticed he would interrupt to translate, giving us a chance to think how to formulate the answer.

The media made a big fuss of our *Broederbond* Afrikaner senior counsel, 'Lang Dawid'. Another key focus was the wide representative range of the trialists and especially Jen's South African 'aristocratic' background. I think much was made of her rather distinguished colonial ancestors: Olive Schreiner (internationally known and influential women's rights author), FW Reitz, president of the former Republic of the Orange Free State, and WP Schreiner (brother to Olive Schreiner),

who in 1898 became premier of the Cape Colony and was determined to prevent the Anglo-Boer War.

Immediately after our court sitting my lawyer, Christine Berger, requested to see me confidentially. She was very cautious and caring and asked whether i was fine. I realised that something was amiss. She then shared that my mother had had an emergency operation that morning and had a mastectomy. I then understood their absence. Christine then also informed me that it was agreed with the security police that i have a mammogram as well. A few days later i was taken to Groote Schuur hospital for a mammogram. It was a very painful experience and, as i learnt later, their machines were very old fashioned, still using a big balloon in the process.

After the mammogram i am not sure what happened but there was a very long period that i was absolutely alone. I walked out of the room; there were no hospital staff around. I stood perplexed and at some moment, i contemplated trying to escape. I was outside the lift and the staircase was adjacent. I stood there momentarily, absolutely petrified: what was i to do? After what seemed like an eternity, Lena reappeared.

Ever since the issue of the state not being able to provide more particulars and their offer to withdraw the treason charges and substitute it with terrorism, it has been a nightmare and tension for all of us. There have been myriads of discussions, consultations also with comrades outside and i think exiled leaders, whether we should accept this compromise.

The lawyers posed us with the two Acts with which we could be charged. They were the Terrorism Act of 1967. If found guilty according to this Act the minimum sentence is five years. The other Act was the Internal Security Act of 1982. The state was then arguing that the above charges were part of the deal in withdrawing the treason charge. There was absolute silence and tension in the room while this was being explained. One could feel the icy atmosphere, hearing not a word from us but an occasional deep sigh or nervous movement. I will never forget the angst which gripped us all, or rather me.

Questions emerged which we had raised several times before and which would recur occasionally to be considered: what is the role of lawyers in this decision regarding if we accept the withdrawal of the treason charge? Would the acceptance of the withdrawal of treason be a compromise? What is the lawyers' position on this? What is our attitude to them and their decision? If we were to accept the withdrawal of the

treason charge, would this be a victory or a compromise? Is this shallow politically? Why should we accept it? If we refuse the terrorism charge and adhere to the treason charge, what would it mean? Would it imply 'sacrificing' Tony? (Bearing in mind we still had capital punishment and treason was punishable with capital punishment.) What would this mean for the other trialists?

We reasoned as follows: the state does not have ample evidence on Lumka and Jenny. Are we allowing the state to get away with the fact that they do not have enough evidence?

What is important is that whatever decision we take, we need to build unity in the group. Also, we must not lose our political goals.

When we considered the way the trial was going, there were many things to take cognisance of. Prosecutor Klem was pushing the trial into the direction of not making it an ideological trial. How do we prevent this? This was discussed at length. I recall being absolutely exhausted once we returned to our cells at 3.30pm after a day of deliberations. I even had headaches occasionally.

Recurrent questions were raised: what is our attitude to lawyers? To what extent do we accept what they advise? We want a political programme for our trial. The guideline that we should keep in mind is that it is important to weigh up the deal in so far as it retards or promotes our political goals.

Furthermore, in relating to the situation if individuals are implicated in the 'deal' with the state, there should be no individual consultations first. The group should be reported to initially and then there could be the discussions about how or if individuals will be implicated. I wonder now while i am writing whether this implied that there was a lack of trust amongst us; that maybe some wanted a deal to 'get off' at the expense of others to be sacrificed. But no, i do not think this was possible. We were too united according to my analysis.

There were times we wanted to be alone without the lawyers so that we would not be influenced by their reasoning or just their presence. In these cases, we requested that the report-backs by lawyers should be short and concise. Thereafter they could retire, and the group would discuss it. This, according to prison rules, was not allowed but i think our lawyers explained to our personal guard and they would leave the room and be called in later. Individual lawyers' positions could also be shared. In terms of time, we could ask for adjournment. We were adamant! There would be no rushing to take decisions. As far as was

practically possible, more than one lawyer could consult with the state. But advocates must report to the group first. No 'deal' was to be made with the state without the full agreement of and consultation with the group. The mandate must come from the group. Our relationship with the lawyers was again alluded to: what is the difference between advice from lawyers versus persuasion by the lawyers for us to take a specific stand? We must discern between legal advice and being persuaded to take up a position. Lawyers should not veto our decisions. We should be guided by them in terms of the legal implications of any decisions.

Another aspect of strategy again focused on was the POW argument. It must include community education. How newspapers and other media can be used in this should be thought through. Include the use of torture in Section 29 as part of this strategy. We must ensure that these issues are also taken up outside in the community. We should discuss with lawyers how to use evidence to annihilate the state witness. We could maybe write feature articles. But throughout we reminded ourselves to remember that whatever actions and decisions were taken had be prompted by our ideology and political principles.

Another consideration was how confessions were to be used. Discussion with defence was on how to gain maximum political gains in the event of the treason charge being removed. We had to be concrete – would the political gains be removed if we accepted terrorism? How we could alleviate this de-politicisation was the next consideration. We also had to consider the issue of the state witness. I think this was a constant and underlying concern for all of us. We did not know who it was initially and what incriminating and damning evidence this person was to give, even though some suspected it to be Bongani. How were we to counter this? Also to be considered is propaganda – what will help our case or ruin it?

Day 293

This was such a difficult time. As much as we wanted to be out of the cells, the political and strategy sessions were emotionally draining. There were no arguments about what was to be done but there were many difficult questions posed. We also knew that this trial was getting a lot of media coverage. It also received lots of international attention and support. Together with others, i recall receiving masses of letters of support from various countries.¹⁰³ Our decisions had to be politically motivated.

I think we did not want to be judged negatively by our communities. Eventually the majority decided to accept the compromise of the state and the terrorism charge. Else Schreiner captures this as such: 'After much argument, the trialists had decided, by democratic decision and to Jen's dismay, to accept that' (Schreiner 2000: 78). I did not know about Jen's reticence, but i know there has always been a need to compromise in our numerous discussions.

It was also a relief to discuss practical issues and not to worry about what decision or action we were going to take and how our actions would be interpreted. There was never a case of individuality; it was always what *we* would do. What would suit *us* better? So then we would revert to discuss practical issues like behaviour at court. Do we stand when the judge enters? I recall falling asleep one day and this was not allowed. I remember being admonished by either the judge or our defence. So we had to keep ourselves interested and awake and wake one another if one was falling asleep. No talking either. It was so difficult to keep a straight face, especially when Klem was talking rubbish or stammered for five minutes ('I asshum, I ashum... becos... becos...') before the sentence was complete. He stared at the ceiling while he was waiting for the next word. I would just burst out laughing aloud and then Zurayah next to me too would laugh and this would affect everyone. So we were reminded to be disciplined comrades and behave in an exemplary manner!

The issue of transport to the court was of concern. Occasionally the drivers would take us around the entire peninsula and go to Cape Town via Hout Bay. This was a very long drive and they drove fast and recklessly, which meant we would be falling from side to side in the back of the vans. One of the trialists also got car sick. We requested that in future the most direct road be taken to the courts. But this was ignored, as with most other requests we had made. Of course, i treasured the fact that we could see the sea and the beautiful Hout Bay views but refrained from commenting as it disadvantaged the person getting car sick.

Most times the vans took the M3 drive to the city. There was also a lovely ritual that emerged over time. I think our convoy passed UCT at about 8am daily during court sessions. We were almost like VIPs. They would have two motor bikes and a police van in front and several others between the two vans and all driving at a great speed. Once there was also a helicopter accompanying us. The sirens would be wailing and blue lights flashing. So, all and sundry knew we were approaching. As we drove past UCT rugby field, there would

be students with ANC flags saluting us. Further down there was a garage and all the garage attendants would stand to attention with their fists raised while we passed. They would shout 'Amandla!' and other slogans to us.

Once en route back to Pollsmoor one of the police vans had mechanical problems. It could not drive up the hilly incline at Edinburgh Road adjacent to Bishop's Court. It was also fun to witness the state's agents being upset and agitated. They called out a semi-army to guard us while we waited for alternative transport. Oh, it was such fun watching their anguished faces as we walked from the one truck to another, the semi-army with guns cocked lining our path to the other truck.

Much later

Even though we were imprisoned, communication with political comrades and allies was effective and regular. Means of communication must remain discreet. Of course, one way was our lawyers. The prisoners on Robben Island were on a hunger strike to be released. Robben Island was the prison where Nelson Mandela and our other struggle leaders were held – men only. So we joined them in solidarity in fasting. This experience i found amazing. I had tried dieting often in the past, but my best diet was when i was in prison on hunger strike.

Glucose water only!

According to the Tokyo (or is it Geneva?)¹⁰⁴ Convention, we had to be weighed every day. What a bonus! That meant a walk down the corridor to the doctor. So daily Lumka, Jen and i would saunter languidly down to the surgery. Initially we were accompanied by a staff member but later there were not always staff to accompany us, so yes, we walked down the corridors as if on a Sunday afternoon stroll! Laughing and chatting with not a care in the world. Yes, there were times of fun and laughter in prison. I think it also has to do with attitude. One just adjusts to circumstances and turns a negative into a positive.

But the wardresses also taunt one. Four days into a hunger strike i recall asking for the radio station to be changed to the church service at 7pm. This was a regular feature but that day someone must have forgotten to change the station. I reminded them as i had done on the few previous Sunday evenings when staff forgot to change the station:

'Sersant! Sersant, die radio asseblief vir die kerkdiens' (Sergeant! The radio please for the church service). No response!

I repeatedly asked this. Later i really shouted loudly so they could hear me. Gradually my voice was growing louder and i became more agitated. I tried deep breathing at times, but it was becoming increasingly more difficult to control. I struggled, fighting to maintain my composure.

I pressed the alarm button several times. They've probably disconnected this button.

I tried hard to control my anger, breathing slowly and deeply. We have these tin mugs which are very useful for banging against the bars. I started banging on the bars.

Clang! Clang! Solidarity in prison without knowing the cause. Hey, others have joined me! Clung clung! Wow! This entire section was reverberating with the clang clang sounds of tins on bars.

I recall thinking: i have to stop getting agitated or i may lose control. Stop hyperventilating. Maybe i should stop banging my mug on the bars. If i climb these bars facing the outside, i may get more air. Oh gosh, ouch! How silly to fall. Let me climb up, slowly now. Slowly, climb up now. Balance your one foot on the side of the cupboard. Breathe in deeply, stand up straight and compose yourself. It's not working. I cannot reach the windows. I need air, fresh air.

What shall i do, get a notebook and start writing? Find a pen. Now stop crying and start writing. No panicking. No matter how difficult it is to write, just write! Write slowly, does not matter if your writing is skew. That it is difficult. Write something in bits and pieces.

Write, write and calm down. I then started writing the following.

A PLEA TO POETRY (19 February 1989)

Hold! Hold onto your mind!
 Do not let dumb fascists taunt you!
 Psychologically terrorise you
 Psychologically pulverise you!
 Do not let them break you
 Crumble you
 bit
 by
 bit
 into a seething mass of unbridled emotions
 random pieces of yourself, your soul
 flung furiously

scattered sporadically
like
bits of shit
onto cell walls.

Hold onto your anger, contain it
Do not let it like
a malignant cell spread insidiously
throughout
your body cells, your soul
eating it up
devouring your very self
your soul
consuming the residue of your humanity
your dignity
do not let them dehumanise you further
in this hell hole of hostility
this cell
Claustrophobically covering you
closing in on you
overwhelming you
the powerful over the powerless

your soul
your spirit
slouched in yourself
your pent-up frustrations
cloud your brain
imprison your soul
like they imprison your body
your hands shiver
vibrating with impotence

Though your mind cannot form clear thoughts
systematise them
though your hands cannot produce polished letters
go on
write on

contain your mind
hold onto your thoughts
write them down!

you paralysed
powerless in prison
hold onto life, to sanity
soothe your tormented soul
push prod on to pusillanimity
to poetic purgation
let Calliope¹⁰⁵ inspire your spirit
to soar the skies
let your tears not dissipate your spirit
but rather
feed new strength into you
infuse you with faith
that the spirit shall not be caged
that the powerless shall free themselves from
indignity and oppression

let you pen
however slow
empower you through poetry
as your pen pours out your troubled thoughts
jettisoned like flotsam onto paper
so too

shall strength be sieved into your soul
slowly but surely.

Breathe deeply. Maybe meditate.

Later that month:

Wow, what a wonderful big cell. Here i am, in a cell meant for 20 or 30 women. Shame, hope those others are not too squeezed into small, overcrowded cells. Yippee, let's arrange my furniture. Easel with paintings next to the study. My paintings, painting brushes and paint in the studio. Not bad at all! Lumka has been pestering the prison authorities since we arrived here for bigger cells for us.

I divided the cell into bedroom, study complete with books, and studio with my easel for my painting, kitchen/dining room and of course i had my private en suite shower and toilet, suitably scrubbed umpteen times to be really bright and clean. Painting and posters on the wall and a bright yellow duvet set enhanced the décor.¹⁰⁶ I also had flowers occasionally. When new persons joined the prison service, they were taken on a tour of the prison. This tour included my ‘designer apartment/cell’.

I had to hide some of these paintings – one is not allowed to paint scenes from the prison. I put up my List of Rules in a prominent place and those regarding the Tokyo Convention in case we have a hunger strike. Anything to get out of the cell. But of course: we must know our rights and use them appropriately.

Day 293: March 1989

As usual, as we had done in the past commemorating ‘struggle’ days, we focused on Sharpeville, 21 March 1960. This was led by Tony. The period covered was 1961 to 1988. The background was the hated passes and the action initiated by the PAC. The South African armed struggle by the ANC was still committed to avoiding bloodshed if possible. Emphasised was that despite the propaganda by the state, it failed in demonising the ANC – there was growing support for it. Because of the current crisis, we had to intensify mass activities. However, we needed to equip ourselves and comrades outside. It was important that we were clear on how we countered the argument that MK was not justified in its armed struggle. Considered too were what the ideological arguments were. We had to defend MK. We needed to be able to distinguish between reformist struggle versus revolutionary struggle.

There was a proposal that we also highlighted the role of women in MK and the liberation struggle in general. Previous women political prisoners discussed were Thando Modise and Jansie Lourens. It was also emphasised that our struggle was for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. In the liberation struggle we also had the participation by all sectors of society, just as our ‘rainbow’ trial illustrated. The other white women who contributed to South Africa’s liberation struggle included Conny Braam, Dutch journalist who worked with Janet Love, Operation Vula operative. Also aligned to the anti-apartheid struggle was Muff Andersen, who was a former *Sunday Times* journalist.

Political prisoners were Susan de Lange, political prisoner and wife of MK Damian de Lange; Barbara Hogan and Marion Sparg. Women killed in exile included Ruth First, ANC activist and wife of Joe Slovo, killed by apartheid government assassins in 1982. Jeanette Curtis Schoon, NUSAS and ANC activist, was killed in exile with her six-year-old daughter Katryn, by apartheid government assassins in 1984. Belgian citizens like Hélène Passtoors and Guido van Hecken were part of the struggle, as was Trish Hanekom, who served four years in prison in the 1980s. On her release she was subsequently deported to her native Zimbabwe.

There were proposals that apart from the general Yengeni support group in London, and local support groups for Jenny and Gertrude, there should be a local support group for individuals like Lumka. The Observatory UWCO branch apparently was willing to support her.

Individual consultation would continue depending on what was required for the court proceedings. There were so many issues that one had to give attention to, that it was good that the lawyers did not burden us with everything. It was unknown to me that the team of lawyers throughout this period were busy applying for bail for some of us. Imagine my surprise and delight when one day in May, at the end of the court day, I was released on bail. I had to daily sign the register at the Maitland police station.

Day 391: 18 July 1989

As was usual we celebrated the 'struggle' days. We arranged to have a focus on Madiba for his birthday. These are the few lines I had written in celebrating him.

Written for Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (on his 70th birthday):

Three score and ten, the promised age
 Three score and ten you have reached
 But how many of those years have you enjoyed spent with your
 family and friends
 How many of those years have you enjoyed the fruits of this land?
 And because you say, 'the struggle is my life,'
 Your life is severed from your loved ones and friends

You say, the struggle is my life
 And because you say the struggle is my life

You cannot enjoy the beauty of this land
And because you say the struggle is my life
We honour and revere you

But not only do you say the struggle is your life
Your entire life, your refusal of freedom if the people are not free
Support this
Because of this you inspire us
That we, too, strive to say with sincerity that the struggle is our life

And we, in masses mobilised, will work in the garden of our land
Like earthworms deep dark underground nurturing,
Aerating the soil –
Ridding our land of leeches and parasites, preparing the soil ready
for sowing seed of justice and truth.
Our cause is just; supported by many in the world
Except those who want to pilfer our profits
We must eliminate pests which hamper growth in our garden
Parasites and leeches getting sucking profits, blood and energy from
those who work the land

Surging forward never surrendering
Let us sing
And though we're here by their bars confined
Justice cannot be incarcerated by walls,
So let us sing like Victor Jara¹⁰⁷
Though they shot his hands, his guitar
And shot his body down
The gentle poet sang
Despite pained by bullets
Victor Jara continued to sing
Though they shot his body down

You can gun down the person but not his song
When it is sung the whole world round.

Not only did we all make cards and write poetry, we also did some plays.
During the long court lunchtime, the women and men had to be kept
in separate cells. But because we had our lawyers with us, we had 'legal

consultation' during this break. During solitary i had composed a play and poems in my head. I then performed it for the group during one of our lunch breaks. Zurayah and i then decided on a little play on the proceedings in court. Zurayah was eager to have the part of Klem. So we consulted and i wrote the following:

Cast:

Judge – J

Clerk of the court – CC

Du Toit – DT

Klem (chief prosecutor) – K

Registrar – R

K: My Lord, I don't have any further questions. But I have a mystery witness for Monday. Becos... Becos... I'm only able to consult over the weekend. Can I ask for an adjournment until Monday?

J: The court will adjourn until Monday 10am.

CC: Staan in die hof. All rise in court.
(All stand. J leaves.)
Monday morning.

CC: Staan in die hof. All rise in court. (Judge enters, all rise.)

K: We now call the mystery witness. (Klem goes to the witness box.)

R: Wat is jou volle name?

K: Hendrick Apools Klem.

R: Sal u die waarheid, die hele waarheid, sê, so help my God. Lig op jou regte arm.

K: So help me God.

DT: On the night of 15 October you were seen behind the Supreme Court building. Is that correct?

K: Yes, but... but... becos... becos.

DT: And you were naked? Why was that?

K: Eh... Eh... I ashume... ashume... eh... eh... (Looks up at the ceiling.)

J: Mr Klem, will you please answer the question!

R: (Gets up and whispers in the judge's ear.)

J: Will accused number 19 please respect the dignity of this court and stop eating. Accused number 18 will you please

wake up. These accused are undermining the dignity and integrity of this court. This is my last warning.

- DT: Mr Klem, why were you naked?
- K: Eh... becos... becos... Mr Jonas wanted Mr Wagenaar to tell his girlfriend that he was arrested for possession of dagga.
- DT: Mr Klem don't make things worserer for me. You know I am not used to being prosecutor. You do know that my studies at UNISA were in political science and not law. And I need to emphasise I almost got my degree cum laude. So please answer me.
- K: I went to plant a bomb but instead of blowing up the building I blew up my brains... becos... becos... eh... eh (Looks up at the ceiling... gets excited and mumbles inarticulately.)
- DT: (angry and shouting) Mr Klem, you were supposed to say... (shaking his head). This is absolutely nonsense... (Mr Klem continues to mumble and look up at the ceiling at various angles as if searching for something in the sky.)
- J: Mr Klem. (Mr Klem is still mumbling and searching the sky more vigorously now.) Mr Klem, please control yourself.
- DT: Your Lordship, I don't want to deceive this court as it is my duty as a citizen of this republic of South Africa to respect and help this court to judge in as wise a manner as possible. There has been a confusion. Mr Klem was supposed to go to Valkenberg as he had a nervous breakdown on his wedding night. He kept on addressing his new wife as Mr Yengeni. But we made a mistake with the names and the forms, so the mystery witness was taken to Valkenberg. Mr Klem has had an identity crisis and he now thinks he is the mystery witness. Your Lordship, I have been trying my best to help this court. I have been promoted to major and hoped to be promoted further to lieutenant soon. I have already bought a new house in anticipation of this salary increase... Your Lordship must please try to understand... (During all this time Mr Klem is mumbling and now even desperately searching the skies.)
- J: (Very angry) No, no Du Toit, there has been more than enough confusions and lies throughout this trial and I am tired of it. How am I supposed to make wise decisions with all these lies abounding? My reputation is at stake. And

now... at this stage, at this very time when I am supposed to prosecute these people, others are being released for the very same things these accused allegedly have committed. This country is undergoing transition and I don't want to be seen as reactionary. So, I have no option but to release all the accused. To the Yengeni trialists I would like to say – I was very impressed with your pleading statement at the beginning of the trial. In fact, if I had not been a judge, I would have been with you in the accused dock. Thank you for the way in which your clothes have enhanced the dignity of the court.

R: Staan in die hof. All rise in court.

Of course, this play is a rather silly one and will win no Thespian accolades. But we had to entertain ourselves while in the belly of the beast.

Day 548: November 1989

Jen was having a hard time in court. It was as if Klem had a personal vendetta against her; maybe he saw her as a traitor to her people. I thought Jen was having a hard time in court but also there was tension amongst us trialists.

The following was written in court by me for Jen:

Woman, sister Comrade, Friend,
Let life's longing for freedom fulfil us
Let us go through this maze of meanderings
Forward ever, backward never.

Let us toil though we tire dark into the night
Let us toil, dedicated and true
To our beliefs.

Woman, sister Comrade, Friend,
Together we will win.
Woman, sister Comrade, Friend,
Though the ground is hard with mire
Through the clouds of confusion, camouflage seek clarity, never tire
Birthday blessings Jen.

On Jen's birthday Else Schreiner (2000: 148) wrote in her diary:

Jen's branch of the UWCO had been given permission to prepare lunch that day. The girls arrived with pots and pots of the most delicious-smelling food, slightly flustered and excited, not knowing where to go, or how. Rescued by Bailee Gertrude – 'Come on, just follow me!' they set off after her... down the stairs to the cell heading for the cells with armfuls of food and flowers.

They say there were bewildered police, one flapping his arms saying excitedly, 'Hulle kan nie hier inkom nie. You can't come in here!' But they just swept along.

Then, through the bars of the cells, the most bewildered of all the police saw them coming, rushed forward... and flung wide the grill doors. Being very fast off the mark, they were all inside in a flash, food on the floor, arms round Jen, much hugging and kissing and laughing while a now distraught policeman was frantically saying, 'You can't come in here! You must get out quick.' They did. But they had managed an unscheduled contact visit.

On another day again, Jen was really having a hard time. I had to do something... One felt so helpless when our comrades are being persecuted and retraumatised by the state. Then there were the tensions amongst us. Jen did not retaliate. She bore it all with silent dignity, reserve and stoicism.

All i could do was write her some words of encouragement:

Woman, sister comrade friend
Deep seas have you trod
Waves overwhelm you while you walk
Pebbles, shells prod your delicate soles
Salty spray stings your open wounds
While you wander forth –
Not for your own ideals and dreams
But for the future of our common good

For me, for you, for all!
And though you're walled in by mountains,
Waves and torturous rocks,
The sun in all its glory comes
Shimmering through the slowly thinning clouds
The warmth will invigorate you
Our common dreams will spur you on
Your commitments will inspire you
To stand tall and proud
Until that day
When the sun shall rise
And justice and peace shall reign
Ilanga Lizophumemela!!

Jen's response:

Did you write that now? It's wonderful! You're lucky I did not burst into tears and start flooding us all out! The sun will most definitely rise, and we will all be there making it do so – but there are many paths to get to the dawn, and one has to decide which path to take! Thank you for the poem!

Day 556: 8 December 1989: Celebrations

Unexpectedly Chris and Alpheus were granted bail of R5 000 each.

