

INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA'S GULAG

Continued from First Page

But the island's work itself is a punishment and study has become a weapon wilfully used by prison authorities.

"They knew how important our studies were to us," says Mararaj. "There always seems to be an excuse—some trivial offense; you were charged, sentenced, then deprived of studies for the rest of the year. This always seemed to happen at examination time. So, you lost the 200-300 rand (about \$230-\$345) in fees and couldn't take your exams."

Moreover, even when it is permitted, study is restricted by a harsh and arbitrary code. No post-graduate programs are permitted—a particularly cruel restraint on professional men. At the undergraduate level, all legal courses are banned, as are physical and political sciences and all foreign languages. Inmates may order only those books required for their particular course and not those on recommended reading lists.

"There were always tremendous difficulties in getting prescribed books," Mararaj recalls. "Sometimes, a book would arrive, was approved and passed by the censor, but just held back. Then another year would pass before you could take your exam. One chap had the Oxford dictionary taken from him because he could not prove it was a book prescribed for his course."

Finally, the money to finance correspondence courses may be obtained only from the prisoner's next-of-kin.

But despite white administrators' calculated attempts to

demoralize the political prisoners on Robben Island, they have failed. In fact, people forced to live under this prison apartheid seem to gain an even greater political awareness.

Mararaj describes his own experience: "This was the first time for me, as a black man, that I had whites with me day in and day out, on an ordinary level. I came to understand what they said. I realized the importance of learning Afrikaans history, of reading Afrikaans literature, of trying to understand these ordinary men, the warders, the white elite—all whites are elite in South Africa—with whom we are dealing; how they are indoctrinated, how they react. "They all have a blank wall in their minds. They just could not see the black man as a human being."

Prisoners, supported by a nebulous community invisible to the guards, learned to draw strength from each other. Mararaj says: "In a sense, I also became more tolerant. I came to realize that we each have our weak points.

"When I left Robben, I came away with one unshakable conviction. I saw that we had to fight to overcome this system, and that it cannot be done by peaceful means, that you cannot humanize apartheid by modifications or by cosmetic changes.

"It must be overthrown by force of arms. Not one of us who passed through prison, whatever our previous beliefs, came out believing that change can come by peaceful means."

Solidarity with SA women

A WOMEN'S Conference to discuss solidarity with South African women is being held by the Anti-Apartheid Movement on April 24. HILDA BERNSTEIN explains the importance of the conference and argues that women's movements everywhere are a part of the struggles of their own societies.

THE women's movement in a country such as South Africa must take an essentially different form from those that have so deeply impressed themselves in recent years on the Western world.

This does not imply a difference in ultimate objectives; women's movements everywhere want the same things. But the differences in the nature of our societies lead to differences in organisation, in propaganda, and in immediate aims. The interesting thing is that in the advanced countries of the West the women's movements have been to a large extent self-limiting and inward-turning; sometimes too self-indulgent; probably because in a country like Britain women wanted first to examine themselves, their emotions, their sexuality, before relating all their problems more directly to structures of society.

The problem is one of power. The mechanism of women's liberation is identical to the mechanism of the colonised man in colonial society, or of the worker in capitalist society' (Samora Machel).

In Britain this tends to be overlooked as women wrestle with day to day issues that make immediate

demands on them: adjusting the wording of the new law on women's rights; or arguing about the application of equal pay and job opportunities. These are vitally important, of course, but they do obscure the basic structures of women's exploitation. In South Africa, it is the basic structure that reveals itself with utmost clarity.

For these reasons, the women's conference, 'Women Under Apartheid' on April 24, will be more than a valuable but simple expression of solidarity with the struggles of women in South Africa. By examining the nature and basis of the oppression of South African women, it will be possible for British women to learn a great deal more about their own disabilities and the action that must be taken towards true liberation.

Any conference of women that tries to isolate women's problems from the context of the intense struggles in their own society is nothing more than a sham. Like the convention in Grahamstown at the end of last year, when 700 women delegates from South Africa and overseas met for a week to discuss 'Peace, Goodwill and Equality' — as though these high-sounding principles could be discussed in South Africa while excluding all delegates, organisations or discussions that would touch on the pass laws, Bantustans, family life and all the rest.

Tini Vorster, wife of the Prime Minister, stated that the role of housewife is still one of the most honourable professions in the world for women. The delegates were delighted, and more so, no doubt,



The women of South Africa have a long history of oppression—and of struggle against it. These mothers with their children in their arms took part in the campaign of defiance against unjust laws in the 1950s

when Maggie Owies, described as a Coloured organiser of the Domestic Workers' Union, pointed out that domestic servants are the 'key people in society'.

Yes, one may laugh. But Margaret Mead was there, and Britain's Sheila Scott OBE, and Dame Mary Cartwright from Girton College. April 24 must help right this wrong.

At this moment of tremendous historical change in Southern Africa, women everywhere must find ways of struggling and working together. 'All bear the same scars, all have known the same hunger, the same poverty, the same suffering, the

same shackles, the same widowhood, the same orphanhood, the same tears caused by colonialism and exploitation. We are united through the discovery of common wounds and scars, but above all unity is realised through common effort, links are forged through collective

work and study, through collective internal struggle....' (Machel)

The Women's Conference could well prove one of the most important actions of the women's movement in Britain, for the women of this country, as well as of South Africa.

Jamaican women against apartheid

JAMAICA'S High Commission in London has protested against the inclusion of Jamaica in a list of countries to be represented at last December's World Convention of Eminent Women held in South Africa.

It said that Jamaica had never contemplated any association with the event — which was dominated by South Africa's white establishment — and that representation would have been a negation of Jamaica's policy of opposition to apartheid.

By Hilda Brenstein

London. You children that you may all remain alive. You fathers and your mothers you must save. And if I rains you would not survive. Tell them you will not take what they have taken. You children that you may all remain alive. —Barthel Brecht: "To My Countrymen."

There is nothing in African history to compare with the revolt of the black children of South Africa. Ever since June the country has been rocked by massive political protests unprecedented in South African history in their scale and character. These uprisings started in a sprawling black ghetto outside Johannesburg, where black workers live in matchbox houses; the area embraces many "townships," meaning housing areas, and these were designated the South-West townships, which was abbreviated to "Soweto."

4,000 arrested in 5 months

According to a study issued two weeks ago by the South African Institute of Race Relations, more than 4,000 persons have been arrested in connection with the political protests of the past five months.

The institute—a research organization funded largely by American foundations—said about half that number have been convicted of crimes such as riotous assembly, public violence, incitement, theft and arson. More than 500 youths have been sentenced to flogging, while 200 adults have been sent to prison.

The study reports that another 1,200 are awaiting trial on similar charges while at least 400 blacks are being held under detention provisions. The study lists among the black detainees 100 students, 21 teachers and university registrars, 16 clergy, 17 journalists and 25 officials from the Black People's Convention and two other influential organizations.

Hilda Brenstein

the rest with illegal gatherings. Most were sentenced to fines or flogging. In Port Elizabeth, night courts were held to sentence 100 arrested children; the youngest received the lightest sentence—five cuts with a cane. This did not help.

The mass arrests are indiscriminate. Sometimes whole schools together with teachers are arrested. Nobody knows how many are held because police don't release names. But there are at least 400 more than 2,000 have been held under either the Terrorism Act, which allows prolonged detention without trial, or the new Internal Security Act, which permits imprisonment without trial for a year for anybody considered a state security threat.

Those arrested are being treated after a year has elapsed. The act bypasses the courts and the arrested are held incommunicado.

Arrests under these laws have been aimed chiefly at black leaders—all the executive members of the Soweto Black Parents Assn, as well as the leading members of the Soweto Students Representative Council, the South African Students Organization and other bodies.

The children who come onto the streets over and over again to confront the tanks, armored cars, stunguns and riot squads are both extraordinarily young and unbelievably brave.

We saw that the Boers were afraid of us, a 13-year-old girl said, "else why should they shoot at us!"

The school children have formed a unity with students from the five segregated black universities. "We want to do what our parents couldn't do," they say.

They've already succeeded in uniting color groups, Indian students, and colored (mixed race) students in Cape Town and Natal who've joined their African brothers and sisters.

They are puritanical. Shebeens (illicit liquor dens) and liquor stores have been among their main targets. They smash the bottles, empty liquor onto the street, and graze land. A fat man in a suit was seen emptying a bottle of whiskey. The son said, "They gave you whiskey instead of using it for food."

The demonstrators were accompanied by organized attacks on what are regarded as white authority symbols, using whatever weapons are available, mostly stones and gasoline bombs. By August, two months after the disturbances started, more than 100 municipal offices, 200 police vehicles, 90 bertha's and liquor stores, 100 schools and many post offices, clinics, banks and clinics had been damaged or destroyed.

