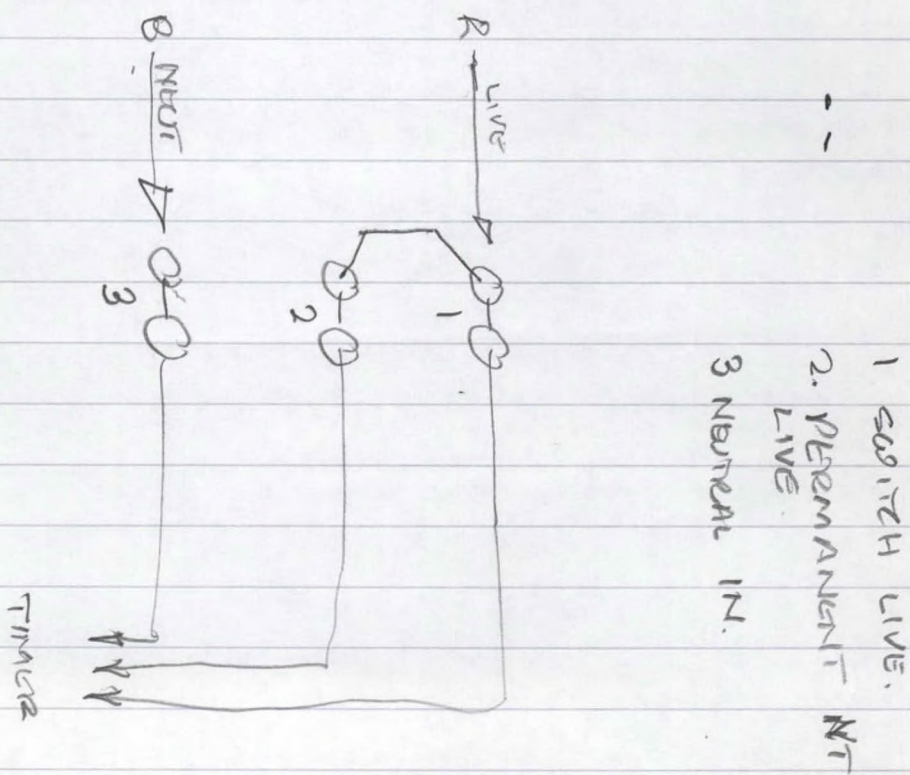


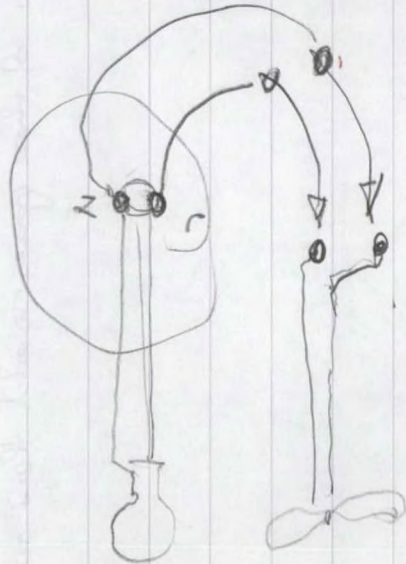
was born in the , the new SA was born at Cape Town  
barrade, where N.M., fresh from jail. & with some of his comrades over  
him addressed the multitude, from a balcony. It was not stirring, but that  
picture went around the world, and every South African knew of it and  
rejoiced.

But, without the necessity for a Propaganda Department intervention -  
shortly with the passage of time Mandela's colleagues and comrades,  
those thousands of men and women of incredible courage, conviction  
and persistence who had made possible that day of triumph had  
gradually faded away and become lost to the public memory. It would  
perhaps be stretching the symmetry too far to suggest that all that  
remains ~~of~~ to remind us of them is the halo on Mandela's head.

I was concerned that the - the ordinary people whose resistance conquered  
apartheid, should not be forgotten, or their example of courage in the  
face of persecution be lost.

