

Revering and sometimes

*San Francisco Chronicle*

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"A compelling, thoughtful, and  
written or likely to be written by a  
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"... as that glorious day in 1990  
secretly out of jail to liberty and  
leadership."

— *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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# LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

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The Autobiography of  
**NELSON  
MANDELA**



Little, Brown and Company

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## 23

JUST AFTER DAWN, on the morning of December 5, 1956, I was awakened by a loud knocking on my door. No neighbor or friend ever knocks in such a peremptory way, and I knew immediately that it was the security police. I dressed quickly and found Constable Rousseau, a security officer who was a familiar figure in our area, and two policemen. He produced a search warrant, at which point the three of them immediately began to comb through the entire house looking for incriminating papers or documents. By this time the children were awake, and with a stern look made them to be calm. The children looked to me for reassurance. The police searched drawers and cabinets and closets, any place where contraband might have been hidden. After forty-five minutes, Rousseau matter-of-factly said, "Mandela, we have a warrant for your arrest. Come with me." I looked at the warrant, and the words leapt out at me: "HOOGVERRAAD — HIGH TREASON."

I walked with them to the car. It is not pleasant to be arrested in front of one's children, even though one knows that what one is doing is right. But children do not comprehend the complexity of the situation; they simply see their father being taken away by the white authorities without an explanation.

Rousseau drove and I sat next to him — without handcuffs — in the front seat. He had a search warrant for my office in town, where we were now headed after dropping off the two other policemen in a nearby area. To get to downtown Johannesburg, one had to travel along a desolate highway that cut through an unpopulated area. While we were motoring along this stretch, I remarked to Rousseau that he must be very confident to drive with me alone and unhandcuffed. He was silent.

"What would happen if I seized you and overpowered you?" I said.

Rousseau shifted uncomfortably. "You are playing with fire, Mandela," he said.

"Playing with fire is my game," I replied.

“If you continue speaking like this I will have to handcuff you,” Rousseau said threateningly.

“And if I refuse?”

We continued this tense debate for a few more minutes, but as we passed into a populated area near the Langlaagte police station, Rousseau said to me: “Mandela, I have treated you well and I expect you to do the same to me. I don’t like your jokes.”

After a brief stop at the police station, we were joined by another officer and went to my office, which they searched for another forty-five minutes. From there, I was taken to Marshall Square, the rambling red-brick Johannesburg prison where I had spent a few nights in 1952 during the Defiance Campaign. A number of my colleagues were already there, having been arrested and booked earlier that morning. Over the next few hours, more friends and comrades began to trickle in. This was the swoop the government had long been planning. Someone smuggled in a copy of the afternoon edition of *The Star*, and we learned from its banner headlines that the raid had been countrywide and that the premier leaders of the Congress Alliance were all being arrested on charges of high treason and an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the state. Those who had been arrested in different parts of the country — Chief Luthuli, Monty Naicker, Reggie September, Lilian Ngoyi, Piet Beyleveld — were flown by military planes to Johannesburg, where they were to be arraigned. One hundred forty-four people had been arrested. The next day we appeared in court and we were formally charged. A week later, Walter Sisulu and eleven others were arrested, bringing the total to one hundred fifty-six. All told, there were one hundred five Africans, twenty-one Indians, twenty-three whites, and seven Coloureds. Almost the entire executive leadership of the ANC, both banned and unbanned, had been arrested. The government, at long last, had made its move.

We were soon transferred to the Johannesburg Prison, popularly known as the Fort, a bleak, castle-like structure located on a hill in the heart of the city. Upon admission we were taken to an outdoor quadrangle and ordered to strip completely and line up against the wall. We were forced to stand there for more than an hour, shivering in the breeze and feeling awkward — priests, professors, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, men of middle or old age, who were normally

treated with deference and respect. Despite my anger, I could not suppress a laugh as I scrutinized the men around me. For the first time, the truth of the aphorism “clothes make the man” came home to me. If fine bodies and impressive physiques were essential to being a leader I saw that few among us would have qualified.

A white doctor finally appeared and asked whether any of us was ill. No one complained of any ailment. We were ordered to dress, and then escorted to two large cells with cement floors and no furniture. The cells had recently been painted and reeked of paint fumes. We were each given three thin blankets plus a sisal mat. Each cell had only one floor-level latrine, which was completely exposed. It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones — and South Africa treated its imprisoned African citizens like animals.