—353 dead children.

In the first three June days, police fired point-blank into a crowd of 10,000 laughing, singing children. Of the 353 children killed, 1139 injured and 1,298 arrested. But students who visited the memorials daily said numbers were put on dead children's foreheads and the numbers had reached 353 in those first three days.

Sweeping arrests and the disappearance of many children caused mounting resentment and anxiety. Schools were closed, pupil agitation continued. Schools and administrative offices were attacked, set on fire, stoned in three of the country's four provinces—northern Cape, Free State and Natal.

In August a massive demonstration of more than 20,000 young people took place in Soweto. They had planned to march to police headquarters, but police fired, killing two more children, wounding and injuring dozens, and once more the frustration and violence was turned inward, against the police.

It is countryside around spread to the farms. One victim was Hendrik Schoeman, a minister, whose farm in Transvaal suffered extensive damage, while prime minister B.J. Vorster's farm lost 2,000 sheep through arson on his farm.

The arrests ran into the thousands. Between June and October 2,500 troops were sent to the countryside arising out of the demonstrations. Nearly 25,000 students were charged with public violence;

Tell me, name you heard from Johannesburg



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The spark that set off this fire of revolt—protest against compulsory use of Afrikaans as a teaching medium in African schools—has been smoldering for some time.

African children in primary school are taught in their mother tongue—Tswana, Zulu, Sesotho and the like—but at high schools, Afrikaans and Afrikaans, and teaching must be half and half in each language.

At the beginning of the year the Department of Bantu Education said it would force closure of Afrikaans schools in Afrikaans at Soweto schools. Parents and teachers opposed the move, but protests were ignored. Afrikaans is hated as the language of apartheid, law and oppression. But this was really only one issue among many concerning education in South Africa, including the overcrowding, high cost (free for whites) and inferior nature of Bantu education.

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Some weeks later, after so many had died and so many were imprisoned, and the death toll was mounting, the issue was conceded. But the demonstrations spread, increased, and went on and on.

The myth shattered. Portugal's defeat was different. The Frelimo victory in Mozambique destroyed the myth of white invincibility. Here on the very borders, a ragged, ill-equipped army of black men and women had started in a remote corner—and in two years had won the whole country back for its people.

Then followed the MPLA victory in Angola, which I want to discuss because of the invincibility of white Africa itself. This was probably the most disastrous mistake ever made by the white govern-

ment. Led on by U.S. intervention in Angola on the side of two organizations, the Frelimo and UNITA, South Africa moved its troops in "at UNITA's request" to set up establishment under MPLA of black socialist governments. From July to December 1975, \$32 million worth of arms and equipment was channeled by the CIA to UNITA-UNITA, including a half million dollars to recruit white mercenaries in Britain alone—with disastrous results.

Mozambique and Angola were claiming calls to South Africa's blacks, bringing a surge of black consciousness that had previously been confined only to a section of students (incidentally, trials of black students who tried to organize meetings to celebrate the freedom of Mozambique are still proceeding).

These events outside South Africa together with the unfolding hardships of apartheid within the country have at last succeeded in achieving what oldtime systems of colonialism had made almost impossible: they've ended that bitterly destructive sense of inferiority essential to keeping races subject in a colonial system.

By their insistence on separating the blacks, on dividing people on lines of skin-color, apartheid has finally forced blacks to see themselves through their own eyes. Black consciousness began to flower and became a new force to challenge a struggle so long repressed by police and state power.

The child says: "The government policy of apartheid has made us conscious of the fact that we are black. We have come to accept our blackness. Now we believe we should have power."

Enter Henry A. Kissinger, the U.S. secretary of state. Not having been a colony-worshiping power in Africa, the U.S. had held relatively subordinate interests in investment and trade to that of Western European rivals. But in two decades Africa has become an area of major American concern, with rapidly growing economic stakes.

From 1957 to 1970, private American investments in Africa increased five times from \$644 million to \$3.48 billion. Official aid and loans added another third to this.

A Bureau of African Affairs was not established until 1958. By the beginning of the '70s, the U.S. was displaying increasing concern with southern Africa, which is the source of cheap supplies to the U.S. of rare minerals, including lithium, in beryllium, chromium and others important to future technology. (Lithium, for example, is essential for high-powered batteries. Some 80 percent of all known world deposits of these minerals are in southern Africa.)

Initial U.S. policy in southern Africa was based on the false belief that Portugal would retain its colonial hold on Annobon Robben Island, despite paramilitary police and an army equipped with the latest hardware.

The effect on black South Africans was electric. The revolutionary struggles outside Africa have always seemed remote, even unrelated to their own. True, they had heard of Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro and his band and they knew something of the long Vietnamese liberation war—but these were far away. The conception of poor, oppressed people fighting and defeating superpowers in armed struggle seemed remote, unreal.

Angola, which is known to have large, undeveloped mineral reserves, is therefore understandable; it is potentially a very rich country.

—Kissinger's April speech in Lusaka was the answer. He expressed support for the majority rule and "for the great goals of national independence, economic development and racial justice."

In speaking of South Africa, however, Kissinger did not mention apartheid or refer to majority rule. He simply said "policy toward South Africa" (based on the premise that within a reasonable time we shall see a clear evolution towards equality of opportunity and basic human rights for all South Africans.)

Most dangerous about this policy is the encouragement it gives to the idea of gradual change, the illusion that apartheid will slowly die through economic processes and liberal advances.

The African National Congress states: "South Africa's economic policy of force and is today being killed by force. At moments when white autocracy feels itself threatened, it does not hesitate to use the gun. When the colonialism had made almost impossible: they've ended that bitterly destructive sense of inferiority essential to keeping races subject in a colonial system."

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Half of whites want change?

Johannesburg, South Africa. More than half of all white South Africans would support major changes in the race laws, including integration of sport, theater, universities and churches, a national survey has shown. The survey, commissioned from a private company by the Afrikaans-language newspaper Rapport, showed earlier this month that, in general, the all-white electorate would back scrapping many of the immemorial laws that govern apartheid. A majority of whites questioned favored abolition of the immemorial laws that are at the core of apartheid, and in favor of the mixed marriages act.

Hilda Brenstein

From an original drawing by the author

Hilda Brenstein was a journalist in Los Angeles until she and her husband were imprisoned by the South African government for apartheid activities. She is in London, where she is a much-beloved writer.

SOUTH AFRICA

Winnie Mandela will not be silenced

Mandela was just arrested for the ninth time. Her plight typifies that of the resistance leader.

I last saw Nomzamo Winnie Mandela 13 years ago as she walked down the steps of the Palace of Justice in Pretoria. Her husband, Nelson Mandela and seven others had just been sentenced to life imprisonment. (The ninth defendant, my own husband, had been found not guilty the previous day.)

The crowd outside the court was waiting, as they had waited for the weeks and months of the Rivonia Trial. Winnie raised her arm in salute and called "Life!" and the crowd burst out singing and unfurled banners they had been concealing from the police.

We had sat on separate benches in the courtroom for eight months. Our husbands sat together in the dock, but we were divided, blacks on one side, whites on the other. We had passed, looked, but never greeted each other although we were old friends, for we were both "banned," and banned people are prohibited from communicating with each other. Even a smile, a whispered greeting, has been interpreted by the courts as "communication." We could not risk it under the unremitting gaze of so many police.

Unceasing harassment.

Nomzamo Winnie Mandela was born and brought up in rural Pondoland, a remote and beautiful part of the Transkei. She matriculated, came to Johannesburg, obtained a social science diploma, became a social worker. In 1958 she married Nelson Mandela, one of South Africa's first black lawyers, a leading member of the African National Congress.

When the African National Congress was declared an illegal organization in 1961—40 years after its formation—Nelson Mandela went underground; from that time the life of Winnie and her two small daughters Zenani and Zenziswa became one of police raids and unceasing harassment.

She was banned for the first time in 1962, then arrested for breaking her banning order, allegedly by attending a party. She was also arrested in 1967, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1976—and now, for the second or third time in 1977.

Nelson Mandela is serving a life sentence on the penal Robben Island, which is a thousand miles away from Winnie's home in Soweto. Once, when given permission to visit him, she was to have travelled by train, but as it was full she caught a plane to Cape Town so that she could see her husband before her permit expired. For this she was arrested and charged with breaking the exemption to her banning order.

Waking up screaming.

In May, 1969, she was arrested at 2 a.m., and thereafter remained in prison for 491 days, most of it in solitary confinement.

Perhaps because world attention centred on the name of Mandela, or perhaps because she suffers from a heart condition, she was allowed to remain seated during five days and nights of continuous interrogation. Other women arrested at the same time were less fortunate: three died in detention, one became mentally unbalanced, and another endured torture.