My "Memory Against Forgetting" is a small store of remembrance  
dropped in ~~to~~ to start refilling the void in our history. I hope that it  
persuade other survivors of those years to add their own "jewels".





Adie Israel.

Adie and I go back a long way - 65 years in fact. It was 1937 when we first met, both fresh from school and at the beginning of our studies in Architecture at Witwatersrand University.

We came there from very different backgrounds. I had been born in Johannesburg and had lived there all my life; he had come as a young refugee from Eastern Europe, and grown up in a Free State village. Somehow, from that time on, it seemed as though our lives were mysteriously linked together - not quite like twins but more like trains on parallel tracks, sometimes alongside one another, sometimes diverging, and then coming back together again.

We studied together part-time at University while working part time in different Architectural offices. At University we came into contact with the same left-wing and radical influences; we had the same beginners' lessons in politics and Marxism; we became involved together painting banners in the University studios for May Day and other radical demonstrations; we worked together from time to time building decorated 'floats' for political processions.

We completed our course, and graduated on the same day in the early months of the World War. Work for aspiring young architects had dried up, and we both turned to other fields. I went to work for the Communist Party in Johannesburg, and Adie - in circumstances I no longer remember - went to Durban and worked full-time for the Communist Party there.

Somehow, we reached a simultaneous decision that it was time to join the army. Adie had returned to Johannesburg by that time. We went down to the recruiting office together and signed on; we were sent off together to the Army training camp at Potchefstroom together, shared the same tent, and in due course were passed out were sent off to join our regiments - only this time separate regiments in separate places. For the rest of the war, we met up only occasionally and purely in passing. When we were eventually demobilised, we both decided for ourselves that we would not return to full time politics. I went back to the firm I had been with during my University days, and Adie went elsewhere.

I no longer recall how it happened but some months later Adie left his employers and came over to work in my own place. We worked alongside each other there for several years, improving our skills, acquiring practical experience and achieving seniority in the firm. In due course and on the same day, we were both offered partnerships in the practice, and worked as partners for several years. Until, for reasons of my own, I decided to leave the partnership and set out on my own. Adie decided to remain where he was.

This was 1956. Our tracks separated, even further than anyone could have anticipated. I became caught up in a long-running trial on a charge of Treason, and almost lost touch with Adie and his more regular life. For months we scarcely saw each other. And then, a few days after the great Sharpeville massacre, we were both arrested in the night without warning. We were held together, without charge, under Emergency Regulations - first in the Johannesburg Fort and then in Pretoria Local Jail.

As the State of Emergency subsided, detainees were released in dribs and drabs. Adie was released some weeks, perhaps even months before me. By the time I was freed and could return home, I think he and Rochelle had decided that the future was too menacing. They had already left for a new life in Britain. For a long time we lost touch, until once again I was caught up in the country's political troubles. I was again imprisoned, tried in what has become known as the Rivonia Trial, and found not guilty. In the atmosphere of fear and conflict which existed in the country, we too came to the decision that the time had come for us to leave. In haste.

Some parts of the country suffered more than others - those places to which Stalin was particularly antagonistic. In the provinces Leningrad suffered huge losses; the purge affected the entire political and industrial leadership. In the Ukraine where there was always a strong nationalist feeling, Stalin was suspicious of all those with influence. In one sweep the whole political leadership disappeared, and in their turn the newly appointed leaders also disappeared, thus effectively destroying the Party in the Ukraine.

It was a time of prolonged fear for ordinary people. Anyone with contacts abroad, representatives of foreign firms, employees at legations; engineers and people associated with production were suspected of sabotage; special groups: Jehovah's Witnesses, priests, national minorities living in Russian towns, people who had foreign contacts, such as philatelists and Esperantists. The purge spread abroad. Soviet diplomats were recalled and shot. and also members of the Comintern, representatives of countries where the party was illegal, such as Germany, Yugoslavia, Italy, Poland; in their own countries there was no democratic voice, nobody there to raise objections.