We stayed in the Fort for two weeks, and despite the hardships, our spirits remained extremely high. We were permitted newspapers and read with gratification of the waves of indignation aroused by our arrests. Protest meetings and demonstrations were being held throughout South Africa; people carried signs declaring “We Stand by Our Leaders.” We read of protests around the world over our incarceration.

Our communal cell became a kind of convention for far-flung freedom fighters. Many of us had been living under severe restrictions, making it illegal for us to meet and talk. Now, our enemy had gathered us all together under one roof for what became the largest and longest unbanned meeting of the Congress Alliance in years. Younger leaders met older leaders they had only read about. Men from Natal mingled with leaders from the Transvaal. We reveled in the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences for two weeks while we awaited trial.

Each day, we put together a program of activities. Patrick Molaoa and Peter Nthite, both prominent Youth Leaguers, organized physical training. Talks on a variety of subjects were scheduled, and we heard Professor Matthews discourse on both the history of the ANC and the American Negro, Debi Singh lectured on the history of the SAIC, Arthur Letele discussed the African medicine man, while Reverend James Calata spoke on African music — and sang in his

beautiful tenor voice. Every day, Vuyisile Mini, who years later was hanged by the government for political crimes, led the group in singing freedom songs. One of the most popular was: "*Nans' indod' emnyama Strijdom, Bhasobha nans' indod' emnyama Strijdom*" (Here's the black man, Strijdom, beware the black man, Strijdom). We sang at the top of our lungs, and it kept our spirits high.

One time, Masabalala Yengwa (better known as M. B. Yengwa), the son of a Zulu laborer and the provincial secretary of the Natal ANC, contributed to a lecture on music by reciting a praise song in honor of Shaka, the legendary Zulu warrior and king. Yengwa draped himself with a blanket, rolled up a newspaper to imitate an assegai, and began to stride back and forth reciting the lines from the praise song. All of us, even those who did not understand Zulu, were entranced. Then he paused dramatically and called out the lines "*Inyon' edl' ezinye! Yath' isadl' ezinye, yadl' ezinye!*" The lines liken Shaka to a great bird of prey that relentlessly slays its enemies. At the conclusion of these words, pandemonium broke out. Chief Luthuli, who until then had remained quiet, sprang to his feet, and bellowed, "*Ngq Shaka lowo!*" (That is Shaka!), and then began to dance and chant. His movements electrified us, and we all took to our feet. Accomplished ballroom dancers, sluggards who knew neither traditional nor Western dancing, all joined in the *indlamu*, the traditional Zulu war dance. Some moved gracefully, others resembled frozen mountaineers trying to shake off the cold, but all danced with enthusiasm and emotion. Suddenly there were no Xhosas or Zulus, no Indians or Africans, no rightists or leftists, no religious or political leaders; we were all nationalists and patriots bound together by a love of our common history, our culture, our country, and our people. In that moment, something stirred deep inside all of us, something strong and intimate, that bound us to one another. In that moment we felt the hand of the great past that made us what we were and the power of the great cause that linked us all together.

After the two weeks, we appeared for our preparatory examination on December 19 at the Drill Hall in Johannesburg, a military structure not normally used as a court of justice. It was a great bare barn of a building with a corrugated iron roof and was considered the

only public building large enough to support a trial of so many accused.

We were taken in sealed police vans escorted by a half-dozen troop carriers filled with armed soldiers. One would have thought a full-scale civil war was under way from the precautions the state was taking with us. A massive crowd of our supporters was blocking traffic in Twist Street; we could hear them cheering and singing, and they could hear us answering from inside the van. The trip became a triumphal procession as the slow-moving van was rocked by the crowd. The entire perimeter of the hall was surrounded by gun-toting policemen and soldiers. The vans were brought to an area behind the hall and parked so that we alighted straight from the van into the courtroom.

Inside, we were met by another crowd of supporters, so that the hall seemed more like a raucous protest meeting than a staid court of law. We walked in with our thumbs raised in the ANC salute and nodded to our supporters sitting in the non-Whites Only section. The mood inside was more celebratory than punitive, as the accused mingled with reporters and friends.

The government was charging all one hundred fifty-six of us with high treason and a countrywide conspiracy to use violence to overthrow the present government and replace it with a Communist state. The period covered by the indictment was October 1, 1952, through December 13, 1956: it included the Defiance Campaign, the Sophiatown removal, and the Congress of the People. The South African law of high treason was based not on English law, but on Roman Dutch antecedents, and defined high treason as a hostile intention to disturb, impair, or endanger the independence or safety of the state. The punishment was death.