On the third day, when she saw the police her blue and swollen feet the chief interrogator



Winnie Mandela raised her arm with her fist clenched and called "Life!" as she left the Palace of Justice in Pretoria. Mandela is now back in jail. IDAF

us some inheritance when you decide to pop it; you cannot go with all that information."

On the fifth day "my clothes were soaking wet from excessive night sweating . . . I was trembling badly and could not control the muscles . . . The pain under the left breast was acute and I had difficulty in breathing." In the early hours of the sixth morning Swanepoel stopped the interrogation, which then continued only day by day. At night, lying on the prison floor (no beds for black prisoners), "I used to wake up screaming and found myself talking aloud and suffered from nightmares."

Yet in February, 1970, the case collapsed and the accused were found not guilty and discharged. They were immediately re-arrested and put back into solitary confinement. Six long months later, after a second trial on the same charges, they were all again found not guilty.

Contemptuous of Bantustans.

It was not two years since Winnie had visited Nelson. But she was served with even more stringent banning orders, confining her to a small area of Soweto during the day and keeping her under house arrest every evening and weekend. The application to leave her home to visit Robben Island was refused. Police came to her home three or four times a day to "check up" and harass her.

When her brother-in-law came to her house one evening to collect a list of groceries, she was arrested and charged with having visitors after 6 p.m. His presence, together with her sister and two small children, constituted a "gathering," and she was banned from all gatherings. Another arrest followed in July of the same year—1971. This time she was accused of breaking her banning order by communicating with Peter Magubane, a friend and well-known photographer, in a Johannesburg street. She was spoken to her children who had been taken to Marshburg.

searches of her house day and night, unexplained burglaries and attempted assaults, Nomzamo Winnie Mandela was free for a very short while to move around, to speak openly, and to be interviewed.

South African newspapers wrote with admiration of her calm beauty, her dignity, serenity, compassion. But she spoke bitterly about the untold hardships of years that had left scars which nothing could remove. While her daughters grew up she could not properly fulfill her role as mother. She could not even take them to school, or meet their teachers. Yet "I am even more opposed to this violent system now than I was in 1962. . . I will express my views . . . I am aware of the risks I will have to face."

She said she could not be a spectator to the cause of her people. "As long as our people are imprisoned and as long as Whites continue to do what they are doing, my life will remain unchanged." She dismissed detente as playing for time. "Is it possible that Whites are not aware of the agony of the Black people? Can they be unaware of how explosive the situation is in South Africa?"

She spoke contemptuously of the Bantustans, declaring South Africans would never accept such a future, only that of a multiracial South Africa.

"Handle with care."

Only eight months later, the explosive situation of which she spoke erupted in Soweto, and Winnie Mandela was one of dozens of leading blacks who were arbitrarily arrested and put into "preventative detention" under the Internal Security Act. She was released six months later and once more banned and restricted to her district within Soweto.

Then in May of this year, a force of 20 police in camouflage uniforms descended on her home early one morning and without warning, packed her belongings onto a lorry and removed her bodily to a remote black township hundreds of miles away in the Orange Free State—a place so insignificant that it has no official name, although local blacks call it Phatakhale, which means "handle with care."

roomed house is without electricity, running water, a bath or a stove. It has no water-borne sewerage and a door that locks only from the outside. She is house arrested every night and weekend, but she is permitted to go as far as the nearest town, Brandfort, during the week.

Her youngest daughter, 16 year-old Zenziswa, who went with her mother to Phatakhale, spoke with bitterness and anger. The people of the township speak Sotho and Afrikaans. "We are Xhosa-speaking," said Zenziswa. "We do not speak Afrikaans."

There are no libraries, no cinemas; the location has one primary school, one small general store. "No one can survive in these conditions. It is soul-destroying. The Security Police visit us three or four times a day, they won't leave us alone." Every half hour a police van drives through the location streets, sending up clouds of dust. When mother and daughter go into Brandfort to shop for groceries, they are escorted everywhere by both black and white security police.

Zenziswa's own education has come to an abrupt end, because she will not leave her mother alone. But when Zenziswa had visitors at the house, Winnie was immediately arrested and charged with breaking her bans by "receiving visitors."

A few days ago the London Times correspondent wrote from Johannesburg: Second arrest of Mrs. Mandela in two months. The brief report said she was arrested again for breaking the terms of her banning order, and will appear in court at the end of this month.

"She can leave the country if she wishes," said Vorster. She would then, of course, never see her husband again.

The Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, said she would be paid R100 a month. (1 rand = \$1.15.) R15 would go in rent for the house. (She had been earning R350 a month in Soweto.) She would get all the basic amenities she would require, said Mr. Kruger, "And we are giving her R100 for free. What more does she want?"

Yes, indeed. What more?

Hilda Bernstein was a journalist in Johannesburg until she and her husband were imprisoned for anti-apartheid activities.

commonwealth areas, and with Vickers in the same general areas.

Historically, Cogswell & Harrison has maintained a close relationship with the Crown Agents, a semi-autonomous government body that controls, among other things, the sale of surplus military equipment. The best indication of Cogswell & Harrison versatility is the ease with which it supplied one million dollars worth of weapons to Moise Tshombe in 1963.

Cogswell & Harrison maintains a "retail" outlet on Piccadilly primarily to afford potential customers a point of contact. The hub of the business, however, is on the second floor. It is here that all the international deals are made. One of the offices has a display on the wall of the latest equipment available for sale. Most prominently displayed are the Model 59 machine gun and the Model 61 sub-machine gun.

Also hanging on the wall at the time of my visit was a Welrod, a tubelike single-shot assassination pistol made by the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, DC. It is in effect a silencer pistol that makes no greater noise on firing than a popping champagne cork and was used to great effect by members of the French Resistance. Holden told me that this particular item was definitely not for sale.

Of particular interest is Cogswell & Harrison's relationship with the firm of Omnipol: Cogswell & Harrison is one of its principal outlets in the non-communist world. Many Eastern European

of dealing with them", he went on. "For example, you are extremely careful about discussing price, destination—things like that—in the office or on the telephone because they're all recorded. If they come to your hotel room, or on the street, then you can talk openly and make your deals with them. Then they simply set it down on paper afterwards, you see, without the intervening negotiations and discussions having been recorded anywhere for Big Brother".

Omnipol, he went on, is only an arms sales agency, but it can operate quite independently of the Czech political authorities because it is one of the country's major sources of foreign currency. It will take payment in many currencies, preferably hard ones, although it is not for some reason fond of Italian lire. The one currency it will not accept in payment under any circumstances is its own country's.

Birmingham firm

Another firm dealing with Omnipol, and also a Cummings competitor is Parker-Hale Limited of Birmingham. This company differs from Interarms and Cogswell & Harrison in that it is essentially in the quality rifle business. It does, however, buy surplus small arms at auction and renovates them into sporting weapons. Each year some 10,000 surplus rifles are converted, of which 99% are exported.

John Le Breton, the company's sales

Hilda Bernstein's Personal Comment

'THROWN AWAY'

Words with blood on them. Wish words to rise and cry, to clamour in the ears, words beating an intolerable battering of tin drums over the head. Words to be swords, to be knives, daggers, cut, thrust, strike, tear open soft flesh, raw wounds jagged from which slow blood drops . . . my words drip with blood.

Much of Dr Muller's speech was aimed at getting across the message that South Africa did not live under any kind of dominant group.

The country's separate development policy was not based on colour or race but "on the different characteristics and separate identities" of each of its various peoples.

It was today one of the most stable, prosperous and peaceful areas on the globe, "mainly as a result of our policy of separate development which resulted in the removal of the main causes of friction between the different population groups . . ."

Morsgat. Early last December trucks rumbled through the dust along rutted tracks to small settlements, mostly near quarries, where people lived in little

brick houses or neat stone and mud huts, and where they and their fathers had so lived for up to one hundred years. Back and forth for a week or two. More than 300 American families were taken to Morsgat, brown scrub, uncleared bush, given tents, and in these tents through summer heat and freezing winter they have lived ever since.

No sanitary facilities. They were stopped from digging lavatory pits and told amenities would be provided—nearly a year later, the amenities have not materialised. The only source of water is a borehole supplying a tank in which the malodorous water surface is covered with slime.

No medical facilities, but an ambulance will take the seriously ill to a Catholic hospital 25 miles away. Most patients from Morsgat suffer from tuberculosis; also kwashiorkor. Morsgat children are plagued by a skin affliction, terrible sores, the skin peels off the body. People call it "lekkerkrap" (a good scratch)

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Hilda Bernstein's Personal Comment

'THROWN AWAY'

from page 3

... "I never believed the human skin could carry so many sores . . ."

"They are now able to live in harmony with full confidence in the future and without fear of one group being dominated or swamped by others. This applies to the white nation with its Christian Western culture and way of life as well as to the various nonwhite nations in our midst or on our borders."