The most visible victims were foreigners who were working in the Comintern. Many of these were men who had been given refuge in the USSR from persecution by their own governments, particularly Nazi Germany. In 1937 Heinz Neumann, a former leading German communist then living in Moscow was arrested, and three other leading members of the German Communist party also disappeared. Other foreign victims were those who had sought sanctuary from the terror in their own countries. (After the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939 many German communists, including Jews, were arrested as undesirable aliens and sent over the border into German-occupied Poland - into the hands of the Gestapo. Citizens of other countries now occupied by the Germans also became victims.)

Stalin was paranoid about foreigners The purge was also extended to foreigners who had come to work in the Soviet Union. Every foreigner, even those who had come to work for the Soviet government at its request, became suspect; even those who had been accepted into the Communist Party, even those who had been given asylum from persecution in their own countries because they were communists - to Stalin all were potential spies: they could have been planted by the Americans, the Germans, the British - the whole capitalist world was opposed to socialism. The foreigners could have been trained to act as though they were devoted to the Soviet cause, only in order to betray it. In the widespread and increasingly indiscriminate disposal of human beings a few foreigners were of little consequence.

A few of the foreigners who had come to give their expertise to the Soviet Union returned to their own countries in those years before the war. For those who stayed the Americans and British who had retained their own nationality had some safeguard; provided their arrests became known their embassies would make enquiries about them. Those from European countries where there was no democratic voice had no one to speak on their behalf.

One American victim was Stan, Zena's husband. He simply disappeared. Although she had never shared Zena's political certainties, and in a sense, like Stan, was still an outsider in Soviet society, Olga and Zena had formed a close friendship. As soon as she heard of Stan's arrest, Olga phoned Zena.

Zena said: 'You know, you shouldn't be phoning me, should you?.' Olga said: 'Yes I should. I'll come and see you.' 'No, don't come. We're being watched.'

Olga said Zena's case was very, very sad and she was so brave. 'They had a nice apartment right next to Lubyanka,' she said, 'and one of the people working there, possibly investigating her husband, had his eye on that apartment. I'm sure that was why he was arrested. They tried to arrest her, too, but she managed to avoid it. But she lost her home.'

The arrests filtered down, the net spread wider. In the pervading secrecy and suspicion it was easy for people to denounce anyone against whom they had a grudge, or those whose job or home they wanted to take over. Once someone was arrested anyone who worked with them, belonged to the same group, or was associated with them - as well as family members - felt threatened. They put their heads down and avoided any contact with the relatives of the arrested person.

My sister never completed her story about Zena, and in the end I do not know what happened to her; only that Stan never came back from the camps. She did write about one German who had escaped from the hands of the Gestapo - her friend Probst.

We arrived in Britain almost accidentally. Our children were still in South Africa. We had nowhere to live save temporary lodging with friends; no money, no employment, and no planned future. We were in deep distress; and Adie came to our rescue even though he was himself still struggling to make a new life in this foreign land. He had a minimal and temporary home, but took time off from his own life to help my search for accommodation. He found us our first accommodation of our own in England. His embryonic architectural practice was still struggling, but he handed over small slices of work for me to be able to earn something to keep e going. He helped me find permanent employment, and even insisted on taking me to the West End to buy a raincoat - which I could not afford - thus saving my health and possibly my life from my first English winter.

All of this was so typical of Adie. He was one who was always there to volunteer help; always there prepared to do what needed to be done for others in times of need. That is how I will always remember him. He expected nothing in return, and asked for no reward. It has been a privilege to have had a friend of that quality for for so many years of my life.

Everyone should be lucky enough to have friend like Adie. His death will leave a great emptiness in the lives of all his friends, and an even greater sense of loss amongst his family. We will remember him for what his friendship has meant to us in the worst of times. Our lives will be the poorer for his passing.

Rusty Bernstein.  
April 2002.

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