Friday, 2 February 1990

Weekly political and legal consultation continued throughout the time the court was in recess. Maximum Prison, Pollsmoor:

Notes from my notebook: Gary came late to legal consultations that day. I recall there were some irritations with his not being there. Later when he returned he informed us that the ANC, SACP and PAC had been unbanned. He had listened on the radio. Not sure how he knew that he should listen to the radio that morning. Must enquire. We of course were elated. We immediately assumed we were to be released and charges withdrawn.

Always the proactive bunch: 'We need to draw up a press statement for our release... Gertrude, you draft it. Please emphasise even though we are being released we still stand for a democratic, non-racist, non-sexist South Africa. That if our other comrades are still in prison, we

demand their immediate release.' I brought the press release to court every day thereafter. However, the day, 30 March, when some of us were released, i did not have the press statement with us. I thought after a month of constant hoping that charges be withdrawn and all to be released, nothing was happening.

Weekly Mail, 16 to 22 March 1990, 'Yengeni trial: Sudden turn as state ends case' by Gaye Davis, Cape Town:

In a surprise move this week, the prosecution in the Yengeni terrorism trial said it might close its case against all 14 accused without proving the admissibility of confessions seven of the trialists are alleged to have made.

If the state proceeds with its case without the confessions, the chances are that – on the basis of evidence already before the court – several of the trialists could be acquitted...

The defence had earlier succeeded in persuading Mr Justice Selwyn Selikowitz that the admissibility of the confessions should be tested in a single trial-within-a-trial, arguing that the security police employed a 'system' to extract information from unwilling detainees.

The system... involved persistent questioning, confronting detainees with false confessions by their fellow detainees, threats, intimidation, abuse and violence, interspersed with promises.

Then in another significant move, Selikowitz ruled last Friday that the onus of proving the admissibility of four of the confessions would rest with the state...

The state prosecutor, Klem, reiterated his surprise at the ruling – said as the only option the state had now was to close its case in respect of all the accused without proving the admissibility of the confessions.

In the newspaper, *South*, 22 to 28 March 1990, 'State backs down' by Rehana Roussouw:

The dramatic developments in the Cape Town terrorism trial in the Supreme Court this week may affect the future of political trials elsewhere in the country.

Eight trialists in the 'Yengeni 14' trial were acquitted on Monday and the trialists' defence is preparing to apply for bail for the remaining six accused...

At the start of the trial the 'Yengeni 14' were charged with treason. The state's case was based on their 'inside man', Bongani Jonas (this did not materialise) and on confessions extracted from 11 of the accused...

The defence stated their intention to lead evidence about the methods used by the terrorism detection unit to extract confessions from detainees.

'There is no question that the state was worried about the impact this evidence would have had publicly, throughout the country and on the trial itself,' said De Villiers (SC).

It was an awkward, ambivalent feeling – relieved to be free and outside. But how can one be happy when your fellow trialists with whom you have spent the past almost two years together are still in prison? Then, too, think of the thousands of others unknown; invisible political prisoners in small rural jails, others again trapped in the prison of poverty.

I immediately think of the words of Mandela:

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Post-prison

Charges had been withdrawn for accused numbers 8 to 14. It was an awkward feeling – but i was happy to be out of prison. My poor mother was crying and happy at the same time. But how can one really feel free if one’s comrades are still in prison? It was a difficult time. People outside accused me of only making time for the trialists whereas the trialists felt neglected if i did not manage to do everything they had asked for. Shopping was a challenge because i always had long lists of things to buy. I now understand the pressure Colleen and Zurayah had been under for more than a year. It was like sitting on the shoreline longing to be on a boat cruise but also wanting to dig into the soil and be party to building a garden on the land. I recall that i was experiencing lots of tensions in all areas of my life.

The Coloured Affairs Department of Education had ‘dismissed me on grounds of misbehaviour’ or ‘bringing the teaching profession into disrepute’ while i was in detention; that was before i was found guilty. When the charges had been withdrawn, they reinstated me. It was interesting that male teachers who had also been in detention and tried for political ‘crimes’ had not been dismissed. Lawyers and people from the Western Cape Teachers’ Union (WECTU) wanted me to sue the department but i really did not have the energy. I was so mentally and physically exhausted and drained.

I returned to teach at Hewat College at the beginning of the second school term. It was strange that on my return no one said anything. It was as if i had not been gone. The only person who remotely referred to my experiences was fellow lecturer Colin Thomas, who said to me: ‘How was it?’

I was emotionally fragile, but was then prepared to teach as i had been given only five classes of drama to facilitate. There were no formal

examinations and hence minimal marking when compared to subjects like English. As i walked up to the first floor of the main teaching block, a fellow English lecturer saw me. ‘Ahh, you are back. I will now apply for sick leave for my back,’ or something like that. She took her sick leave and i was saddled with three extra English classes as well as the Drama. I was concerned at my colleague’s actions, but perhaps she really was ill. But i had not been prepared to teach eight classes and English with all its challenges as well. I was overwhelmed and felt emotionally fragile. Meanwhile, the nightly panic attacks continued. The doctor was concerned that i was alone at home at night when these attacks came. I also felt extreme fear and occasionally suicidal during these episodes.

What may have exacerbated my mental state of mind was the acrimonious break-up with a long-time partner. I suspected an affair while in prison, judging from the letters and mention of a certain name repeatedly. What i think was the worst was that everyone around me was deceiving me. They pretended that i was paranoid and imagining things. Even the therapist who was part of our support group deceived me. This i still find difficult to accept. I heard them saying that i was ‘crazy and mad’, overreacting, ‘imagining things’. The therapist was not honest with me. She never told me that i was right in what i was suspecting and very much sane. This was very difficult to deal with. To be unsure of one’s sanity and friends and people who care, and the therapist whose work it was to support and help me. This was integral to the deception. I found the therapist’s behaviour unprofessional and unforgivable.

My therapist was a member of the Organisation of Applied Social Sciences Activists (OASSA). The organisation had been established to assist activists, political prisoners and all affected by the apartheid repression and she deceived me. She also did not invite me to an event for the Yengeni support group as the other parties were going to be there. And to think i had been part of the Yengeni trial. What a dilemma i was in. I shared my feelings at a women’s meeting without providing details. There my friend AnneMarie gave me useful advice – examine the bits of the puzzle and then see how they fit into the picture. This was unclear at first. I recalled the puzzles initially and how all fell into place.

I compared this OASSA therapist with Renee Romkens Van Veelen, the Jungian therapist who graciously treated me free of charge during the times i was not earning a salary. Renee had a very different approach to that of the other therapist. She asked me to ask myself at the time:

‘Why did you abdicate your responsibility and allow others to determine your state of mind?’

So there i was: post-political detention with many panic attacks and pseudo-hallucinations, waking up at night and not being able to breathe and occasionally feeling suicidal. Again, memories are vague, but i had a sort of breakdown and the doctor, Laeticia, referred me to the Avalon Treatment Centre in Surrey Estate, Athlone.

The doctor i had consulted did not like the idea of my being alone at home and tried to arrange residential status for me at the Centre. However, they only had residential facilities for recovering alcoholics, and i was temporarily booked in at Valkenberg. Being there was indeed a real eye-opener.

I do not know how many people have the same recollections about Valkenberg that i have had as a child, listening to what the adults mentioned. There were the standard jokes that we played when we were kids – especially when we required money. We would say to the affected person who either did something silly or who we thought was behaving unacceptably or abnormally: ‘I’ll take you to Valkenberg and get two and six pence if I hand you in!’ There were so many stigmas around Valkenberg and mad people. Meanwhile, i discovered during the period i spent there that there is a thin line between sanity and insanity.

The film *One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest* included scenes that showed the daily routine of the nursing sister saying, ‘Medication time.’ I recall that in the scenes the inmates had to queue up and get their medication whether they wanted or required it or not. So, too, at Valkenberg. Maybe things have improved in these institutions today – hopefully with all the talk about human rights. Anyway, there i was. I was admitted on a Friday night.

I recollect being in the first block as one entered the building complex. I cannot remember the number, but i think it was B block. There was not much for inmates of Valkenberg to do, and i cannot recall whether i took books along. I just went to bed early. It was usual for me to wake at about midnight if i went to bed very early. This happened here too. On the first night, there was a moment when i was not sure where i was. Then it registered: ‘Oh, it’s Valkenberg.’ But before i was properly awake, a nurse shoved a pill into my month before i could do anything or even protest. I was so shocked and half-asleep that i just dutifully, ‘like a good and obedient patient, the nurses and doctors know best attitude, of course’, swallowed the damn pill, even though i knew i did not require one.

I cannot recall whether i had my car there. Maybe i did, because i had to go to the Avalon Treatment Centre during the day. My main problem while i was living alone at my home was the night; being alone and fearful of panic attacks. So i was grateful to be in a place with others.

What is most prominent in my memory is that there was an attempt to keep us patients drugged all the time. What i discovered there was that people i had met there were pretty 'normal'. We had sensible, intelligible conversations and interactions like average people do – like the 'normal conversations' i had outside of the institution. We shared the reasons why we were there: one was overcoming drug addiction and now was being given a 'high' on drugs of another kind. One woman's boyfriend left her – she was depressed; 'normal' stuff and experiences. But, because of the drugs, it felt as if we all walked sky high – like we were floating. There was this weird thing about us, eyes glazed because of the medication. When we walked, smiled and generally surveyed the world, everything was in slow motion. Or rather, that was my experience. Not only did the medication make us feel different, it also made us all look really out of this world. Different to 'normal' people.

An eventful day that i recall was one Sunday morning when we all wanted to watch videos. I am not sure how these were arranged, but there were none that day. I then informed the staff that there was a video rental shop – Video Shack – in Salt River down the road, about a 30-minute walk from Valkenberg. We were not allowed to walk on our own, so a nurse had to accompany us. We could have been about 10 to 15 of us. Now, can you imagine this motley bunch walking down the road. Firstly, remember that the medication made us all walk as though we were floating in the air with blank facial expressions – or that is what i saw and experienced. Then some of us were dressed rather eccentrically – half pyjamas, and half dress or trousers. Some had a dress over their pyjama pants. And we were dressed in all colours and clashing designed fabric – what an unconventional bunch we were! *So gemaak en so laat staan* (laissez-faire, unkempt, no special effort made about tidying oneself) – really bizarre outfits. And the pills all have different impacts on how we walk: some with legs astride, others shuffled, while others walked with small steps. Some were wearing slippers, which made the shuffling appear worse. A real weird bunch! One was wearing the pink institutional gown over his clothes. Quite a few had uncombed hair. They had heard about the 'outing' and just rushed out to join us. Not really the 'Sunday go to meeting outfits'

at all. I cannot remember how i looked, but i must have been pretty eccentric considering that i allowed myself to be bullied into taking excessive medication.

When we arrived at the Video Shack it was closed. As is customary in our communities, everyone knows everything. And when there are new people in the street, some residents are sure to come out to investigate. One resident of the area told us that the owners lived next door and that it would open at 11am. It could have been 10 or 15 minutes before 11am, but i then decided to knock on the door and ask whether, as we had walked so far, they could open the store for us.

It is with amusement that i now visualise our really mixed bunch. I recall that they were mostly white, and there was our one nurse in full uniform and all of us in varying degrees of 'sleep walking' or looking really weird, different, eccentric or even unstable.

I knocked, and a young woman opened the door and looked rather shocked when she saw this motley bunch of people at her door. I explained very politely, and probably in my best English, that we wanted some videos, adding a 'please. We have walked all the way from Valkenberg'. She winced visibly when i said 'Valkenberg'. I explained that it was a problem because we could not be away from the institution for too long. There was a long pause. I then politely enquired whether there was any way that the Video Shack could be opened earlier or if we could be assisted in some way. The shock on this woman's face was precious. She remained speechless. I was not sure whether it was incredulousness or nervousness, but she remained speechless. I then uttered: 'It is true. We walked all the way from Valkenberg. And look, there is our nurse, if you do not believe me.' Still speechless. Silently she went inside, and we saw that the main door to the Video Shack had been opened. Wordlessly we were immediately assisted. We had not discussed beforehand which video we wanted to see. People just indicated various videos and we got them. I do not even recall whether we had paid. Usually, one has to produce an ID document. Nothing! She perhaps just wanted to get rid of these 'weirdos'. We enjoyed the slow walk home to our ward. I assume the staff returned the videos.

Later, when facilities were in order at the Avalon Treatment Centre, i was transferred there. One of my fellow patients was a nurse who had smoked most of her life. Her name might have started with a B. She had an attractive face, very short hair and regularly wore bright red lipstick. She was the only one who wore that striking lipstick, hence my

comment. She was in a wheelchair; something to do with smoking that resulted in the amputation of both her legs.

There was another nurse from Bonteheuwel as well as a senior nurse who was a very prominent medical professional at a well-known local institute. She was a sister or quite a senior person, who did not want any information about her being exposed. Of course, being discreet about other patients was part of the contract that a resident at the Avalon Treatment Centre had to sign. She was very vague and indirect when she spoke and would as far as possible explain her situation in a way that made it difficult for us to work out her actual circumstances; what her actual problems were. But we had already worked out which institution she was linked to. Like a jigsaw puzzle. Interesting times. But those were her issues. We all had ours as well.

Then there was S, who was a recovering drug addict or recovering from some other substance addiction. As far as i was concerned, he exaggerated his role in the political struggle. He lived in Woodstock and worked for a short while with us in the UDF. I resented his constant reference to: 'Is that not what we had done during the struggle, Gertrude?' I was his constant reference point, and i really did not know how to deal with it. As far as i recall, he had been peripheral politically. But, then again, one never knows. Maybe he too was working underground.

Meanwhile, the rest of my comrades were still in prison. I never had an opportunity to go to court to support them. I was in my own personal prison.

One of the experiences that i recollect vividly was when i decided to stop taking my medication. I had already started doing that when i was in prison. At that time, i had halved the 550mg of Prothiaden i normally took. I just decided one day that i was very tired of walking in the air. Literally, one feels as if one is floating somewhere. I stopped taking the pills completely. I cannot remember all the tablets i had been taking, but i know Prothiaden was one of them. When i told the staff about my decision to stop taking medicine during one of their ward rounds, it became a fiasco! I was scolded and treated like an absolute renegade. The sister in charge threatened me in so many different ways, including: 'I will tell doctor about you.'

When the doctor came for her weekly visit, i explained to her about my medication. 'How do you feel?' she asked. I replied that i was feeling well and in control and did not feel as if i was floating somewhere in the heavens. She then calmly said it was fine.

I am very fond of my cousin, Mary-Jane, who has spent most of her life in a wheelchair in various institutions. I remember as a child my dad telling us when we drove past Princess Alice's Home that it was at that hospital that Mary-Jane had been extensively operated on. It was his contention that those operations had aggravated her condition. She has been living in Turfhall Cheshire Home for the disabled for the past few decades. I always felt the contrasts of our lives very acutely (and some guilt about this!) and my numerous privileges because i was able-bodied. I tried to visit her regularly and give her small gifts in a limited way. On one occasion i decided to take Mary-Jane and her friend Joleen, who was born without arms and legs, to the drive-in. I included two Avalon patients, B, wheelchair user, and the Bonteheuwel nurse, on this trip. It was a lovely night out.

We told the group at the Avalon about this outing during a report-back session. F, the nurse who gave me hell about my decision to stop taking my pills, then accused me of being in love with B. I was so shocked. I could not understand what had made her come to that conclusion. I also felt that she was trying to coerce me into admitting that i was in love with B. I was not. So of course, i just denied it.¹⁰⁸ Then she accused me of denying many other things in my life and that i hid behind being in detention; that i thought that the root of all my problems was my being in prison, that i was not confronting the real issues. It was such a destructive, negative altercation and one that i would never expect from a medical professional. I was extremely hurt too. I was astounded, but really intimidated by this woman. She was a strong character, but very caring in many ways. I think many patients saw her as a mother figure: 'Mama F'. I also found her impressive in some ways. But, on the whole, i was ambivalent; no, more angry and upset at her treatment of me. I suppose she was a nurse trained in psychiatry, and hence she felt justified in 'diagnosing' me. This was the second occasion that i felt abused by medical staff, the first being the OASSA therapist. I was at the Avalon for three months. When i was leaving Avalon, my former co-trialists were also leaving their enforced stay in prison. I read the following in some newspaper:

November 1990

Bail for the Yengeni six at R40 000 each.

ANC paid for half of this.

But how different our lives suddenly were since my release. We had shared so much for the past few years in prison and now we did not see one another nor was there any communication amongst us at all.

In mid-November, i was sent a plane ticket by my friend Ireen, who had been a student with me at the Institute of Social Studies in Den Haag, and her partner, Leontine. This was a gift to enable me to unwind and relax in Amsterdam and Den Haag after having spent time in prison. So in early December i went for a lovely holiday in Holland. I also went to Australia and New Zealand that December. Immediately after returning from Europe, my mom and i left for Australia and New Zealand. I cannot recall, but perhaps it was my sisters who were living there who paid for our flights. I took them lots of South African goodies like biltong and mebos. I declared the Swiss and Belgian chocolates, as well as the Nederlandsche Dropjes, to the very strict Australian customs desk at the airport in Australia, but not the biltong. I knew it was illegal. I was not searched, and everyone was amazed that i had got through the strict Australian customs with my goodies.

It was an absolute pleasure to meet the people in Australia and New Zealand who had written letters to me while i was in prison. I performed my prison play at an Amnesty International¹⁰⁹ function in Timaru, New Zealand.¹¹⁰

In the meantime, the 19 March 1991 *Natal Witness* stated: Yengeni six and Piet Skiet Indemnified: ‘The six Yengeni trialists, including former city students Jenny Schreiner and Orde Boerevolk deputy leader Piet “Skiet” Rudolph, have been granted indemnity according to an announcement by Minister Justice Kobus Coetzee.’

Afterword

At some time in 2010 i received an email from Australian woman leader and educator Professor Shirley Kaye Randell. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) mentioned to Shirley that i had done some gender training work for them in Kenya. Shirley was the initiator and founder of the Gender, Culture and Development Centre at the Kigali Institute for Education (KIE, now the University of Rwanda). She was exploring options for staff for the new Centre, and especially someone who could lecture Transitional Justice Mainstreaming Gender. I then examined the curriculum for Transitional Justice and discovered that i had already done research and published on most aspects of it. I even had practical experience in, for example, making input in terms of gender into the Constitution for post-conflict South Africa in 1993 as a member of the Women's National Coalition, participated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) from 1996, as a member of National Parliament in terms of drafting legislation to address post-apartheid South Africa and as a Commissioner on Gender Equality, a constitutional body to promote, educate and monitor the implementation of gender equality nationally. I was also part of the team of ten women from various countries who gave testimonies at the United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, where, subsequent to our testimonies, the slogan 'Women's rights are human rights' was coined. This famous slogan was used by the women's rights movement at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (Van Leeuwen 2013).

The slogan has been incorrectly ascribed to Hillary Rodham Clinton when it was claimed that she first used it at the NGO women's conference in Huairou, China, which coincided with the Fourth United Nations

Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. I also attended this conference as a representative of South African civil society and the Western Cape region of the Women's National Coalition.

I was given a contract to be a visiting professor lecturing in Transitional Justice Mainstreaming Gender at the KIE from June to August 2011. Thereafter i was given a three-year contract. On my first arrival at Kigali airport in June 2011, i walked confidently to collect my baggage, proudly carrying two bottles of red wine as a gift for Shirley. I remembered that South African wines, especially red wine, were sought after on the African continent. So, i bought the wine at the OR Tambo airport in Johannesburg. At Kigali airport there were some soldiers standing around and two official-looking persons sitting at a table. They beckoned me to come to them. I knew i had nothing illegal on me nor had i done anything that i was not supposed to do. But i was nervous as i approached them. They pointed to my packet with the wine. I did not initially understand what the problem was. On enquiry, i was very impressed to hear that they did not allow plastic bags into the country. They then confiscated my plastic bag advertising the OR Tambo airport and offered to sell me a rather inexpensive cloth bag. This was my introduction to many progressive and creative practices in the country.

A taxi took me to the suburb of Kimironko where i was to live at Shirley's house. It was situated a short distance from the KIE, which was rather convenient for us. What attracted my attention when driving from the airport were purple banners hung conspicuously all over the city with the words *Kwibuka* and *Nta na rimwe* on them. I subsequently learnt that *Kwibuka* means 'to remember' and refers to the annual commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and *Nta na rimwe* means 'never again'. I also learnt that Rwanda has an annual memorial between 7 April and 4 July. The genocide began on 7 April while 4 July was when the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) stopped the genocidaires. This memorial has been held annually throughout Rwanda since 1995, during which there is an active exchange of what happened during the genocide. This involved some people testifying and confessing about what they had done during the genocide, while others shared their suffering and pain during the painful period in the country's history. The memorial time confronted Rwandans with mixed emotions. The majority of Rwandans i spoke to felt that it was an important time for healing, sharing, building reconciliation and commitment to ensure that such experiences never happen again. *Nta*

ra rimwe – never again. Some fear the memorial because they relive the pain they had experienced during the genocide. Others who were not in the country at the time of the genocide participate in the events as a sign of respect to their fellow Rwandans. No one i met felt they were forced to participate in it. I asked all my students to keep a journal of that period as a class project. I also saw this as a means of healing and introspection for the students. All the students emphasised how meaningful the period was to them. Others told me that they got ill as in earlier years. For me the journal writings of the students were sensitive and authentic. There are diverse experiences and interpretations of the genocide.¹¹¹

During my second year in Rwanda, i went to a memorial at the Amahora (Freedom) stadium on 7 April 2012. All institutes, including educational and businesses, are closed during the first week (7 to 14 April). A range of people attend these meetings, especially the one at the stadium. Thousands attended, and one could see that people from all over Rwanda were there. There were also medical staff on standby for those people who needed medical attention as they relived the trauma they had gone through. It was a traumatic experience for me hearing people crying and seeing some faint as they got traumatised. It also reminded me of my own trauma when i was in prison. There was the constant sound of anguish from various parts of the stadium throughout the event and one could see the medical staff rushing to attend to people. The programme consisted of songs, dance, military parades, and the sharing of personal and collective testimonies. Foreign dignitaries were present, and some gave messages of support. Most of the events were in Kinyarwanda with English and/or French translations.

The president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, delivered the keynote address. At one stage he switched to English and said he had decided to speak in English because he did not want the foreign media to mistranslate or distort what he was saying. In his speech he appealed to people to please share what they knew about where people killed during the genocide had been buried. ‘We want to give them a dignified burial,’ he concluded.

A story told to me by one of our housemates, a nurse named Dianne Longson from Australia, provided the background to this request. When she first arrived in Rwanda she lived in the Kigali suburb of Kibagabaga adjacent to Kimironko. During the memorial period the landlord approached her with a request to dig up the garden. She readily agreed as she reasoned it was his home and she had not yet started her

vegetable garden. Her landlord explained to her that someone had made a confession and that they were there to dig for human remains. They found the remains of four bodies in the yard. The landlord explained that the family of the deceased had assumed that they had escaped as many others had done. The remains were then reburied.

I once attended a reburial ceremony in the small town of Musa. The remains of the aunt of a friend of ours (Francis, our Kinyarwanda teacher) were among those to be reburied. There were ten coffins, so i assumed these were the remains of ten people. However, during the service i heard reference to more than 100 people being reburied. I became confused. My French was minimal and my Kinyarwanda even less so. On enquiring i learnt that the remains of 180 people were being reburied. As the remains were mostly just a few bones, they had the remains of several people in a single coffin.

During the three-month memorial period, institutions such as churches and universities all have their own memorial meetings around a huge bonfire. Our university also held one, and we also performed tasks to support orphans or families of those killed. In 2013 we went to the east of the country, which is apparently the poorest part of Rwanda. We built a house: the process is as follows – firstly one places two rows of bamboo stalks dug deep into the ground to form the perimeter of the walls and mud is placed between the bamboo stalks. We waited until the mud had dried. Once the mud we had placed between the stalks had dried, we stood at a distance and threw clumps of mud onto the wall. At first my clumps of mud did not stick, much to the amusement of my students. However, after some practice my mud stuck. I then ‘built’ an entire wall of the house. When i first travelled in the rural areas of Rwanda, i often wondered how the pretty designs on the rural houses had been made. I now learnt the patterns are formed by the clumps of mud and i was actually making them too. While we were building the house others were clearing the surrounding area of weeds and preparing a vegetable garden. This took us the entire day. This type of action and many other similar tasks take place during this memorial period.