The average wage of Morsgat breadwinners is R3 to R4 a week (R1=11s 8d). Their lives are complicated by the fact that families who once lived together, close to where the breadwinner worked, have now been moved so that the men have become rural migrant labourers,

able to afford only weekly or fortnightly visits home from the quarries.

The return bus fare, said one man, is R1.80. Even so, they will pay this and go without food because they are so worried about their families. "At a meeting they told us bricks to build a house would cost R80. One of the people said this was too much and he was told he was a Communist." The woman laughed angrily. "We can barely afford food."

"They can build a nice little house for about R1,000," says the white works foreman.

People who really knew what was going on in Southern Africa not only rejected the "gloomy and distorted" picture of its being on the threshold of a major racial clash, but believed it to be "one of the most exciting areas of the world . . . I wish to emphasise that there is no substance to the accusation that the white man made an unfair division of South Africa.

"Indeed, the division was not made by the whites, but was the result of an historical process, and it is by no means unfavourable to the Bantu." Although an extremely difficult and costly task, the white South Africans were prepared to give their whole-hearted support to the advancement of the less developed people in our midst . . .

Poor, often non-existent facilities; unhealthy and degrading living conditions; additional costs eroding wages that are already far too low; the enforced break-up of families; these are the morale-shattering hardships responsible for a comment that is heard again and again in Morsgat "We have been thrown away."

Hopeless resignation . . . a short laugh, a shrug of the shoulders: "You get nothing by complaining—it's their country."

"Our policies are frequently condemned as morally wrong and impracticable. These charges are, however, completely unfounded. How can a system be wrong which leads peoples to self-determination and provides them with higher social, educational and economic standards than can be attained anywhere else in the continent. Which guarantees security for all by avoiding a struggle for power between black and white in South Africa. The results already achieved are indeed gratifying."

Father Colin Davis, an Anglican rector who began taking an interest in Morsgat when parishioners told him of severe malnutrition there and diseases that sounded like kwashiorkor and pellagra, woke at three in the morning, his children screaming, as stones and half-bricks rained down on his house. The

attack was repeated on two other nights . . . car tyres let down, windscreen smashed.

The window of a shop belonging to Mrs P. Gould was smashed. She was more furious than afraid. "Let's put it this way," she says, "I'm furious that I should be afraid to help people in distress."

Officials refuse to answer questions. "Let sleeping dogs lie," said one, "you'll just bring trouble". "Morsgat? What's wrong with it?" asks the public relations man from the Department of Bantu Administration.

A white official jumps out of a van loaded with policemen with sticks. The official, Mr G. C. Vermeulen, doesn't know why newspapers should be interested in Morsgat. "It's a lovely place," he says.

* * *

(NOTE: All italicised passages are direct quotations from a Press Agency report on a speech made by South Africa's Foreign Minister, Dr. H. Muller, to the Monday Club, on October 27. The report was headed: "Let Good Sense Prevail. Harmony Between Peoples in South Africa. No Separate Colour Or Race Policy." The story of Morsgat—which means "mess-hole"—is from a full report, three pages with photographs: "Morsgat: South Africa's New Village of Shame", *Rand Daily Mail*, October 25.)

Silenced — a powerful voice against apartheid



The letter bomb that killed Ruth First in Maputo was one of two that had arrived at the Centre for African Studies. The second was addressed to Aquino de Braganca, director of the centre.

Ruth had gone to her office together with the director and two other delegates to a Unesco seminar. Standing by the window, she began to look through the letters. Aquino de Braganca remarked on the size of the post. "I don't get any letters," he said.

"Here's one for you," Ruth replied, and handed it to him. Then she slit open her letter.

* * *

Ruth's parents, Julius and Tillie First, were in a wave of early settlers who came to the mining camp of Johannesburg from the Baltic states. They brought with them strong Marxist beliefs. They were among the activists who formed the first communist party in Africa, the Communist Party of South Africa, in 1921.

Immersed in radical politics, Ruth joined the Junior Left Book Club as a schoolgirl; as a student at the Witwatersrand University 40 years ago she helped found an organisation of progressive students.

Ruth became Johannesburg editor of the radical weekly *Guardian* whose editor, in Cape Town, was Brian Bunting. He records how, with her energy and enthusiasm, she turned in a remarkable series of reports over the years that exposed the cruelties and scandals of the pass laws, the courts and labour system.

Dark-eyed, attractive, possessed of a youthful energy that lasted all her life, Ruth was an investigative journalist of top calibre. She was equally dedicated in the activities of the Communist Party, with its total opposition to racist discrimination and its demand of votes for all.

The Communist Party was made illegal in 1950, and the *Guardian* was suppressed the following year. It re-appeared in many different guises, ending as *New Age*, which appeared until the state found that by prohibiting everyone who worked on the paper from writing or having anything to do with publication, they could destroy the paper more effectively. While *New Age* lasted it became the mouthpiece of the Congress movement during a period of tremendous political activity in the 1950s.

The Congress Alliance welded together the African National Congress, the Indian

Congress, coloured and trade unionists, and a small number of white radicals. Its campaigns drew in thousands. In the ANC itself, the older, more traditional leadership was yielding to the young militants, among them Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu. A huge Congress of the People in 1956 hammered out the Freedom Charter, still the basis of ANC policy.

In December 1956 the state responded, and in 1956 political leaders including Ruth and her lawyer husband Joe Slovo were arrested and charged with treason. After a 4½ year treason trial all the accused were acquitted in 1961.

When banning restrictions became more severe, confining people to limited areas or putting them under house arrest, the era of social intermingling between the races came to an end. Banned people were prohibited from communicating with other banned people, and we were all banned.

Ruth's home was always open to her friends, and they included ANC militants, Indians Congress members, visiting writers.

In 1960, after the shootings at Sharpeville, Joe was among those detained in the five months state of emergency. Ruth, with a few others had managed to slip across the border into Swaziland, but returned in disguise before the end of the emergency to work underground.

With the passing of the 90-day detention law (later to become the 180-day law, then the Terrorism Act) permitting indefinite detention without trial or access to anyone, the police Special Branch had at last the weapon they wanted: the licence to torture, that has led to more than 50 deaths in detention. It also led to the betrayal of the underground hide-out at Rivonia, near Johannesburg. Ruth was not there when the raid took place, but she was closely associated with the arrested group. She was subsequently detained for 117 days, an experience she examined with courage in the book she wrote.

Ruth went into exile when it was obvious she was to be re-arrested.

I went to Jan Smuts Airport near Johannesburg to see her off. The Special Branch were there, and because we were prohibited from communicating, we sat apart. Finally we exchanged hugs in the ladies' lavatory, the only place they hesitated to follow us.

Ruth found the rich cultural and intellectual life of London tremendously stimulating. She contributed to seminars

and conferences on apartheid, presented papers in various countries and continued to write.

Her work remains remarkably relevant, even her first book on Namibia in 1963. *The Barrel of a Gun*, a study of political power and the cout d'etat in Africa, appeared in 1970 after years of extensive research. *The South African Connection* (1972) was written with Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney. She was midwife to two other books: a biography of Kenya opposition leader Oginga Odinga and *South Africa: the Peasants' Revolt* by Goven Mbeki. Her book about present day Libya was subtitled *The Elusive Revolution*. Her last book, with Ann Scott, was a departure — a biography of the South African writer Olive Schreiner.

Her activities and experience bore rich fruit in her work as research director at the Centre for African Studies in Mozambique. She directed several important projects. A book about the first, *The Mozambique Miner*, is due for publication. At the same time she continued to contribute to the struggle against apartheid, both locally in the ANC and internationally.

There is one word that describes Ruth First: brilliant. Brian Bunting writes: "She was struck down when the stream of her talent was flowing at full spate."

Mary Benson summed her up: "An incisive writer, a practical academic and a creative revolutionary at the head of the liberation struggle in South Africa."

Everything in Ruth's life was directed towards the liberation of her country.

She was quick in all things, sharp-tongued, impatient of fools, easily bored. I often observed her taking a cat-nap at social events when her interest flagged.

Her work revealed to the world how the future of Southern Africa, and countries further to the north, hinges on the destruction of apartheid. She was among the growing number of apartheid's opponents on South Africa's hit list — one more sign, wrote Jonathan Steele, of South Africa's creeping intervention in every one of the black-ruled states on its borders.

In *The Barrel of a Gun*, Ruth wrote: "Harsh judgments are made in this book of Africa's independence leaderships. Yet this book is primarily directed not to criticism, but to the liberation of Africa, for I count myself an African, and there is no cause I hold dearer."

Her life was given for that.

