

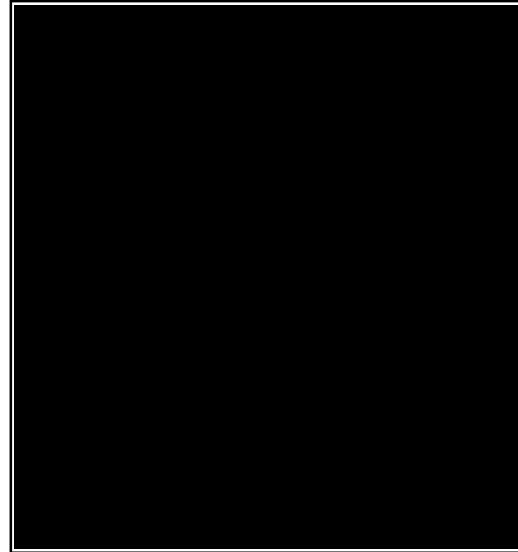
41 TEDDINGTON NQAPHAYI

Kraaifonten ANC Branch, later Nyanga East ANC Branch

Teddy was born in 1942, 31st May from very good parents who always had good things to say about him. The name of his father was Mcweli Nqaphayi and his mother was Magarett Nqaphayi.

He joined the ANC in 1959. His mentors were comrades like Bernard Huna, Reverend Marawu and Mountain Qumbela who had a huge influence on this young enthusiastic Teddy. When they were forced to move to Nganga East he became a leader of the Youth League under Comrade Mountain.

For Teddy, Nyanga East became a wonderful place to organise as the racist



regime made a huge mistake of collecting all Africans in the northern suburbs of Cape Town into the melting pot ready to be led into the struggle for freedom. Teddy took up the challenge of leading the Nyanga East youth.

He was part of a subcommittee that selected young comrades who went to Mamre. The leadership had confidence that

he would know the young comrades who could be called to join the nucleus of MK that would later be the future democratic defence force that our country could rely on. He was among those who were sent abroad for military training. I could say perhaps our country should be proud of comrades like him. He is still in active service as a general of our National Defence Force.

42 EVELYN NQOSE

Retreat ANC Branch

Evelyn was born in about 1920, in a village called Cala in a rural part of the Eastern Cape. As a young woman she came to Cape Town and married John Nqose. They settled in Retreat before the Group Areas Act, when anyone in Cape Town could buy property anywhere they chose. There they raised eight children, four girls and four boys, all of whom were influenced by their mother to become active in the struggle. One of them, Zolile went on to join MK and later become a General in our new democratic South African army.

Evelyn and Dora Tamana, whose story is told elsewhere, were undisputed

leaders of the Retreat ANC Branch. This made Retreat the only ANC Branch in the Western Cape to be led by women. The two of them were both strong women, always together, like twins – except that Evelyn was tall and Dora was short!

I met these women first when I joined the ANC regional committee and I worked with them until I left for military training abroad in 1963. We worked closely together once when I was a SACTU organizer and was involved in a strike of woodworkers in Retreat where there was a big sawmill employing about 500 workers. Evelyn was a

pillar of strength, distributing leaflets across Retreat, organizing support for the strikers and their families. She gave practical support herself, cooking soup every day for the strikers and others on the picket line and she chaired meetings in the evening to bring together strikers and the local community.

During the strike, I was arrested as a ringleader and Evelyn was the first comrade to come to see me at the police station. She reported about the progress of the strike and also reported that my lawyer had been informed of my arrest. She made sure that the policemen heard the name of my lawyer - Sam Kahn. Sam Kahn was a name that struck fear into the hearts of policemen, as so many of them had been caught out and humiliated by him in court. As soon as Evelyn mentioned



him I was released without any explanation!
Which was, of course, the whole idea!

Later it was Evelyn who found out and reported to us that every night wood was being loaded onto trucks and driven out of Retreat and disappearing eastwards. When the trucks were followed we discovered that they were going to a sister factory in Stellenbosch. We understood then how it was that the bosses were still resisting our demands in the face of a 100% solid strike. We realized that we needed to organise the woodworkers in Stellenbosch too if we wanted to break the

employer. I couldn't go there myself, I would have been detained on sight, but our comrades in Kayamandi, led by the ANC chairman there, Milton Hani, (Chris's uncle) took on the task and successfully organized the Stellenbosch workers.

To me, what was impressive was that these two women showed us all that it was not enough to join the ANC and restrict yourself to doing only ANC work. To strengthen the power of our people we had to organize others too, especially working people, and build the trade unions.

43 MAWAKA NQOSE

ANC Retreat branch

Mawaka Nqose was born in 1935 in Retreat, Cape Town. He was the elder brother of Wilson (Zolile) Nqose.

Mawaka was influenced politically by his mother Evelyn Nqose who was active in the ANC and whilst still young he joined the ANC and became a committee member of the Retreat Branch. He was also influenced by progressive young student comrades from Cape Town University like Dennis Goldberg. These students used to collect food and clothing and give them out in poor communities in the townships and when they came to

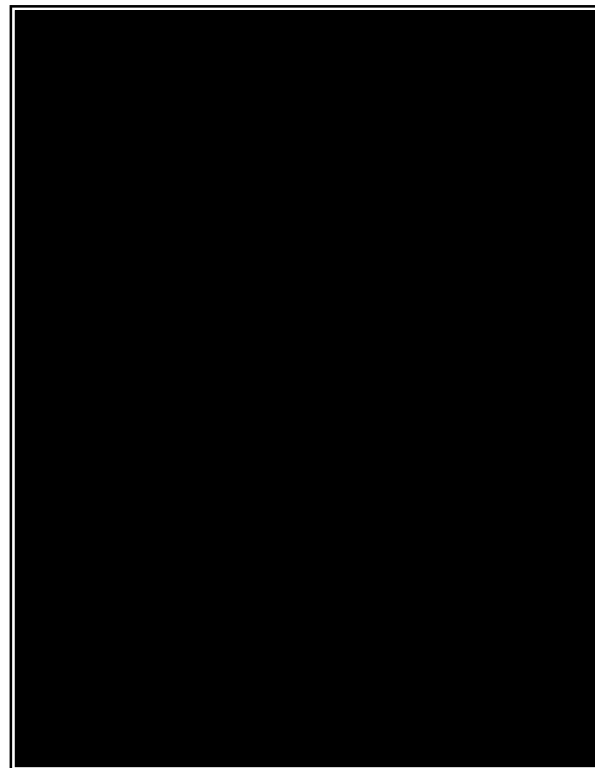
Retreat Mawaka helped them with this good project in his area.

Evelyn and her friend Dora Tamana were regular attenders at ANC public meetings, and Mawaka always came with them in his ANC Volunteers uniform. The job of the volunteers was to be stewards at mass meetings and keep order in the crowds. This was a very important function. The ANC always made sure that meetings were well stewarded, as we were aware that the racist regime wanted to discredit the movement as an unruly mob. Many a time they infiltrated saboteurs to try to cause disturbances and of

course there were genuine comrades who wanted to be more militant and who were all too ready to take direct action. In the 1950s the ANC was strongly committed to non-violent policies and was not going to break with that easily. The Volunteers were the key to maintaining that position.

Mawaka worked at the saw-mill in Retreat and became involved in the trade union movement when SACTU sent Ben Turok and myself to organise the wood-workers at the mill. Most of the workers were local Retreat people and they elected Mawaka to be a shop steward and he soon took a leading role there.

Because we had recruited coloured members, labour legislation covered this factory. We took advantage of this to apply to the Labour Department for a meeting to discuss the wages and conditions of the workers and we were invited to the Labour



Department to meet the employer. The workers elected a delegation of Mawaka and other shop stewards to go with Ben and me to attend this meeting.

The employer was surprised when he was told that the delegation included workers from his factory and he objected, but he was ruled out of order by the Department officers. The department officials themselves were surprised when we told them that the leader of the delegation was an African (me) and they stopped the meeting. They told us that an African could not lead, but what about Mr Turok? Ben told them that that was impossible as the workers decided who would lead the delegation, not him.

We went back to the factory to report to the workers the outcome of our meeting and to get fresh briefings about the next move. The meeting confirmed our refusal to

change the leadership and said if the meeting did not take place, the workers would go out of the factory -in other words, a strike was declared. This was a difficult decision and a huge undertaking. Most of the workers had no reserves, depending each week on getting their wages and, worse, in some cases their residential permit allowing them to be in Cape Town was on the condition that they worked in that sawmill. A lot of support was going to be needed.

Mawaka and the other shop stewards formed a Strike Committee to keep the workers together. The ANC leadership of the Retreat Branch, led by Festers Ntloko, Dora Tamana and Evelyn Nqose drew on their experience and contacts to set up local support committees to collect money for the strikers and their families and to set up a soup kitchen to feed the volunteers who manned

the picket line which was preventing the employer from engaging scab labour to break the strike.

Mawaka and other shop stewards were picked up and detained from time to time and I was also arrested once. However, when I mentioned that my lawyer was Sam Kahn this so frightened the police that they released me at once, rather than have a confrontation with this sharp lawyer.