This period is also characterised by numerous international conferences on post-conflict challenges, and it was a revelation to personally see examples of reconciliation and forgiveness between perpetrators and former victims. There were cases of victims going to the families of perpetrators to inform them that they forgive their perpetrators. There were also cases where a former Tutsi victim got

married to the daughter of a genocidaire father who had killed his parents. Mukanyiligira (2014) succinctly illustrates through her interviews with women genocidaires how people have been transformed. Women found guilty of genocide and imprisoned formed reconciliation clubs in prison. Some women genocidaires, once they had been released and returned to their community, also formed reconciliation clubs in the community. They actively worked to make reconciliation a reality. As a South African living in Rwanda, i was confronted by the many positive things the Rwandans were doing and explored what we as South Africans could learn from them. One of the many events i had witnessed was the reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. Some genocidaires built houses for the children of their victims. Poor women, both victims and perpetrators, worked together to form cooperatives because of their poverty and need to feed their children (Umutoni 2012). This impressed me deeply.

The major institution that reflects the transformation of the traditional reconciliation and problem-solving structure was the *gacacas*. This institution still has international legal scholars abuzz with criticism, admiration and scepticism. Traditionally, only older men could preside over problem-solving structures (similar to the South African *lekgotla*, or *kgotla*¹¹²), but the *gacacas* included young people and women who were given paralegal training for cases dealing with the genocide. These were used to fast-track the court cases of thousands of suspected genocidaires in prisons. When compared with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) at Arusha, Tanzania,¹¹³ these courts used minimal funds and covered thousands of cases. But like everything else in Rwanda, academics have diverse views on what impact these courts had.¹¹⁴

Other community structures that i found impressive are the *Umudugudugu* and the *Umuganda*. The *Umudugudugu* refers to community cells that are found throughout the country. All areas are divided into cells. Elected members from these community cells are responsible for development, security, peace, gender issues, poverty and support, respectively, while there are other relevant positions to assist the community. Meetings are held regularly, and elections are held for positions in these structures. If there are problems or concerns in the community, they are taken to the community cell and resolutions sought there. *Umuganda*¹¹⁵ take place on the first Saturday of each month. Between 7am and 9am, community members gather to clean up a designated area,

while the period from 9am to 11am is dedicated to political education. At these meetings some of the issues discussed are new bills and laws. Critics of Rwanda argue that these are meetings to indoctrinate the people. I cannot contest this as it is not possible to assess without data and my limited Kinyarwanda constrained my reading and understanding of the local newsletters. What i do know is that it is good if people discuss draft bills and get to know the laws of their country. In addition, members of the community find these sessions helpful, and they also contribute to the building of a community spirit. What i have also seen is that in some cases men get together to drink after the work is done. I met only one woman who did not participate. She said she was busy but had paid someone to do her work. Jehovah's Witnesses are also exempted on the Saturday, and they do their community work on the Sunday.

There are also parents' evenings, *Umugoraba w'ababyei*, instituted as part of the 2013 women's-month activities to nurture 'gender equality in families to promote dignity'.¹¹⁶ This is a platform for parents to discuss gender equality, human rights and the dignity of all Rwandans. Here, too, it is expected that the values of the Rwandan constitution will be discussed, debated and hopefully internalised. From some of the research of my students i learnt that there are still many parents who favour the education of boy children as opposed to girls' education, so this is necessary education.

The issue of poverty is the one concern that has been challenging Rwandans. Jane Umutoni (2012) highlights how women, irrespective of which 'groups' they had earlier been categorised into, united in forming a cooperative so that they could ensure money for food and to support their children. Kansanga Ndahiro (2012) also illustrates how women who had been raped and impregnated during the genocide and were rejected by their families and society united and together created a viable community of support and care for themselves. Mukeshimana (2014) stresses the government's response by caring for the thousands of orphans in peace villages, thus providing orphans a housing community for young adult female-headed households. Mukeshimana uses the case study of the Niboyi peace village in the Kicukiro district of Kigali as an example.

What i found impressive was the commitment of people to make their country work well. I was inspired by people i met and Rwandan communities in general. One event in particular illustrates the latter. In 2013 there was a mutiny in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by a rebel group called the M23.¹¹⁷ The group was

named after the agreement that was made on 23 March between the government and a group of soldiers based in East Congo (incidentally, they speak a version of Kinyarwanda). The agreement was that they would be incorporated into the main army. This did not happen, resulting in the mutiny. The United Nations had a special enquiry into the mutiny. The UN report noted that Rwanda was behind the outbreak of the mutiny and was also financing it. When a country is implicated in a UN research report, it is UN protocol to give the implicated country a chance to either refute or verify the contents prior to it being made public. However, the report was leaked to the press before Rwanda had seen it. Immediately international donors like Oxfam, the European Union (EU) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ; German Development Agency for International Cooperation) stopped providing Rwanda with development aid. I do not recall who initiated it, but immediately our university staff and several other civic bodies held meetings to discuss the withdrawal of international aid and how to remedy the situation. Our staff unanimously decided to donate one-third of our monthly salary for the next year. Foreign staff were consulted, and the same request was asked of us. Most agreed.

There were then reports in the media that people were being forced to donate money. When this was investigated it was found that at one school the principal had filled in the debit forms for his staff. These donations were then returned, and individuals were asked to sign and submit their own forms. When the allegation of Rwanda's involvement in the mutiny in the DRC was eventually found to be false, international funding was reinstated. Nevertheless, most people continued making their contribution for the entire period they had committed themselves to.

Of course, there were some negative experiences too. There was a church next to our house. Some Rwandan churches have whole-night rituals, and they have huge speakers blasting noise throughout the night, making sleep for neighbours impossible. We complained to the *Umudugudugu* about the noise that began at 7am on Sunday mornings, and then had a meeting with the chief and delegates of the church. Many other people also complained about this noise and the singing throughout the night.¹¹⁸ The mayor of Kigali later issued a local government law that the sound from churches should not exceed a certain level (decibels) and hours. Hence the noise stopped; but some people were very unhappy about that law.

A negative experience on a personal level was a complaint from one student in my master's class about the amount of work i was giving the students. She influenced a few others to join her in making the complaint. It was not extra work, but a staggered submission of work to assist them. The quality of students' work was very poor and the standard of research assignments mediocre. I thus devised a system whereby they would submit their choice of one assignment out of ten with an interim bibliography after two weeks. A week later they had to submit the outline of the plan for their assignment and how they were going to develop their arguments. All this was in preparation for their assignments, which had to be submitted a few weeks later. Of course, it was extra marking for me. But the students needed to learn how to plan and to develop their arguments using sound research. What was disappointing to me was that the student did not come to me about her concerns. I was at a conference in Turkey when she complained to the director about me. It became a high-profile university enquiry that included the rector and senior staff in a disciplinary hearing. The outcome was that the assignment was reasonable, educative at all levels and that the process was helpful and informative for the students. However, the events prior to the decision at the disciplinary hearing were so unpleasant, protracted and painful to me that i resigned before the decision was made public.

Thereafter, i did consultancy work for GIZ, which gave me the opportunity to travel throughout Rwanda and engage with local governments. This gave me insight into the challenges and successes at that level. I continued to supervise my master's students. However, the lessons drawn from my students, their varied data (they all had to use primary data for their theses) and my personal experiences and observations in Rwanda inspired me to explore issues of reconciliation in South Africa. The content of the Transitional Justice course that explored post-conflict societies and how to promote equity, transformation and restorative justice post-conflict, also contributed to my need to investigate my personal relations with former apartheid agents. These all prompted me to interview my interrogator regarding my Section 29 experiences.

My interrogator while i was in solitary confinement had proudly announced that he was going to serve in the new government that would inevitably happen, as the signs were there that apartheid was almost at an end. I was shocked and said that there had been many

human rights violations committed in South Africa. I mentioned the need for a Nuremberg-type trial when he said he was ready to serve in the new post-apartheid police. Well, we had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but as many will attest, despite the international lauding thereof, it had mixed results. The amnesty section worked more effectively than the reparations one (not sure if there was a budget for this at all). Khulumani Support Group,¹¹⁹ of which i was a board member, has 140 000 members who suffered gross human rights violations but are not classified as victims and therefore receive no support. One of the recommendations of the TRC was that the process of identifying victims of gross human rights violations should continue. There is nothing the government seems to be doing about this.

I am privileged to be one of those classified as ‘a victim of gross human rights abuses’. I receive a special pension. Not all the trialists do, and efforts are now being made to assist with a new application. Richmond Mbutho (accused number 5 in our trial) has applied several times in the past, but was unsuccessful. I have medical aid because of my class position and was able to have extensive treatment after my release from prison. I have managed to overcome some of the negative consequences of the trauma experienced in solitary confinement and prison, but not all. One of the most profound experiences i had after my release was freeing myself from what i term being a ‘prisoner of my anger’.

My interrogator/torturer did not go through the TRC process. He also succeeded in getting employment in the new police service created after the first democratic elections in 1994. During the late 1990s, he often appeared on television with the Western Cape provincial Minister of Safety and Security. What was remarkable to me was that they were always captured on camera either laughing or smiling. I would cringe with anger and pain whenever i saw them on television. There was even a colour photograph of them on page one of a local newspaper on one occasion – again, smiling ear to ear. I keep this piece of the newspaper with the photograph of them amongst my prison memorabilia; why, i do not know. This angst i experienced continued for some time, until one day i reflected on what it was doing to me. Du Toit was obviously in a good space with an influential and well-paid job. He also seemed to have a good relationship with his boss, a former struggle activist. And here i was filled with anger and pain because of my experiences of the torture he inflicted on me. It

was while i reflected on this that i realised i was allowing my anger to imprison me. It was at that moment that i literally freed myself from that anger. It was such a liberation.

Witnessing the events in Rwanda made me see a deeper version of reconciliation. Perpetrators and victims met to ask forgiveness and share experiences. I decided that during my next holiday in South Africa i would try to speak to my interrogator. I had a few questions that i wanted to pose to him. I had also been encouraged about the possibility of meeting with him when i learnt about how Lieutenant Mostert, a very notorious and barbaric security branch policeman during the 1980s, had approached Johnny Issel for a meeting so that he could ask for forgiveness. Johnny was a grassroots political leader from Mitchell's Plain who was terrorised by the police. This meeting between Johnny and Mostert took place at the Theological College of the University of Stellenbosch and was facilitated by the theologian Professor Llewellyn McMasters and Progressive Primary Health Care director Elise Levendal, who had been a counsellor to Johnny. According to Elise, it was a very frank discussion.

Mostert was a notorious security policeman, and it appeared as though he was obsessed with persecuting particular people, especially Johnny Issel and Zubeida Jaffer. Mostert treated Zubeida and Johnny as his personal 'trophies'. He was always on the hunt for them, and triumphant when he managed to detect and arrest them. Both Johnny and Zubeida had been traumatised by him.

Zubeida also noted how most of her torture had major sexual undertones and how she was made to feel very vulnerable as a woman. When Mostert heard that she was pregnant, he tried various ways to induce a miscarriage. Fortunately, he did not succeed.¹²⁰ Apartheid had no victors; all, in some way, were victims. Security policeman Mostert was one too; a pathetic character who thrived on instilling fear in people.

It came as a shock to all who heard that Mostert had approached McMasters to facilitate a meeting between him and Johnny, whom Mostert had severely abused.¹²¹ Mostert apologised to Johnny, and requested that Johnny send his apologies to his wife, Zubeida Jaffer, and the child she subsequently gave birth to. He probably recalled how she was threatened with an abortion during detention.

Can we ever shed fear, anger and memories of pain? I immediately think of the presentation by Russ Parker, parish priest to ten villages in the English Midlands, at the Healing History's Wounds Conference

at Bishop Stuart University in Mbarara, Uganda, in January 2013. He shared the story of the tension in a village that had experienced trauma during the Viking raids centuries ago. He noticed that whatever the nine other villages decided, the tenth village always wanted to do the opposite or just disagreed with the other villages' proposals. He then consulted with the people of the tenth village to determine what their concerns were.

They informed him that during the period of the Viking raids the ten villages had jointly put security in place; a lookout was placed on a hill with a view of the sea. When the lookout saw the Vikings' ships approaching, he would warn the ten villages and they would hide and institute various mechanisms to avoid being killed or attacked by the Vikings. However, on one occasion someone had forgotten to inform the inhabitants of the tenth village that the Vikings were approaching. The village was destroyed, many women raped and most of the men killed and their treasures stolen. Ever since then, there has been animosity amongst the villages. Russ had to work hard to bring about reconciliation to overcome anger and animosity that was centuries old.

When I learnt about the Mostert visit and apology, i felt encouraged. I thought i would share Russ Parker's story with Captain (now General) du Toit when i asked for an interview with him. I wanted to pose the following questions to him:

- I assume that when i was held in solitary confinement at Pollsmoor prison (in Blanke Hospitaal), all events had to be reported to the chief investigating officer. Did they inform you that they had forgotten about me as a prisoner? Did they tell you for how long it was?
- You know that everywhere i went during interrogation i was always accompanied by a security policewoman, even to the toilet. Why was it necessary to strip me naked on my return from interrogation?
- What do you think are the major challenges confronting the new South Africa?
- Do you have any personal concerns about the new South Africa?
- Do you see yourself having a role in contributing to this new South Africa? If yes, how? If no, why not?
- Anything or any opinions relating to the new South Africa that you would like to share?

Du Toit justified, in a three-page email, why he did not want to be interviewed. He gave me permission to use the email in my writing. Of course, i had to forward whatever i was publishing that included the email to him before publishing. I explained that i would be using the entire email as is. He stated:

I am therefore not going to dwell on the past and suffice to say that I asked to be transferred to the Detective Branch in 1993 where I was able to address the ills of society at another level.¹²²

What is significant, though, is that as a beneficiary of apartheid and a person who worked to maintain the apartheid system, he does not make any reference to himself as a beneficiary and defender of apartheid or the negative implications thereof. He believes that he ‘served both regimes faithfully, the former under the NP [Nationalist Party] and secondly under the ANC’. He is now ‘doing his bit for the new South Africa’ because he is ‘lecturing mainly to blacks in Criminal Law’.¹²³ He further added:

Apparently, I must have done some things correctly, as I was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and Major-General (Assistant Commissioner) in charge of the Detectives of the Western Cape Province.¹²⁴

On receiving the email, i immediately thought of the enormous pension he must be getting. In terms of the TRC’s recommendations on reparations and restoring the dignity of the victims of human rights abuses, i thought of my co-trialists and how some of them are living in dire poverty and are unemployed. Even more remarkable is that he, like most beneficiaries of apartheid, does not take any responsibility for the past. Instead, he still refers to the ‘involvement in the *criminal* actions you and others engaged in during the so-called Rainbow Trial’.¹²⁵ This despite the fact that none of us had been found guilty and all charges had been dropped for eight of us in March 1990. In March 1992, the six remaining Yengeni trialists received indemnity.

However, i now believe that in order to have attempted to promote reconciliation, i went about it in the wrong way. I should not have asked those questions. There may have been accusatory implications and not

a good starting point for reconciliation. I should rather have left the discussion open or depended on a skilled and experienced mediator to facilitate the discussion.

Reflections

I also have another very personal concern. During my detention in solitary confinement, i no longer menstruated. My doctor, post prison, examined me and diagnosed early menopause brought on by the trauma. I tried to suppress this memory as well as other very negative ones. However, two years ago, a writer friend of mine, Hale, excitedly informed me that she was pregnant. I was a bit surprised as i knew she was quite an age at 49 years. She, however, was very positive and stressed now healthy she was, and that the gynaecologist was very satisfied with her progress and that of the unborn foetus. She subsequently gave birth to a healthy baby with no complications throughout her nine months of pregnancy. This immediately set me pondering. I then contacted an aunt of mine whom i remembered was also quite an age when she gave birth to a healthy baby. I was like one obsessed. I contacted all the women whom i recalled who at a very mature age had had healthy pregnancies and babies. I was 30-something when i had the early menopause. This happy news of my friend's contributed to my reflection and subsequent deep depression. It was a revelation of something which i had been aware of all these decades but never confronted. This traumatised me anew: i had been robbed of the decision about whether i wanted to have a child or not. I was able to go for therapy just to work through this suppressed memory of decades ago.

However, i have had many opportunities and privileges post 1994. I am one of the 17 000 'victims of gross human rights' identified by the TRC. I hence received a once-off amount of R30 000. Khulumani Support Group has identified 140 000 victims of apartheid and victims of gross human rights who have not benefitted. This government has not fulfilled the recommendations of the TRC that the identification of

further victims continue. The situation is very erratic. Similar with MK veterans. There are many veterans, including those in our Yengeni trial, who have not been given an MK force number and therefore do not get a special pension. I receive a monthly pension which enables me to live a reasonably comfortable life.

I was able to complete my PhD and be a member of the first democratic Parliament. As a member of the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality and Status of Women i was able to participate in drawing up the first National Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality for South Africa. Other political deployments included being transformation and gender consultant to the first woman Minister of Minerals and Energy, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and strategic liaison and advisor to the then mayor of Cape Town, Nomaindiya Mfeketo. A very challenging position was being Commissioner on Gender Equality (CGE) from 2001 to 2006. As much as i was being 'paid for my passions', the position was difficult as the budget was minimal, the structure a bit dysfunctional and there were different interpretations of the Act by the 12 commissioners. This made the situation almost untenable to work constructively. We did not achieve as much as we could, given the power and mandate. It is with sadness that we currently in South Africa are confronted with so much violence against women and femicide.

We have an impressive Constitution and the gender machinery is elaborate, but patriarchy is still alive and thriving. We need all sectors of society, including institutions of faith and cultural groupings, together with government to make our Constitution a living document. After 28 years of freedom, women still do not enjoy freedom and the benefits of full citizenship.

In order for women to have full citizenship they should have rights and equality with men in all areas. This has been addressed to a certain extent by the Constitution and in many policies of the ANC-led government since 1994. However, patriarchy is alive and thriving, while violence against women and children is rampant. In many respects, the new South Africa that has been in existence for close to 30 years is not the South Africa women in particular, and members of the liberation movement in general, fought for. Most importantly, our history has demonstrated that it is easier to draft a constitution and make laws than to implement them. How does one change the perceptions and attitudes of patriarchal and abusive men who think that they own and can control

women and children? It has largely been left to women to challenge the violence against women and children. What is required is that men begin to explore how they will confront this problem and deal with their fellow men who abuse women and children.

I am reminded of the lines from Giles Pontecorvo's famous film on the Algerian national war of liberation, *The Battle of Algiers*: 'It's difficult to start a revolution; more difficult to sustain it. But it's later, when we've won, that the real difficulties will begin' (quoted in McClintock 1995: 388).

Karl Marx argued that 'we have conquered the hills, we now have to conquer the plains'.

This is the phenomenon we are now confronting.

Appendix A:

List of accused

- Accused no. 1 – Tony Yengeni
- Accused no. 2 – Jenny Schreiner
- Accused no. 3 – Lumka Nyamza
- Accused no. 4 – Michael Mzimkhulu Lubambo
- Accused no. 5 – Richmond Mbutho Nduku
- Accused no. 6 – Mongameli Wellington Nkwandla
- Accused no. 7 – Mthetheleli Titana
- Accused no. 8 – Gary John Kruser
- Accused no. 9 – Chris Giffard
- Accused no. 10 – Sitlabocha Charles Mahlale
- Accused no. 11 – Alpheus Nowana Ndude
- Accused no. 12 – Gertrude Fester
- Accused no. 13 – Zurayah Abass
- Accused no. 14 – Colleen Lombard

Appendix B:

Brief biographies of some of the accused

Tony Yengeni accused no. 1

Tony Yengeni was born on 11 October 1954. He is the oldest in a family of four boys and one girl. Both his parents are workers. His father is currently a pensioner having recently stopped work after 23 years of service at the University of Cape Town. His mother works on a temporary basis in nurse's homes. She is a dedicated Christian and a member of the Anglican Church. The family was brought up in a strict Christian environment.

Tony completed matric at Healdtown High School in 1975. He joined the South African Student's Movement (SASM) in 1974. SASM was a high school student's organisation committed to the struggle against 'Bantu' education. In November 1975, shortly before he was due to take his matric examinations, he was expelled from school because of involvement in a strike by the students.

In 1976 he was employed by the City Council as a clerk. Three months later he was retrenched with hundreds of other workers. A month later he took up employment as a packer at Columbit, which is a spice-processing factory in Paarden Eiland. Six months later he was dismissed from this job after the manager had accused him of distributing leaflets on the factory premises. He then joined the ranks of the unemployed.

Tony Yengeni was married to Lumka Nyamza (accused no. 3 in this trial). They have a child called Mandlabantu.

One of Tony Yengeni's younger brothers served a ten-year sentence on Robben Island for joining and receiving military training from Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC.

Jenny Schreiner accused no. 2

She was born on the 30th October 1956 into a 'professional' family. Her parents, two brothers, sister and herself lived in Pietermaritzburg. All four children matriculated at private church schools and went on to university and postgraduate studies. Jenny commenced a Bachelor of Science degree in 1974 and then transferred her science credits to a Bachelor of Arts degree at UCT in 1977. She subsequently did an interdisciplinary BA honours in African Studies, followed by a master's degree in Sociology. Her MA thesis examined the history of the Food and Canning Workers Union to see how it had organised to improve the lives of women workers during the 1950s.

During her schooling, Jenny's extracurricular activities were hockey, tennis, ballet, piano and working at a charity organisation, Kupugani.

At university she joined the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) Wages Commission and stood for the Students' Representative Council. She was one of the few women who held positions in these organisations. She joined UCT Women's Movement and then helped in the formation of the United Women's Organisation, a non-racial community-based women's organisation. She was a member of UWCO (United Women's Congress), the organisation that came from the merger between UWO and the United Women's Front. She also became active in the Detainees' Parents Support Committee in Cape Town after the detention of friends in 1981. Through the United Women's Organisation and the United Women's Congress, she was a part of the United Democratic Front.

She was employed at the University of Cape Town to catalogue the new NUSAS archives, to tutor and to lecture in Industrial Sociology and Comparative African Government and Law. She also worked for the Labour Research Committee on a publication and a resource package on high prices.

Lumka Nyamza accused no. 3

Lumka Nyamza was born in 1962. She grew up in Mdantsane. Her father died when she was very young and her mother was left to support her five children. She did so by way of domestic work for white families in East London.

While Lumka's mother stayed in the backyard of her white employer's house, Lumka, as the eldest daughter, had to take responsibility at

home. Often the people her mother employed to look after the younger children were unreliable. So, Lumka found herself in a situation where she had to miss school in order to look after the family.

As a student Lumka became a member of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). She was also a member of the East London Student's Cultural Association (ELSCA). In October 1977 both SASO and ELSCA were banned. Lumka, together with many of the other members of ELSCA, was detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. She was subsequently charged and convicted of addressing an illegal gathering and also of public violence arising out of an incident that occurred after Steve Biko's funeral.

After her release from prison, she served as a member of the Propaganda Unit of the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). During a commemoration service in Duncan Village, she was again arrested and held for a few days. On her release she was instructed not to attend political gatherings, not to involve herself with student politics and to make herself available for interrogation at any time. During this period, she also worked for the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU).

Lumka was married to Tony Yengeni (accused no. 1 in the trial). They have a son, Mandla.

**Michael Mzimkhulu Lubambo accused no. 4
(written by Michael)**

I was born in Alice on 7 June 1952. I grew up under my grandmother because my parents had to go to Cape Town in search of work.

I started schooling in Alice. When I was in Standard 4, I joined my parents in Cape Town. I proceeded again with my schooling in Cape Town. In 1972 I started at I.D. Mkhize High School. Because of financial problems I got problems at school. Then I decided to look for a job during school holidays to help my parents.

In 1976, students at all schools boycotted classrooms in protest against Bantu Education. After that I didn't go back to school. I decided to look for work to help my parents in problems that were arising. I got a job where the wages were very low. I worked there for a year and disputed with the bosses. By the following year I got another work at S.B.H. Cotton Mills. There also I experienced the same problem of the low wages.

There I joined a workers' union, which is fighting for the rights of workers. I was still working there at S.B.H. and a member of the Union when I was arrested in 1987.

Now I am one of the awaiting trialists in Pollsmoor Prison charged with Treason.

Richmond Mbutho Nduku accused no. 5

(written by Mbutho)

I was born in Alice in 1961 and grew up in the villages there. My father was a worker here in Cape Town and my mother was always in Alice with us. I started schooling in Alice until I passed my Std. 10 in 1983. During my school time I also had problems which affected my schooling. I lost three years at school because of boycotts by students against the inferior Bantu Education and the implementation of Afrikaans in our schools.