The purpose of a preparatory examination was to determine whether the government's charges were sufficient to put us on trial in the Supreme Court. There were two stages of giving evidence. The first stage took place in a magistrate's court. If the magistrate determined that there was sufficient evidence against the accused, the case would move to the Supreme Court and be tried before a judge. If the magistrate decided there was insufficient evidence, the defendants were discharged.

The magistrate was Mr. F. C. Wessel, the chief magistrate from

Bloemfontein. That first day, when Wessel began to speak in his quiet voice it was impossible to hear him. The state had neglected to provide microphones and loudspeakers, and the court was adjourned for two hours while amplification was sought. We assembled in a courtyard and had what was very much like a picnic, with food sent in from the outside. The atmosphere was almost festive. Two hours later, court was recessed for the day because proper loudspeakers had not been found. To the cheers of the crowd, we were once again escorted back to the Fort.

The next day, the crowds outside were even larger, the police more tense. Five hundred armed police surrounded the Drill Hall. When we arrived, we discovered that the state had erected an enormous wire cage for us to sit in. It was made of diamond-mesh wire, attached to poles and scaffolding with a grille at the front and top. We were led inside and sat on benches, surrounded by sixteen armed guards.

In addition to its symbolic effect, the cage cut us off from communication with our lawyers, who were not permitted to enter. One of my colleagues scribbled on a piece of paper, which he then posted on the side of the cage: "Dangerous. Please Do Not Feed."

Our supporters and organization had assembled a formidable defense team, including Bram Fischer, Norman Rosenberg, Israel Maisels, Maurice Franks, and Vernon Berrangé. None of them had ever seen such a structure in court before. Franks lodged a powerful protest in open court against the state's humiliating his clients in such a "fantastic" fashion and treating them, he said, "like wild beasts." Unless the cage was removed forthwith, he announced, the entire defense team would walk out of court. After a brief adjournment, the magistrate decided that the cage would be pulled down; in the meantime, the front of it was removed.

Only then did the state begin its case. The chief prosecutor, Mr. Van Niekerk, began reading part of an 18,000-word address outlining the Crown case against us. Even with amplification he was barely audible against the shouting and singing outside, and at one point a group of policemen rushed out. We heard a revolver shot, followed by shouts and more gunfire. The court was adjourned while the magistrate held a meeting with counsel. Twenty people had been injured.

The reading of the charges continued for the next two days. Van

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Niekerk said that he would prove to the court that the accused, with help from other countries, were plotting to overthrow the existing government by violence and impose a Communist government on South Africa. This was the charge of high treason. The state cited the Freedom Charter as both proof of our Communist intentions and evidence of our plot to overthrow the existing authorities. By the third day, much of the cage had been dismantled. Finally, on the fourth day, we were released on bail. Bail was another example of the sliding scale of apartheid: £250 for whites; £100 for Indians; and £25 for Africans and Coloureds. Even treason was not color-blind. Well-wishers from diverse walks of life came forward to guarantee bail for each of the accused, gestures of support that later became the foundation for the Treason Trial Defense Fund started by Bishop Reeves, Alan Paton, and Alex Hepple. The fund was ably administered during the trial by Mary Benson and then Freda Levson. We were released provided we reported once a week to the police, and were forbidden from attending public gatherings. Court was to resume in early January.

The following day I was at my office bright and early. Oliver and I had both been in prison, and our caseload had mounted in the meantime. While trying to work that morning, I was visited by an old friend named Jabavu, a professional interpreter whom I had not seen for several months. Before the arrests I had deliberately cut down my weight, in anticipation of prison, where one should be lean and able to survive on little. In jail, I had continued my exercises, and was pleased to be so trim. But Jabavu eyed me suspiciously. "Madiba," he said, "why must you look so thin?" In African cultures, portliness is often associated with wealth and well-being. He burst out: "Man, you were scared of jail, that is all. You have disgraced us, we Xhosas!"

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EVEN BEFORE THE TRIAL, my marriage to Evelyn had begun to unravel. In 1953, Evelyn had become set on upgrading her four-year certificate in general nursing. She enrolled in a midwifery course at King Edward VII Hospital in Durban that would keep her away from home for several months. This was possible because my mother



and sister were staying with us and could look after the children. During her stay in Durban, I visited her on at least one occasion.