The strike was eventually settled, but Mawaka never got his job back in that factory. Luckily he was also a musician, a

trombone player, and he immediately formed a jazz group that kept him going for some time. When I left in 1963 he was still playing music and active in the ANC.

It was unfortunate that Mawaka died in 1991 without enjoying the full fruits of what he struggled for, although he knew that Apartheid was crumbling. Of course he was fighting not just for himself but for all the people of South Africa and he could see the time coming when they would be free and happy, and proud to be South Africans.

44 ZOLILE WILSON NQOSE

Retreat ANC Branch

Zolile was born in 1943 in a suburb of Cape Town called Retreat. His mother was Evelyn Nqose, one of the most important women leaders of the ANC in Cape Town at that time.

It is obvious that she had a big influence on her children, especially her sons. At our ANC public meetings she always appeared with her friend Dora Tamana and those two young chaps.

Later I noticed that the boys were not as regular as they had been and I asked what had happened. She explained that the elder son was attracted to music and had taken up

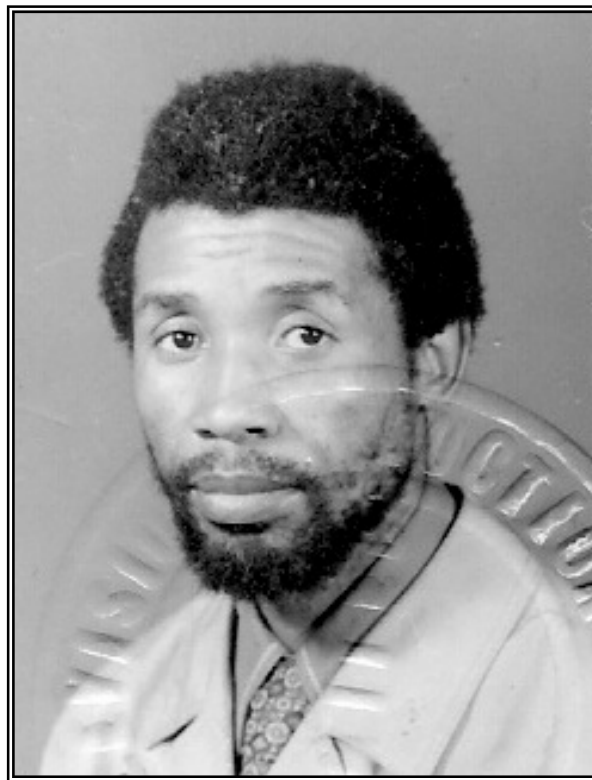
the trombone while the young one, Zolile, was seriously playing rugby. He had reached the standard of playing fly half, a key position in the team, for Western Cape Province (in black competitions, of course.) She added jokingly “I somehow seem to have lost my sons politically.”

However the loss was not permanent. Zolile reappeared in our circle when he was working in the council offices in Nyanga as a clerk. These offices were managing the building of small cheap brick houses, which were being put up to replace the tents which people were living in after being uprooted

from their homes all over the Western Cape, after the passing of the Group Areas Act.

At that time Elijah Loza was organizing council workers and he recruited Zolile into the trade union movement. Another trade union exposure probably influenced him too. There was a bitter strike at the wood factory in Retreat in which his family was directly involved. His brother was one of the strike leaders, as a result of which he lost his job, and his mother worked hard in supporting the strike committee.

Everything seemed to come together at the same time. Nationally the ANC was coming to the conclusion that our non-violent struggle only was not enough for the defence of our people. All internal structures were being asked to recognize that it was becoming necessary to change our policies to include developing our capacity to put up a military



defence when needed, if possible without endangering lives.

Instructions had already reached us in our region from HQ that we should select trusted, unmarried young comrades who might be sent abroad for military training, and we had elected a subcommittee to deal with the selection. Zolile was one of the small group of young comrades who were invited to be considered for this and he was very happy about that. (He said later that, at that age, he liked the idea of fighting better than he liked ordinary political activity).

We decided that some sort of test was necessary to see if they all fitted the bill and we got the use of a small farm near Mamre, up the north-west coast from Cape Town and there the comrades were given some basic military training. Wolfe Kodesh, who had been in the South African army during World

War Two, and Dennis Goldberg, who was an engineer, were in charge of the training.

After this, things moved fast. We were required to send the first group north immediately and Zolile was one of them. I myself went soon after that and was sent for military training near Moscow. I caught up with Zolile again in 1964 when I was Camp Commander of the MK camp at Kongwa in Tanzania.

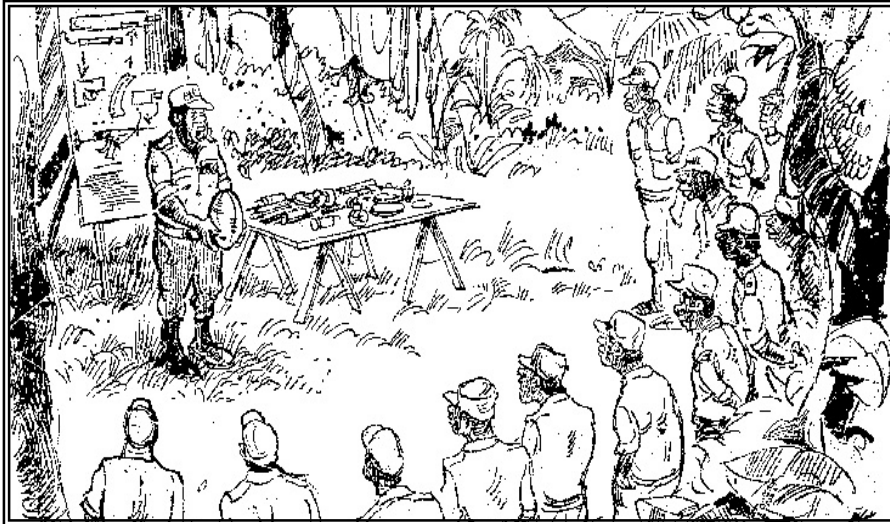
Later we both moved to Zambia and were reunited with others who had started training at the camp in Mamre. These included Comrades Sidney Skweyiya, Charles Ngamlana, Mncedi Nontshatsha, James Masimini, Chris Hani, James Tamana and James Mninzi.

This group and Zolile were all part of the detachment that crossed the Zambezi in 1967 and fought the big battle at Wankie with

the South African and Southern Rhodesian armies. Some of these brave fighters reached South Africa, making their way there after that battle, some were captured and imprisoned in Botswana and some fell,

including Masimini, Nontshatsha, Ngamlana and Tamana.

Zolile returned to Zambia and reached home later, eventually becoming a General in the new South African Army.



"Having shown you how to assemble an AK47, lay a landmine and sabotage a power station, we now turn to the finer points of the drop kick."

Tony Grogan, Cape Times, 20 October 1988.

45 MATTHEW NTABA

Kensington ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

Matthew was born in Tsomo in the Eastern Cape in the 1920s. Like many before him, he came to work in Cape Town and there joined the ANC. He became an active trade unionist, being a founder member of the Hospital Workers Union together with Christmas Tinto and Lucas Kukulela.

Most of the hospital workers who joined the ANC and became active trade unionists were probably the product of these three. To them trade unionism and the political struggle were inseparable. This union included a lot of people who could read and write and many of them could articulate

the messages of the movement and put them in simple understandable language. Many of them spoke English too. Because of these skills many hospital workers became good calibre leaders.

Eventually Matthew was sacked from Groote Schuur Hospital for organizing the workers, though this was not said in as many words, of course. He then got a job in a garage and recruited many workers there to the ANC, as well strengthening the Garage Workers Union.

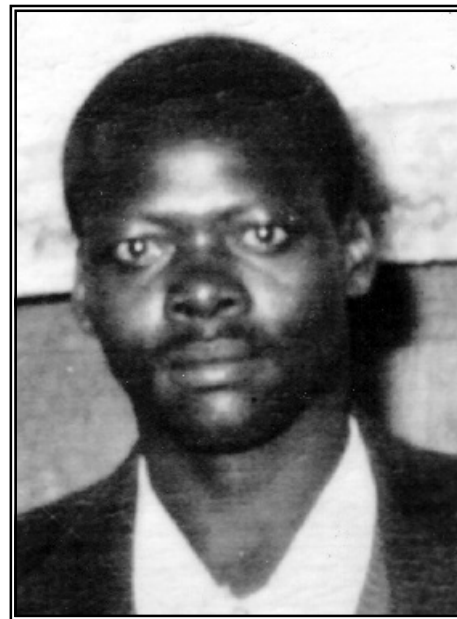
Matthew made it clear that joining a trade union is never enough, particularly for

Africans whose unions were not recognized by the labour laws of the racist regime. Matthew explained to those whom he organized that paying Union or ANC dues was not like buying sugar in a shop, but was an investment for future freedom for themselves and for children not yet born.

Matthew died while I was out of South Africa and I truly wish I was there when they buried him. I feel I was entitled to claim that I had known him better than most people in the Western Cape. It would not be exaggerating to say I knew him better than I know my own family and that he could have said the same about me. He was one of the seniors of the movement in the Western Cape who helped many of us develop our political understanding and maturity.

Matthew belonged to the unsung heroes of our leaders of the Western Cape and

was a human being that I feel it was a privilege to have worked with in our ANC branches in Kensington and Nyanga West as well as in the trade union movement.