In 1984 I left the school and searched for work in Cape Town. Many more problems like Pass Laws in South African Republic arose. I struggled to get a job because it was said I was not allowed to be in Cape Town and I have no South African identity because I was born in Ciskei. By that year I managed to get a casual job where the wages were very low and conditions were not right. I decided to go back to school in 1985 in East London to start a profession in teaching. Unfortunately, I did not finish there because of the same problems I have mentioned above. The following year there was no money for me to go back to school.

By the following year 1986 I came back to Cape Town in search of work again. I struggled again to get work. In the township I was just a soccer player.

The whole year I did not get work, that is I joined the Army of the Unemployed. By 1987 I was arrested and now I am charged with treason.

Mongameli Wellington Nkwandla accused no. 6

(written by Wellington)

My name is Mongameli Wellington Nkwandla, a married man who has two children, a father and three sisters. My elder sister is a married woman, and the two younger sisters are still schooling. My mother died in 1975.

I was born on 24 February 1957 in Tsomo Village in Transkei. I came to Cape Town in 1958 when my mother decided to join my father who was working for Cape Steel Construction.

I did my Lower Primary Education in Sokanyo Lower Primary School, Higher Primary Education in Luzuko Higher Primary School, Secondary Education in I.D. Mkize Secondary School and my High School Education in Langa High School. In the first year of my university studies, I decided to drop my studies because of money problems and of the boycott against inferior education.

I struggled to get the job which was suitable for me. In the first two companies I worked as an unregistered worker because I had no permit to work in those companies and they were underpaying us. I was working for S.B.H. Cotton Mills as a labourer when I was arrested by the police. The National Union of Textile Workers which is an affiliate of COSATU came to organise workers into the trade unions. I joined the Union and I was elected as the Vice-Chairperson of SBH Shop Steward Committee. The duties of the Chairperson were to represent the SBH workers in the branch executive committee meetings of our trade union and meetings of COSATU.

I was also involved in sport in my location. I was the official member of United Aces Football Club for which I played for 12 years.

At the present time I am an awaiting trialist in Pollsmoor Prison accused of treason by the South African government.

Mthetheleli Titana accused no. 7

(written by Titana/JJ)

I was born in Paarl in 1960. I have two brothers and four sisters. They are all still alive except my father who died in 1978. I come from a Christian family. In 1967 I started my primary education at home in Paarl. After passing my primary education I went to higher primary school. I passed these standards under difficult conditions which were caused by the lack of facilities in our schools. During this period a lot of children were dropping out of school. One of the main reasons for the children to drop out of school was corporal punishment. This was one of the main grievances of the South African Blacks students during 1976 Uprising when they were protesting against Bantu Education.

In 1975 I went to Secondary School. This is the period when I started to discover how Bantu Education System is affecting me. In 1976 the Government introduced Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in Black schools. The students saw this as one of the government's campaigns to suppress black education in South Africa. The students

started a peaceful protest, which resulted in serious uprising in South Africa as I had never seen before. Hundreds of innocent students died. This was the turning point in my life. From then, I decided to commit myself in the struggle of the Black students against Bantu Education. In 1980 I was doing matric in Langa High School. In the same year I joined the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). I was the branch chairperson of COSAS in Paarl. COSAS's aim was to fight for free, democratic and compulsory education in S.A. In 1985 this mighty national students' organisation was banned.

Presently I am awaiting trial in Pollsmoor Maximum Prison. I am charged for treason by the S.A. State.

Gary John Kruser accused no. 8

Born 04.12.1960 in Gleemore, Athlone. Third eldest child and eldest son out of five children born to Mr and Mrs John Charles Kruser. Fairly middle-class background and upbringing. Was educated at Athlone E.C. Primary. Thereafter matriculated at Spes Bona Senior Secondary in 1978. Throughout childhood he had to battle with understanding of why children in outskirts of Gleemore in areas like Quetown were always begging and lacked decent clothing. In 1976 became involved in student battles which lead to uprising on his doorstep in Belgravia and Thornton Roads.

At the time of arrest, he was a community worker for a Christian Aid Organisation where he mainly worked in squatter areas in Black Townships where he initiated and assisted pre-school, co-operatives and Feeding Schemes. It was here in 1986 when he was exposed to Police brutality in the Crossroads fights. He saw the police openly assisting the conservative 'Witdoeke' in destroying people's houses and killing helpless people trying to defend their homes. This was not the only time he was exposed to such injustice by the police.

On the 15 October 1985 he clearly remembers the police not acting as they should in protection of the people in general but hiding themselves inside a box on a SATS TRUCK during uprising in Athlone and brutally murdering three young boys after coaxed to stone the truck. (This is known as the Trojan Horse incident.)

It was on this day he decided to deepen his commitment to free the oppressed people and to contribute to see that justice is done and that the people shall govern.

He is now lingering in Pollsmoor Prison after being detained for six months in Section 29, thereafter refused bail and charged with treason.

Christopher Giffard accused no. 9

Christopher Giffard was born on 7 October 1960 in East London where he lived until he finished school in 1978. He comes from a small lower middle-class family. His mother is a teacher, his father is a clerk and his sister works as a librarian.

He attended a Roman Catholic school (De la Salle College) from 1967 to 1971 and a government school (Selbourne College) from 1972 to 1978. At the time of his arrest in terms of Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, he was a lecturer and post-graduate student at the University of Cape Town.

In 1978 Chris joined the School's Committee of the Institute of Race Relations and through its activities he found himself in Duncan Village, an African Township. This was the first time he met Black South Africans outside of the master/servant relationship.

In 1979 Chris started studying at the University of Cape Town. He soon became involved in democratic student organisations and strike support committees. He was arrested in 1980 for handing out copies of the Freedom Charter in an industrial area and was charged with 'Furthering the aims of Communism'. He served on the 1982/1983 UCT/SRC as Media Officer and came into contact with many members of democratic community organisations and trade unions. It is said that the upswell of popular democratic structures during this time, more particularly the UDF, convinced Chris that the majority of South Africans supported the notion of a free South Africa based on the ideals of the Freedom Charter.

Chris was also influenced by his studies at UCT which concerned African and South African history as well as contemporary South African society. He graduated with a BA degree in 1982 and with an honours degree in 1984. He was in the process of completing his master's degree at the time of his detention.

Sitlabocha Charles Mahlale accused no. 10

(written by Charles/Captain)

I was born in 1950 at Langa, being the last in the family of three, the eldest is a girl. I attended school at Dutch Reformed Church School,

the Primary School, which later became Moshoeshoe Higher Primary. I left school at primary. I was brought up in a fatherless home as father died when I was still very small and mother passed away in 1986 of lung cancer.

At school I had played soccer and had taken part in swimming of which according to the apartheid law across the colour-line contest provincially or nationally is not allowed and the pool that we have is not of competition standard.

I had involved myself in other sports such as ballroom dancing. There are no adequate facilities for this. We made use of any hall and in centres. They were overcrowded as they were small and in highly populated places. With the Separate Amenities Act now this indicates that dispensation is done racially we had to join the non-racial South African Congress of Sport (SACOS) fraternity to bridge the racial barriers and unite the oppressed non-racially in sport.

I had spent some time in different places of employment. I changed jobs occasionally; leaving the places because of poor working conditions and low wages. Between 1968–1975 I was employed at the Community Centre where I worked until I was arrested in 1975.

Here we had to improve relations between staff and sports people. Serious challenges to be made with Administration Board for improvement of fields and extension of centres as they were overcrowded.

I fathered four children – two boys and two girls who have experience of a disrupted family life as I was arrested three times under Section 6. The last time been detained under the notorious Section 29 detention – where there was access to nobody except the police, not even lawyers or family member or priest as a Christian. Since 1987 I have been arrested and detained under the notorious law and am this year March 1988 charged with treason.

Alpheus Nowana Ndude accused no. 11

Alpheus was born in Cape Town on 19 April 1942. In 1946 Alpheus' family was forced to move from their home and were thereafter subject to forced removals twice again, when they settled in Jakkalsvlei (today known as Bonteheuwel).

His father died when Alpheus was very young. His mother was unemployed and the impoverished family moved to Transkei. Alpheus' mother died there and he became an orphan at age 15 years.

The continual forced removals had repeatedly interrupted Alpheus's schooling. He had begun schooling in 1947 and by 1955 had passed Std. 2 when he was taken to the Transkei. Alpheus returned to Cape Town with the financial assistance from his sister and resumed his schooling in Gugulethu until Std. 5. Thereafter he began facing prosecution under the now repealed pass laws and in his own words 'was constantly harassed by the police and inspectors and the Administration Board which forced me to leave school and face tremendous difficulties'.

Alpheus had difficulty obtaining a passbook in Cape Town because he had no birth certificate. As a result of having no pass and being forced to leave school so prematurely Alpheus faced seven years of unemployment. He supported himself with earnings from casual jobs, apart from 11 months employment with Irvin & Johnson at the docks.

Alpheus then became a part-time organiser at the Western Province Advice Bureau where his cousin was also employed. They were both detained in 1976 under the Internal Security Act when Alpheus spent four months in detention and was released without charges. His cousin died in detention.

At the time of his arrest, Alpheus was employed as a coordinator at a school for illiterate adults (Adult Literacy Project) where he taught them to read and write in different languages spoken in South Africa.

Alpheus was detained at his workplace on 28 October 1987 and held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act until 15 March 1988.

Alpheus was married to former UDF executive member Hilda Ndude and they have five children between the ages of five and 12.

Gertrude Fester accused no. 12

Gertrude Fester was born in 1952. The family consisted of four sisters and a brother. From childhood Gertrude's family was focused around the church wherein she states that she was taught to love and respect everyone and that she was lucky to be living in a 'Christian society'. Her family church was the First Dutch Reformed church which permitted slaves to be members and is in the centre of Cape Town. Most of the congregation lived in District Six. Gertrude states that she found it puzzling when many of the congregation and her childhood friends were forced to move to remote areas as a result of Group Areas Act removals. Similarly, near her family home in Maitland, there lived African people with whom everyone mixed freely, and they were also forced to move in terms of the Group Areas Act.

Gertrude attended St John's Roman Catholic School and St Augustine's Catholic Secondary School. During her schooling she recalls that many conscientious classmates were compelled to leave school early, as their parents were unable to afford their continued schooling. This led her to an awareness of the inequalities in society. She found it difficult to reconcile these experiences with the teaching regarding the supposedly Christian society in which she lived.

Gertrude's father died when she started secondary school and in order to ensure that she and her three sisters were able to obtain an adequate education, her mother looked after them during the day and worked as a nurse at night.

Gertrude matriculated at Harold Cressy High School. She commenced first year at the University of the Western Cape, where she was a member of the South African Students Organisation (SASO). She then transferred to the University of Cape Town as she wished to study Drama. She completed her BA (Drama) at UCT in 1975. During this period she was responsible for the annual church plays and plays in the community.

In 1975 Gertrude commenced working for the Education Department as a teacher at Kensington High School. In 1976 and 1977 she completed an HDE (Higher Diploma in Education) part-time through UNISA. She continued teaching at Kensington High School until 1978. She was involved in producing school plays and relating these plays to the problems experienced by the people in the community.

In 1979 Gertrude taught at a school in a rural area in the Northern Cape.

During 1980 Gertrude travelled in Europe and decided to study in Holland. She completed a master's degree in Development Studies (with Women and Development as her major subject) in 1981-1982 and focused on women and the problems of migrant labour affecting women. During these postgraduate studies, she gained insight into the problems faced in other third world countries as a result of participants from many of these countries in the postgraduate course.

Thereafter Gertrude was invited to World Health Organisation conferences on women and other international conferences which focused on women, health and the state of medicine in third world countries.

In 1982 Gertrude returned home to South Africa and took up a teaching post at Hewat Teachers' Training College. She joined the United Women's Organisation and later the United Women's Congress (UWCO), a merger of the United Women's Organisation and the

Women's Front. She participated in workshopping plays and presenting them on days like National Women's Day. She also assisted producing plays relating to children's rights. She was the Education Officer for UWCO and served on the education panel for the UDF Woodstock area committee. At the time of her arrest, she served on the executive of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). Gertrude is also a member of WECTU (Western Cape Teachers Union).

Zurayah Abass accused no. 13

Born in Salt River, Ms Abass is aged 36. Her formative years were spent in Rondebosch which was a mixed area. When this area was eventually declared 'For Whites Only' her family was forced to move from the area, which left Zurayah confused and bitter. She completed her schooling at Salt River High School. She worked in the commercial field for approximately ten years, initially as a clerk and then as an accounting assistant.

Zurayah's religion is Islam, which sees race, class and gender discrimination as repugnant. Her parents inculcated in her a strong sense of sharing and accordingly she found the condition and poverty of the majority of South Africans irreconcilable with her beliefs.

She joined the United Women's Organisation, a United Democratic Front (UDF) affiliate, as she felt it would work towards achieving her aspirations.

She finds herself involved in this trial as a result of her Islamic socialisation which encourages adherence to oppose all forms of discrimination.

At the time of her detention, she was employed by Molo Songololo, a project for children to express themselves through a magazine and workshops. Zurayah is an active sportsperson and enjoys hiking, tennis, swimming and mountain climbing.

She was detained on 15 August 1987 until January 1988 when she was released on R3 000 bail subject to conditions including reporting daily between 6–8pm at Woodstock Police Station. She married shortly after her release from detention in terms of Section 29.

Colleen Lombard accused no. 14

She was born in Wynberg on 21 August 1950 and attended St Matthew's Primary School and St Matthew's Church in Claremont. She attended

Oaklands High School in Lansdowne and left school while doing Std. 9. She completed her Secretarial Course at Maurice's Secretarial in Wynberg. She worked at various commercial companies thereafter, doing secretarial work.

She married in August 1970 and is a mother of two boys and a girl.

She was elected as treasurer to the Clothing Workers Union (CLOWU) in 1984 and started as administrative secretary to CLOWU in May 1985.

She subsequently worked as a part-time administrative worker with the Churches Urban Planning Commission (CUPC) in 1986.

She was released from detention in terms of Section 29 in January 1988 and was granted bail of R3 000 subject to certain conditions including reporting between 6 and 8pm at Gugulethu Police Station.

She loves music, films and books.

Appendix C:

Excerpt from the Trial Charge Sheet

IN THE SUPREME-COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA (CAPE OF GOOD HOPE PROVINCIAL DIVISION)

The Attorney-General of the Cape of Good Hope Provincial Division who prosecutes in the name and on behalf of the State, presents and gives the Court to be informed that:

1. TONY SITEMBISO YENGENI;
a 33 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused one) and
2. JENNIFER ANN SCHREINER;
a 31 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused two) and
3. LUMKA ELIZABETH NYAMZA;
a 25 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused three) and
4. MICHAEL MZIMKHULU LUMBAMBO;
a 35 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused four) and
5. MBUTU RICHMOND NDUKU;
a 26 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused five) and
6. WELLINGTON MONGAMELI NKWANDLA;
a 31 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused six) and

7. MTHETELELI TITANA;
a 26 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused seven) and
8. GARY KRUSER;
a 27 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused eight) and
9. CHRISTOPHER JOHN GIFFARD;
a 27 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused nine) and
10. SITLABOCHA CHARLES MOHALE;
a 37 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused ten) and
11. ALPHEUS NKWANA NDUDE;
a 45 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused eleven) and
12. GERTRUDE MAGDALEEN NETHANI FESTER
a 35 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused twelve) and
13. ZURAYAH ABASS;
a 35 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused thirteen) and
14. COLLEEN LOMBARD;
a 37 year old South African citizen (hereinafter referred to as accused fourteen)

are guilty of the crimes of
TREASON

Alternatively

TERRORISM in sections 1, 54(6), Security Act 1982 contravention of section 54(1) read with 54(7), 67, 68, 69 and 73 of the Internal (Act no. 74 of 1982) and further read with sections 245 and 270 of Act 51 of 1977.

PREAMBLE

Whereas:-

1. The Republic of South Africa (hereinafter referred to as 'The Republic' is and was at all relevant times a sovereign State.

2. The accused at all relevant times were citizens and/or residents of the Republic, and therefore owed allegiance to the State.
3. The African National Congress (hereinafter referred to as 'the A.N.C.')
- aims and endeavours to overthrow the Government of the Republic, by means of violence or means which envisage violence and/or by other means,
4. The A.N.C. was declared an unlawful organisation in terms of Proclamation 119 of the 8th April 1960 as amended by section 22 of Act 93 of 1963, and is deemed to be an unlawful organisation by virtue of the provisions of section 73(2) read with sections 1 and 4 of the Internal Security Act, 1982 (Act no 74 of 1982),
UMKHONTO WE SIZWE, the military-wing of the A.N.C., was declared to be in fact the A.N.C. in terms of Proclamation 93 of 10 May 1963,

The accused were at all relevant times members and/or supporters of the A.N.C. and associated themselves with the aims and objectives of the A.N.C., and/or

5. The accused acted in the furtherance of a common purpose, and/or conspiracy and/or alone to-
 - (a) promote the aims and objectives of the A.N.C., and/or
 - (b) promote their own hostile and treasonable intent against the Government of the Republic.

NOW THEREFORE:

Count 1

TREASON

IN THAT during the period 1979 to 16 December 1987 and in the Republic or elsewhere and more specifically on or about the dates and at or near the places set out respectively in Schedules A to N attached hereto, the accused unlawfully and with hostile intent against the State to overthrow and/or coerce and/or endanger the Government of the Republic.

- (i) conspired jointly and/or severally with the A.N.C. and/or its members and/or supporters and thus with one another and/or the one with the other, to further the aims and objectives of the A.N.C. and/or their own hostile and treasonable intent.
- (ii) committed the acts set out in Schedules A to N hereto, or any of the said acts, in the furtherance of the aims and objectives

of the treasonable intent, A.N.C. and/or their own hostile and
treasonable intent,

AND THEREFORE the accused are guilty of the crime of TREASON,

ALTERNATIVELY

TERRORISM IN CONTRAVENTION OF – SECTION 54(1) OF THE
INTERNAL SECURITY ACT, 1982 (ACT NO 74 OF 1982)

IN THAT during the period 1 July 1982 to 16 December 1987 and
in the Republic or elsewhere and more specifically on or about the
dates and at or near the places set out respectively in Schedules A to
N attached hereto, the accused with the intent to:

- (a) overthrow or endanger the State authority in the Republic, and/
or
- (b) achieve, bring about or promote any constitutional, political,
industrial, social or economic aim or change in the Republic
and/or
- (c) induce the Government of the Republic to do or to abstain from
doing any act or to adopt or to abandon a particular standpoint,
and/or
- (d) put in fear or demoralise the general public, a particular
population group, or the inhabitants of a particular area in the
Republic, or to induce the said public or such population group
or inhabitants to do or abstain from doing any act unlawfully
 - (i) committed acts of violence or threatened or attempted to
do so, and/or
 - (ii) performed acts which were aimed at causing, bringing
about, promoting or contributing towards such an act or
threat of violence, or attempted/consented to or took steps
to perform such act, and/or
 - (iii) conspired with other persons to commit, bring about or
perform any act or threat referred to in paragraph (i) or act
referred to in paragraph (ii), or aided in the commission,
bringing about or performance thereof, and/or
 - (iv) incited, instigated, commanded, aided, advised,
encouraged or produced other persons to commit, bring
about or perform such act or threat as set out in the
Schedules A to N hereinafter.

AND THEREFORE the accused are guilty of the crime of TERRORISM.

SCHEDULE A – ACCUSED ONE

1. During the period 1979 to 1987 accused one was a member and/or supporter of the ANC.
2. During or about 1978 to 1980 the exact dates being unknown to the State and outside the Republic, inter alia in Angola and the USSR, accused one received and/or underwent military training and/or training that could be of use in furthering the aims and objects of the ANC and/or the accused's own hostile and treasonable intent.
3. During the period 1982 to 1986, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused one worked in the Kingdom of Lesotho in furthering the aims of the ANC inter alia for the Regional Military Council of the ANC responsible for the infiltration of trained terrorists into the Republic. Accused one was also a member of the political department of the Lesotho Machinery of the ANC during this period.
4. During 1986 the exact date being unknown to the State, accused one unlawfully entered the Republic from the Kingdom of Lesotho and became a resident of the Cape Peninsula with the aim to:
 - (a) make contact with other militarily and politically trained members of the ANC.
 - (b) arrange accommodation and lodging for ANC members who may enter the Republic on missions.
 - (c) receive instructions from the ANC leadership and to carry out these instructions.
 - (d) receive and store explosives, arms and ammunition for use by members of the ANC to commit acts of violence in the Republic.
 - (e) to give instructions for the commission of acts of violence in the Republic by other members of the ANC.
 - (f) to commit acts of violence in the Republic.
5. (a) During May and July 1987 the exact dates being unknown to the State accused one did receive explosives, arms and ammunition and stored the said material in his house at 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne.

- (b) During June/July 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused one supplied explosives to accused four with instructions to use these explosives at the Magistrate Court, Athlone and various service stations. These attacks were carried out as set out in paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of Schedule D.
- 6.
- (a) In mid July 1987 accused one informed accused two that they should explode an explosive device at Castle Court, Tennent Street, Cape Town. Castle Court being a block of flats where married members of the SA Defence Force and their families are accommodated.
 - (b) With this aim in mind accused two bought six gas cylinders filled with liquid petroleum gas and stole a Toyota Corolla Sedan, the property of Francis Biggs. On 20 July 1987 accused one and two loaded the gas cylinders into the car and accused one supplied two 158 mini limpet mines and one SPM limpet mines which they attached to the gas cylinders. The SPM mine was fitted with a fuse and a detonator.
 - (c) Accused two drove the car to Kasteelhof and parked it in the parking area as instructed by accused one. Thereafter she pulled the safety pin on the SPM mine and made her way back to accused one.
 - (d) At 20h35 the car bomb exploded causing extensive damage to other parked vehicles in the parking area as well as to the building.
- 7.
- (a) The next evening, 21 July 1987, accused one informed accused two that the D F Malan Airport is their next target.
 - (b) Accused one supplied accused two with two SPM limpet mines fitted with fuses and detonators and instructed her to place these mines at the airport.
 - (c) During the night of 21 July 1987 accused two placed these limpet mines in two different toilets in the Ladies Rest Rooms at the airport after she had removed the safety pins.
 - (d) One of these mines exploded at approximately midnight on 21 July 1987 causing extensive damage to the said Ladies Rest Rooms and adjacent areas.
 - (e) The second SPM mine was discovered by members of the bomb disposal unit of the SA Police and was exploded under controlled circumstances.

8. After these explosions accused one and two drafted a letter to the press to explain the reasons for the explosives and to serve as propaganda for the ANC.
9. During the middle of 1987 accused one and two transported certain explosives, arms and ammunition which were in the possession of accused one, from the house where accused one was living at 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne, to the flat of accused two at 5 Marie Court, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg for safe keeping.
11. At the time of his arrest on 16 September 1987, accused one was in possession of a Makarov pistol and two fully loaded magazines at his house in 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne, as well as in possession of the following material at the flat of accused two at 5 Marie Court, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg:
 - 5 AK 47 assault rifles
 - 3 carrying straps for AK 47 rifles
 - 8 AK 47 magazines
 - 967 rounds of AK 47 (7,62 mm) ammunition
 - 1 SPM limpet mine
 - 2 158 mini limpet mines
 - 1 VZD - 1M holder for limpet mines
 - 5 lead strips
 - 3 VZD - 3M mechanical timers
 - 2 MDSM mechanical detonators
 - 1 SPM limpet mine dust cover

SCHEDULE B – ACCUSED TWO

1. During the period 1979 to 1987 the exact date and place being unknown to the State, accused two became and remained a member and/or supporter of the A.N.C.
2. During 1979 the exact date being unknown to the State, and in the Republic of Botswana, accused two received training in the politics of mass organisation from members and/or supporters of the A.N.C.
3. Accused two received instructions from members of the A. N.C. in the Republic of Botswana to return to Cape Town and to gather information that might be of use to the A.N.C. in bringing about its aims. Accused two duly returned to Cape Town and during the period 1979 to 1987 gathered the said

- information for the A.N.C. as instructed and conveyed the information to the A.N.C. in Botswana and elsewhere.
4. During 1986, the exact dates being unknown [to] the State, and in Harare, Zimbabwe, the accused received training in the principles of underground work, and the perspectives of the A.N.C., the South African Communist Party (S.A.C.P.) and the South African Council of Trade Unions (S.A.C.T.U.) that should be put forward in propaganda material. On completion of her training accused two was instructed by members of the A.N.C. in Zimbabwe to return to Cape Town and to:
 - (a) do propaganda work for the A.N.C., the S.A.C.P and S.A.C.T.U.,
 - (b) to link up with terrorists sent by the A.N.C. to the Western Cape,
 - (c) to give political guidance through propaganda, to intensify the armed struggle and mass political action,
 - (d) to link up with accused ten and to instruct him to work with her.
 5. During the period 1986 to 1987 the exact dates being unknown to the State, and in Cape Town, accused two did propaganda work for the A.N.C., S.A.C.P. and S.A.C.T.U. Accused two inter alia:
 - (a) produced and distributed leaflets dealing amongst others with the following topics:
 - The Academic Boycott
 - A Call on White South Africa
 - Statements on Detention
 - Conspiracy
 - May Day
 - The A.N.C.'s response to the state of emergency
 - National Women's Day
 - Taking People's War into the White Areas
 - (b) In a leaflet entitled 'Taking Peoples War into the White Areas' written by accused two and reproduced and distributed in the Western Cape she inter alia wrote the following:

'It is only through a co-ordinated national and armed uprising to seize power (insurrection) that we will truly liberate ourselves: The tactical decisions about negotiation should not divert our long-term commitment to people's

war. Our goal, as outlined in the Freedom Charter, can only be won and secured for the working people through a disciplined take-over of all enemy installations, all seats of power, local government structures, factories, farms, the radio and T.V., the telephones and railways and by replacing the enemy's armed forces with people's militia and a people's army. No regime, even in a period of crisis, falls of its own accord it has to be pushed over. That is our target.'