Evelyn returned, having passed her examinations. She was pregnant again and later that year, gave birth to Makaziwe, named after the daughter we had lost six years before. In our culture, to give a new child the name of a deceased child is considered a way of honoring the earlier child's memory and retaining a mystical attachment to the child who left too soon.

Over the course of the next year Evelyn became involved with the Watch Tower organization, part of the church of Jehovah's Witnesses. Whether this was due to some dissatisfaction with her life at the time, I do not know. The Jehovah's Witnesses took the Bible as the sole rule of faith and believed in a coming Armageddon between good and evil. Evelyn zealously began distributing their publication *The Watchtower*, and began to proselytize me as well, urging me to convert my commitment to the struggle to a commitment to God. Although I found some aspects of the Watch Tower's system to be interesting and worthwhile, I could not and did not share her devotion. There was an obsessional element to it that put me off. From what I could discern, her faith taught passivity and submissiveness in the face of oppression, something I could not accept.

My devotion to the ANC and the struggle was unremitting. This disturbed Evelyn. She had always assumed that politics was a youthful diversion, that I would someday return to the Transkei and practice there as a lawyer. Even as that possibility became remote, she never resigned herself to the fact that Johannesburg would be our home, or let go of the idea that we might move back to Umtata. She believed that once I was back in the Transkei, in the bosom of my family, acting as counselor to Sabata, I would no longer miss politics. She encouraged Daliwonga's efforts to persuade me to come back to Umtata. We had many arguments about this, and I patiently explained to her that politics was not a distraction but my lifework, that it was an essential and fundamental part of my being. She could not accept this. A man and a woman who hold such different views of their respective roles in life cannot remain close.

I tried to persuade her of the necessity of the struggle, while she attempted to persuade me of the value of religious faith. When I would tell her that I was serving the nation, she would reply that

servicing God was above servicing the nation. We were finding no common ground, and I was becoming convinced that the marriage was no longer tenable.

We also waged a battle for the minds and hearts of the children. She wanted them to be religious, and I thought they should be political. She would take them to church at every opportunity and read them Watch Tower literature. She even gave the boys *Watchtower* pamphlets to distribute in the township. I used to talk politics to the boys. Thembi was a member of the Pioneers, the juvenile section of the ANC, so he was already politically cognizant. I would explain to Makgatho in the simplest terms how the black man was persecuted by the white man.

Hanging on the walls of the house, I had pictures of Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Gandhi, and the storming of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1917. I explained to the boys who each of the men was, and what he stood for. They knew that the white leaders of South Africa stood for something very different. One day, Makgatho came running into the house, and said, "Daddy, Daddy, there is Malan on the hill!" Malan had been the first Nationalist prime minister and the boy had confused him with a Bantu Education official, Willie Maree, who had announced that he would that day address a public meeting in the township. I went outside to see what Makgatho was talking about, for the ANC had organized a demonstration to ensure that the meeting did not succeed. As I went out, I saw a couple of police vans escorting Maree to the place he was meant to speak, but there was trouble from the start and Maree had fled without delivering his speech. I told Makgatho that it was not Malan but might as well have been.

My schedule in those days was relentless. I would leave the house very early in the morning and return late at night. After a day at the office, I would usually have meetings of one kind or another. Evelyn could not understand my meetings in the evening, and when I returned home late suspected I was seeing other women. Time after time, I would explain what meeting I was at, why I was there, and what was discussed. But she was not convinced. In 1955, she gave me an ultimatum: I had to choose between her and the ANC.

Walter and Albertina were very close to Evelyn, and their fondest wish was for us to stay together. Evelyn confided in Albertina. At one point, Walter intervened in the matter and I was very short with

him, telling him it was none of his business. I regretted the tone I took, because Walter had always been a brother to me and his friendship and support had never faltered.

One day, Walter told me he wanted to bring someone over to the office for me to meet. He did not tell me that it was my brother-in-law, and I was surprised but not displeased to see him. I was pessimistic about the marriage and I thought it only fair to inform him of my feelings.

We were discussing this issue cordially among the three of us, when either Walter or I used a phrase like "Men such as ourselves," or something of that ilk. Evelyn's brother-in-law was a businessman, opposed to politics and politicians. He became very huffy and said, "If you chaps think you are in the same position as myself, that is ridiculous. Do not compare yourselves to me." When he left, Walter and I looked at each other and started laughing.

After we were arrested in December and kept in prison for two weeks, I had one visit from Evelyn. But when I came out of prison, I found that she had moved out and taken the children. I returned to an empty, silent house. She had even removed the curtains, and for some reason I found this small detail shattering. Evelyn had moved in with her brother, who told me, "Perhaps it is for the best; maybe when things will have cooled down you will come back together." It was reasonable advice, but it was not to be.