46 MOFFAT PUTEGO

Elsie's River ANC Branch, later Nyanga East ANC Branch

Moffat was a natural leader. He was born in Francistown in Botswana and looked impressive. He was tall and straight with a very dark skin and he spoke with confidence.

He had already been in Cape Town for some years when I first met him. And he was one of the two men who had a great influence on me when I was new to township life. The other was an older man, my relative, Sidinile. These two both had strong characters and made their presence felt at meetings whenever a problem had to be solved. They both tended to get straight to the point, even if what they had to say was not very popular with others.

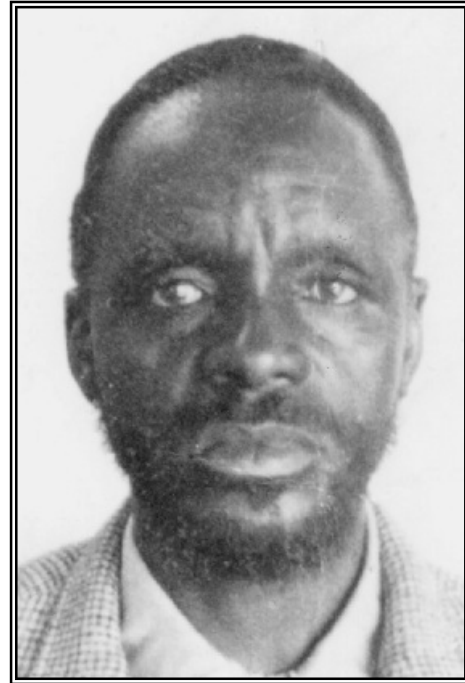
Later when people were evicted from northern suburbs including Elsie's River, Putego moved to Nyanga and became Chairman of the Nyanga East Branch of the ANC. This was at that time a very strong branch with a powerful group of ANC leaders in its membership, including Huna, Mpetha, Morawu, Makhetha and Stuurman.

Putego continued his activity and leadership all through the years that I was away and when I returned in 1990 he was still Chairman of Nyanga East Branch. That branch had a big party for me, to welcome me home. This was appropriate and appreciated

by me, because the ANC in the Western Cape had sent me and others abroad on an enormous assignment and it was right that I should report back on our difficulties and achievements. It also gave me an opportunity to express our happiness at coming home at the successful end of that stage of our struggle. It was Putego and his branch that made it possible for me to do that.

At the last Regional meeting I had attended before I left for military training in 1963 Putego had spoken to me. His words were “We expect you to be back with us before we are dead. Personally I would like you to be among the speakers at my funeral.” Although we were out of the country much longer than either of us dreamed then, his wish was fulfilled. I happened to be in Cape Town when he died and his daughters made sure that I was informed. So I did indeed

speak at his funeral and was able to pay tribute to this great man.



47 MOUNTAIN QUMBELA

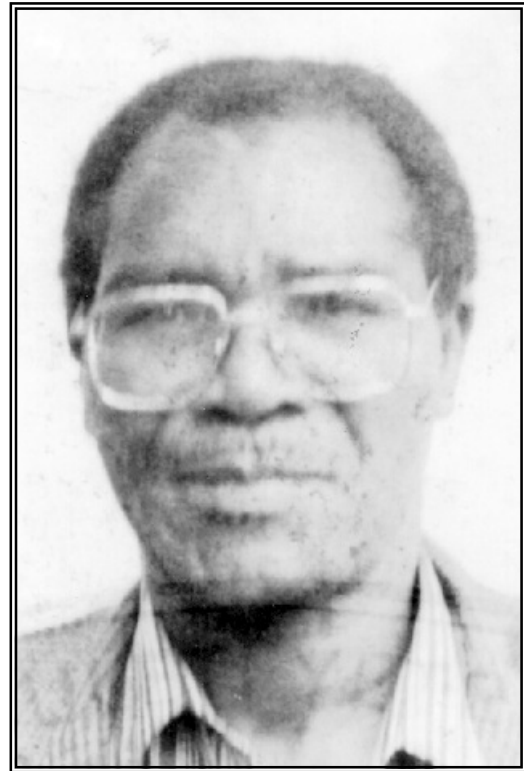
Windermere ANC Branch, later Nyanga East ANC Branch

Mountain was born on December 1st 1930 in the Eastern Cape, at a village called Enyoto in Ngcobo District. As a young man he came to Cape Town, a migrant worker, like all of us. At that time most of us who went to town to work were illegal. You were supposed to have permission to move from a rural area to a town, but you could only get that permission in town, so you entered the town illegally and hoped the police would not pick you up before you could get a residential permit. (In many cases you had to bribe someone who worked in a Pass Office to get the permit.)

Probably the best place to go to if you were an illegal migrant worker was Windermere, because the police did not want to patrol that place as it was dirty, wet and smelly. It was somewhere where you needed gumboots to get about. It had no streets and it was dangerous, even for the police. Another good place to head for when you reached town illegally was one of the bachelor compounds in Langa Township where you might be lucky enough to find some of your home people who had work and would look after you and feed you until you got a job, in return for you cooking for them.

Other options were particular compounds, that seemed not to be much troubled by the police such as those near the big canning factories in Paarl and the huge, ugly compounds by the harbour where dockers were housed. These latter were notorious for illegal migrants, but were tolerated by the authorities because the residents were press-ganged into being scabs whenever regular workers were on strike.

Mountain chose to go to Windermere and eventually he got a job with a building contractor. To get one of these jobs, you had to queue up at the Pass Office in Langa and hope that when employers arrived looking for casual labour, you would be one of those picked. Such casual labour, of course, was ruthlessly exploited because it was not covered by any industrial legislation.



Mountain made the most of his employment in the construction industry. He literally copied from the buildings he worked on and built himself a fine house. He even had a flush toilet (and a septic tank) long before anyone else in the township. The ANC benefited too. We had most of our branch meetings in his comfortable home!

After the forced removals from Windermere, Mountain made it his ANC specialty to organize youth in Nyanga East, coordinating with Elijah Loza's work in Nyanga West. The ANC regarded it as very important to work with the young people to guide them in the right direction and to make use of their abilities to forward the struggle.

Young people liked nothing better than to be moving about the unlit streets at night and

this fitted in very well with the needs of the M Plan. We needed rapid communications, mass leafleting and poster coverage overnight and young people were organized, especially by Elijah and Mountain, to carry out these important tasks. Mountain was just the person to work with the youth as he was very popular with them and spoke their language.

On a recent visit to Cape Town, I discovered Mountain in a new Township called OR Tambo Square. All the streets in this township are named after leading ANC comrades, especially women comrades. I don't know whether he was influential in this! I was very sad to find that this wonderful comrade has lost a leg because of diabetes. He was, of course, living in a beautiful house that had been built under his supervision.

48 ARCHIE SIBEKO

Kensington ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

My autobiography has already been written (Freedom in our Lifetime, Indicator Press and Mayibuye Books 1996), and inevitably I have appeared in all of the short biographies in this volume, since they are based on my memories of my comrades.

However I have decided to add something more here about my impressions of an event in this period between 1953 and 1963 which had a profound impact on me and which looking back I can see made me the man I am. That event was the Treason Trial.

I think it is worth recording in some detail because I believe that it had a major

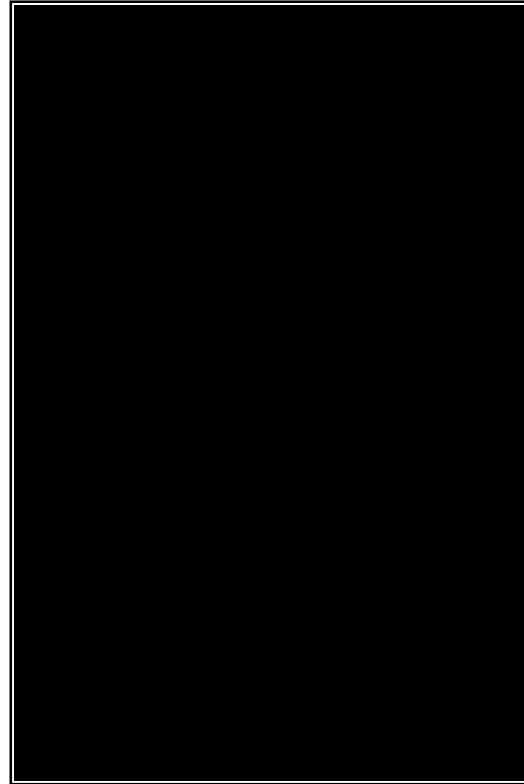
effect on many others too, and determined the way the ANC conducted the struggle for freedom and democracy for years ahead. As the reader will find, I shared the experience of the Treason Trial with others who are written about here.

I remember well that on that day in December 1956 when I was woken in the early hours to be arrested for High Treason, I was very surprised to find this happening to me and so was Sidinile, the chairman of my ANC Branch, with whom we lived. He said to the police “are you not making a mistake? I am the leader of this young man, perhaps it is

me you are looking for.” The police replied “sorry, you are not Archie Sibeko” and then to me “dress up you, lets move.”