- (c) received copies of A.N.C. and S.A.C.P. literature, reproduced these copies or re-typed and redid the lay-outs thereof, reproduced and thereafter distributed it in the Western Cape.
6. Late in 1986, the exact date being unknown to the State, and at or near Cape Town accused two met accused one and they began to work together to further the aims of the A.N.C.
 7. (a) During October or November 1986, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused two acting on instructions from a member or members of the A.N.C. went to Harare, Zimbabwe and reported to the A.N.C. on organisations in the Western Cape as well as on the political climate in the Western Cape. Arrangements were also made between accused two and the A.N.C. in Zimbabwe for the collecting of information of use to the A.N.C. by accused two and the processing thereof.
 - (b) On her return to the Western Cape during November 1986, accused brought back from the A.N.C. in Zimbabwe R10 000 in cash, certain codes and a written message for accused one. These items were in fact delivered to accused one.
 8. After her return to Cape Town as mentioned in paragraph 7(b) accused two became responsible for the funds of the A.N.C. in the Western Cape, including the accountability for funds received and the distribution thereof and in fact carried out this task during the period 1986 till her arrest in September 1987.
 9. Early in 1987 accused two rented a house at 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne and a flat at 5 Marie Court, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg to facilitate work done for the A.N.C. by herself, accused one and other members and/or supporters of the A.N.C., to accommodate A.N.C. members who arrived in the

- Western Cape on missions from abroad as well as to serve as a store for explosives, arms and ammunition.
10. Early in 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused two again paid a visit to the A.N.C. in Harare, Zimbabwe:
 - (a) Here she met inter alia with CHRIS HANI, the Supreme Commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe. They discussed the details of her propaganda work in the Republic, the steps to be taken to ensure that regular funds reached A.N.C. members in the Western Cape and how to get more trained terrorists and equipment into the region.
 - (b) Thereafter accused two met with the A.N.C. leadership in Harare and was briefed inter alia on:
 - (i) the program of action for the political and military underground,
 - (ii) program of action for a mass movement in relation to the cultural boycott, the youth, the rural areas and education,
 - (iii) the input of organisations into the A.N.C., S.A.C.P and S.A.C.T.U. alliance and the strengthening of workers participation.
 11. Early in 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, and at or near Cape Town, accused two instructed accused ten to travel to Swaziland to fetch accused three, a trained A.N.C. terrorist, to assist her to enter the Republic unlawfully and to assist her to get to Cape Town. Accused two later collected accused three, as arranged with accused ten, from D.F. Malan Airport, Cape Town and put her in contact with accused one.
 12. During the middle of 1987 accused two assisted by accused one transported certain explosives, arms and ammunition from the house in Searle Street, Lansdowne to the flat in Wynberg, where she stored it in a metal trunk.
 13. (a) In mid-July 1987 accused one informed accused two that they should explode an explosive device at Castle Court, Tennant Street, Cape Town, Castle Court being a block of flats where married members of the SA Defence Force and their families are accommodated.
 - (b) With this aim in mind, accused two bought six gas cylinders filled with liquid petroleum-gas. And stole a Toyota Corolla Sedan, the property of FRANCIS BIGGS.

- (c) On 20.7.87 accused two assisted by accused one loaded the gas cylinders into the car and attached two 158 mini limpet mines and one S.P.M. limpet mine to the gas cylinders. The S.P.H. mine was fitted with a fuse and detonator.
 - (d) Accused two drove the said car with the gas cylinders and the explosives to Castle Court and parked the car in the parking area of the block of flats.
 - (e) She pulled the safety-pin on the S.P.H. mine and left the car in the parking area.
 - (f) At 20h35 the car-bomb exploded causing extensive damage to other parked vehicles in the area as well as to the building itself.
14. (a) On 21/7/87 accused one informed accused two that the D.F. Malan Airport is their next target.
- (b) Accused one supplied accused two with two S.P.M. limpet mines fitted with fuses and detonators.
 - (c) During the night of 21.7. 87 accused one placed these limpet mines in two different toilets in the Ladies rest rooms at D.F. Malan Airport, Cape Town after she had removed the safety pins.
 - (d) One of the mines exploded at approximately midnight on 21.7.87 causing extensive damage to the said Ladies rooms and adjacent areas.
 - (e) The second S.P.M. mine was discovered by members of the bomb disposal unit of the SA Police and was exploded under controlled circumstances.
15. After the two explosions accused two assisted by accused one drafted a letter to the press to explain reasons for the explosions and to serve as propaganda for the A.N.C.
16. (a) During August 1987 accused one and one MAX OZINSKY travelled to Botswana to assist MZWANDILE VENA, a trained A.N.C. terrorist, to enter the Republic unlawfully and to transport him to the Western Cape.
- (b) They met Vena as arranged near Mafeking and brought him back to Cape Town.
 - (c) The object of Vena's journey to the Western Cape was to take command of the Western Cape military machinery of the A.N.C. as a replacement for LIZO BRIGHT NGQUANGWANA who had been arrested by members

- of the SA Police. Ngquangwana was known as 'SIPHO' to members and supporters of the A.N.C. for security reasons.
17. On 17.9.87 at 03h40 and in her flat at 5 Marie Court, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg, accused one was found in possession of:
 - 5 AK 47 assault rifles
 - 3 carrying straps for AK 47 rifles
 - 8 AK 47 magazines
 - 967 rounds of AK 47 (7.62mm) ammunition
 - 1 SPM limpet mine
 - 2 158 mini limpet mines
 - 1 VZD-LM holder for limpet mine
 - 5 lead strips
 - 3 VZD-3M Mechanical timers
 - 2 MDSM mechanical detonators
 - 1 SPM limpet mine dust cover.

SCHEDULE C – ACCUSED THREE

1. During the period 1980 to 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused three became and remained a member and/or supporter of the A.N.C. She was known to A.N.C. members and supporters as 'SHIRLEY' for security reasons.
2. During the period 1980 to 1986 and in the Kingdom of Lesotho accused three worked with accused one for the A.N.C. structures in that country. During 1984 accused three was specifically active in the women's section of the A.N.C. in Lesotho.
3. At the beginning of February 1982, the exact date being unknown to the State, accused three unlawfully entered the Republic from the Kingdom of Lesotho and was met on the South African side of the border by accused ten. Accused ten assisted her to get to D. F. Malan Airport, Cape Town where accused three was met by accused two and taken to accused one.
4. Accused three lived with accused one, her husband, at 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne and assisted him since her arrival at the beginning of February 1987 until her arrest on September 1987 in furthering the aims and objects of the A.N.C. in the Western Cape as set out in Schedule A.
5. (a) During the last week of April and the beginning of May 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, accused three

went on a mission for the A.N.C. structure in the Western Cape of which she and her husband, accused one were members to the Republic of Botswana inter alia to obtain funds from the A.N.C. in Botswana for the said structure in the Western Cape. Transport was arranged for her by accused one and accused four in the form of a car driven by accused twelve. Accused twelve drove accused three to Gaborone in Botswana and back to Cape Town.

- (b) In Gaborone accused three made contact with members and/or supporters of the A.N.C.
6. At 22h00 on 16.9.87 accused three was arrested at 17 Searle Street, Lansdowne. A Makarov pistol and two magazines for the said pistol, filled with 9mm ammunition, were found in her possession.

SCHEDULE L – ACCUSED TWELVE

1. At the end of 1986, the exact dates being unknown to the State, and at or near Maitland, Cape Town, accused twelve was recruited into the ANC by Abednego Bongani Jonas, a militarily trained member of the ANC, with the aim:
 - (i) to act as a courier between the Western Cape structure of the ANC and members and/or supporters of the ANC outside the Republic;
 - (ii) to arrange accommodation for members of the ANC who enter the Republic unlawfully; and
 - (iii) to recruit more coloured women into the ANC.
2. (a) During February 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, and at or near Cape Town, accused twelve on instruction of Abednego Bongani Jonas agreed to travel to Harare in Zimbabwe to convey a message relating the problems of his unit to members and/or supporters of the ANC in Zimbabwe.
- (b) During the period as set out above, accused twelve flew to Harare where she was met on the airport. In Harare she met with Chris Hani, Commissar of Umkhonto We Sizwe, and other members and/or supporters of the ANC and conveyed the said message to them.
- (c) In turn the said Chris Hani and/or other members and/or supporters of the ANC in Zimbabwe gave her a message

with certain instructions to be conveyed to Abednego Bongani Jonas in Cape Town as well as R10,000-00.

- (d) Accused twelve returned to Cape Town and delivered the said message and an amount of R2,000-00 in cash to said Abednego Bongani Jonas. Accused twelve deposited the balance in a bank account and handed over money to Abednego Bongani Jonas from time to time at his request.
 - (e) On her return to Cape Town (as set out in paragraph 2(d) above) accused twelve received training from Abednego Bongani Jonas in secret writing and secret communication training that could be of use in furthering the aims of the ANC and/or her own hostile intent.
3. During 1987, on several different occasions accused twelve hired vehicles from several car rental firms on request of Abednego Bongani Jonas for his use or for the use of other members or supporters of the ANC.
 4. During March/April 1987, the exact dates being unknown to the State, and at or near Cape Town, accused twelve assisted Abednego Bongani Jonas to recruit accused number thirteen into the ANC with the aim to act as set out in paragraph 1(a) above.
 5. During April 1987, accused twelve flew to Harare in Zimbabwe on instruction of accused one to deliver documents and photographs to members and/or supporters of the ANC in Zimbabwe. Accused twelve was met on the airport, she delivered the said documents and photographs, and returned to Cape Town.

Appendix D:

Plea of the accused

We stand here charged with 'terrorism'. The original main charge against us was treason, and this has been withdrawn for reasons best known to the State. The allegation was that we sought to overthrow the State. The indictment omitted to mention that the State referred to was the apartheid state.

Our understanding of treason is that it is a crime against the people. It would, for instance, be treason to betray the people of this country and to take up arms against them. But our people have been treasonably betrayed. The racist minority regime rules by force through the barrel of the gun and without a mandate from the people. It has created an apartheid state and, in order to maintain and defend it, employs awesome weapons of war which it has unleashed against the citizenry of this country. Hereby bringing about an informal and armed conflict.

We believe that SA belongs to all who live in it and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people. We accordingly abhor the apartheid state and, in so far as we have any choice in the matter, we owe it no allegiance whatsoever. We make no apologies for seeking its downfall. Nor do we believe that those who seek its demise whether by international armed conflict or otherwise, should on that account be guilty of criminal conduct. The regime therefore stands accused of treason and the people do not and will not withdraw that charge.

As for the charge we now face, we say that it is the State that stands accused. In defence of its apartheid practices, this regime has brooked no opposition. Mass democratic organisations, the organisations of the people, have been silenced and their leaders gaoled or restricted. Thousands of the regime's political opponents languish in jail, having been detained without trial. Scores of others are forced to stand trial for

so-called crimes against the State. This is called the maintenance of law and order. We call it terrorism.

It is terrorism too when:

- (i) Innocent men, women and children are attacked by the regime's police and SADF, and killed while they sleep, in foreign countries; we think of Maseru, Matola, Gaborone and others.
- (ii) This country's neighbours are destabilised, all in the name of apartheid.
- (iii) Assassination squads, operating inside and outside this country, hunt for and eliminate opponents of apartheid by acts of terrorism. We think of Ruth First, Jeanette Schoon, Pat Ndzima, Abram Tiro and many others.

We recall with horror the cruel, violent and untimely deaths of many heroes of the struggle inside this country, all at the hands of the agents of this regime. Joseph Mdluli, Steve Biko, Neil Aggett, Goniwe, Calata, Mhlawuli, Saul Mkhize, Hector Petersen, Timol and many others. The roll-call is endless. It includes the thousands who have been mowed down by the police and SADF in the townships of our land; Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga, Soweto and elsewhere; the thousands of our fallen comrades who dared to march in protest against their oppression. We call this brutal, naked terrorism. This is terrorism in any language.

It is terrorism when, in the pursuit of apartheid, whole communities are uprooted – when extreme misery and poverty are the lot of certain sections of the population while others enjoy a standard of living which rates with the highest in the world.

We say that it is the regime that is guilty of terrorism. It would therefore be terrorism for us to identify with apartheid, or to condone a system that forces its youth to take up arms against fellow citizens, to defend the indefensible.

Apartheid stands condemned as a crime against humanity. It has been declared a crime by the international community and has been rejected as a heresy and a sin by the religious community. Yet it has been allowed to devastate millions of lives in this country.

Because of those who are complacent or just ignorant of consequences of the Government's destructive policies, we believe it is necessary for us to participate in these proceedings, to expose this evil as much as we can. We do this in spite of our attitude to the Courts of this land and to the whole system of so-called 'justice' in this country.

For, and we say this with due respect to your Lordship and learned Assessors, we do not believe we can receive a fair trial in the courts of this land. This is not the Court of the people of South Africa. It is a court imposed on us to safeguard the privileged position of the few. We believe a fair trial is in any event impossible, given the circumstances under which we were arrested, detained, interrogated and brought to trial.

After our arrest, we were detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, a provision which is, in practice, used only against the political opponents of the regime. It is a horrific legal provision and is in blatant disregard of the Rule of Law. The Security Police have not failed to take full advantage of its provisions; it enables them to operate in the dark and to extract maximum advantage to the maximum detriment of their victims. It enables them to exert all manner of pressures on the detained: psychological and physical torture, intimidation, coercion and assaults. It exposes the detainee to dehumanising and degrading treatment, lengthy interrogation and months of solitary confinement without even the basic mental comforts such as reading material, access to family, friends and legal representation and advice. It is as though the system is designed to destroy the detainee's mental faculties; it is in fact designed to break them, to force them to produce information which will be used against them at political trials. Having undergone the rigours of section 29 ourselves, we are not surprised that political trials are characterised by the extremely high number of 'confessions' allegedly made by the accused. The courts have admitted these 'confessions'.

The Act stipulates that the detainee should be visited periodically by a magistrate as well as by other employees of the State. We were so visited. Some of us were also visited by the Judge President of this division. These visits do nothing to ameliorate the conditions under which we were kept. Rather, they were designed to put a more humane veneer to barbaric treatment which is sanctioned and countenanced by the law. Some of our comrades still bear painful reminders of their ordeal; they are still receiving medical and psychological treatment.

There is no doubt that the State is using the section as a terrorist weapon: to extract a terrible revenge on opponents of the regime's sterile and outdated policies. Eventually, when the victim has been thoroughly broken, s/he is brought before these courts to put a final stamp of credibility on the actions of the police. The Court then becomes a mere tool of the oppressor.

The courts have, furthermore, failed to fight the erosion of civil liberties. The judiciary have, by their silence, allowed this erosion to gain momentum and the courts now find themselves bereft of their traditional role of an independent arbiter and protector of individual rights. The regime has treated the courts of this land with disdain. We cannot therefore have confidence in them; they cannot dispense 'justice' except in accordance with the guidelines and rules devised by the oppressor. Our ideal is that all shall be equal before the law; that the courts shall be representative of all the people.

We therefore have no desire, nor do we find it at all necessary, to plead to the charges brought against us in this court.

Finally, we cannot fail to observe that there are numerous political trials before the courts in this country. Hundreds of our comrades, decent, sensitive and intelligent men and women are daily arraigned; they have but one thing in common: they pursue the same ideal of freedom which *the fathers and grandfathers* of today's rulers sought and fought for against the British. But they seek also the destruction of apartheid and the establishment of a truly non-racial and democratic South Africa (as espoused in the Freedom Charter). Hundreds of these noble souls already populate the jails of this country. Thousands more have suffered severe deprivation whilst being held in detention for indefinite periods without trial, the anguish and desperation of it all sometimes driving some of them to adopt extreme measures like hunger strikes, in order to draw attention to their plight.

We in this Court are but a humble few. We tread a thorny path which is rapidly becoming a highway. We do expect pain, prison and death if need be. But our cause is just and victory is certain. South Africa shall be free.

Appendix E:

2018 update on trialists

I attempted to interview the trialists, but the process was a challenging and uneven one. I used internet sources for some as indicated. I edited these as i procured other information or interviews. Jenny's mom, Else Schreiner, wrote a book, *Fear Stretching Time*, on the trial and i complemented the information she sent with extracts from the book. The inputs are very uneven – lots of information on some and minimal on others. This is a weakness of this section.

Tony Yengeni accused no. 1

Sithembiso Tony Yengeni was born in Cape Town and grew up in two Cape townships, Gugulethu and Nyanga. He completed his matric at Fort Beaufort college in Cape Town.

Yengeni was a member of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) under the leadership of Steve Biko before joining the banned ANC in 1976. As a result of the government's determined effort to crack down on anti-apartheid movements, Yengeni voluntarily went into exile as a member of Umkhonto We Sizwe. He received military training in ANC camps in various countries (Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia and Angola) in southern Africa. From Botswana, Yengeni headed for Moscow in Russia to study for a social science diploma in 1982. Chris Hani met Yengeni in Lesotho, where they became friends.

In 1984, Yengeni married Lumka Nyamza, an ANC member in Lusaka, Zambia. When he returned to South Africa in 1986, he was appointed to lead MK in Cape Town.

A year after his return, while still trying to find his feet, Yengeni was arrested by the National Party government. He was charged with

terrorism and detained for four years while awaiting trial. During his detention period Yengeni was exposed to severe torture by an anti-terrorist squad policeman, Jeffrey Benzien. The state failed to prosecute Yengeni successfully until he was granted indemnity as part of the political transition process in 1991. The case, which involved 13 co-accused, dragged on for 269 days and cost the government R5 million.

Upon his release Yengeni was elected ANC secretary in the Western Cape. In his effort to drum up support for the ANC on the eve of South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, Yengeni adopted a militant leadership style, joining in the list of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Peter Mokaba. The ANC rewarded his efforts by awarding him an influential position as chair of Parliament's Joint Standing Committee for Defence. He was also elected party Chief Whip in the National Assembly.

In October 2001, Yengeni was arrested and accused of having received a generous discount on his Mercedes Benz from an arms manufacturing company, which had benefited directly from the arms deal. He was released on R10 000 bail. In 2004 Yengeni was found guilty of defrauding Parliament by receiving bribes for his luxury car. Yengeni did not immediately go to jail as he appealed against the verdict. His appeal was not successful, and he served five months of a four-year sentence at Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. He was released on parole on 15 January 2007.

(History Online accessed 17.01.19)

ANC defends Yengeni appointment as chair of crime and corruption group

POLITICS / 26 JUNE 2018, 09:58AM / ZINTLE MAHLATI
Johannesburg – ANC members have come out in defence of a decision for Tony Yengeni to head up the crime and corruption committee taken at the party's elections manifesto workshop.

Eyebrows were raised on Monday when it was discovered that Yengeni, who was found guilty of fraud and corruption in 2003, was appointed to head up a committee dealing with crime and corruption.

The ANC's head of policy Jeff Radebe defended Yengeni's position as head of the crime committee and said it was not unusual as he was a National Executive Committee (NEC) member.

Radebe said Yengeni had served his time and ANC members believed in him and that it why he was voted into the ANC's highest decision-making body outside of conferences.

READ: ANC ‘shocked by scale of corruption’, vows to root it out

‘All the chairs of the working group are members of the NEC. Yes, indeed he was found guilty and he served his sentence and paid his due. The members of the ANC voted him in the NEC, that’s why he’s a member and chairperson of the peace and stability committee,’ said Radebe on eNCA.

Yengeni has a history of drama and has previously been arrested for drunken driving.

For the fraud case, Yengeni was convicted for failing to declare a discount he received for a Mercedes from an arms dealer.

He was convicted to four years in prison, but only served four months. (Politics Hub)

**Jenny Schriener accused no. 2
via email 23 October 2018**

In the time since prison I have established a family with life partner Anthony Stevens (musician), have two sons Nikita and Raul both in their 20s and talented and wonderful young men. Niki has found his life partner Lisa Boyd – they are both in the dance, photography, music industry. Raul is on a tennis bursary and studying business management. I have lost both my parents – Dad in 2008 and Mum in 2018 and I miss them both deeply. I have been employed in the SACP W Cape, in ANC President’s Office 1992–3, as MP in 1st Parliament of democratic SA, in public service for 20 years in intelligence coordination, correctional services, economic development and women – the last two as DG. I serve as Non-Executive Director on Boards of Prasa and Broadband Infracore. I chair Board of Mzala Nxumalo Centre. I am teaching Development Policy to honours students at Nelson Mandela University. As a Politburo and Central Committee member of the SACP, elected to CC in 1991, I am in the time left over a volunteer in SACP Head Office and part of the Editorial Board of SACP publications. I hope that gives you what you need let me know if there are specific questions you want me to answer!!

(Written by Jenny and sent via email)

Extracts from *Time Stretching Fear* by Else Schreiner

I am starting a life I didn't think I was going to have. I knew when I got involved that prison was a possibility and made a conscious decision to get involved while taking into account the possible consequences.

While in total isolation under section 29, I began preparing for a long prison sentence.

My decision to join the ANC seemed to be a natural process. I came from a family that has been political for generations. I grew up politically aware, and concerned about injustice, wherever it pitched up, in school, or in the community.

Section 29 is a violation of human rights. It is incompatible with any legal system that claims to be based on justice. It has been a vicious weapon against people who were, in the majority of the cases, morally in the right. Apart from the assaults, or torture through psychological techniques, the simple fact of being locked up without access to lawyers, family or friends with absolutely nothing to do, is torture in itself. It is designed to break a person down, no matter how strong you are. When you come out, you are not the same person who went in. I reached a point of trying to kill myself. Never in my entire life did I dream that it could become possible for me to attempt that. I was pushed to that point, after being locked up with nothing to do, and being psychologically pressured and abused by the Security police, and assaulted, and threatened with rape, among other things (Schreiner 2000: 249, 250).

There isn't much to say about how I fare internally now. I can, and do, think about all aspects of Section 29, and the trial and prison, without anxiety attacks, without much anger. I don't have dragons that ride me. But being accosted in Adderley Street by a Klem (state prosecutor who gave Jen a very hard time) eager to be friends was a sickening shock. (Else Schreiner)

Looked at objectively, if that is possible, the detention, trial and prison experiences – nearly four years of my life – helped me to know myself as a human being, to overcome a lot of my shyness, and to have a deeper knowledge on a personal level about what is okay and what is not okay. I believe hardship in life does one of two things to a person – makes one crack up and crumble, or grow and become stronger. I firmly believe I am a less fragile person than I was, and with a better

knowledge of what I will tolerate from life, and what I will not. I have two delightful sons, and a rich family life (Schreiner 2000: 250).

Lumka Nyamza accused no. 3

Ms Yengeni holds an Executive Leadership Programme Certificate from Unisa and an Executive Leadership Programme Certificate from Rhodes University. She has been a member of Parliament since 2004 and has previously served on the Portfolio Committee on Communications. Ms Yengeni was a member of the Black consciousness South African Students Organisation (SASO) and was detained in 1976 under Section 22 of the Security Act, later under Section 6, and sentenced to four years. She was released in 1980 and later arrested again in 1987 under Section 26 of the Security Act, and again for terrorism and treason. Source: ANC (www.anc.org.za, accessed November 2018)

Her responses to the interview questions:

What was life like immediately after prison?