Hilda Bernstein

The flowers so black

Ruth First was attractive — prickly and sharp-tongued, but words and ideas blossomed in her presence. She could cut away the fluff and go to the heart of the matter. Africa was her only love, for which she lived and died. She worked collectively and made her companions rethink and reassess thoughts and events in the light of fresh experience.

Hilda Bernstein (see page 51) who worked with Ruth First for many years could not say what made Ruth live the way she did. "Perhaps she did not know any other way." Asked who killed Ruth, Hilda replied: "The South African hit-squad." What did Ruth achieve? Hilda reflected, "Nothing, and then perhaps a great deal, who knows?" People like Ruth leave behind a gap which is not easy to fill.

Ruth's murder is not an isolated incident, it is part of South Africa's campaign to destabilise its bordering states. No-one is beyond the reach of South African terrorists. They killed a minister in Lesotho some months ago, and earlier, Joe Gqabi, the African National Congress representative in Harare was shot outside his house and the police inspector who was investigating the case absconded to South Africa. Recently there has been a series of explosions at Inkima Barracks north of Harare. The terrorist attacks have increased in frequency and intensity and the targets now are student leaders, dissidents and politicians.

South Africa's objective is clear: gradual occupation of neigh-

bouring territories which it regards as buffer zones. This is exactly the Israeli strategy regarding its neighbours. "Another Lebanon", shouted Botswana's President, Dr Quett Masire, after yet another South African incursion into his country. The parallel goes further. Israel says its forces will not withdraw from Lebanon so long as the Syrian forces are not withdrawn. South Africa insists on a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola before withdrawing its troops from Namibia.

For South Africa Ruth First was the embodiment of dissent. In her preface to Nelson Mandela's book *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, she said that there was no room for any reform or liberation in South Africa's apartheid system and "this is why the least expression of dissent is treated as a revolution". Pik Botha saw Ruth First not as a revolutionary but as a revolution. People like Ruth First are neither individuals nor institutions, they are accidents which can cause a conflagration.

Born in 1925 of radical socialist parents who emigrated from the Baltic States, Ruth First involved herself with multi-racial activities as a student. In 1946 she supported the African mine-workers in their strike and as editor of several radical newspapers in Johannesburg she portrayed the horror of the actual life experiences of non-whites under apartheid. Her word was banned in 1962 and she spent 117 days in solitary confinement a year later.

In her account of confinement and interrogation under the South African 90-day Detention Law (1965) she says that when there were seven days left before her release she started saying to herself again and again: "Now, then, get a hold on yourself. These last days will drag worse than any other." But when the moment came it passed like a flash, rendering her life into immortality.

Altat Gauhar

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Custody of the children

Controversy over sport has once more put South Africa in the news. For women imprisoned with children, apartheid is no game. Hilda Bernstein, a writer in exile, reports

AMONG those superlatives that so often accompany tyranny, in the bloody history of Sharpeville and Soweto, Mandela and Biko, three-year-old Dudu Mbatha might well claim to be the youngest person arrested under South Africa's detention laws.

On 22 October last year, Dudu was taken into custody with her mother and father.

Alex Mbatha, employed by the South African Bishops' Conference, has not been heard of since. Dudu spent two nights in jail. Her mother, Khosi, met a fate sadly typical of women protesters in South Africa.

Late in November, she was one of two women admitted to the Johannesburg General Hospital under the names of Mrs Brown and Mrs Black. They were under strict police guard, and incommunicado, but nurses were told that they were SWAPO (Namibian) guerrillas. Dudu's mother had suffered a heart attack under interrogation.

Separation from young children is the one big factor that makes the detention and jailing of women more difficult to endure. Another woman detainee was literally dragged from her seven-month-old baby, who was then left alone when she was arrested. The catalogue of suffering, of human separation, is terrible.

Rita Ndzanga and her husband, Lawrence, were both active trade unionists. In 1977, after many months of solitary confinement and torture, Rita was eventually charged, brought to court and acquitted — twice — before she could rejoin her two young children; two years had passed. Her husband died in the hands of the security police, one of more than 50 such deaths.

Now Rita is once more in detention; perhaps the children, being a little older, have learned to care for themselves.

Then there is Esther Levitan. Together with a friend—both are members of the white women's protest organisation, the Black Sash—she made a wreath with the words Remember Steve Biko. This was in 1977, shortly after the horrific death of Biko in prison.

The two women drove to Pretoria, where the ruling Nationalist Party was holding its annual conference. They marched in, straight down the main aisle, placed the wreath at the foot of the platform, and walked out while delegates

clawed and spat at them.

Esther was not arrested then, but in January of this year, just after a visit to England, she was detained for two months; then, after a spell in hospital, released. No charges. I think constantly of her ebullient courage. Detention, solitary confinement, interrogation—no one comes out the same as they went in.

Five women political prisoners made a court application in October last year to try to get an order declaring that their detention in solitary confinement is illegal. They are also asking to be allowed reading material and study facilities.

One of them, Caesarina Makhoere, has had a running battle with the authorities since April 1979 when she was one of 10 women who took part in a hunger strike in Kroonstad Prison.

Helen Suzman, the Progressive Party MP, says she thinks Makhoere's situation is leading to a rapid mental deterioration. "She has told us she is feeling bitterly alone and quite desperate and she has now even been refused toiletries. She is certainly defiant and has no respect for the prison authorities; but she is being constantly, drastically punished, unremittingly, and clearly with no positive results whatsoever."

Now, for the first time in all these long years of detention laws, relatives are organising support committees. The Detainees' Parents' Support Committee holds weekly meetings in Johannesburg. Parents



Dudu Mbatha, making detention more difficult to endure

stand, silently, holding placards with the name of their child, and the period of detention. A black man, holding a placard for his wife Emma, stands next to a white doctor, calling for the release of his son Keith.

Nor do the years dim the defiance of the women. Martha Mahlangu is the mother of the executed African National Congress guerrilla, Solomon. She told a public meeting in December, in Soweto, that it was disgraceful for black mothers to stand and watch their children dying for their motherland without joining in the struggle.

"Nothing is going to stop blacks from being free," she

declared, standing draped in the green, black and gold colours of the illegal ANC.

With the death last month of the young white doctor, Neil Aggett—said to be suicide by hanging—another in the long list of detainees whose violent murders stir only passing comment in a press so devoted to human rights; and by the news that his friend, Dr Elizabeth Floyd, has been taken from her prison cell to a psychiatric ward, we are reminded that men and women alike suffer the horrors of prolonged detention, of indefinite imprisonment, and of torture that has frequently led to death.

Without women, particularly the older women, the struggle for liberation in South Africa would never have advanced. In celebration of South African women's day on Friday, Hilda Bernstein meets some veteran campaigners

Quandary 7/8/85

Freedom's bedrock

WHEN 20,000 women went to Pretoria on August 9, 1956 to protest against the extension of pass laws to women, the Prime Minister of South Africa at that time, J. G. Strydom, refused to see them. "We were so angry," said one of the women, "very, very angry. We had written to him for an audience. He was expecting us. But he was not there ... We think he fled from us. He had so much power, but he was scared of us."

As the women dispersed that day, they sang a new freedom song, one that exemplifies their spirit: Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo, uzokufa — now you have touched the women you have struck a rock.

"You have struck a rock ..." It is the young people, school children and students, who day after day confront armed police and soldiers in the townships, and daily add to the ever-rising toll of unarmed youth shot dead. But it is the extraordinary strength of the older women that is the rock that supports them, giving experience, continuity and courage. Without the women, foremost among whom are these older women, the struggle for liberation could never have advanced to the stage reached today.

It appears to be a contradiction. Because black women are the most severely oppressed and deprived section of the total population, because poverty, hunger, homelessness, banishment to the bantustans, divided families, the death of their children are the themes throughout their lives of hardship and struggle, you would think that by the time they are old, life would have defeated the women. On the contrary.

In spite of intense oppression, the voice of women who have always been deeply immersed in the struggle of their people, emerges strongly and without prevarication. Their continuing defiance in the face of persecution, torture and terrible loss, challenges apartheid, destroys myths of female submissiveness and subservience.

After her son, Solomon Mahlangu, was executed as a guerrilla fighter, Martha Mahlangu appeared at a public meeting in Soweto. Defiantly draped in the green, black and gold colours of the banned African National Congress — in itself an illegal act — she declared it was disgraceful for black mothers to stand and watch their children dying for their motherland without joining the struggle. "Nothing is going to stop blacks from being free," she declared.

The last words of Sarah Mosololi to her son Jerry, on the morning of his execution, resound like a poem. "Go well, my son, I love you. I am proud of you because you are to die for our people. We'll meet where you're going. You must know the struggle will

not end even after your death."