I was also very afraid. At that time in South Africa, if you were found guilty of high treason it meant the death penalty. By 6am I found myself with others in front of a Cape Town Magistrate who transferred us to Johannesburg. By about 7am we were at Ysterplaat military aerodrome near Kensington, becoming a group of 20 people from all over the Western Cape region.

We boarded a military plane, a Dakota, and found ourselves in the air, for most of us for the first time. Once we took off we soon all became equal human beings, nobody policing anyone. The air pockets which caused turbulence were doing damage to everybody; we were all queueing for the toilets and vomiting. It seemed it was the first



time to fly for most of the police as well. Definitely it was a horrible flight for all of us.

When we landed at a small remote military aerodrome outside Johannesburg my morale started to rise, boosted by the sight that greeted us. As we came off the plane we saw a long line of comrades, all of them carrying one simple slogan “WE STAND BY OUR LEADERS”. I felt my strength coming back and for the first time that morning, I felt good.

We were driven to the centre of town to the prison called the Fort, an extraordinary place where you seemed to be going into a tunnel into a hill. It got its name from being an old colonial fort, but everyone knew it as Number 4, which was the section where the black male prisoners were housed. (The Fort is now the site of our Constitutional Court, the highest court in the land, which is perhaps

fitting for a place which played such a part in the troubled history of our land.)

When we emerged from the hilly rampart to the reception area of the prison I was amazed to see who was already there, being registered. There was AJ Luthuli, President General of the ANC, Walter Sisulu, Secretary General, Dr A Letele, Treasurer General, GA Mbeki, OR Tambo, RN Mandela, M Kotane, JB Marks, Dr Dadoo and Dr Naiker of the Indian Congress, Rev J Calata, Prof ZK Matthews, D Tloome, Dr Conco, Rev Thompson, J Slovo. Others appeared later.

These were the cream of our leadership, well-seasoned politicians some of whom I was seeing for the first time, people who could compete with any leaders in the world. They seemed relaxed, some lounging with their hands in their pockets and chatting

amongst themselves. They came over and greeted us as we arrived and I forgot I was in prison and began to feel at home.

We went through the admission procedures and settled in the big hall-like cell where we were to live. (Putting us all together like this was to suit us very well, but it was a big mistake on the part of our enemy, as soon became apparent.)

Suddenly AJ Luthuli stood up and asked for our attention. He told us that the leadership had held a short meeting and had agreed on the following:

- a) Every morning, before we did anything else, the national anthem would be sung
- b) We were to take no orders from any prison staff. All orders had to go through AJL
- c) We would not eat prison food. A message had been received from Jo'burg Indian

women that they would provide food for us for as long as we were here.

When one observed the comrades on trial what immediately struck one was the composition of our leaders. There were working people, engineers, professors, lawyers, medical doctors, business people and church leaders. There were both men and women although the women were housed separately. The majority were Africans, but all the minorities, Indians, Coloureds and whites were there too. In other words, it was representative of what a democratic South Africa should look like, with all its peoples taking part.

As well as bringing the leaders together in a way that had never before been possible, the enemy had inadvertently created a university for our political development and an opportunity for us to strengthen our commitment to the struggle for a different South Africa.

Most of us in the treason trial would never be the same again and indeed I think South Africa was never the same again. We had crossed a bridge and demolished it behind us. After the privilege of spending a year with our arrested leaders, and the political development we underwent, one felt there could be no going back. Whatever happened, the struggle would go on and we would be part of it.

The leadership and supporters had assembled the most formidable legal brains in the country for our defense. Led by Bram Fischer they included Israel Maisels, Vernon Berrange, and Norman Rosenberg. Among the accused were other powerful lawyers like J Slovo, who conducted his own defence, and RN Mandela who were also involved in planning our defence.

Much of the court proceedings were very boring to us, as lawyers discussed legal

intricacies for hours, but there were dramatic confrontations too, two of which I want to relate.

The first was the day the prosecution brought someone from prison who claimed he had been a student at Fort Hare University and who accused Professor ZK Matthews of inciting students against the government. Some of our comrades from the Cape immediately passed a note to our lawyers that they knew this witness and that he was a liar who was just trying to negotiate his way out of jail.

Discussion took place during an interval and it was agreed that the witness should be challenged to identify Professor Matthews amongst the accused and that he should be asked to write down in front of the judge the degree he claimed to have, a BSc.

Both of these challenges proved a disaster for the prosecution. The chap could not identify Professor Matthews and he wrote his claimed degree as B S C.

Berrange had a way of showing us how stupid a prosecuting witness was by holding up documents so that we could read them too, usually followed by a burst of laughter from us, to the annoyance of the judge. The judge would threaten us but Berrenge did not accept that. He said if his clients had committed a crime in the court, they should be charged and he would defend them, but they must not be threatened.

The second incident arose when our defence wanted to show that it was stupid to believe that a Special Branch officer would be able to write accurate notes of what was said at a big, noisy ANC public meeting,

especially when the crowd was hostile to the police. This would be a completely impossible task.

They started by asking the police witnesses to describe the layout of the meeting, and where they themselves were. The answer was that they had gone to the meeting by motorbike and sidecar, as they always travelled in twos as sometimes people at the meetings were threatening, adding on occasion that the chair had to intervene on their behalf.

The lawyers thanked them politely, and asked the judge for permission to recreate the scene in the courtroom, complete with police motorbike and sidecar, to demonstrate that it would be impossible for accurate notes to be made in the situation described. The judge agreed that this could be done the following morning.

Next day the motorbike and sidecar were in place and the accused became the audience at the meeting. It had been agreed that Robert Resha would be the speaker, one of the most articulate and flowery speakers that the ANC had. He was to speak for 15 to 20 minutes.

The judge came in as usual and the performance began. The policemen were seated on their motorbike and then Resha emerged from behind a door, to thunderous applause. Robbie bellowed 'Africa! Africa!' And we responded 'Mayibuye! Mayibuye!' Robbie started to speak. We were encouraging him, clapping, standing up and stamping with our feet, trying to recreate the atmosphere of a real ANC meeting. Robbie's theme was about judges and how unbiased South African courts were towards the oppressed! He said of course the judges were all political appointees and knew

what was required of them. For example our judge just had to commit us for trial and he would be promoted.

At the end of the speech the police notes were given to the judge and he had to admit that he could not read one line of them.

While the circus continued by day, our political education continued by night. Leading comrades gave lectures every night for more than ten months, throughout the preparatory examinations. We covered the politics of South Africa and international affairs and debated how we should respond to the challenges ahead. And, of course, we learned a lot from the proceedings in court as well, and the explanations that the lawyers among us gave us afterwards. We all assumed that some of us at least would not be hanged and that eventually we would be free and able to resume the struggle.

Our morale was growing every day. We believed that time was on our side, it would be a rocky road and that some of us would not make it, but there was light at the end of the tunnel. Even the fact that the regime had brought these charges of high treason showed that what we were doing was having an effect on them and they were getting nervous. Other things raised our spirits too.

The newly formed Defence and Aid organization showed that we had international support, and we were cheered by the British Prime Minister, Macmillan, coming to South Africa to speak to the racist parliament about the wind of change blowing through Africa.

Many things were pointing in the same way, towards a future democratic South Africa.

For myself, as I wrote above, the Treason Trial strengthened my resolve and made me what I am today and I think that applied to many others who were there. The contact we had with our great leaders and what we learned from them inspired the struggle in the difficult years that lay ahead and put us, and I think South Africa as a whole, forever in their debt.

May they never be forgotten.

49 LETITIA LINDIWE SIBEKO

Kensington ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

Lindiwe was born in 1930 in a village called Mxumbu, a proper maqabane (traditional) place. Her father was a chief, and when he died his remaining son inherited that title. She was the first person from there to go to school long enough to attain a JC (Junior Certificate). She was a student at Mkubiso High School. At that time I was a student at Fort Cox Agricultural College, not far from Mkubiso and I used to visit the high school sometimes to visit the principal, who had been my biology teacher at Lovedale College. That was how we met.

We got married in King Williams Town in 1953, and after that she never returned to her village. She made her home with me in Cape Town, in spite of all the difficulties that the Apartheid system created to disallow women to live with their husbands in any town in South Africa. The regime claimed to be Christians, upholding family values, but when it came to black people, apparently those values did not apply.

Lindiwe was not very interested in politics until 1956, when I was arrested and taken to Johannesburg to be charged with High Treason, alongside ANC leaders from

all over the country, including Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Chief Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo etc.

All of a sudden she found herself the breadwinner for our family, at the time that she was pregnant with our second son. When he was born we named him Nqaba, after the Johannesburg prison, the Fort, where I was imprisoned. That experience started her political career, which later became so traumatic and ugly for her.

When I was released after a year, I was subject to house arrest. This meant that I was banned from attending any meetings and confined to the area where we lived, and it became my turn to stay at home and mind the children. Letitia came into her own then, going to ANC and Womens League meetings and becoming a leader of campaigns in the Western Cape. She was one of the Women's



League delegation who went to the great women's demonstration at Pretoria, protesting against the proposal that women should be forced to carry passes.

Later I was ordered to go underground and we agreed then that we should send our

children to our parents, in case anything happened to us.