‘Integrating both to family and society was a challenge. Being an adult and having to depend on parents for survival was the biggest problem.

Today we live in a democratic South Africa. I salute the heroes and heroines who lost their lives for us to be freed from the brutal apartheid system.

Since the establishment of democratic government, a lot has changed in the country. We have freedom of speech meaning we can choose and elect a government of our choice through a secret ballot where everyone is free from intimidation. There is freedom of movement in the country; apartheid boundaries based on tribes and nationalities were abolished. South Africa is signatory to a number of UN conventions that recognise, amongst others, the criminalisation of violence against women in particular and gender violence in general. The employment system has changed and laws protecting workers in the hands of brutal employers have been passed by Parliament though implementation might be a challenge.

I have sighted few gains of our democratic governments.

I need to point out that, as much as we have attained political freedom, the economy of the country is still in the hands of the few who were beneficiaries in the previous apartheid system. That is a discussion on its own, as to how we landed up in this situation.

The country is still experiencing high rates of crime and employment. However, it is important to qualify those statements by using stats when democracy was established and today's ones. The question would be, why are we slow in addressing such environments?

That also needs serious discussions because we have policies in place but implementation is a challenge.

Other challenges are high rates of crime and unemployment.' Sent via WhatsApp

'Ambassador Yengeni was recently appointed as High Commissioner-designate of South Africa to Jamaica, and has been a Member of Parliament of South Africa's National Assembly since 2004. She is also an active member of the African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's ruling party.

Ambassador Yengeni is a graduate of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and currently holds the position of Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Labour.

She also held the position of Member of the Standing Committee on Appropriations from 2011 to 2014 and Member of the Portfolio Committee on Communications in Parliament from 2009 to 2011. Accessed 23 February 2022, <https://www.isa.org.jm/news/high-commissioner-south-africa-jamaica-appointed-permanent-representative-international-seabed>.

Lumka is doing her master's degree in Women and Gender at the University of West Indies (WhatsApp communication).

Michael Mzimkhulu Lubambo accused no. 4 (in response to being interviewed 2018)

What was life like immediately after prison?

Maestro (Wellington) and I worked together at the same company. We were arrested together while at work. When we came out, on our release, we were very pleased. Also comrades all around us – we were not feeling lost. We worked hard to organise and campaigned for the elections. However, we had no job that year.

I got a small grant from Essa Moosa's office. Also from the Woodstock Cowley house I got a small stipend. It was very little but we survived. We got nothing from the organisation. After the elections, we still had nothing and no job. The grant stopped. We have been looking for jobs all the time.

The company we worked for before we went to prison did not want us back again. We went there and they refused to give our jobs back but we managed to survive. I worked for a hotel for a short time. That got liquidated and we again were unemployed.

At the hotel job – worked nine years in the kitchen and did all and everything.

Was it easy to get a job?

No I was unemployed for years.

I have a wife and four children; three girls and one boy.

Gary Kruser phoned us (in 2003 or thereabouts). He assisted us to get jobs. I worked there at Philippi Police College for seven years. I now am 67. I did not get an RDP house. I was supposed to but something happened. I had to pay a donation first but I refused to pay. For my house I have now I had to put in my own ceilings. People refused to pay. We did not pay and not sure – something went wrong.

Was getting back into civilian life easy after a two-year period in prison?

We were just relaxing but not too much. There I was staying with my mother. I was an adult but I did not have a house and I had responsibilities. My wife helped me a lot.

When I got a job, it was short. The hotel job ended – I did domestic work.

Any comments from people that you remember?

People were always kind. No nasty feelings.

People in leadership positions (in our organisation) did not care.

People around us were happy for us on our release.

Tony did nothing for us.

Captain was helpful to both of us. If we were short of money, he helped us.

One general comment about current South Africa?

Sometimes you get disappointed about what is happening.

But maybe I have got a hope for the new president.

Maybe things are going to happen. We were ready to die for our organisation; we did everything to promote the movement throughout our lives. I will support the movement until I am dead – no, I am not part of structures at the moment.

(Michael has applied for a special pension for more than ten years – he still does not have it.)

What is good in the new South Africa?

Some are corrupt.

My son is doing matric this year.

My children are not getting scholarships. They attend Damelin College which is very expensive. He is studying business management. I am paying the fees myself.

Michael passed away on 5 December 2019. He was buried at his ancestral home in Alice, Eastern Cape.

Richmond Mbutho Nduku accused no. 5 (interviewed on 27.10.2018)

What was life like immediately after prison?

It was not easy to adjust – firstly coming out of prison with no money. We did not get what we wanted in the new South Africa. I wanted to go back to school to complete my teaching training but I could not. There was no money; no one to help. No one to give advice.

(Throughout the interview Mbutho constantly repeated, ‘It was not easy.’)

I was not working before my arrest. I was unemployed until 1996. It was only then when I got a job. All those years – nothing. The hotel where we worked was liquidated and we lost our jobs.

I was in the ANC branch. We were all members. Tony was there also. But nobody helped us. We were busy campaigning for elections up to 1994.

We all campaigned during the elections for the ANC.

After elections all went their separate ways; some got jobs in Parliament. But I was at home doing nothing; struggling to get a job.

I still am a member of the ANC – still participating in all structures. Nobody offered to help us.

Was it easy to get a job?

No, as I stated before, I had a job until 1996. This was at the hotel with Wellington and Michael and the firm was liquidated in 2000. So I only worked for four years.

I built a shack in Khayelitsha – Site B.

Was getting back into civilian life easy after a four-year period in prison?

We were in prison for four years. People were involved in the struggle.

People were looking for direction. They all thought I could give direction, but I could not. No one was nasty to us. However, there were some exceptions – not all people liked us.

People did not always understand what we did.

If you were involved, you would do everything to achieve what you believe in. We believed in the ANC.

Any comments from people that you remember?

It was, 'Thank you for being in the struggle for us.'

One general comment about current South Africa?

Also please add: we thought for instance after five or ten years after liberation and freedom we would get some jobs. I did not expect this – no crime like this at the moment, corruption within our own government, our own people. We did not expect them to be like that. We have also been in the struggle, so we have feelings that it is not right. Some are losing interest in our organisations and it is not doing what we hoped it would do. Some are feeling some hope though. Things may change with the new president. I have mixed feelings. I will remain a member of the organisation even though I have these mixed feelings.

People would phone Boeta Mike about meetings in Athlone – we had no money to go to meetings in Athlone. We wanted to go, but had no transport money. When I stayed in Gugs it was easier – Captain would come with his car and pick us up. Then the three of us would go to the meetings. It was good living near to one another. Captain was a good networker and supported us. It was a big gap when Captain died (after a very short illness). It was not even a week that he was ill. In fact, he never was sick before.

P.S. I cannot remember how many documents I have filled in for my application for special pension. Nothing happened.

Mongameli Wellington Nkwandla accused no. 6 (responses to interview in October 2018)

What was life like immediately after prison?

Life was very difficult. I went back to the same job I had had before my detention but they refused to take me back. So for about six years I was

unemployed. We were living off the ANC grant. I eventually got a job. But that firm was liquidated. Then for another five or six years, I was again unemployed. Gary phoned me about the possibility of a job. He had heard that we, Michael, Mbutho and I, were not working. I went to Michael to inform him. We thought that Mbutho was working with his brother but we could not find him. We got jobs at the police academy and got clerical jobs. I am still working there. I am now 61 years old and will retire in a few years.

What was life like when you just got released from prison? Was getting back into civilian life easy after a two- or three-year period in prison?

It was frightening. I had two children at school. My eldest sister was looking after them. My wife, Nmondo, was also not working. We all lived in my father's house and my father was a pensioner. It was difficult. But I have my own house now.

Any comments from people that you remember?

People were OK, but what I noticed, in past people spoke to me about sports. But when I came out of prison, then they just talked about politics to me. I said to them I am not a politician. We should still talk about sports. People were nice, kind to me. Supportive.

What opportunities did you have in the new South Africa?

Things did not change as I was hoping it. Also in terms of work to do.

Share any one or two things about your life now? One general comment about current South Africa?

We fought for freedom – now we do not know what to do with it. People do not know what to do with the freedom now.

There are different ideas about freedom, what it is.

Expectations that everything would be free. But only those with education had opportunities and are benefitting.

Those other who did not go to school – life is very difficult for them/ for us.

There is lots of unemployment amongst young people. We thought things would be easier; that things would be better for all of us; that we would have a good future.

My daughter wants to go further and study and she has a bright future.

My son is not really interested in furthering his education or career. He is 38 and still does not have a steady job. He has three children and he and his family are staying with me. My daughter is getting married now – she has a B.Tech in Accounting. She is working at Parliament now and has her own house.

Captain was good to us. When we had to go to meetings, he would pay our taxi fare. He always was helpful.

Mthetheleli Titana (JJ) accused no. 7 (deceased)

With thanks for information via WhatsApp from Mcebisi Skwatcha and details of JJ's sister Veliswa. Information telephonically.

According to Veliswa, Titana's sister, Titana had been extremely ill with meningitis before his passing in 2001. He leaves his 86-year-old mother and four sisters, of whom only one is employed. He has three children. Former president Zuma visited the family on his passing and assured them of some support. Veliswa is not sure what type of support to expect but hopes it will come soon. The family is in dire straits.

Gary John Kruser accused no. 8 (interviewed 2019)

What was life like immediately after prison?

I was fortunate; I went straight into structures – part of Madiba's security unit. He invited me. I also set up the security at Shell House but did not get paid for many months.

In 1990 I eventually got deployment. Fortunately.

I continued with the therapy about my torture.

I went for counselling.

When the ANC went into government in 1994, I was part of a team preparing security for the inauguration. I set up the office and there was integration into the police – both MK and PAC. We were temporary constables at the lowest rank. It was traumatic that we never got any rank.

The national commissioner is the highest rank. There seems to have been lots of unhappiness in terms of the settlement drawn up by the minister. Being in the underground could be seen as a stepping-stone. However, I have since left the police. My opinion of the struggle is that to sustain the struggle is often more traumatic than the struggle itself.

Was it easy to get a job?

It was problematic as there was no legislation in the police. There were in the army and intelligence legislation but none at the police so it was up to the national commissioner who had more power than the minister and the minister allocates jobs in the police – through this process people become generals and deputy-generals.

Was getting back into civilian life easy after a two- or three-year period in prison?

One of the things that was helpful was therapy. It was weekly. I also got drawn into ANC branches and went back to work. Not long after I went to Joburg. The experiences at Shell House kept me busy. It was very demanding.

What opportunities did you have in the new South Africa?

I have been blessed in that sense, very fortunate. Life worked out well for me.

I tried to help the others in our trial and tried to get them, (Wellington, Michael and Mbutu) to get jobs.

They can still get ranked; told low level jobs - deal with formal policy – not dealing with – they may have felt left out.

They can still get back pay. They must take up with the committee. Maybe with Jeremy Veary. We've done what we did for our country.

Share any one or two things about your life now?

I was worried about the past.

One general comment about current South Africa?

Happy in that I have a 21-year-old son studying at the University of Johannesburg. I am very settled despite the challenges out there. In terms of the future, I do not have the answers. The situation is very complex; I wonder how to turn the situation around. One thinks of the situation in Westbury (regarding poverty and unemployment) and the dissatisfaction that the people expressed there. It has even got worse in some places. The situation in the country is really not easy.

Chris Giffard accused no. 9 (interview 02.10.2018)

What was life like immediately after prison?

'Brain fried' is the word I would like to use as it describes my experiences. It was a difficult space. You come from an environment where you are controlled by an institution which is highly controlled. Then suddenly you have freedom – more movement. It was good to have the freedom after being in prison. Yet it was difficult to adjust.

There is a stark memory that I have is that of one day I was going to make curry. I went to the shop to buy canned tomatoes. Suddenly I had an anxiety attack. There were so many various tins of canned tomatoes. I did not know how to make a decision about which to buy. I stood there, perplexed, in front of this variety. This is an example. That memory, trying to make that decision, illustrates the difficult adjustment. It took me years to really adjust; maybe two years?

When were you detained?

I was detained in December 1987 – I was three months in solitary under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Then I spent the following 21 months in Pollsmoor, as an awaiting-trial prisoner.

Was it easy to get a job?

Alpheus and I were out on bail – last three months, before eight of us were acquitted.

It was relatively easy to get a job. I had a few offers of tutoring at UCT. I first worked at the Centre of Education Resources (CER). Then I lectured in the History Department at UWC. I then spent three years as a lecturer at the Centre for African Studies at UCT. I left at the end of 1994. It was difficult to settle into working. I spent most time at UCT. Worked there about five years.

Was getting back into civilian life easy after a two-year period in prison?

Yes it was difficult – remember that clearly. It was difficult with so much changing, happening in the country. Also violence – no resolution of the struggle in a sense, like a twilight period, from the unbanning to four years later. Not sure what I felt – I do not remember it that easily. It took me a while to recover.

Any comments from people that you remember?

I met a staff member who offered me a job. I did not take the job. I felt there was a complete open support from UCT; from both students and staff.

In fact, I was going to start a one-year job in African Studies. There when I was arrested in December 1987. They paid me for the months that I never even started the job. Yes, there was enormous support.

The time that I was relating, that I was shopping, I bumped into somebody, three or four days after bail. He/she was a lecturer from UCT who asked me, 'Do you need a job?'

What opportunities did you have in the new South Africa?

Yes, plenty at UCT. I had been working there for some time – some time during 1982–1987 – I taught in various departments. I was well networked at that time in social sciences at UCT. It was easy to slot back into UCT social sciences. Also worked for an NGO under CAS (CER referred to above), which was funded. I did that for about eight months (June–December 1990). (At UWC?) No, then I spent the following year (1991) at UWC.

After I was acquitted, I worked for a funding unit in the Centre for African Studies, called Community Education Resources, which trained postgraduate students in how to popularise their research for use in the community. Then I spent a year lecturing in History at UWC, before returning to the Centre for African Studies as a lecturer, for three years. I convened a first-year course in African Studies. During this time, I also completed a nine-year master's degree in History. It was a familiar place for me. I left in 1995.

In 1995 I was at Parliament for five months. And then in IDASA I worked as a team of the secretariat of the Transformation Forum on Correctional Services (TFCS).

I then completed a second master's in Criminal Justice in 1996–97 and specialised in prisons. Around that time, I was engaged in a number of little research contracts.

Later I bought a plant nursery and worked there for a few years. Thereafter I worked for four years at the Centre for Conflict Resolution (2001–2004). The Prison Transformation Project trained both prisoners (gangs, sentenced and unsentenced), and also prison staff in conflict resolution and mediation.

Share any one or two things about your life now.

Currently, I work as a contractor in the GTAC (Government Technical Advisory Centre) in the National Treasury. Now that my children are grown up, I have more flexibility. With a few others, I have bought a few buildings in a small village called Vermaaklikheid in the southern Cape, where I spend time. Vermaaklikheid is a poor community, with high unemployment, and challenges to decent education, training and also substance abuse. We are in the first phases in working on a series of projects on community development in the area.

One general comment about current South Africa.

Well, not sure. I may say another thing tomorrow. I have not been involved in party politics for a long time. But passionately about one thing then to be during the anti-apartheid era – it was necessary to have unquestionable loyalty.

Sitlabocha Charles Mahlale (Captain) accused no. 10 (deceased 2017)

According to Michael and Wellington, he was very kind and always offered to take them to meetings. He also was always looking out for job opportunities for them. In response to a general question on social media, Deputy Minister Mcebisi Skwatsha said Captain passed away in June 2011.

Alpheus Ndude accused no. 11 (interviewed)

Pre-interview:

It took me a very long time to locate Alpheus. I spoke to several persons and never got any clarity about his whereabouts. People knew that he was not in too good a position but his whereabouts were unknown to many. People tried to be very helpful and said they would take me to his house. I also asked whether they could not just give me the address or describe to me how to get there. This was met with, 'I'll take you there.' I made several appointments with persons to take me but they never materialised. Months later i went to Belinda Landingwe's home and found her daughter there. I explained my predicament in struggling to get hold of Alpheus. She then kindly made a few phone calls in order

to assist me. She eventually got hold of someone from New Crossroads who knew where Alpheus lived and would take me there. I followed her and her friend in their car to New Crossroads. Throughout this process, not wanting to impose on these strangers, i kept on saying that maybe they could just direct me to his home. This statement was received with a blank stare. In New Crossroads i was introduced to a person (Khaya) who works night shift and hence he was home during the day. He offered to take me to Alpheus' home. I tried to concentrate in order to remember the directions we were driving. We crossed Govan Mbeki Road which separated New Crossroads from the informal settlements of Philippi East. We drove up a very narrow lane. I was scared to drive there as it was so narrow but my guide thought it was fine. We passed dishevelled lean-to homes of corrugated iron. There was so much litter and streams of really dirty water. The stench thereof penetrated through the windows of the car. It was overwhelming. Khaya then got out of the car and walked to Alpheus' home further up the path – the road was too narrow and i could see there was no way of driving through. I insisted that i would not drive up there. There were stones and rocks in the path and driving was really challenging.

I saw Alpheus walking down the path towards my car. His face was lined; his former well-built body, as i had known him, had shrunk. He walked with lead legs, his features shrivelled through what i thought was hardship, ill health, hopelessness and pain. I could not reconcile this shadow of a man with the Alpheus i knew from the Yengeni trial. Maybe from anxiety of the taxing driving, the stench suffocating me and seeing this shade of the former tall, bold and defiant Alpheus – i can picture him in his MK uniform in the court, with right arm raised into a fist, shouting 'Amandla!' – bold and handsome with courage and bravado... and now this... i burst out crying! We hugged. The first words he uttered were, 'I do not see my children! Hilda did not allow me to see them.'

2.45pm 22.11.2018

I interviewed Alpheus a few weeks later at Philippi East. We sat in my car near the FIFA cafe. This was after i really struggled to find his place on my own. I knew there was a cafe nearby and the name had something to do with the soccer world cup, hence i found the FIFA cafe.

Alpheus: When I came out life was very bad. I lost my job at Alpha Literacy Project. There was no more funding for the Cape Town project.

Even though I was glad to be out and see my family, the situation was not well. Hilda was not supportive and we eventually got divorced in 1995.

We have five children together but I never see them. However, last week I saw them at the funeral of Norman Yengeni's son. Bongani was also there.

Was it easy to get a job?

As it was not easy to get a job here, I went to the Transkei for a while. I worked there as the coordinator for ALP, a branch of the project.

No, I did not experience any trauma when I came out of prison. I am a very strong person. But the breaking up with family was very sad.

How were people towards you?

Most of the people were very kind.

Also supportive. Captain was very kind.

What do you remember about Captain and JJ (Titana)?

Yes, Captain passed on some time ago. He was buried only a month later.

Titana too. He is from Paarl. We never had any contact between us.

What do you think of the new South Africa?

Well, up and down, good and bad. There is no employment, as Mbutho said.

No jobs. We did not achieve all we fought for; a little only.

There are not many benefits for the majority of people.

I receive a special pension.

Gertrude Fester accused no. 12

The first few months were very challenging. I had panic attacks at night. Post-1994 i had various political portfolios in the new South Africa, including being a member of the National Parliament until 1999 for the ANC. Here i served on the Finance and Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women Portfolio Committees. Subsequent to leaving Parliament, i was Gender and Transformation Consultant to the Minister of Minerals and Energy and Political Advisor to the mayor of Cape Town. From 2001–2006 i was appointed Commissioner

on Gender Equality, a constitutional body. Tasks included promoting the constitutional principles focusing on gender equality, monitoring and evaluating practices and policies of all South African institutions in order to expedite equitable gender relations. Education on gender equality was a central task.

From 2011 to 2013 i was professor and deputy director at the Centre for Gender, Culture and Development at the Kigali Institute of Education (now University of Rwanda). The focus of this teaching was on transitional justice mainstreaming gender and analysing journeys from conflict to post-conflict and promoting best practice globally. During 2012–2015 i was the research coordinator of the Rwandan Association of University Women’s Council (RAUW). From 2013–2014 i was employed as an international consultant for *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), Kigali and Mirovri Peace Institute, Ljubljana Slovenia. My research was countrywide in Rwanda and on aspects of improving gender equality and women’s empowerment. Current research entails exploring strategies to counter violence, promote reparations, women’s peace work and assessing the impact of women’s representation in government on the lives of poor and marginalised women. I am currently preparing and editing a book with chapters by first-time young Rwandan writers. The focus of the book is transitional justice overcoming conflict and promoting peace and democracy. In 2014 i trained cell leaders and house assistants in gender equality (Nyamirambo, Kigali). Furthermore, in 2014 i was a member of the team of gender experts advising the Chief Gender Monitoring Officer, Government of Rwanda. As a consultant to international organisations, my main focus is gender and education. I coordinated a campaign on Women, War and Peace as part of RAUW and the International Federation of University Women’s ‘Peace is Loud’ global campaign.

Since 2014 i have been assisting students to formulate their PhD research proposals and to access scholarships for the College of Medicine and Health Sciences. I am a member of the International Artistic Committee coordinating the *Marche des Arts du Spectacle African* (MASA, Market for African Arts Festival) in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire. I am a peer reviewer for several international journals. In 2015 i published my book *South African Women’s Apartheid and Post-Apartheid Struggles: 1980–2014* (ISBN 978-3-639-51082-9). On returning to South Africa, i established Sociology at the new Sol Plaatje University

in Kimberley during 2016 and 2017. In 2018 i was awarded the position of Honorary Professor at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town (UCT), in recognition of my work. I also teach Sociology to UCT master's students and am an honours and PhD supervisor. In recognition of my research, i was asked to be PhD supervisor for Bishop Stuart University Mbarara, Uganda, and external supervisor for the universities of the North-West, Free State and Stellenbosch.

As part of my volunteer work as a Grail Member, i have done some work with young women and girl children from the Children's Resource Centre. I would like to explore doing more of this in future. I also worked with young prisoners at Kimberley Correctional Services. Drama and creative writing were used as empowerment tools and a means of developing confidence.

Zurayah Abass accused no. 13 (deceased)

Zurayah Abass was the late co-director of Molo Songololo and a long-standing anti-apartheid activist. She was a member of the United Women's Organisation, which later became the United Women's Congress, as well as a key member of the Woodstock UDF area committee. She braved a long battle with cancer and died in her sleep at her Salt River home on 16 September 2003 at the age of 50.

She was an energetic and spontaneous person and often she delighted all who knew her with her sense of humour and her commitment to social justice. She was passionate about children. In the decades that she was co-director of Molo Songololo with Patrick Solomons, they took the organisation to new heights at various levels and even at the United Nations as advocates for children's rights. Zurayah and i shared a house in Maitland for a few years and worked actively together in the UDF and the UWO/UWCO.

Molo Songololo co-director Patrick Solomons said Abass 'will be remembered for her courage, strength, commitment and leadership'.

'Messages of condolences and tributes have been received from far and wide, including individuals and organisations nationally and internationally paying homage to the extraordinary way in which Zurayah Abass touched them and tirelessly and passionately fought for the rights and protection of women and children,' Solomons said in a statement. Adapted from <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south->

africa/hundreds-honour-childrens-rights-champion-113491, accessed 22 February 2022.

Colleen Lombard accused no. 14

Lives in Rondebosch East with her family. I interviewed her in early 2018. She said everything was ok. She also has some health challenges. Chris Giffard has published a book on Colleen's post-prison writings, *To the Moon and Back* (2022).