Annie Silinga, who died in 1984 aged 74, defiantly refused all her life to carry a pass, in spite of the harassment and hardship this brought, including the fact that without a pass she could not claim a pension although she was both old and disabled.

Mrs Greta Ncapai, 72, was cross-examined in court when she was suing the Minister of Law and Order for wrongful arrest. Asked how many times she had been arrested, she said she was arrested so many times in her life that she had lost count. She was pressed about her views on violence. "Up to the time the ANC was banned," she said, "we did not advocate violence. I still believe South Africa's problems can be solved by talking to one another." But after repeated



South African protest, 1956

questioning she said: "I will support anything that will bring change in this country. I would not say I am against violent change. If change must come through violence, then I cannot help it."

Faith in the inevitable destruction of apartheid has given Albertina Nontsikelelo Sisulu strength and courage during 40 years of political struggle and persecution. A leading figure in the ANC Women's League and the Women's Federation, she was banned for 18 years, during which time she brought up her own five children together with the two children of her deceased sister, while her husband, Walter Sisulu has spent more than 20 years serving life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela. She and her children have been arrested many times. One daughter went into exile after being detained for 11 months, assaulted and tortured. A son was detained for a year. Yet as soon as her bans had expired, Albertina was once more in the thick of the fight against apartheid. She was elected one of the three presidents of the United Democratic Front, and is now on trial with other UDF leaders. She is in her late 60s.

Winnie Mandela has turned her place of banishment and isolation into a mecca for visiting notables. Living in a tiny two-roomed house without running water or electric light or a bathroom, debarred from speaking to more than one person at a time, or having anyone in her home, she organised a mobile clinic to tour the district, a baby-care centre, a club for teenagers, and taught the miserably-paid workers how to grow their own vegetables and how to organise to demand higher wages.

The black woman, she said, "has emerged fighting all the way, one of the greatest resisters, and when we shall bring about the liberation of this land, the women will be in the forefront."

Black women in South Africa, suffering from three-fold oppression (as women, as blacks, as workers) have a self-awareness, a strength and pride that derives from their very oppression, from the harshness of the struggle for survival for themselves and their children. They live in a society that is deeply sexist as well as racist. Racism and sexism are intertwined. They have never been indifferent to the need to struggle against laws and customs that discriminate against them as women.

But they are also aware that their disabilities, whether arising from social custom, cultural indoctrination or legal barriers, cannot be separated from the overall system of apartheid. Nor does the black feminist, demanding an end to patriarchal oppression, see black men as figures of privilege with access to personal fulfilment in their lives. "We do not seek the right to be exploited equally with our men," they say. Women desire their personal liberation, but they see that as part of the total liberation struggle.

Every year the women celebrate their day in August. Last year there were more rallies than ever before. They know there will never be another day like that one in 1956 when they went in peace to Pretoria. The doors slammed shut and were barred. The power and the violence of the minority state has made the nature of present and future struggles inevitable, although the overt leadership in the liberation movement has been dominated (as in other countries) by men, the segment of society controlled by women has been the key to the most significant mass movements in modern South African history, and now the crucial role played by women in raising basic issues, organising and involving the masses, has become widely recognised.

Friday is an international day of solidarity with the women of South Africa. The ANC is holding a meeting starting at 7 pm at Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 with speakers from SWAPO, Anti-Apartheid and the ANC.

Hilda Bernstein on the persecution suffered by one South African family

The high risk activities

Guardian
8/8/84

THERE ARE no legal barriers in South Africa to marriage between whites, (as there are to inter-racial marriage), but both Jeanette Curtis and the man she wished to marry, Marius Schoon, were "banned persons," and banned people are prohibited from communicating with one another. Even to greet each other would be to break the law.

They defied the law to marry in secret. The same night they walked together across the border into Botswana.

Jeanette's active opposition to apartheid began when she was still at school. In her student years at the University in Johannesburg she took part in many political campaigns: against the forced resettlement of black people; against legislation forcing segregation in political parties; against the Terrorism Act, under which she herself would be imprisoned five years later. As vice-president of the National Union of South African Students she was involved in literacy campaigns, in work for the support of the dependants of political prisoners, and in a programme of preparing study material for people held in detention.

For a year she worked as archivist for the liberal research organisation, the Institute of Race Relations.

For four years in the 1970s she played an important part in the movement to help build black democratic trade unions, and she researched the wages paid to black workers, often below the meagre minimum stipulated by law.

She always worked with people. She lived her politics, her husband said, it was not a question of intellectual conviction — it was her life. Her

passport was taken from her in 1974, and later she was detained in solitary confinement for three months.

Jeanette met Marius Schoon shortly after he was released from gaol after serving 12 years for attempted sabotage. On his release, Marius was immediately placed under stringent banning and house arrest orders, and thus when Jeanette, together with other active trade unionists, was also banned, they could only meet secretly.

Real fear of assassination

They applied to the Minister in 1977 for permission to get married. Their request was never acknowledged. At that time the poet Breyten Breytenbach, who had been in gaol at the same time as Marius (although kept apart) was due to appear in a second case; and because when they were in gaol, Marius had corresponded with him surreptitiously with the help of a warder who was now to give State evidence, Marius and Jeanette, after consultation with others, decided to get married and leave the country.

They made their home in Botswana where their daughter Katryn and their son Fritz were born. At the time when Katryn was born, Marius was ill in hospital, and a false message was sent to Jeanette's family that he was dead. This was only one of a series of hoaxes and death threats with which the Schoons were harassed in Botswana, and in 1983, because of this harassment, they both left their jobs as teachers to work for the British International Voluntary Service.

The persecution continued. One day the British High Commissioner in Botswana informed Marius that he had received reliable information that Marius was to be assassinated, a threat that was confirmed by the head of the Security Police. A few days later, they were both dismissed from their jobs. They moved to Zambia, where for a while they worked in the department of education for the African National Congress.

Then, responding to a request from the MPLA for English teachers, they were sent to teach at the University at Lubango in Angola. At the same time they were assisting with the establishment of two vocational training centres in Luanda, and one or other of them would fly to Luanda, usually once a week. Marius was in Luanda when the bomb that exploded in their flat blew his wife and daughter to pieces.

A friend was present when the bomb went off (he was knocked out but not seriously injured). He had just arrived in the room where Jeanette was seated at a table reading. She offered him coffee, and rose from the table to make it. The bomb exploded, blowing off her head and reducing her six-year-old fair-headed daughter to a pool of blood on the floor.

"All political activists," Jeanette had said when they were forced to leave Botswana, "whether they are inside or outside South Africa, obviously have a real fear of assassination. Danger is nothing new. Wherever you are you have to accept danger."

So the names of Jeanette and Katryn Schoon join with Ruth First, murdered by a

bomb two years ago in Mozambique, Joe Gqabi, ANC representative gunned down in Zimbabwe, 12 members of the ANC and SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) murdered at Matola near Maputo in 1981, by an invading force of soldiers from South Africa; and 42 people, nationals both of South Africa and Lesotho, gunned to death by a South African Defence Force commando unit that raided Maseru, the capital of Lesotho; and so many others.

The list could go on and on. "They regarded us as a danger," Marius says, "they forced us into exile, then they hounded us from our jobs and homes even in exile in Botswana. The last two things Jeanette did," Marius says, "were indicative of her whole life: she had prepared a beautiful exhibition for June 26 (South African Freedom Day); and she was in the act of offering hospitality to a friend.

A child of the future

"And our daughter was already a child of the new South Africa. She had been brought up with the attitudes and beliefs that all children will learn in our free, democratic South Africa."

She was a child of the future, that future for which Marius and Jeanette had already given so much; and that they would not let her live to share.

Marius Schoon will be talking about the death of his wife and daughter at a meeting celebrating Women's Day in South Africa, tomorrow at 7 pm, in the Hackney Town Hall.

After all those years . . .

Hilda Bernstein's husband, Rusty, was acquitted at the Rivonia trial in 1964 simply to give it international credibility. As he has been a free man for the last 27 years, the reunion with Nelson Mandela was charged with considerable emotional undertones.

**Sunday
January 17
Lusaka**



WE DO not have invitations for the reception at State House for the six released ANC leaders. Names of guests had to be submitted more than a week ago and we have only just arrived in Lusaka. No use protesting that Rusty was in the Rivonia trial with these men. Old comrades? Sorry — it's Zambian security.

However, we drive to State House on the off-chance. An unseemly scramble at the gates — hundreds of ANC and other people like us without invitations, and press and media who haven't managed to get in, all milling around and shouting at each other.

Eventually we are handed two invitations. We walk in through State House, impressive with its statues, carvings and paintings and a huge formidable stuffed lion, down a wide flight of steps into the garden. Below, Walter Sisulu and the others are lined up, with top ANC leaders-in-exile, and the media and guests facing them, awaiting the arrival of President Kenneth Kaunda for the formal greeting.