Things did happen. I was arrested and while I was on bail the ANC sent me out of the country for military training. Letitia was pregnant at the time, but she was arrested and tortured as the regime tried to get information from her about my whereabouts. She was released only one day before giving birth.

The persecution did not end there. She was deported back to Mxumbu. There was no means of livelihood there so she came back to Cape Town, using her family name, to survive as best she could.

She lived there illegally until she died some years later. Like many of the ANC

women of her generation she had never enjoyed a peaceful family life with her husband and her children, but sacrificed herself to the struggle for a better life for all South Africans.

Letitia lay in an unmarked grave until I was able to return to South Africa in the early 1990s. After much searching we located the grave and Rev John Mcqueen arranged for a memorial stone to be made. This was opened up by Rev Temba Sibeko in the presence of the children, family members and Zollie Malindi, one of the few surviving ANC leaders who worked with her in the 1950s and 1960s.

50 GORDON SIDINILE

Kensington Branch later Nyanga West

Sidinile was born in Middle Drift in 1900. His mother was Notyiwa Sibeko before she married, so he was a relative of mine, and soon after I came to Cape Town to look for a job I was taken to see him by a cousin. He got me a room to live in, in the next street to his, so I saw a lot of him. I took to him at once and it was he who introduced me to ANC politics.

His appearance was striking. He was slim and upright, always very clean and well dressed. He was self assured and proud of who he was.

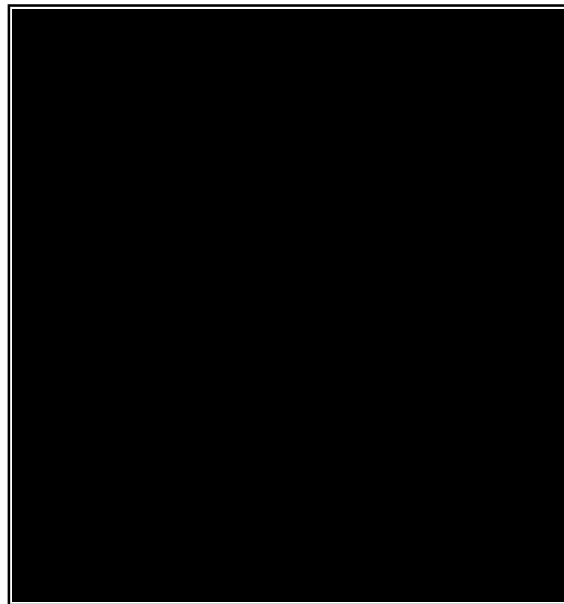
Although Sidinile was a member of the Commercial and Catering Union, he was

not very active as a trade unionist because he had decided to spend all his free time organizing for the ANC. He influenced me to become involved in the ANC and eventually I became Branch Secretary in Kensington Branch, where he was Chairman. I replaced Lawrence Mgweba who was one of those who broke away to form the PAC (Pan African Congress).

Sidinile was an effective chairman of the Kensington ANC branch, always on time for meetings and exerting discipline when necessary. This was a difficult period in many ways for the ANC. One factor was the

breakaway of some members to form the PAC. They were anti communist and anti white and when they had failed to persuade the membership that these policies would be good for South Africa they left and of course this inevitably caused some disruption and suspicion. Some were convinced that *agent provocateurs* were behind the whole thing.

One time when ANC people (including Sidinile) and some PAC people were in prison together, Sidinile said loudly “We are in prison today because of these PAC fools who do not know what they want”. Nobody except him could say that to the PAC, without causing a commotion but they did not even dare to reply. I think they still thought of him as the strict Chairman whose ruling must be accepted!



One morning the police came looking for me to arrest me because they were looking for leaders to charge with treason. Sidinile told them they were making a mistake, he

was the leader and they should arrest him instead. The police assured him they did not have his name so they were not interested in him, they only wanted Archie Sibeko. So he failed to protect me and they went on to find me later. These police were uniformed police, who knew little about politics and treason. They had been sent by the Special Branch, who directed operations but did not lower themselves to arrest natives.

Amongst the difficulties and harassment that we faced in the 1950s was this arrest of many ANC leaders in the Treason Trial. While this was going on, the passage of the Group Areas Act led to the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of our people from their homes because the areas where they lived had been designated for some other racial group. It was under this legislation that we were all forced to move to Nyanga West.

Somehow Western Cape never attracted educated ANC leaders like Mandela, so our leaders were all working people like Sidinile, self educated. It was experience rather than a university that taught them about life, they really were self-made men. Sidinile was my mentor and my friend as well as my relative, and I really admired him and regarded him as a great person.

I went to see Sidinile when I returned home in 1990. Now over 90 and virtually blind, he was still the same Sidinile. He was upright, smartly dressed with a jacket and tie, being helped by a granddaughter. When I took my wife to meet him a couple of years later, he got up to accompany us to the door when we left.

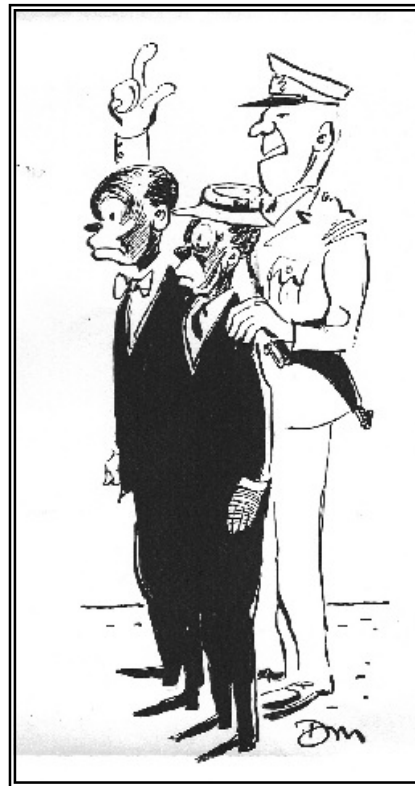
Nelson Mandela gave a party in Cape Town for stalwarts of the struggle to which both Sidinile and I were invited and we were

able to go there together. He could not see what was happening but he enjoyed the occasion, especially Mandela's speech thanking the veterans for the sacrifices they had made.

He was over 100 when he died. He had said beforehand he had no complaints about dying, he had lived long enough. I was very happy that this old man had lived to see the fruits of freedom and democracy in our country, for which he had worked so hard.

"Caught 'em red-handed, sarge - shaking hands"

David Marais Collection, Manuscripts & Archives, University of Cape Town Libraries



51 ANNIE SILINGA

Langa ANC Branch

Annie Silinga was born in 1910 in Gqamakwe in the Eastern Cape. Gqamakwe seemed to produce fighting women because Dora Tamana was born there too and perhaps there are even more I do not know about.

Annie got married and like most of us looking for a better life for ourselves and our children the Silingas drifted to town, ending up in Cape Town in 1937. There they tried to make a home in Langa township.

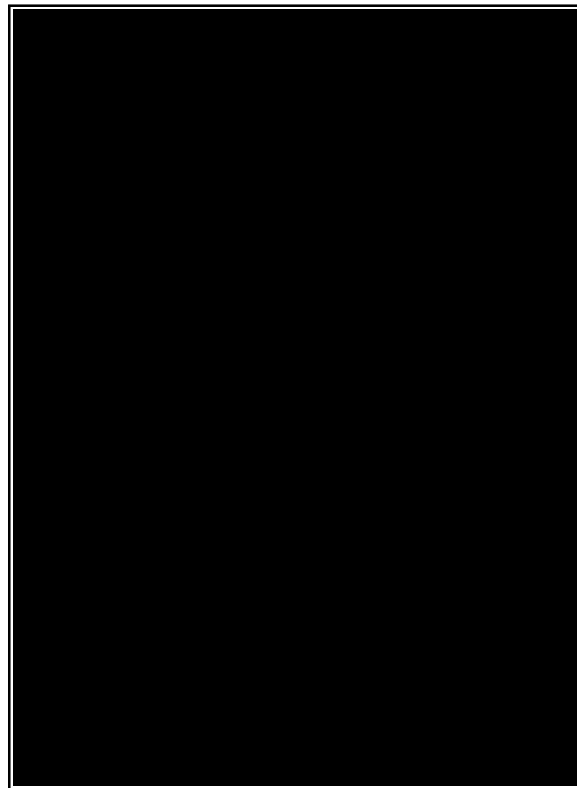
When you think of a place as home, you want to contribute to that the place being clean and happy. Annie felt like that and so she joined the Vigilance

Association and later she joined the ANC, taking part in the Defiance Campaign, which led to her being arrested for being part of a group entering a whites-only railway waiting room.

Once you took an interest in making ordinary people conscious that they have the right to be treated like everybody else you were likely to come to the attention of the authorities, particularly if you pointed out that those “authorities” had no right to claim authority over them, since they did not put them there in the first place. Those “authorities” gave Annie plenty of attention.

This was the strong woman who I met when I came to Cape Town in 1953. She was a leader of the ANC Women's League and an executive committee member of the FEDSAW. Naturally she was at the forefront of the campaign against the regime's decision to extend the Pass Laws to women. She declared to a mass meeting at the Parade in Cape Town "I will never carry a pass" and she never did.