Appendix F:

Email correspondence

2013-09-20

Dear Ms. Gertrude Fester

I have considered all the questions that you have about your detention and your involvement in the criminal actions that you and others engaged in by accident during the 'Rainbow Trial'. This term was the term used by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Emeritus) for the trial because all races in South Africa were represented in the accused box. 20 years later after the trial, one can still recall various events that took place and the reasons, feelings, and many other elements, those memories conjure up when one recalls the past. It may be a sign of old age. I have had the honor to serve the people of this beautiful country as a police officer for more than 38 years. I served under numerous leaders for both the National Party and also the African National Congress up until my voluntary retirement in 2005. Throughout my career, I have endeavored to protect innocent people, apprehend transgressors and lawbreakers, and become an exceptional investigator. In my career, I have witnessed a lot of violence, heartache, unfairness, craziness, all committed by individuals who believed that it was okay to do whatever they were doing to other people. For a very long time when I was serving in the security branch, I witnessed people killing, maiming, planting bombs, exploding bombs, shooting, all in the name of some ideological belief and self-centered justification. In the process, many innocent people were killed and injured, properties were destroyed and people were placed under the threat of death, and it was all justified by some ideological motivation. This reason led me to study politics and internal warfare in university

as well as read as much as I could about the present ruling party and their beliefs as well as the political history of the previous governments. The more I read, the more I realized that anything to do with politics and ideologies as a motivation to hurt and kill was wrong and that I will never be able to believe anyone coming with political ideologies or justifications. Politics are indeed a swamp of filth and I am therefore not going to dwell on the past. I asked to be transferred to the Detective Branch in 1993 where I was able to address the ills of society at different levels. I was elected to continue my service to the people of South Africa even after the present political party took office. I was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and Major-General (Assistant Commissioner) in charge of the Detectives of the Western Cape Province. I was on duty the day of the first South African democratic elections and I hoped that we as a nation would get on with the job of building the nation and a better life for all. To this end, I continued my services in the SAPS until 2005, ten years after democracy. After my retirement, I decided to use my years of knowledge to train young people and to improve their skills. I now have joined a university as a part-time lecturer in criminology and other related modules and have also begun training older people in business management, health and safety, financial management, and other subjects. To this end, I travel from Musina to Cape Town and from coast to coast. The learners are both young and old and are persons of color. Maybe this is my contribution to rectifying what was wrong with the previous dispensation. As far as the current government is concerned there are good managers but unfortunately, the skilled people left before the skills transfer and repayment of past debts took place. The cadre deployment is killing a glorious opportunity to be the best society in the world. Greed, self-enrichment, and nepotism are going to be our downfall. The general person of color in this country has benefitted very little from the new dispensation as politicians fill their own and their friend's and colleagues' pockets. Have we not exchanged one monster with another, I wonder. But despite all of this I believe that this country and people like yourself and other young leaders can make a difference. One must not feed the evil monsters by standing by and letting them steal, corrupt, and fill their own pockets as it is now. Ask yourself, is this what you struggled for, or are the predictions of the previous government that a black government will destroy everything, not slowly coming true? Especially when looking at service delivery in most of our local municipalities. But then again I looked at your struggle partners

like Lindi Masebukwe, Patricia de Lille, and yes, Helen Zille and others in the Western Cape who are truly changing the lives of the so-called 'previously disadvantaged' and it gives me hope for the future. I hope that enough of you will vote for decent administrators and people who are interested in helping other people. Yes, my dear Aluta Continua – the struggle indeed is ongoing and people of the previous struggle need to wake up and vote out the ones who are not delivering. Good luck with your struggle for better leaders for our beautiful country and its beautiful people, I believe we need them.

Regards Andre L du Toit

From: Gertrude [mailto:gertrudefester@gmail.com]

Sent: 23 September 2013 06:42 AM **To:** Andre Du Toit **Subject:** Re: New South Africa and its challenges

Dear Maj Du Toit

Thanks for your extensive reply. As someone working in Transitional Justice and as all experts on reconciliation will testify, there can be no healing if one does not look at the past. Why do you think there are the Voortrekker monument, the Women's museum in Bloemfontein and Holocaust centres all over the world?

If you are healed and happy – good for you. Unfortunately there are many who as survivors of apartheid brutality and inhumanity cannot say the same. However, life continues as 'la lute continua' – to quote you. I assume that I may use extracts from your email for my research?

greetings

gertrude

GERTRUDE FESTER

2013-09-25

Dear Ms Gertrude Fester

I have no objection against you using my reply on condition I see before you publish what you have written and that my words are quoted correctly and in context.

Regards.

Andre L du Toit

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAB	Anti-Apartheidsbeweging
AABN	Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland
AK	Arbeitskreis
ANC	African National Congress
ANCWL	African National Congress Women's League
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CAL	Cape Action League
CAGAL	Comparative African Government and Law
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DETU	Democratic Teachers' Union
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECC	End Conscription Campaign
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FEDSAW	Federation of South African Women
FSAW	Federation of South African Women
GALA	Gay and Lesbian Association
GETNET	Gender and Transformation Network
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDAF	International Defence and Aid Fund
IDASA	Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa, later known as the Institute for Democracy in South Africa

ISS	Institute of Social Studies
JC	Junior Counsel
KIE	Kigali Institute for Education
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Transsexual, Intersexed, Queer plus
MIGEPROF	Minister of Gender and Family Promotion
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
MP	Member of Parliament
MPL	Member of Provincial Legislature
NGK	Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NUFFIC	Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation
NUM	New Unity Movement
OLGA	Organisation of Lesbians and Gays
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
SACOS	South African Congress on Sports
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SC	Senior counsel
SB	Security Branch
SPEF	South Peninsula Educational Fellowship
SRC	Students' Representative Council
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
USSR	United Socialist Soviet Republics
UWC	University of the Western Cape
UWO	United Women's Organisation
UWCO	United Women's Congress
WCCA	Western Cape Civic Association
WECTU	Western Cape Teachers' Union
WNC	Women's National Coalition

Endnotes

- 1 I consciously use the small letter i for the first personal pronoun in the middle of a sentence. In many languages i am acquainted with (minimally so in some cases) like Khoekhoegowab, Afrikaans, Kinyarwanda, Dutch, French, the first personal pronoun is always written with a small letter. I do, however, use the capital letter, I, at the beginning of a sentence as is the convention.
- 2 My friend Phil Cotton, in his communication with me, would enquire about the progress of my 'womanuscript'.
- 3 The United Women's Organisation merged with the Women's Front Organisation in March 1986 to form the United Women's Congress (UWCO).
- 4 Closing prayer in Khoekhoegowab. In summary meaning: God bless our entrances and exits,/Bless what we hear,/Bless us (what) to do and not to do/Bless us with a happy passing/So that we can be Your heavenly heirs.
- 5 Beach apartheid was formally legislated and enforced in 1953 after the Nationalist Party election victory of 1948 although it had been practised socially in South Africa since the beginning of the last century. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, several coastal towns enforced beach apartheid by zoning beaches, thus complying with the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (No. 49 of 1953) which restricted public amenities such as beaches, parks and cinemas to specific race groups. Although the amenities should have been 'separate but equal', in reality black beach users were relegated to inferior beaches with inferior facilities. See Cadman (1986: 1).
- 6 See endnote 1.
- 7 The Group Areas Act (No. 49 of 1950) provided for the involuntary segregation of the 'races' in South Africa on the basis of colour into separate residential and commercial areas. The enforcement of the legislation in the 1950s and 1960s led to the forced removal of thousands of families from their homes and their placement in areas defined for their racial group. See Omar (1989).
- 8 It is housed in the building that was the first theatre in the Cape Colony, built in 1800. According to Lady Ann Barnard, 'It is a very fine building' (quoted in Brand and Fester 2003: 16).
- 9 Treasurer-secretary of the church council.
- 10 District Six was declared a white group area in 1966, and the families of people of colour, including many who had lived in the area for generations, were forcefully removed in terms of group areas legislation and located in new townships far from the city centre. The residents of the district that were forcefully removed in this manner underwent the same experiences that were meted out to residents of colour living in Cato Manor (Durban), Sophiatown (Johannesburg), South End (Port Elizabeth) and Lady Selborne (Pretoria),

- to mention just a few. They had to relinquish properties they had lived in for generations to live in council-owned houses located far from their places of work. This resulted in the dislocation of communities that had developed a coherence over many years.
- 11 The apartheid government introduced the pass laws in order to restrict the movement of black people and deny them access to certain areas reserved for white people only. As a result, the *dompas* was introduced. A *dompas* was an identification document which black people were required to carry around and produce on demand to the apartheid authorities to prove that they were permitted to be in an area. The Afrikaans word 'dompas' directly translates to 'stupid pass' in English. See Welsh (2009) and Dlamini (2020).
 - 12 Restrictions on the movement and settlement of African people in South Africa have been in place since the early parts of the last century. Included here are the pass laws, migrant labour practices and restrictions on land ownership and use found in the Natives Land Acts. However, Africans faced additional restrictions in the Cape with the application of the Cape Coloured Labour Preference Policy. The policy was applied at various times in the 1920s, 1950s and 1970s to restrict the entry of Africans into certain parts of what was then the Cape Province, in particular Cape Town. This included denying permission to Africans from other parts of the country to enter Cape Town, restricting certain jobs for coloureds and, in particular, giving coloureds preference in employment in the city. See Goldin (1984).
 - 13 Apartheid, and in particular the denial of many privileges that it gave to white people in the country, led many who would otherwise have been classified as coloured to assume a white identity and to enjoy the benefits given to the latter such as political rights, and better educational and job opportunities. This often divided families.
 - 14 Sports song with two houses – blue and white; the blue house wins and white loses.
 - 15 The NGK had implemented racial segregation for a century or more. The churches for the different 'race' groups were segregated: the Moederkerk (mother church, white), the Sending or Mission church for coloureds (established in 1881), the NGK in Afrika (African, established in 1857) and a church for Indians (established in 1947). Our church, St Stephen's, one of the first slave churches in the Cape Colony, joined the Moederkerk at the 13th Synode Sessie on 28 October 1857 (NGK Archives, Minutes of Synode, October 1857, Theology Department, University of Stellenbosch). At the same synod, when St Stephen's became a member, the decision was taken to have racially exclusive structures for worship.
 - 16 No freed slave could acquire or buy property unless they had been baptised in a Christian church. Some freed slaves embraced Christianity for this purpose. There were also a few cases of women slaves who married wealthy farmers and landowners and became Christian, eventually inheriting large tracts of land, such as Groot Constantia.
 - 17 I recall also at age six or seven refusing to learn to play the violin. My elder sister Solome, who had been taking piano lessons, then had to give up her lessons and was forced to do violin lessons instead. This was despite her protestations. I recall her crying that the children would tease her en route to her lessons, walking with the violin case, and call her 'chie chie chie'. How could i get away with it and not she? Was i just a selfish, self-absorbed, arrogant little wimp? Of course, now i bitterly regret not taking violin lessons after later in life discovering the beauty of the violin strains and Vivaldi.
 - 18 'I do not know' in French, Khoekhoegowab and Afrikaans (Cape Afrikaans).
 - 19 Named after Harold Cressy (1 February 1889–23 August 1916), who was 'a South African headteacher and activist. He was the first Coloured person to gain a degree [UCT] in South Africa and he worked to improve education for non-white South Africans. He co-founded a teachers' group which opposed the apartheid Bantu Education Act'. He created the Teachers' League of South Africa. See <https://>

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Cressy, accessed 4 June 2021. I use apartheid-era racial labels in order to illustrate the degree of separation and specificity of racial groups' lives.
- 20 It consisted mostly of an educated, coloured, elite middle class of doctors, lawyers and teachers. They had a newsletter, Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA).
 - 21 Editor of the TLSA newsletter and wife to advocate Bennie Keys, banned by the South African government for his anti-government political activities.
 - 22 A card game popular among students on the campus.
 - 23 I was approached by Mavis Taylor to do the part of the Spanish teacher in some play. The play incorporated multi-media and i was in the video as the Spanish teacher. A second opportunity was when asked by Peter Krummeck to participate in his play. I recall not being asked to audition. When i met him, he looked at various parts of my face and said yes, he would be able to do some make-up to change me. Apparently, i was to play the role of an older person. I then received the script. On reading it, i was shocked to discover that the role i was to play was that of a 'coloured maid'. That was why i had had no audition, just a head-hunted coloured student to play the coloured maid. I was so angry and felt that i would not do a stereotypical role. And hence i refused.
 - 24 'Hotnot' is most often used in a derogatory sense.
 - 25 The ANC supporters rallied under the UDF, formed on 21 April 1983. It was an umbrella body of more than 100 anti-apartheid structures with all their contradictions: capitalists, communists, Catholics, atheists and Protestants, the Call of Islam and Jews for Justice. Later the Organisation of Lesbians and Gays (OLGA) joined the UDF. One of the UDF's main activities was the 'One Million Signature' campaign. Volunteers went door to door or had information tables at shopping malls explaining what it was and requesting people to sign.
 - 26 The Public Safety Act (No. 3 of 1953) 'included a provision that empowered the government to declare a state of emergency in any or every part of the country [South West Africa included] and to rule by proclamation'. On July 1985 the country was put into a state of emergency after 500 people were killed in police clashes within the townships in one year. The state of emergency remained in place for five years and was only lifted in 1990. See Merrett (1990); Lodge and Nasson (1991).
 - 27 I challenged the Western Cape Education authorities in 1995 not to close the teacher colleges. The plan was to amalgamate them and then incorporate them into the universities. We knew that this was not going to happen. Hewat was closed in 1996 and i left to do my PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science (Gender Institute). Ten years later (early 2000s), the provincial MEC of Education asked me to start the discourse on the opening of education colleges. I said no as i had moved on.
 - 28 I use the apartheid classifications to illustrate the agency of women and the diversity of the UWO despite the apartheid laws. I raise elsewhere that we did not succeed in organising many white working-class women. See Fester (2015).
 - 29 Dorothy Zihlangu was born in Alice in the Eastern Cape on 25 December 1920. She joined the ANC in 1950 and became involved in its various campaigns, such as the 1952 Defiance Campaign and the campaign against segregation in the market at Salt River. She was one of the leaders of the women's march to the Union Buildings in protest against the pass laws in 1956 and was banned for five years after being detained for political activities in 1960. She participated in the fight against removals in the informal settlements in Nyanga in the Cape, and in the 1980s became the first president of the United Women's Congress. In 1984 she was elected Western Cape chairperson of the relaunched Federation of South African Women. See Scanlon (2007: 278–279). Note: the Western Cape Federation of South African Women was launched in 1987. I participated in it and was on the executive.

- 30 Mildred Lesea (nee Ramakaba) was born in Cape Town on 28 January 1933 and started working as a domestic worker when she was 16 years old. After marrying James Lesea, she moved to an informal settlement in Elsies River, where she became involved in various popular struggles. In 1954, she joined the ANC and underground Communist Party of South Africa. She participated in the 1956 march to Parliament. She was active in the ANC Women's League until the ANC was banned in 1960 and was kept in solitary confinement while in detention in 1963 and subsequently sentenced to six years imprisonment for sabotage. The sentence was overturned, but she was banned for five years. In the late 1970s she was part of efforts to resuscitate political activity and was elected first chairperson of UWO when it was formed. See Scanlon (2007: 183–195).
- 31 Included here are Meintjes (1996a, 1996b); Meintjes and Hassim (2002); Hassim (1991, 2002, 2004, 2006).
- 32 In many of the indigenous languages in South Africa, the word for 'mother' and 'women' is the same, e.g. *Makhoskasi*.
- 33 I wonder to what extent it influenced women that I had on the questionnaire a section that indicated they should tick if applicable: 'I joined out of concern for my children.'
- 34 These traditions change over time and there are many different versions depending on language and location. Basically, a *makoti* is a newly married woman whose tasks entail serving breakfast to the entire family. In the rural areas where this is most strictly observed it means collecting firewood and fetching water, making the fire and then the food. In fact, you have to do what your mother-in-law tells you to do. If the husband marries again and you are the first wife, you become the senior wife and in turn instruct the other wives what to do. This is of course once you and your husband have your own home. *Makotis* are also supposed to dress in a particular way. It may mean wearing a long skirt and a scarf and having your face painted white.
- 35 Traditional relations meant that women were minors in terms of power. They had to ask permission for everything they wanted to do. It is very complex. Women in other branches like Gugulethu and Langa did not have the problem of seeking permission from their husbands. Most urban African women were community workers, were engaged in wage labour and often were members of the Manyano women (church mothers) and thus had public roles. See Cole (1987) and Kaplan (1994) for an extensive background on the changing roles of women in informal settlements.
- 36 Josette Cole provides an analysis of how the democratic process of the formation of the largest informal settlement in Cape Town was transformed into a battle, with conflict between the various warlords. Women were first in charge and they worked as a collective. When organisations moved to assist them and wanted to speak to the 'leaders', they had none and at that moment the warlords emerged as 'leaders'. UWCO Education Forum, speaker Josette Cole, May 1987.
- 37 These are verbatim from the written responses.
- 38 In 1998, I was part of a group of ANC women MPs discussing the challenges of women activists and the effects on their political activism on marriages. I commented on the number of divorces that took place during the 1980s on the height of the struggle. Thandi Modise, ANC Women's League deputy chairperson, responded that with the increase of women in Parliament since 1994, many women parliamentarians were getting divorced. At a women's meeting at the South African embassy in Dublin in May 2003, 'Challenges for Women in Politics', ambassador Melanie Verwoerd shared her experiences of 1994–1999 in Parliament and commented on the large number of divorces that had taken place during that period.
- 39 UWCO dissolved in 1990 to form the ANC Women's League
- 40 Because the women were too 'ungovernable' in the cells and they could not cope with them, the authorities decided to have a special night court at Caledon Street

- Magistrates Court in Cape Town, in order to release the women. A celebratory festive atmosphere prevailed outside the court. The proceedings started at 1am and as individual women emerged out of the court there were loud cheers and shouting of liberation slogans from the enormous crowds who waited outside.
- 41 The Women's National Coalition was established on 25/26 April 1992 with the objective of identifying women's needs for a future South Africa. The WNC brought together 70 women's organisations that were linked to political parties, trade unions, religious groupings and community organisations. See Govender (1993) and Thipe (2012).
- 42 De Lille was at the time the only woman leader of a political party in the country. She had broken away from the PAC in 2003 and formed the Independent Democrats. They won five seats for National Parliament in the 2004 elections and had a few provincial seats as well. She subsequently formed the Good Party and is currently the Minister of Public Works.
- 43 Whitey Pokwana was an executive member of UWO. She or her husband worked at this Muslim crèche so they lived on the premises and we used it as a venue for some of our meetings.
- 44 Xhosa proverb (travelling opens a window to the world).
- 45 Within the context of the following events, identifying people by the apartheid racial labels is important.
- 46 I related this story to a South African living in the UK. Subsequently, i read a much distorted version of our experiences as an introduction to her article in a journal. She based the event in the suburb of Athlone. This happened to us in Walmer Estate. Maybe she was trying to protect our identities, hence she gave an inaccurate version. But it is also with ambivalence that i note these variations of events. On the one hand i understand if she wanted to protect us. However, this was another example of how our histories were being distorted. During these turbulent political periods (1976-1990), many foreign researchers would come to South Africa for a short period to interview us and also many other women in other parts of the country. They would, after about two months in the country, leave as South African women's struggle experts and publish their books and articles. On reading some of these, we were very dismayed. One of the preconditions of the interviews was that we wanted to see a draft of the manuscript before being published by them. Out of probably more than hundreds of interviews the only manuscript that was ever returned for ratification by us was that written by the collective that wrote *Vukani Malibongwe* (Barrett et al. 1985).
- 47 Fort Calata, Matthew Goniwe, Siculo Mhlauli and Sparrow Mkhonto were brutally killed by the apartheid regime. These four were leaders of the very radical township of Lingelihle in Cradock. The South African security police abducted them, killed them and burnt their bodies. They were known as the Cradock Four.
- 48 Toyi-toyi is a sort of war dance/exercises that the freedom fighters do. It became fashionable to do it when protesting. Currently in South Africa, strikers usually still do it when they march through the streets. Toyi-toying is a sign of defiance/strength, like the Maori 'Hakka'.
- 49 Praise be to the name of the women.
- 50 Two weeks after her words at the funeral, she too became a victim of mysterious killings. Her husband Griffiths was brutally stabbed 45 times and his throat cut. His body was found in Umlazi cycle stadium on 19 November 1981. His killers have also never been found.
- 51 In Athlone, Cape Town, the area bordered by Klipfontein Road, Belgravia Road, Thornton Road and Alexander Sinton High School became a gathering place for anti-apartheid protests, particularly by students. On 15 October 1985, members of the security forces shot and killed three young people who were part of anti-government demonstrations. On the day of the incident, Security and Railway

- police worked together to crush a gathering of youth who were protesting against the apartheid government. This incident became known as the Trojan Horse massacre. A South African Railways truck was loaded with crates close to the edges all around the back with the middle unloaded to create space for the police to hide. The truck drove down Thornton Road to the middle of the protest with armed police hidden behind the crates. They sprang up and opened fire, killing three young people – Jonathan Claasen, aged 21, Shaun Magmoed, aged 15, Michael Miranda, aged 11 – and injuring several others. An inquest was launched in March 1988 to investigate the actions of the police. The magistrate ruled that the police had acted in an unreasonable way. Thirteen men were charged with the incident and the case was referred to the Attorney General of the Cape who refused to prosecute those who were responsible. Families of the victims launched a private prosecution which ended in the acquittal of the accused men in December 1989. See <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/trojan-horse-massacre>, accessed 28 February 2021. Hewat College of Education, where i taught, was also in this precinct. It was here that the Pollsmoor march started and the police attacked the students and threw teargas into the college hall where students assembled after the police chased and beat them on their march to Pollsmoor prison on 28 August 1985. ‘At one point, policemen charged with riot sticks and fired tear gas and rubber bullets at 1,500 protesters led by priests who sat in a road and sang a hymn near the Hewat Teacher Training College. The police detained nine journalists, including three Americans – a reporter from *Time* magazine and a reporter and a photographer from *The Dallas Morning News* – were arrested in Athlone, the scene of much of today’s unrest.’ See Cowell (1985).
- 52 Children’s games. First group played by us in Maitland area. Second group played in Gugulethu, according to Wanita Mfeketo (interview November 2018).
- 53 Coloured township in the northern suburbs of Cape Town.
- 54 Colours of the then proscribed ANC.
- 55 White suburb in northern Cape Town, near Ravensmead.
- 56 This will be highlighted in another section where i describe the information i received from a detained comrade, Bongani, about the fact that the security police knew everything about my activities and what i should say if i were to be detained.
- 57 After the First World War, Belgians ruled Rwanda through a mandate from the League of Nations (Melvern 2000: 9, 13–24). In 1933, the Belgian administrators organised a census after measuring the circumference of the head, length of nose and height of people. Thereafter people were divided into Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. Everyone was issued with identity documents. It was compulsory that they carry them all the time. Privileges also coincided with this categorisation, with the Tutsi having the most privileges and the Twa the least. Hutu women, for example, were not allowed to be educated. In 1959, with the wind of change for African colonies, the demand for independence also inspired the Rwandan ruling classes and they demanded independence from Belgium. This brought the Tutsi out of favour of the colonialists. Hutu organisations, assisted by Catholic priests, also increased and published their manifesto for independence and majority rule. Persecution of the Tutsis then started. The genocide of the Tutsi was a protracted affair, starting in 1959 and culminating in 1994. See Kansanga Ndahiro (2012) and Mukanyiligira (2014).
- 58 Established in April 1981 and August 1983 respectively.
- 59 At that stage (1982/1983) we did not use the more inclusive term lesbian, gay, bi-, trans, intersexed and queer plus (LGBTIQ+). It is an indication of the development of our struggles when the terms used became more inclusive.
- 60 It was only in the late 1980s that the feminist movement disaggregated sexual orientation to include the LGBTIQ+ community.
- 61 Initially the state of emergency was not declared in the Cape. But after real ungovernability and constant protests and uprisings the state of emergency was declared on 25 October 1985.