A scene from a dream: the air heavy from rains, the light gentle, a soft diffused light for Southern Africa. Huge trees with strange dark foliage, peacocks strutting and crying in the background. Hugging, kissing, overflowing with emotion while the cameras are trained on us, mikes thrust forward, the stewards begging us to get back into line, KK is arriving.

How well they all look! Walter is white-haired, but seems hardly to have aged, Govan at 79 is upright, smiling Elias, who has been ill, looks just as he used to, 25 years ago, Kathy who was a young, full-faced, thick-haired man of 35 has become a balding, bespectacled 60-year-old. But when he smiles, when he speaks, it is Kathy.

I want to hold them, to keep touching, them, to reassure myself of the reality of them. All those years, dreaming of their release, of meeting again, but never conceiving of such a place, such a setting, such formal splendour.

Protocol moves us away. Kenneth Kaunda makes a speech. Walter replies. We stand in the sultry light, among the great dark trees, while an unknown bird repeats a high, clear call.

Thursday, February 22, Harare

TONIGHT I spoke to Nelson! I spent hours over several days trying to get through to his Soweto home: local phones not working. He sounded so firm and fine, he asked about our children, remembering their names and what they did. I feel a warm, happy

glow, and so long to see him.

Sunday, March 4, Harare

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But if you are black, you can now swim in the Atlantic. **G**

Hilda Bernstein is the author of *The World That Was Ours: the story of the Rivonia trial*, published by SA Writers at £5.95.

Women in Europa

From Mrs Hilda Bernstein

Sir, Now that International Women's Year is over, editors can relax and revert to normal. So the centre spread of Europa, pages 8 and 9, presents a true picture of the kind of Europe you would like to see—16 photos of men, no women; 18 interviews with men, and the one indispensable statutory woman. A new Europe with no women painters, musicians, actresses, physicians . . . nothing but "pale, balding, dingy men"? You can keep it.

HILDA BERNSTEIN,
5 Rothwell Street, NW1.

January 6.

Times 14/2/76

27/2/92

Not even a member

R.W. Johnson claims (*LRB*, 24 October 1991) that 'to a degree which is seldom recognised', the South African Communist Party 'held together because its leading cadres belonged to an extended Jewish family, bound together by ties of marriage and descent' and that its 'extraordinary continuity was enhanced by the powerful kinship networks which knit the party together'. 'Take Gillian Slovo,' he continues, citing the fact that her grandfather was the party treasurer, and her parents leading party members – a three-generation dynasty. Except for the fact that her grandfather was never party treasurer, and although a supporter, probably not even a member; and she is not a member. Nor are her two sisters members; nor any of the children in the Wolpe and Goldberg families (also mentioned); nor my own children, for that matter. Nor have I been able to find any evidence of that family continuity among the leading black families of that period – Kotane, Marks, Nokwe, Mofuntsanyana. I do not see any great significance in refuting the Jewish-dynasty theory, except that it does make the SACP sound like a mafia. And because R.W. Johnson still owes Gillian Slovo an apology for doing precisely what he subsequently tried to deny – determining who she is by her father and grandfather.

Hilda Bernstein

Dorstone, Herefordshire

Not even a member

LR of B
19/12/91

I am sorry to have upset Gillian Slovo (Letters, 5 December). In fact, she criticises me for things I didn't say. I did not say she was a member of the SACP, let alone 'a leading cadre', and I certainly never argued that 'what a woman's father and grandfather do must obviously determine who she is.' The point I did make – that the SACP is in part bound together by a dense set of kinship networks – I stand by. There is, by the by, nothing unusual about this – one can witness the same thing in many political parties. Similarly, I am happy to agree with her that there were many heroic and noble chapters in the SACP's contribution to the liberation struggle in South Africa – personally, I had a particular admiration for Ms Slovo's mother, Ruth First.

The word I jibe at is 'McCarthyite'. I am happy that the SACP has been unbanned and, indeed, believe that it should never have been banned. It is all to the good that the Party should be able to operate legally and openly and I would oppose any attempt to suppress it. By the same token, however, the Party is not a protected species: it must put up – with a good grace – with being analysed, criticised and written about by writers far less friendly to it than I am. This is, after all, part of the culture of democracy for which the Party claims to have been fighting.

R.W. Johnson

Magdalen College, Oxford

Meeting the Leaders

Hilda Bernstein

Sunday, 17 January, Lusaka.

We do not have invitations for the reception at State House for the six released ANC leaders. Names of guests had to be submitted more than a week ago and we have only just arrived in Lusaka. No use protesting that Rusty was in the Rivonia trial with these men; old comrades? Sorry — it's Zambian security.

However, we drive to State House on the off-chance. An unseemly scramble at the gates — hundreds of ANC and other people like us without invitations, and press and media who haven't managed to get in, all milling around and shouting at each other.

Eventually we are handed two invitations.

We walk in through State House, impressive with its statues, carvings and paintings and a huge formidable stuffed lion, down a wide flight of steps into the garden. Below, Walter Sisulu and the others are lined up, with top ANC leaders-in-exile, and the media and guests facing them, awaiting the arrival of the President, Kenneth Kaunda, for the formal greeting.

A scene from a dream: the air heavy from rains, the light gentle, a soft diffused light for Southern Africa. Huge trees with strange dark foliage, peacocks strutting and crying in the background. Hugging, kissing, overflowing with emotion while the cameras are trained on us, mikes thrust forward, the stewards begging us to get back into line, KK is arriving. How well they all look! Walter is white-haired, but seems hardly to have aged, Govan at 77 is upright, smiling, Elias, who has been ill, looks just as he used to, 25 years ago, Kathy who was young, full-faced, thick-haired man of 35 has become a balding, bespectacled 60-year-old. But when he smiles, when he speaks, it is Kathy. The voice ages last of all.

I want to hold them, to keep touching them, to reassure myself of the reality of them. All those years, dreaming of their release, of maybe meeting again, but never, ever, conceiving of such a place, such a setting, such formal splendour.

Protocol moves us away. Kenneth Kaunda makes a speech, Walter replies. We stand in the sultry light, among the great dark trees, while an unknown bird repeats a high, clear call to punctuate the speeches.

Thursday, 22 February, Harare.

Tonight I spoke to Nelson! I spent hours over several days trying to get through to his Soweto home: local phones not working. He sounded so firm and fine, he asked about our children, remembering their names and what they did. "Why didn't you phone me before?" "I tried, but couldn't get through." "You didn't try hard enough." "I'm afraid you'll be worked too hard." "Don't worry, there are fine young people here who are looking after me." I feel a warm, happy glow, and so long to see him.

Sunday, 4 March, Harare

Airport. Thrusting out way through crowds to the tarmac. A red carpet is laid out in a square, leading from the plane round three sides where we wait with representatives of various embassies, to a stand prepared for speech-making. Two hours wait in the full unrelenting sun. Then the plane arrives, they are here, Nelson and Winnie with an entourage of liberation leaders headed by Walter Sisulu and including leading members of the UDF and COSATU. They walk slowly around the carpeted square, being introduced to those they don't know, being hugged by those they do, greeting everybody. Winnie is glowing.

Nelson has changed a lot — what did I expect after so long? He is still so

upright, bearing himself with dignity, but he is thin, his face, once round and full-cheeked, has narrowed; the eyes, the voice, the smile are the same, but prison-years on Robben Island have robbed him of his air of fun and gaiety. He is sober, immensely dignified, conscious of the expectations arising from the role into which he has been cast.

In the afternoon, a phone call inviting Rusty and me to visit Nelson in the 'villa' where he is staying. We talk for an hour and a half in the room with overstuffed furniture, people moving in and out, someone serving drinks, bringing tea and biscuits, a child who comes and sits for a while, Nelson courteously rising to offer her peanuts and crisps; bodyguards coming in and out, Nelson's youngest daughter, Zinzi, with her new baby.

Nelson is relaxed, looks tired, talks quietly. He speaks of his attempts — his determination — to forge unity among different anti-apartheid organisations and groups; how he phoned Chief Buthelezi at the earliest opportunity, because there will be no winners in Natal unless the fighting stops, blaming the police for stirring things up rather than helping to calm them down, saying that unless Buthelezi cooperates with the UDF and the ANC to stop the fighting, the killing will not stop. There is no one else in South Africa who can match his unique position — respected and trusted by members of organisations, such as PAC, who do not support some aspects of ANC policy; and at the same time commanding the ear of the apartheid government. South Africa — and the world — expect miracles from Nelson Mandela, but he continually emphasises that he acts not as an individual, but as a member of an organisation, taking its instructions from the people. His modesty and quietness does not detract his air of gravitas, of a senior statesman. I try to imagine how it feels to come out of jail after 27 years, to be plunged immediately into huge crowds, to be confronted with media operators from all over the world, to have to conduct a press conference — something he has never attended or seen before — to give measured, considered answers to questions flung from all sides, to be aware constantly of the responsibility you carry.