After a visit home, she was arrested for entering the urban area of Cape Town without permission and deported immediately under police escort to the so-called Transkei. She was back in Cape Town in less than a week and this farce was repeated many times for nearly a year. Eventually she was brought to court, which the regime was trying to avoid because they knew they would lose. Annie had been resident in Cape Town continuously



for more than ten years and so did not need permission to enter.

While all these battles were taking place, Annie was amongst the ANC leaders from the Western Cape who were arrested, as I was, and taken to Johannesburg to join Luthuli, Sisulu and others to be charged with “High Treason”. The only other person from the Langa Branch of the ANC who was a treason trialist was David Mgugunyeka. As in all our cases, the charges were dropped after a year, but the harassment continued and Annie’s resistance never diminished. She still refused to carry the hated pass.

When you think of Annie, you think of the slogan adopted by the women opposing passes “:Wayithinti-mbokodo wathinta-bafazi UZAKUFA”, roughly meaning “when you touch the women it is like trying to break a rock – you will die”. Annie was a rock in our struggle, one of the women who made sure that Apartheid was indeed killed and replaced with a democratically elected parliament in 1994. It is sad that Annie did not live to see that long awaited day. Those of us who did must never forget Annie and those other comrades who devoted their lives to make it possible.

52 SIDNEY SKWEYIYA

Simonstown ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

Sidney was born in 1942 in Simonstown to Winifred Skweyiya. Most townships looked temporary, as if people were just camping there for the time being, everything about them seemed insecure. The small township outside Simonstown where Sidney grew up looked even more temporary than most, perched precariously on the steep slopes of the south west side of Table Mountain. And sure enough it was temporary. It was demolished following the passing of the infamous Group Areas Act and the residents were forcibly removed to Nyanga West, which was when I met Sidney.

All black communities were like fields of dry grass, liable to catch fire if any spark reaches them, such as the experience of forced removal, appalling living or work conditions or repression following justified complaints against unfair treatment in education. All these sort of things led to people getting involved in ANC campaigns and so it was with Sidney. He was one of the students who rebelled against Apartheid education, which was designed to dwarf the development of black students. This was at the time when Nationalist Party ministers made clear their views of the place they saw for black people in South Africa: “Do not

show Bantus green pastures, knowing that you are not going to let them graze on them.” Sidney’s family had been forcibly removed and he had been expelled from Fort Hare University at the end of his first year.

When Sidney appeared back in Nyanga West he was like a gift to the ANC region. We really needed educated young people and Sidney joined Martin (Chris) Hani in taking on assignments like addressing meetings at the University of Cape Town. (Prior to their arrival, we had been forced to ask Govan Mbeki to travel 700 miles from the Eastern Cape for such tasks.)

Martin was politically senior to Sidney and a good speaker, but he had not lived continuously in Cape Town for 10 years so was particularly vulnerable to being picked up and deported at no notice. Sidney had been in the Cape Town area for almost all his life, so he

was a bit more secure - although of course the regime could still banish him to some remote corner of the country if they chose to.

Things were moving rapidly, however, and we did not have the benefit of Sidney’s political input for very long. The ANC decided to establish an MK training camp at Mamre, north-west of Cape Town, and Sidney was amongst the first group of young people to be sent there. Unfortunately our experiment did not go well as we hoped. Somehow the regime got wind of it, and the names of those at the camp became known to the police, so the project was short-lived.

Instructions had already been received that we should select some dedicated young comrades to go out of the country for military training, to form the nucleus of well trained cadres for MK. Obviously, in the Western Cape, those who had been at Mamre were

prime candidates and Sidney was amongst the first group to move.

Sidney gave distinguished service in MK, becoming one of the first Communications Officers and being involved in the joint campaign between the ANC/MK and ZAPU/ZIPRA along the Zambezi River, where two other Communications Officers, Charles Ngomlana and Mncedi Nontshatsha, died.

In lulls in the military campaign Sidney completed his legal studies overseas and, as everyone knows, later he became a Cabinet Minister under both Mandela and Mbeki.



Skweyiya (left) and other comrades in the German Democratic Republic.

53 LESLIE TAMSANQA SPELMAN

Langa ANC Branch

Leslie was born in 1934 in Langa Township in Cape Town. When he was growing up, Langa ANC Branch was led by comrades Ngwevela and Ndziba. They recruited Leslie into the ANC Youth League where he became a committed and reliable youth leader. These qualities led to his selection to take part in the first ANC military training camp in the Western Cape in Mamre, north-west of Cape Town.

Later he was sent abroad for further military training and he became an MK logistics expert. He was amongst those of us lucky enough to survive to return home in

1990. He has died since then, still an active member of ANC and MK.



54 BEN STURMAN

Elsie's River Branch

Ben was one of those ANC cadres that one could not help but admire for the dedication and persistence that they displayed in any campaign launched by the ANC. However difficult the task we were called upon to tackle he would be there. There were comrades in the movement who said, like Mandela, we do not want to die, but if needs be for the struggle, we will accept that we die. Ben was one who said that. People like him gave us all encouragement in the face of the enormous difficulties before us. Ben was one of our unsung heroes.

In the sixties I did not know whether or not some of our leading comrades were

involved with churches or not, it was not something that we discussed. However when I returned home in 1990, I found many leading ANC people were senior members of various churches. Amongst them was Ben.

I suspect that as banning orders were imposed on political and community organizations, some activists turned to the churches. They were welcomed there, not least because they brought many supporters with them, and they found 'captive audiences' ready to listen to what they had to say.

When people like Ben became involved with churches they were able to

promote the unity of our oppressed masses, as well as expressing their beliefs. This unity brought benefits to both the political and the religious organizations. ANC policies reached many people who had never heard them before and as church people started to join the UDF and the ANC they were able to influence the liberation movement and, later, the ANC government.

I saw Ben Stuurman in happy circumstances when Madiba was President. He held a party in the Union Buildings, Pretoria, to mark the end of the era when our people had suffered so much oppression because of orders sent out from those buildings. Many of the stalwarts of the liberation struggle were invited by the President, and Ben and I were both lucky enough to be amongst those invited.



55 MILTON TAFENI

Simonstown ANC Branch

Milton was born in Cape Town in about 1942. The family lived in Retreat and he went to Boundary Road Primary School. Later the family moved to Simonstown. While they were living there Milton was admitted to Lovedale College in Alice, in the Eastern Cape. At that time Alice was a hotbed of political activity.

The only black University, Fort Hare, was in the town and many of the future leaders of the ANC were students there. The senior students at Lovedale hoped to go there themselves, and they were often to be found on the campus, joining in the political debates

and activities. Young people like Chris Hani, Sidney Skweyiya and Milton Tafeni himself were amongst those students.

In the middle of Milton's Matric studies, conflict developed at Lovedale. Students presented their grievances to the authorities and refused to attend classes until these were rectified. The authorities rejected their demands and the students went on strike. As usual the next step was for the students to be sent home to reapply for admission to the college, so that the "trouble makers" could be excluded, and only the obedient students re-admitted. Milton was regarded as a leader of

the rebellious ones and was never allowed back to Lovedale.

When Milton found himself back home in Simonstown because of his political activities, naturally he became involved in the ANC. This was just after it had been decided that we should send young people abroad for military training. The Western Cape MK structure, in preparation for this, came up with the idea of setting up a military training camp to find out if young comrades would be able to stand the rigours of the military rough and tumble which lay ahead. Our camp was established at Mamre, where some ex- army comrades and engineering experts gave the young people a taste of military life. Milton went there and passed this test, and then proceeded to the real thing.

He joined those going abroad for military training to become an officer of MK.

He served the ANC and MK in the Intelligence Section, but sadly died in Zambia in tragic circumstances.



56 BETWELL TAMANA

Retreat ANC Branch

Betwell was the son of Dora Tamana, who, in my opinion, was one of the greatest political women that our country has ever produced. It was not surprising that one of her offspring became a member of the ANC and an officer of MK.

Betwell was amongst the young men sent out of the country in 1963 for military training overseas, and later, when the opportunity presented itself for him to show what he was made of, he jumped at it.

In 1967 the ANC and MK found that we were confronted with 'buffer' states that the Apartheid regime had created around

South Africa's borders, that had to be crossed before our forces could reach home. It was decided that special dedication was required to undertake this perilous task of crossing the buffer zone, so volunteers were called for. Betwell was one of those who volunteered.

He became part of the Luthuli Detachment, which included both MK and ZIPRA cadres. (ZIPRA was the armed wing of ZAPU) They crossed over the Zambezi river from Zambia into Zimbabwe (then still Rhodesia) and then embarked on the long trek of 50 miles or more through the forest to the vicinity of a village called Sipholile in the

north-east of the country, where ZAPU had contacts. On the way they had numerous clashes with the enemy, and some of our cadres fell there. (They were men from all over South Africa and no doubt their home areas will one day do something to make sure that these heroes are remembered)

Betwell and some others were taken prisoner and tried by the illegal Smith regime. They were sentenced to death. Somehow, Betwell's mother Dora managed to get into Rhodesia and visit her son in the condemned cells. How proud she must have been of him for what he had sacrificed for the liberation of our people.

In the end he and others were freed from prison before the sentences were carried out because Smith was removed from power by the people of Zimbabwe. Unfortunately some of our cadres had already died in prison

before then. At that time those freed would not have been able to return to South Africa and I do not know exactly what happened to Betwell after that. I do know that he is no longer with us.