- 62 According to Mercia Andrews, Rita Edwards was born in Ottery, Cape Town, on 25 March 1950, the third of nine children. In the cantankerous atmosphere of Western Cape Left politics, Edwards located her views amongst those who argued that apartheid and capitalism were umbilically linked. Apartheid facilitated the accumulation of super-profits through the bantustans and migrant labour system, and the coloured labour preference policy was part of the divide and rule strategy. Although Rita suffered from cancer, she worked indefatigably until her death trying to save the project GETNET from closing down. See <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/cape-times/20090603/282415575253213>, accessed February 2021.
- 63 I recall much later when women who had been sexually harassed or assaulted wanted to raise it publicly, a senior female comrade asked the women to refrain from doing so. She warned that the enemy, the 'boere', may use it against us. There was also the concern by some not to emphasise any negative aspects of our movement as it may be used by the enemy.
- 64 The majority of women classified as African under apartheid defied apartheid laws and came to the urban areas to join their husbands or even as independent women to find employment. They then started these informal settlements as there were no houses available. See UWCO Report (Education Forum 1987), Cole (1987) and Kaplan (1994) for extensive background on the changing roles of women in informal settlements. Josette Cole worked for the Surplus People's Project, which did support work with people in informal settlements. Mahmood Mamdani also refers to the emergence of tribal warlords in urban informal settlements (Mamdani 1996: 299).
- 65 In response to a request by third-year women students, including Lynne Brown, who had heard of my activities, the Hewat Women's Movement was established. I applied for funding for the students to do annual plays at the National Grahamstown Festival. Lecturers were expected to initiate extramural courses to widen the students' horizons. One of the courses I had established was the Photojournalism and Community course. I knew that most of our students had never been to African townships. Through this course, we visited and learnt about life in the townships.
- 66 Some of the demands were general political demands which we as staff had no control over, such as an end to the state of emergency. There had been arrests of students, including Hewat student Julian Stubbs, with subsequent marches to demand their release. One such incident was dubbed the 'Wynberg 7'. Gladys Thomas (1987) highlighted this in her book *The Wynberg Seven*. See also <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/special/children/dicks.htm>, accessed 21 February 2021.
- 67 As noted, LGBTIQ+ came onto the political agenda much later.
- 68 Albie Sachs was one of the ANC leaders living in Mozambique who was injured when a car bomb that was planted by the South African security forces exploded in a street in Maputo in April 1988. His right arm was shattered in the blast.
- 69 Section 50 accounts for short-term preventive detention.
- 70 The light-glass was covered with woven wires so that prisoners had no access whatsoever to glass.
- 71 'Soldier' in isiXhosa.
- 72 Search her cell!
- 73 Come on search thoroughly, thoroughly!
- 74 Strip her, examine her! Women prisoners were forced to sit on their haunches and then their anuses were examined; also vaginas in some cases.
- 75 Take off the pillowcase.
- 76 There is no pillowcase.
- 77 Wilton Mkwazi, together with Raymond Mhlaba, Patrick Mthembu and Joe Gqabi, were sent for military training at the Nanking Military School in China as the first Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) trainees. He returned clandestinely to South Africa in 1962 to become the second commander-in-chief of MK after the arrest of Nelson

- Mandela in that year. He was subsequently arrested and brought to trial in the Little Rivonia Trial. He was sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment on Robben Island. He and his wife Irene got married on 30 October or 1 November 1987. I made a card congratulating them and wrote them a poem on behalf of UWCO which the lawyers gave to them on their wedding day on Robben Island.
- 78 May i get warm water now please? I have been waiting for a long time. The floor must be scrubbed.
- 79 Phanzi – down – a word for anything negative; a type of dance movement with the palms of the hands in ‘pressing down’ movements. Phambile – ‘go forward’, meaning advance the spirit and philosophy of Nelson Mandela. Amajoni – soldier.
- 80 Apparently, police are no longer permitted to detain children over the weekend, according to a lawyer consulted.
- 81 I recalled this section about their forgetting about me only in 2001 while i was preparing to write a paper, ‘Memories of Trauma, Resistance and Struggle – Women’s Lives, Struggles and Testimonies in South Africa’, for a conference of the Oral History Association, 35th meeting, St Louis, Missouri, USA in October. It was a frightening experience. I realised that i had suppressed this memory for nearly 13 years.
- 82 As regards the other members of the trial, i knew that Alpheus (accused number 11) was Hilda Ndude’s husband. Hilda was one of the fiery members of UWCO. Alpheus, i knew, was director of the Adult Learning Project (ALP), a very successful literacy project. Next was Colleen, a friend of Zurayah’s and i assumed recruited by Zurayah. She and a group from the trade union CLOWU (Clothing Workers’ Union), started by Johnny Issel, always highlighted how much they were doing for the struggle. Zurayah was probably instructed by Bongani. I introduced her to him. She and Colleen hired a car a day or two before they went on their mission to take Yasmina Pandy and Niclo Pedro to the Transkei. Our Maitland ‘safe’ house was probably being watched. I learnt later of their arrest at the Transkei border with Yasmina and Niclo.
- 83 Ivan Toms dubbed it dynamited chicken as it was indistinguishable which part of the chicken it was as it was so badly cooked.
- 84 I mentioned earlier that we have large families on both Mom’s and Dad’s sides. But, of course, they have very different interests, and we did not see most of them except at the occasional funeral. Uncle Eddie’s family did not come to the annual Christmas holidays on the farm, so we did not really know them very well. But when i saw Deon at Maximum he greeted me and i too recognised him. We never actually had any conversations in the prison apart from greeting. Uncle Eddie visited my mom once in the early 1980s. I was there wearing a UDF t-shirt. Uncle Eddie shouted at me, ‘Trek uit daai hemp!’ (Take off that shirt). I was so shocked. My mom also just looked at him. I retorted something like, ‘I will not take off my t-shirt in my own home!’ Ironically, post-1994, his sons were all ardent ANC supporters, and they were on the local council or had some prominent positions in the ANC in Prince Albert.
- 85 Bongani was on the initial charge sheet as part of the accused. He had then been hospitalised because of his injuries as he had been shot by the police during his arrest. Then his name no longer appeared on the charge sheet, and nothing was heard from or about him. Later the state boasted about their prime witness, Mr X. We all suspected that it was Bongani. But most of us were very sceptical that he would testify against us.
- 86 ‘The International Defence and Aid Fund or IDAF (also the Defence Aid Fund for Southern Africa) was a fund created by John Collins during the 1956 Treason Trial in South Africa. After learning of those accused of treason for protesting against apartheid, including Nelson Mandela, Collins created the fund in order to pay all legal expenses and look after the families of those on trial. The group was

- non-partisan. This was one of the first examples of foreign intervention against apartheid in South Africa and proved very successful with over £75,000 being raised towards defending those accused. Ultimately all were acquitted. In 1981, the Defence Aid Fund for Southern Africa founded Canon Collins Trust, now known as Canon Collins Educational & Legal Assistance Trust. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Defence_and_Aid_Fund, accessed 21 January 2022.
- 87 'The sun shall rise' was used as a regular metaphor in all our communications. The house Jen's parents bought that was near Pollsmoor to facilitate visiting also had the name 'The sun shall rise.' 'Ilanga Lizophumemela'
- 88 'Lizo Ngqungwana (Imprisoned for Life): When Lizo Ngqungwana and 14 fellow accused entered the dock of the Cape Town Supreme Court on April 21, 1987, the main charge was one of "terrorism" rather than the charge of treason which had been suggested at earlier court hearings. With Lizo (26), were Cecil Esau (25), Thembinkosi Mzukwa (26), Joseph Ngoma (28), Temba Tshibika (38), Sazi Veldtman (32), Mthetho Myamya (24), Neville van der Rheede (26), Gladwin Mabengeza (36), Cyril Ntabeni (36), and Norman Macanda (29). The accused faced alternative charges of membership in the ANC and participating in its activities or furthering its aims. The charges arose from the alleged operation of a number of ANC cells in the Western Cape area under the overall control of Ngqungwana, accused number 1, who was described as Western Cape military commander for the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). The group's activities included armed actions as well as importing arms and ammunition. Most of the accused had been in custody since April 1986. The court heard details of the arrest of the men, many of whom were assaulted or tortured. Ngqungwana was strangled with a belt, kicked and hit with a gun butt. Myamya was forced to lie on the floor. He was interrogated by one policeman while another pinned his head to the ground with his boot. Afterwards his clothes were soaked with blood. The trial came to an abrupt end on May 29th when 13 of the defendants changed their pleas. The remaining accused, Van der Rheede and Tshibika, were acquitted. Six pleaded guilty to terrorism; Ngqungwana admitted being the regional MK commander; Mzukwa admitted two hand-grenade attacks in 1985 – on Langa police station and on a casspir (an armored police vehicle); Ngoma admitted undergoing military training and planting two mines at Mowbray railway station in 1986 to mark May Day; Veldtman, Michels and Esau admitted transporting, storing and hiding arms and explosives. Ngqungwana was sentenced to life imprisonment. All of the accused outlined their experiences of oppression under apartheid. Many of them, as school students, had lived through the nationwide uprising of 1976. Ngoma and Michels both told of seeing school friends shot dead during peaceful protests. The convicted combatants described the ANC's policy of avoiding civilian casualties wherever possible, a view supported by expert defense witness Professor Colin Bundy. Ngqungwana declared, "I do not believe this should be made an issue by the state which itself daily injures and kills unarmed defenseless civilians". See <http://www.sabracelets.org/lizo-ngqungwana.html>, accessed 10 February 2022.
- 89 Second World War POW in Holland, where his plane crashed. His experiences have been documented by his wife in *Last Man Standing: Geoffrey Rothwell, Survivor of 71 Missions, POW and Last of the SOE Pilots* (McDonald-Rothwell 2018).
- 90 Dawie 'Lang Dawid' de Villiers led South Africa's legal challenge to keep then South West Africa under South African control in the mid-1960s. De Villiers took the country's case to the World Court in the Hague during an international campaign to have South Africa removed from South West Africa. According to Pik Botha, 'In the early 1970s he told me he was against government policy. He said that majority rule was the only option for South Africa. He died 29 June 2001'. See <https://www.news24.com/News24/SWA-lawyer-De-Villiers-dies-20010629>, accessed 16 September 2021.

- 91 Justice Langa and ten others were appointed as the first judges of the Constitutional Court. He became its Deputy President in August 1997 and in November 2001 assumed the position of Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa. He was appointed the country's Chief Justice and head of the Constitutional Court with effect from June 2005 and served until his retirement in October 2009... Justice Langa's practice as an advocate reflected the struggle against the apartheid system and his clientele thus included the underprivileged, various civic bodies, trade unions and people charged with political offences under the oppressive apartheid security legislation... As a township resident in his early working life, he constantly involved himself in community work and in attempts to improve the quality of life in the communities around him. He helped organise civic organisations and residents' associations and gave guidance to youth and recreational clubs.' See <https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judges/former-judges/11-former-judges/62-former-chief-justice-pius-linga-1938-2013>, accessed 16 September 2021.
- 92 'Advocate Michael Donen was honoured in Parliament earlier this month following a motion to recognise his career and contribution to the history of South Africa... His legal career was shaped by defending political activists during the height of apartheid in pioneering cases that put him at security risk and even saw members of the community ostracise him for doing so... As a young lawyer struggling to pay off his debt, Donen worked as a junior prosecutor on the treason trial of ANC leader Tokyo Sexwale in the late 1970s. This was a turning point in his career, and he describes it as having a seminal impact on the rest of his life... One of his most notable cases was that of Major-General Mxolisi Petane in 1988. Petane was arrested for terrorism against the apartheid government and his defense claim that he was a prisoner-of-war set a historic precedent in the country. With the world's media taking notice of Donen's defense, Petane had claimed a tremendous political victory for the ANC in court, gaining recognition as a liberation struggle rather than a terrorist organisation. Petane was saved from the death sentence due to this defense and went on to serve the South African National Defense Force as an inspector-general later.' See <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/Local/Peoples-Post/defender-lauded-20171127>, accessed 16 September 2021.
- 93 Ds Brand, our parish minister from St Stephen's, was also occasionally allowed to visit me on a Sunday and gave me Holy Communion. I also had counselling sessions with Renee Ramsden-Van Veelen, a Jungian psychologist. I was consulting her prior to my arrest.
- 94 This slogan in the Nguni language of South Africa is used at political meetings, especially of people who support the ANC. 'Amandla' is said by the leader, and means 'power'; the response by the audience is 'Ngawethu – to the people'. The slogan 'La Luta Continua' (the struggle continues) is from the political struggles in Mozambique. *A luta continua* was the rallying cry of the FRELIMO movement during Mozambique's war for independence. The phrase is Portuguese but was used by FRELIMO leader Samora Machel to cultivate popular support against the Portuguese colonial presence. South African political activists supported this struggle, in keeping with the ideology of Pan-African liberation. Viva (Spanish for 'Long live') is used in contexts such as 'Viva Nelson Mandela!'
- 95 Nosipho Ntwanambi was also an executive member of our women's organisations at different times. She was a teacher in Gugulethu and member of the 'African' township-based DETU (Democratic Teachers' Union) before it merged with the Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU) to form SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers' Union). Nosipho and I were both members of SADTU. I was a member of WECTU before the merge. WECTU was outside the township, 'on the other side of the railway line', as we usually said.
- 96 For a short period my thick steel door was left open due to my panic attacks, so I had no double-locking. During panic attacks I usually just cannot breathe.

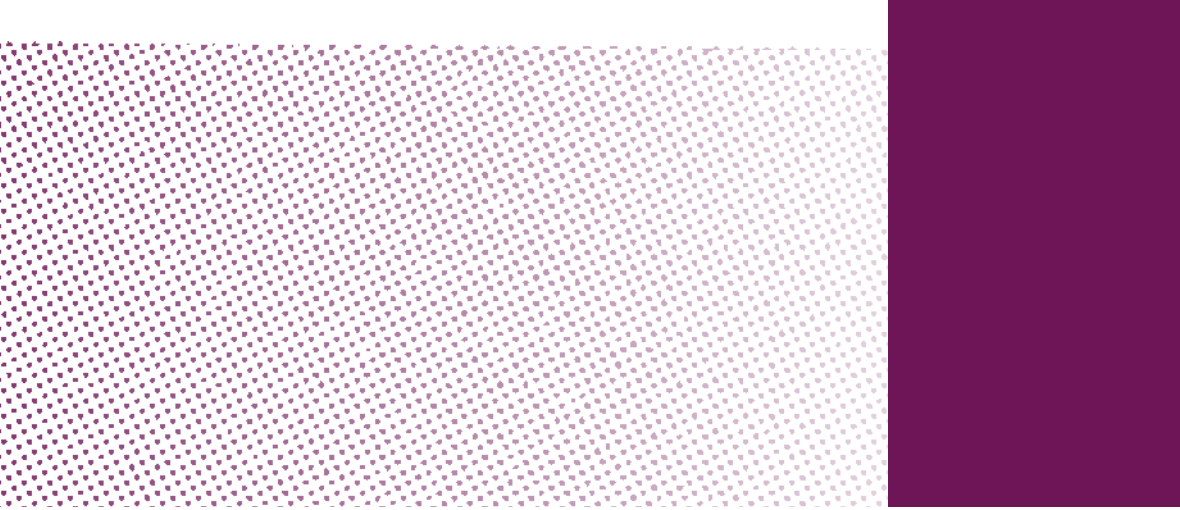
Sometime earlier during the middle of the night this happened to me. I then stood on the bed trying to climb onto the small cupboard below the window. The windows are close to the ceiling so that we prisoners do not have the luxury of a view. I was really struggling to climb up onto the cupboards – impossible but yet i continued. At that moment Sersant Conradie passed my cell and through the bars of my cell door saw this manoeuvring of mine, trying to climb the wall. She asked what i was doing. Her voice portrayed her concern at my actions. I think at that stage i was incoherent and crying. I recalled saying that i needed air from the window. She summoned the doctor on duty, who examined me. I was still incoherent and i remember he wanted to know why i was in prison. Somehow i did not know. I asked Sersant Conradie what i was in for. The doctor then taught me relaxation breathing exercises, tensing up all my muscles systematically from my feet to the rest of my body and slowly relaxing them. He then recommended that my steel door not be closed; hence i did not have the double-locking that most prisoners have.

- 97 I do think there were discussions outside about how demanding our group was. There were 'support groups' for us. But comrades outside were shocked at the brand names/designer-label goods that were being demanded by us.
- 98 Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectional' in a 1989 academic paper (see <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-margins.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2020). Crenshaw raised the inequality of persons determined by race, class, etc., as in 'intersectionality for law'. Intersectionality refers to the intersections of various jeopardies or marginalisations like race, disability, rural, minority religions, etc. These all intersect. So one cannot speak about oppression of women – black women are differently oppressed to white women. So in your analysis you have to take cognisance of these intersectionalities. However, in UWO/UWCO we used intersectionality in our analysis of women's oppressions in terms of race, class and as black in 1981. Our policy and membership cards listed the 'triple oppression of women' as black, as women and as workers. When we look at the history of struggles and women's organisation in South Africa, at all levels, references have been made to the fact that women are not a homogeneous group. For example, in 1913 we had the Association of Native and Coloured Women from Winberg, in the then Orange Free State, who went to Parliament to demand no passes for women; the 1954 Women's Charter acknowledged the differences in women in terms of privilege and oppressions; in the 1980s, women's structures such as the United Women's Organisation used the terms 'triple oppression of women' – race, class and gender – as well as 'double jeopardies' (race and class). The 1996 South African *Women's Charter for Effective Equality* coordinated and published by the Women's National Coalition is also prefaced with the diverse status of South African women.
- 99 When i presented a paper in August on women's emancipation, i of course critiqued patriarchy in all facets of our lives as women. I heard Tony whispering to Jen, "That woman is dangerous!"
- 100 Here we see that there was a hierarchy of political issues. Because of the enormity and overall dominance of apartheid and its overwhelmingly negative impact on the majority of people's lives, other issues of oppression (like living in rural areas and being deprived of opportunities of urban living, disabilities or sexualities, the rest of the 'oppressive jeopardies') were rendered secondary or invisible. I raise this in 'Apartheid's closet' in Reinfelder (1996). There i highlight the homophobia and invisible oppression of the LGBTIQ+ communities within the progressive and liberation movements. I also refer briefly to the nuclear power issue, which was not given the priority it should have received; the national democratic struggle was the main focus. All other issues were secondary or irrelevant. There were no or minimal protests against the building of a nuclear power station fewer than

- 30 kilometres from a major metropolis. Nor was intersectional analysis used: nothing about disabled, culture, albinism, rural, languages, etc. In retrospect, i must admit to my detriment that i too in my activism and political analysis was completely focused on women's struggles – it was quite a battle. I never thought of First Nations' status or oppression before. I recently became much more conscious of further disaggregating oppression and see how very marginal descendants of First Nations are, similar to the situations in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia (Sami people) and here in Africa and, of course, South Africa too.
- 101 NCW was all white. It was started in the mid-1900s.. The organisation has changed a bit over the decades, becoming more inclusive with more progressive members like Jenny's mother, Else Schreiner, who was a prominent member. I did the Bertha Solomon keynote as the UWCO speaker at the National Council of Women AGM in 1985.
- 102 While i was in solitary.
- 103 At one stage i had competing requests from prison staff from both my section and Maximum for the stamps of my various correspondence. For them, those stamps from diverse countries were quite special. I then had to give stamps on a rotational basis.
- 104 'There should be 'respect [for] the informed decision to accept or refuse medical assistance made by prisoners whose fasting is a genuine last resort protest in custodial settings. This was acknowledged by the World Medical Association in its Declaration of Tokyo in 1975. The declaration essentially forbids any medical participation whatsoever in any form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. It also states that doctors should not participate in the force-feeding of prisoners'. See <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/health-article-010198.htm>, accessed 10 November 2021.
- 105 Greek muse inspiring epic poetry.
- 106 My friend who brought me the bright yellow duvet set confessed that she went shopping and kept on emphasising to the shop assistant how bright a colour the duvet set had to be. When the shop assistant enquired where her friend was, she could not admit that it was for a prison cell. She said her friend was ill in hospital or something like that.
- 107 Victor Jara was a legendary Chilean folk singer and political activist, whose brutal killing following a military coup in 1973 went unsolved for decades. Now, his family may finally get justice. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/18/us/victor-jara.html>, accessed 12 November 2021.
- 108 I was so preoccupied by my concern about my mental health that it would have been a welcome experience to be in love or infatuated by someone. In fact, i felt 'empty' and drained of all emotion except mostly fear and anxiety during that period.
- 109 Amnesty International was founded by Peter Benenson in London, England, in 1961, It is an international non-governmental organisation and has as its aim the elimination or reduction of conflicts. It is the largest international organisation for the protection of the rights of all people all over the world and works to promote the human rights found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards. See Buchanan (2002) and Scoble and Wiseberg (1974).
- 110 My sister, Solome Mair, had moved to New Zealand where she petitioned Amnesty International in Canterbury, New Zealand, to lobby for my release. Solome also played a role in lobbying the South African government on my behalf. This is when I wrote the one-women play *Apartheid's Closet: The Spirit Cannot Be Caged* while in solitary confinement. I composed the piece in my head because i was not allowed writing materials. See also Holden (2020) and Fester-Wicomb (2016).
- 111 See, for instance, Lakin and Ndushabandi (2018). As Phil Clarke (2010, 2018) stressed at an April 2013 conference in Kigali, academics are polarised about

- Rwanda (Conference on Reconciliation and Justice, Chez Lando Hotel, Kisementi). Thompson (2018) and Strauss (2006) emphasise the negative, repressive and dictatorial aspects of post-conflict Rwanda. Clarke (2010, 2018) emphasises both the positives and the challenges, a more balanced view according to me. In terms of background (documenting actual events during the genocide, using documentation from the UN), what i really found helpful is Melvern (2000).
- 112 In South African English, a lekgotla is a meeting called by government to discuss strategy planning. The term is a Setswana word, meaning 'court'. Usually there are men who stay at the kgotla, mostly during the day. It was a community response to solving problems, but only elder men participated in it.
 - 113 See Wippman (2006) for a comparison of the International Criminal Tribunal of former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the ICTR. Wippman bemoans the slow course of justice of these courts, the minimal prosecutions and the enormous budgets.
 - 114 Rettig (2008: 25) states that: 'Although gacaca has brought more people to trial than the ICTR, transnational trials, and the ordinary Rwandan courts combined, gacaca exposes—and perhaps deepens—conflict, resentment, and ethnic disunity. Lies, half-truths, and silence have limited gacaca's contribution to truth, justice, and reconciliation.' By contrast, Clarke (2012) states that: 'While the full impact of the process will not be apparent for many years, gacaca has delivered benefits to Rwandans in the spheres of justice, truth and democratic participation. Other societies confronting the aftermath of mass conflict could learn much from Rwanda's approach to local justice.' What was fascinating to me was that Rwandans were issued with 'wind-up' radios so that they could listen to the *gacaca* proceedings if they were far from them.
 - 115 While i was in Kigali, i often listened to Cape Talk Radio. On one *Umuganda* day, the news bulletin quoted Jean Jacque Cornish, the Cape Talk Africa correspondent, emphasising that on that day the Rwandan people were forced to work and clean up. I then sent out a survey to all my 60-odd students to get their responses to that comment. All responded stating how eager they were to participate in the *Umuganda* day. Angelina Konkobwe Muganza added that even earlier during the months they eagerly explore options of where to work the next *Umuganda*. We as foreigners also participated if we wanted to. I did it on a few occasions with an international group of women researchers a few years ago while on a field trip. I must say it was hard work.
 - 116 I was privileged to be part of these discussions with reps from all educational institutions and the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF). We were planning International Women's Day, 8 March, and projects. Each high school has a Gender Commission to promote gender issues. They too participated in these discussions.
 - 117 On 23 March 2009, the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) signed a peace treaty with the DRC government, where it became a political party, and the M23 soldiers integrated into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). See https://www.google.com/search?q=m23+rebels+in+congo&sxsrf=AOaemvJxx2TTsFD2-j8x2xC_Cmf27Xdb3, accessed 20 January 2022.
 - 118 Mostly *muzungus* (foreigners or white people; people with money and power).
 - 119 The support group was established in 1995 as a civil society organisation for survivors of the apartheid regime's human rights violations. The organisation was meant to assist those testifying before the TRC. Khulumani continues to pursue 'transformational justice in South Africa' by addressing some of the shortcomings of the TRC. It has campaigned for survivors of torture to receive reparations, as well as survivors not recognised as victims by the TRC, ensuring that perpetrators were brought to justice, giving closure to families of the 'disappeared', and working with government, local and international key players to memorialise the victims and compensate their families. See Bohler-Muller (2013) and Makhalemele (2004).

- 120 Personal email communication with Zubeida Jaffer.
- 121 Related personally by Elise Levendal, 2010.
- 122 Email correspondence, 20 September 2013, p.1.
- 123 Ibid., 1.
- 124 Ibid., 2.
- 125 Ibid., 1., my emphasis.



This is the life story of a South African political detainee who went through 104 days of solitary confinement under Section 29 of the draconian apartheid-era Terrorism Act before being brought to trial with 13 other political activists in what became known as the 'Yengeni Trial'.

Gertrude Fester begins her story with her childhood and young adult life in Cape Town until she becomes politically active in the city's progressive women's organisations before focusing on her above-ground and underground work for the liberation struggle that led to her detention in the second half of the 1980s.

It is in her depiction of her recollections of the daily experiences of solitary confinement and use of poetry written during this period that Gertrude takes the reader through the physically and emotionally draining experience of solitary confinement in apartheid South Africa during the height of repression and resistance in the second half of the 1980s.



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