We go from the 'villa' to the State banquet at the Sheraton Hotel, driving in a convoy escorted by police cars, outriders, sirens, flashing lights, while cars on both sides of the road draw up to let us speed through red lights at high speed. I thoroughly disapprove of these official convoys, and enjoy it enormously.

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My first, doubtless my last, State banquet. Food indifferent, service intolerably slow. Pity the honoured guests who sit on a raised platform, smiling and making small talk for nearly four hours, and who will have to do it again and again. Will the ANC be able to break out of this time-wasting, unnecessary protocol? But President Mugabe makes a speech directly attacking the policies of the PAC — without naming them — for their insistence on not negotiating. Up to now he has been their strong supporter.

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After all those years . . .

Hilda Bernstein's husband, Rusty, was acquitted at the Rivonia trial in 1964 simply to give it international credibility. As he has been a free man for the last 27 years, the reunion with Nelson Mandela was charged with considerable emotional undertones.

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SIMON RAE THOUGHTS FOR EASTER

We thank thee, Lord, we're happy,
And reasonably well off
(A shame about the organist's
irritating cough)

We love the Easter Service,
The whole church looks so bright;
We love all the appointed hymns,
And sing with all our might.

A psalm before the sermon;
How tall the Vicar stands.
It's such a privilege to take
Communion from his hands.

And now we're on our hassocks,
Praying for this and that.
World peace would be a boon
(I wish I'd worn my other hat)

More prayers — for Mrs Thatcher,
the Queen and Terry Waite;
Then fumble through the final hymn
For coins for the plate.

We shuffle to the doorway,
And out into the sun.
I hope I put the oven on;
I hope the lamb is done.

Nobility of Spirit

Examining a collection of Nelson Mandela's speeches since 1990, HILDA BERNSTEIN considers the compromises made during the process of negotiation for an interim constitution. 'If ever there are men of integrity,' she writes, 'it is these South Africans'

Consider this extraordinary scenario: the highest members of a country's government approach a prisoner serving a life sentence for active opposition to that government — a man who has already been incarcerated for twenty-three years — to discuss the future of their country. The first intention is to obtain undertakings from the prisoner if he is released; for instance, that he will remain confined to a certain rural area. The hope is that this would ease the pressures, national and international, that they have been unable to remove by ever harsher repression within and expensive diplomacy without.

The prisoner receives his pre-eminent jailers with unflinching courtesy, but maintains he cannot give any undertakings on a personal basis, as he is beholden to his organisation (illegal) and cannot take decisions without first consulting with them. To permit him to do this would, of course, be a tacit acknowledgement that the illegal organisation exists.

Four years of these visits, these polite discussions and exchanges go by. The prisoner continues resolutely to refuse to shift from his right to take decisions only with the consent of his organisation; he will not barter for his own personal freedom. Constantly his visitors are pushed further and further into recognising some of the hard facts, while states of emergency do nothing to suppress the internal insurrection and only exacerbate the international pressures; until finally there is a new President, and he takes a remarkable decision. In February 1990 the prisoner walks free — no conditions — his organisation made legal. The pay-off for the government is their hope that some concessions will open the way to normalising their place in world society. But the real pay-off is that the way is now open for radical change.

Once set in motion, any process of change develops a momentum of its own. Those involved can scarcely foresee where this impetus will take them. I feel sure that when government ministers began tentative discussions with Nelson Mandela in Pollsmoor prison in 1986 they had no intention whatsoever — nothing could have been further from their minds — that these limited exchanges would take them on the path to relinquishing white minority rule by agreement.

'Can you think of any precedent for a minority that has held power for generations and surrendered it peacefully?' The question was asked of Nelson Mandela in an interview with *Time* magazine.

'We are now making joint decisions with that minority,' Mandela replies. 'They said they would never talk with the ANC, and they fought almost every election on that basis. We have made them sit down and talk to us. We are now together planning the future of South Africa. They have had to unban the ANC, lift the state of emergency, to allow a climate of free political activity which had not been allowed for more than forty years. They have released political prisoners, allowed political exiles to return to the country, amended and even repealed repressive legislation, and agreed on the installation of a transitional executive council. And

now they are agreeing with us on a date for an election in the country.'

The Pathfinder collection of speeches and statements by Nelson Mandela, covering three and a half years from the time of his release from Pollsmoor to a speech in Indianapolis in July 1993, charts the way in which, through constant discussion, this process of revolutionary change has come about.

Quite obviously many compromises had to be made between parties representing diametrically opposed political views and different sections of the population. Who can feel happy about compromises? But there are also clearly reiterated principles that form a bottom line for Mandela and his associates. These he sets out in several of the speeches, both addressed to national and international bodies, and also to conferences of the ANC and Umkhonto.

At the National Consultative Conference of the ANC in December 1990, for instance, Mandela had to respond to many criticisms and serious reservations about some of the compromises that had been made at the time. Mandela welcomed the frank discussion, accepted without qualification most of the criticisms, and promised that adjustments and changes would be made. But he also rejected the idea that there could be no confidential meetings between the ANC and the government. 'There would have been no talks about talks today — no future prospect for negotiations — if there were no confidential meetings between members of the ANC and the government. Confidential discussions and not secret meetings.'



He also spoke of the criticisms that he, Mandela, had described Mr de Klerk as a man of integrity. 'I went further ... I said: "The strategies of an organisation are not determined by the integrity of any particular individual, no matter what position in the government they hold. Our strategy is determined by objective reality. It is guided by the fact that De Klerk represents a party which introduced one of the most

brutal systems of racial discrimination in this country. As long as that is the position, all our strategies remain in place."

A sharp attack on De Klerk was made on the first day of the CODESA meeting in December 1991. The government representatives had persuaded the ANC to let them speak last.

**Nelson Mandela Speaks.
Forging a Democratic,
Non-racial South Africa**
by Nelson Mandela

Pathfinder, London and
New York, 1993,
£12.45/\$18.95 pbk

President de Klerk used this to launch an attack on the ANC. After his speech the convention signed a Declaration of Intent. Then Mandela rose to his feet and requested the floor. He accused De Klerk of being 'less than frank. Even the head of an illegitimate, discredited minority regime, as his is, has certain moral standards to uphold. He has no excuse, just because he is the head of a discredited regime, not to uphold moral standards ... The members of the government persuaded us to allow them to speak last. It is now clear why they did so. He has abused his position, because he hoped I would not respond. He was completely mistaken.'

Mandela then went on to say he had told De Klerk that no useful purpose would be served by the ANC trying to undermine the National Party because 'we want the National Party to carry the whites in this initiative', but also no useful purpose would be served by the National Party trying to undermine the ANC. 'I say he is less than frank, because he has not told you that it is the African National Congress, not the National Party, or P.W. (Botha), that started this initiative. I have been discussing with top government officials since July 1986 when I was still in prison, asking that the ANC and the government sit down to explore a peaceful solution'.

'As a result of the pressure of the people inside the country and of the international community, and as a result of persuasion from us, they eventually agreed to sit down and discuss with us.'

He attacked De Klerk for playing a double game by not doing his duty as head of the government to put an end to the violence, to restrain his security services, to clean the country of hit squads. 'He is forgetting that he cannot speak like the representative of a government which has both legitimacy and which represents the majority of the population. He doesn't represent us. He can't talk to us in that language.'

As with this 'off the cuff' speech, I feel it is necessary to study Mandela's speeches. He is not a fluent orator, and it is the substance of his speeches, not the form of delivery, that is so important.

'That is one hell of an achievement,' writes Alistair Sparks on the agreement of a new, non-racial constitution. 'There is no historical precedent for getting 21 widely divergent political organisations to agree on something so intricate and emotionally charged as a national constitution; to do that without the help of a foreign facilitator; and to do it in public.' And he adds: 'Are we South Africans ready to acclaim our own achievement? Perhaps we are too deflated by the fact that everyone has had to make compromises to reach agreement ... Yet that is precisely the constitution's strength. There is nobility of spirit in the ability to compromise.'

This collection of speeches helps us to understand how that compromise was reached, and to appreciate the courage, the devotion, the sacrifice and the optimism that are exemplified by leaders like Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela, who for three decades from their respective exiles outside and inside the country brought the architects of apartheid to sit down and discuss how to demolish that system.

If ever there are men of integrity, it is these South Africans. ■

Hilda Bernstein is the author of The World That Was Ours. The Story of the Rivonia Trial (SA Writers, 1989). Her new book, The Rift — the Exile Experience of South Africans (Jonathan Cape) is to be published in March 1994.

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