Surely South Africa should do something to acknowledge and celebrate that Betwell Tamana dedicated his life to our struggle for freedom and democracy.

Although the focus of my writing is on those who were leading the ANC in the Western Cape from 1953 to 1963, I have included Betwell and others in this because they were young people who committed their lives to the struggle during that period, in 1962. They were not leaders then, but they were the products of the Military Training Camp that we set up in Mamre in 1962 and they went on to become officers in MK. In addition to Betwell Tamana, the list includes

comrades like Goodman Mkhawuli, Mdlikiva Rani, Alfred Mfamane, Milton Tafeni, Mavuyi Holo and Lawrence Ndziba. Some other comrades later became Generals in the

new, reconstructed, South African Defence Force – Teddy Nqaphayi, Wilson Nqose and Pitso.



“You have a contract there - a secure job for 11 hours day, seven days a week. That leaves you free for a full 13 hours a day to study your contract.”

David Marais (1972) All the Nudes that's Fit to Print.

57 DORA TAMANA

Retreat ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

Dora Ntloko was born in 1901 in Gqamakwe in the Eastern Cape, one of the most under-developed parts of our country. When she was 22 she married John Tamana and after their first three children died in infancy the family moved to Cape Town to seek a better life. Of course they found there were no green pastures in Cape Town either, only a struggle to survive.

When I first saw her in 1953 she was a long-standing member of the ANC and actively involved in campaigning. She was also a national leader of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW).

This was the period when legislation was going through Parliament to force women to carry passes, as men did. The regime was doing this because women were flocking to towns to work in the expanding textile, canning and clothing factories. Since they did not have to have passes, women could join registered unions and therefore would be protected by industrial legislation, unlike African men. This was something the regime could not tolerate.

The struggle against extending the pass system to women made women more politically conscious and Dora was one of

those who organized thousands of women to go to Pretoria to take part in the enormous demonstration that took place in front of the Union Buildings, the seat of the racist regime. They trampled down every carefully tended flower in those impressive gardens in front of the building whilst supporting the leaders of the FEDSAW leaders, including Dora, who were trying (unsuccessfully of course) to present a petition against passes for women to the Prime Minister. Because of the vast numbers there the police were unable to do anything about this desecration of the Afrikaaners' realm.

Whenever there was a struggle going on in the Western Cape, Dora would appear to give a helping hand. One example was when workers at the wood sawmill in Retreat were on strike for higher wages. She went door to door around the community in Retreat



to collect money for the families of the strikers and cooked soup for the strikers on the picket lines. When necessary she let meetings take place in her house.

Dora was the first woman to stow away on board a ship to get out of the country. She was soon joined by Lilian Ngoyi, another great women leader, who was President of the ANC Women's League and FEDSAW. They travelled to Europe to attend conferences and to visit the socialist countries.

Of course, Dora was could not escape being banned immediately after returning from abroad, but this did not stop her from being involved in the struggle.

Later her son was a member of MK and was captured by the illegal Smith regime whilst trying to infiltrate through what was then Southern Rhodesia on the way home to South Africa. Already an old lady, she managed to visit her son in prison and whilst in Southern Rhodesia created contacts for us with freedom fighters.

Dora was one of the great women who emerged in our country during in our struggle for freedom. She was loved and respected by all the comrades who knew her. With her abilities and her commitment, there is no doubt that if she were still with us and her age allowed it, she ought to be a Cabinet member in our democratic government today.

58 FIHLA CHRISTMAS TINTO

Langa ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

When Comrade Tinto died in 2005 those who wrote his obituary gave detailed accounts of many aspects of his contributions to the struggle for a democratic South Africa. However they did not mention his important trade union work in Cape Town during the period 1953-1963. Comrade Tinto was an ANC activist in Langa Branch of the ANC but first of all Christmas was a worker and very conscious of it.

At the time that I met him I was the local secretary of SACTU and he was working at Karl Bremer Hospital in Cape Town as a porter. There was no trade union for African hospital workers in Cape Town

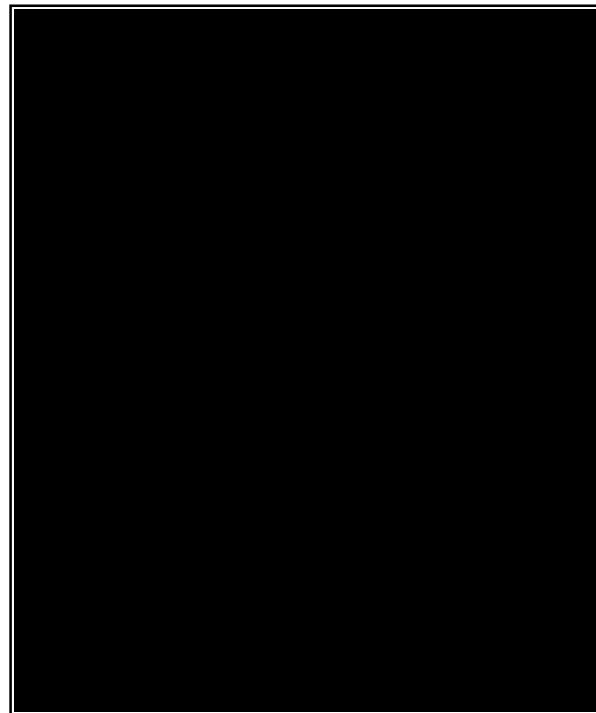
and so Tinto started to organize them under the banner of SACTU. He worked with Ntaba and Kukulela who were at Groote Schuur Hospital and together they created the Hospital Workers Union.

This union grew quickly, perhaps because hospital workers were mostly literate and so could be reached more easily than those who could not read. They could be given leaflets to take home to read and then seen again later to discuss them. Many of them were persuaded to join the new union and also to go to political meetings and then join the ANC. Some joined the SACP too.

Hospital workers tended to stand out at meetings. Mostly they wore clean clothes (and some smelled of disinfectant) unlike most other workers who wore dirty work clothes and had oily hands. There were few other “white collar’ African workers in those days.

Tinto was a gentle person by nature and he liked to see people happy, but he was always aware when things were not right. It made him restless to see injustice and he had to try to do something about it so he became active in politics and at work.

I met him again in the 1980s, some twenty years after our days together in Cape Town, when he came to Zambia with a UDF delegation for consultations with the ANC external structures. He was still the same Tinto that I left in 1963, still dedicated to the



struggle. He had not weakened and he was more sure than ever that we were nearing our goal.

Like me, he was one of those comrades lucky enough to live to see the fruits of our long struggle. The last time I saw him was on 26 April 2005 when he was being

presented by President Thabo Mbeki with an award for the work he had done to forward a free and democratic South Africa. He seemed old and frail, but was proud to be acknowledged by his country as one of its heroes.

59 JAMES (DALABOY) TYEKU

Windermere ANC Branch, later Nyanga West ANC Branch

James was born in the Eastern Cape and like so many people had come to Cape Town to look for work. I first met him in Windermere at one of the regular meetings which the ANC held in every township every weekend, on Saturday or Sunday or sometimes both, depending on the campaign of the time. He was about my age, but was already a seasoned ANC activist, having been in prison during the 1952 Defiance Campaign.

He was working in a tyre factory in Maitland and as a result always had on a dirty old overall. This was a good disguise as he looked like an ordinary person on his way from work. As a result police usually

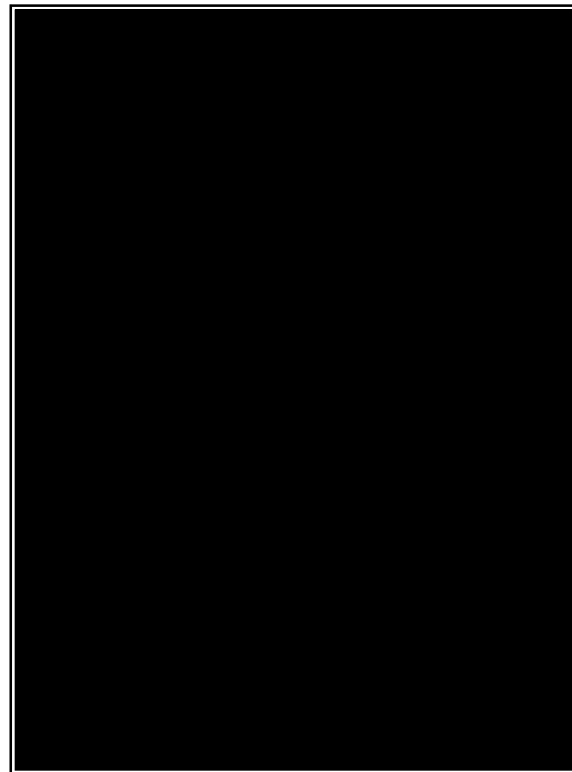
overlooked him when they set up road blocks as they often did, especially if there was ANC activity going on locally.

In 1956 the racist regime declared Kensington a coloured residential area and all the Africans who lived there were moved to Nyanga West. The site that James had in Nyanga West had been a dump for old cars and he had to shift them before he could build his pondoki. He built himself a one room house, but when he decided to extend it he found another car, an old black Ford in the way. This one could not be moved and James decided the only thing to do was to disassemble it. This developed into a hobby,

disassembling old cars, and he finished up assembling a car which would go, made entirely from the usable bits of cars he had disassembled.