Evelyn and I had irreconcilable differences. I could not give up my life in the struggle, and she could not live with my devotion to something other than herself and the family. She was a very good woman, charming, strong, and faithful, and a fine mother. I never lost my respect and admiration for her, but in the end, we could not make our marriage work.

The breakup of any marriage is traumatic, especially for the children. Our family was no exception, and all of the children were wounded by our separation. Makgatho took to sleeping in my bed. He was a gentle child, a natural peacemaker and he tried to bring about some sort of reconciliation between me and his mother. Makaziwe was still very small, and I remember one day, when I was not in prison or in court, I visited her crèche (nursery school) unannounced. She had always been a very affectionate child, but that day, when she saw me, she froze. She did not know whether to run to me or retreat, to smile or frown. She had some conflict in her

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small heart, which she did not know how to resolve. It was very painful.

Thembi, who was ten at the time, was the most deeply affected. He stopped studying and became withdrawn. He had once been keen on English and Shakespeare, but after the separation he seemed to become apathetic about learning. The principal of his school spoke to me on one occasion, but there was little that I was able to do. I would take him to the gym whenever I could, and occasionally he would brighten a bit. There were many times when I could not be there and later, when I was underground, Walter would take Thembi with him along with his own son. One time, Walter took him to an event, and afterward Walter said to me, "Man, that chap is quiet." Following the breakup, Thembi would frequently wear my clothes, even though they were far too large for him; they gave him some kind of attachment to his too-often-distant father.

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ON JANUARY 9, 1957, we once again assembled in the Drill Hall. It was the defense's turn to refute the state's charges. After summarizing the Crown's case against us, Vernon Berrangé, our lead counsel, announced our argument. "The defense," he said, "will strenuously repudiate that the terms of the Freedom Charter are reasonable or criminal. On the contrary, the defense will contend that the ideas and beliefs which are expressed in this charter, although repugnant to the policy of the present government, are such as are shared by the overwhelming majority of mankind of all races and colors, and also by the overwhelming majority of the citizens of this country." In consultation with our attorneys, we had decided that we were not merely going to prove that we were innocent of treason, but that this was a political trial in which the government was persecuting us for taking actions that were morally justified.

But the drama of the opening arguments was succeeded by the tedium of court logistics. The first month of the trial was taken up by the state's submission of evidence. One by one, every paper, pamphlet, document, book, notebook, letter, magazine, and clipping that the police had accumulated in the last three years of searches was produced and numbered; twelve thousand in all. The

submissions ranged from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to a Russian cookbook. They even submitted the two signs from the Congress of the People: "SOUP WITH MEAT" and "SOUP WITHOUT MEAT."

During the preparatory examination, which was to last for months, we listened day after day as African and Afrikaner detectives read out their notes of ANC meetings, or transcripts of speeches. These recountings were always garbled, and often either nonsensical or downright false. Berrangé later revealed in his deft cross-examination that many of the African detectives were unable to understand or write English, the language in which the speeches were given.

To support the state's extraordinary allegation that we intended to replace the existing government with a Soviet-style state, the Crown relied on the evidence of Professor Andrew Murray, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Cape Town. Murray labeled many of the documents seized from us, including the Freedom Charter itself, as communistic.

Professor Murray seemed, at the outset, relatively knowledgeable, but that was until Berrangé began his cross-examination. Berrangé said that he wanted to read Murray a number of passages from various documents and then have Murray label them communistic or not. Berrangé read him the first passage, which concerned the need for ordinary workers to cooperate with each other and not exploit one another. Communistic, Murray said. Berrangé then noted that the statement had been made by the former premier of South Africa, Dr. Malan. Berrangé proceeded to read him two other statements, both of which Professor Murray described as communistic. These passages had in fact been uttered by the American presidents Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson. The highlight came when Berrangé read Murray a passage that the professor unhesitatingly described as "communism straight from the shoulder." Berrangé then revealed that it was a statement that Professor Murray himself had written in the 1930s.