He went to work in this 'new' old car and we also used it to carry paper and leaflets from the ANC, which was illegal and underground by this time. It was this same car that James, Chris and I were arrested in when we were carrying ANC literature to Nyanga East. We were caught because this old car was not fast enough to get away when chased by a fast police car.

James was sent out of the country for military training in 1963 in the same group as myself and he was also one of those who opened up the ANC camp at Kongwa in Tanzania.



Later he was moved to Zambia where he was deputy to the Chief Mechanic responsible for the maintenance of all the ANC and MK vehicles. His commitment and his skill earned him great respect among the freedom fighters, who were convinced that if someone dismantled a car and threw all the bits in the bush, Dalaboy could find them and

put the car back together, as good as new. (We had nicknamed him Dalaboy because he liked to wear a long, loose shirt, which reminded us of what we used to wear when we were boys)

James was lucky enough, like me, to live to see freedom in our country, the cause which he had devoted his life to.

60 SIPHETHO WILLIE

Retreat ANC Branch

Siphetho was born on 1st January 1934 in the Eastern Cape village called Cofimvaba from a peasant family. His father's name was Mbobama Willie and his mother's name was Kavala Willie. Like so many from our rural communities, the Willie family moved from the Eastern Cape to town, in their case to Blouvei, Cape Town.

His father was selling coal in the area and the mother was a washer woman for the white families. Siphetho started to work very early to supplement the income of the home. Cleaning gardens and cutting grass at the

homes of white families earning very low wages of £1 a day.

Political consciousness crept into his mind during the 1952 ANC Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws but his depth of understanding of politics really developed during the potato boycott. This campaign arose following the exposure by the Communist Party newspaper that farmers in Bethlehem had killed black labourers and ploughed them into a field to hide the crime. This dreadful story made a deep impression on the people. When the youth and others went door-to-door calling for a boycott of

potatoes they generated a big response and many people joined ANC as a result.

Siphetho was one of them and he threw himself into the activities of the Youth League. He was amongst the activists who led the campaign to chase Kaiser Mathanzima, the Bantustan leader, out of the Cape Town townships, in particular Langa Township.

Later he was one of the first to join MK and took part in many acts of sabotage of

communications systems, actions that the racist regime did its best to hush up. He followed this by being sent abroad for military training.

Siphetho is amongst the lucky comrades who lived to return home and are still healthy and able to enjoy the fruits of the struggle that he devoted his life to.

POSTSCRIPT

I cannot finish without saying I feel I have been privileged to be married to Joyce, my second wife. When I had a stroke she looked after me until I recovered, she even took early retirement as she did not like me to be alone in our house all day. All the contributions that I have made or attempted to make in my later years would have remained unfulfilled dreams without her.

Because of my stroke in 1992 my doctors advised me that if I wanted to live a bit longer I should leave the heavy pressures of South African politics which had caused the stroke, and try to live quietly. I accepted this advice and since the only way I could live quietly was to return to England, this is what I did.

Whilst I was recovering to help me relax I was encouraged by my wife to peep into the field of painting. It has given me much pleasure and a sense of achievement to see the walls of our home decorated by my paintings. When I look at some of them I cannot believe that they were done by me! That I have done them again owes much to Joyce. I cannot paint anything unless I am happy and happiness is a feeling of being loved by those you have decided to live with.

In spite of my illness, I still wanted to contribute what I could to South Africa and one of the things I decided on was to write about my experiences of the struggle. When we were apart I had been writing to Joyce about my childhood and my experiences of

going to town and some of our political battles and we decided we should now make time to use these pieces as the basis for writing my autobiography. The resulting book, *Freedom in our Lifetime*, is not just about me. It also puts on record some of the history of the campaigns against oppression inside the country and of the years when some of us were sent overseas to prepare for the armed struggle and to mobilize international support. As far as we could find some of this is not documented anywhere else, and indeed the book has been used as a source in SADET's (South African Democracy Education Trust) official history *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1 (1960-1970)*.

Freedom in our Lifetime contains my memories and my ideas, but the arrangement of the book, the flow of English, getting

things in order, avoiding duplication and so on was all done by my wife. This was a huge undertaking, and Joyce spent a lot of valuable time making sure that what I wanted to do succeeded.

There was also a family matter which worried me very much, and which we have been able to do something about. My mother died while I was away fighting for our democratic South Africa and when I got home I was very distressed to find that she had no memorial, not even a marked grave. I was happy when we were able to erect a stone to her and my father in our homestead and to have a ceremony to mark the occasion

Another thing troubled me. We visited the local schools when we were in my home village of Kwezana and were disappointed to find there seemed to be little improvement from the days when I was a child. Kwezana

Primary School and Mazotshweni Nursery School were in a very sorry state with few books or any other equipment and even without a water supply. The old rainwater tanks were leaking and there was no piped water in the village.

On returning to Manchester we started raising money, first of all to buy new water tanks and then for other things like sports equipment. Lots of people joined in and the efforts have grown and grown from then. Our friend Margaret Kiloh, a long time supporter of South African causes, mobilized people she knew to set up a charity, Tyume Valley Schools, which has raised money for all sorts of equipment, books, musical instruments, computers etc and helped to create a local group, Ikhwezi, to support all the local schools. Together they have created resource centres for the children in the valley.

In addition, each summer TVS has persuaded a group of volunteer teachers from Britain to go out to work with local schools, teachers and children to help them adapt to the new curriculum and the new teaching methods that the Government wants them to use, and things continue to progress.

Since moving to Tynemouth we have made friends with Elaine Beard and Ozzie Riley, Directors of a theatre group, Dodgy Clutch, with South African connections and their company has taken music and drama projects to the children of the Tyume Valley.

As I write, it has been possible to appoint a short term worker from the UK to carry on the initiative between the visits of the teachers and Margaret and her colleagues and to acquire a minibus, funded by the estate of a Manchester old friend, to transport the children and teachers to the resource centres.

Our hope is that the Department of Education will soon be in a position to take over at least some of these initiatives.

There was always something else at the back of my mind whenever I was in Tyume. I had recruited a number of young men from the locality to join the ANC and then our military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe. Of course this happened in Cape Town, but they belonged to the Tyume Valley, as I did. Some of these young men whom I organized gave the most precious thing they had, their young lives, so that we can now enjoy a democratic South Africa. I always thought how wonderful it would be if these unsung heroes could be remembered by a public record of what they had done.

Eventually, after a lot of groundwork spread over many visits home, the great event happened. It was not in a town, but on the

veld where as boys we had all herded sheep and cattle. A monument was put up with the names of the young comrades who were born in Tyume and who had died in the struggle for our freedom. The people of the villages celebrated the heroism of their sons. The ANC slaughtered an ox and everyone feasted and sung for joy.

It was very important to me for this to be done, but it was even more important was that the government presided over it. Comrade Humphrey Maxegwana who was then ANC Provincial Secretary made that happen. Those present included the Premier of the Province, the national Deputy Minister of Defence, Army Generals and other dignitaries like the local tribal chief JT Mabandla, all there to witness the occasion.

My latest project, this small book, had a long gestation. It had its origins when I first

returned to Cape Town in 1990. I discovered then that nearly all my old comrades whom I had left behind in 1963 were no longer to be found. Of course some of them were dead but what seemed worse to me, some of their names were not even known to the ANC. In other cases, some people had heard the name but did not know what had become of the person. Since that time I have been thinking about them, going over my memories, making enquiries and trying to get hold of photos, and now at last I have tackled the big task of writing about the great leaders that the ANC had in the Western Cape in the period 1953-1963. I may not have included everyone, there must be some I have not remembered because I was not close to them and I have not met anyone to remind me of them, but I have tried to include as many as I can. These names deserve to be treasured, but most of

them are not mentioned in any history books and are not engraved on any memorial to commemorate their sacrifices and their achievements. This is my effort to rectify that in my own small way.

Again I thank my wonderful wife who corrected the drafts and arranged the flow of events so the booklet should be readable, and who word-processed the finished product.

In conclusion, I should say that I consider myself to be lucky to have survived the struggle and to have received acknowledgements for my contribution. I want to thank my government for telling the world what they think about me. Now I am not simply Archie Sibeko but Archie Sibeko, OLS - Order of Luthuli in Silver. COSATU also made a presentation to me, giving me the Elijah Barayi Award for my contribution to the Trade Union Movement.

In addition the Gauteng Region of the Communist Party has given me an award with the wonderful citation 'For your outstanding contribution to the struggle for national liberation and socialism in South Africa. Your example will always be with us.'

It is a great honour that they say that about me, but I think it applies even more to those great and well known leaders who are no longer with us who inspired my generation, men like Govan Mbeki, Walter

Sisulu, AJ Luthuli and OR Tambo. This small book adds the names of some other heroes that are little known or unknown now locally, let alone nationally or internationally, but whose contributions were no less important. In some cases they gave the greatest gift that can be given to a cause, their very lives.

May their examples remain with us, to remind and inspire us all, but particularly those young people who want to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.