In the seventh month of the trial, the state said it would produce evidence of planned violence that occurred during the Defiance Campaign. The state called the first of their star witnesses, Solomon Ngubase, who offered sensational evidence that seemed to implicate the ANC. Ngubase was a soft-spoken fellow in his late thirties, with

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a shaky command of English, who was currently serving a sentence for fraud. In his opening testimony, Ngubase told the court he had obtained a bachelor of arts degree from Fort Hare, and that he was a practicing attorney. He said he became secretary of the Port Elizabeth branch of the ANC as well as a member of the National Executive Committee. He claimed to have been present at a meeting of the National Executive when a decision was made to send Walter Sisulu and David Bopape to the Soviet Union to procure arms for a violent revolution in South Africa. He said he was present at a meeting that planned the 1952 Port Elizabeth riot and that he had witnessed an ANC decision to murder all whites in the Transkei in the same manner as the Mau Mau in Kenya. Ngubase's dramatic testimony caused a stir in and out of court. Here at long last was evidence of a conspiracy.

But when Ngubase was cross-examined by Vernon Berrangé, it was revealed that he was equal parts madman and liar. Berrangé, whose cross-examination skills earned him the nickname Isangoma (a diviner or healer who exorcises an illness) among the accused, quickly established that Ngubase was neither a university graduate nor a member of the ANC, much less a member of the National Executive Committee. Berrangé showed that Ngubase had forged certificates for a university degree, had practiced law illegally for several years, and had a further case of fraud pending against him. At the time of the meeting he claimed to have attended to plan the Port Elizabeth riot, he was serving a sentence for fraud in a Durban jail. Almost none of Ngubase's testimony bore even a remote resemblance to the truth. At the end of his cross-examination, Berrangé asked the witness, "Do you know what a rogue is?" Ngubase said he did not. "You, sir, are a rogue!" Berrangé exclaimed.

Joe Slovo, one of the accused and a superb advocate, conducted his own defense. He was an irritant to the state because of his sharp questions and attempts to show that the state was the violator of laws, not the Congress. Slovo's cross-examination was often as devastating as Berrangé's. Detective Jeremiah Mollson, one of the few African members of the Special Branch, claimed to recall lines verbatim from ANC speeches that he attended. But what he reported was usually gibberish or outright fabrication.

Slovo: "Do you understand English?"

Mollson: "Not so well."

Slovo: "Do you mean to say that you reported these speeches in English but you don't understand English well?"

Mollson: "Yes, Your Worship."

Slovo: "Do you agree that your notes are a lot of rubbish?"

Mollson: "I don't know."

This last response caused an outbreak of laughter from the defendants. The magistrate scolded us for laughing, and said, "The proceedings are not as funny as they may seem."

At one point, Wessel told Slovo that he was impugning the integrity of the court and fined him for contempt. This provoked the fury of most of the accused, and it was only Chief Luthuli's restraining hand that kept a number of the defendants from being cited for contempt as well.

As the testimony continued, much of it tedious legal maneuvering, we began to occupy ourselves with other matters. I often brought a book to read or a legal brief to work on. Others read newspapers, did crossword puzzles, or played chess or Scrabble. Occasionally, the bench would reprimand us for not paying attention, and the books and puzzles would disappear. But, slowly, as the testimony resumed its snail's pace, the games and reading material reemerged.

As the preparatory examination continued, the state became increasingly desperate. It became more and more apparent that the state was gathering — often fabricating — evidence as it went along, to help in what seemed to be a lost cause.

Finally, on September 11, ten months after we had first assembled in the Drill Hall, the prosecutor announced that the state's case in the preparatory examination was completed. The magistrate gave the defense four months to sift through the eight thousand pages of typed evidence and twelve thousand documents to prepare its case.

The preparatory examination had lasted for the whole of 1957. Court adjourned in September, and the defense began reviewing the evidence. Three months later, without warning and without explanation, the Crown announced that charges against sixty-one of the accused were to be dropped. Most of these defendants were relatively minor figures in the ANC, but also among them were Chief Luthuli and Oliver Tambo. The Crown's release of Luthuli and Tambo pleased but bewildered us.

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In January, when the government was scheduled to sum up its charges, the Crown brought in a new prosecutor, the formidable Oswald Pirow, Q.C. Pirow was a former minister of justice and of defense and a pillar of National Party politics. He was a longtime Afrikaner nationalist, and an outspoken supporter of the Nazi cause; he once described Hitler as the "greatest man of his age." He was a virulent anti-Communist. The appointment of Pirow was new evidence that the state was worried about the outcome and attached tremendous importance to a victory.

Before Pirow's summing-up, Berrangé announced he would apply for our discharge on the grounds that the state had not offered sufficient evidence against us. Pirow opposed this application for dismissal, and quoted from several inflammatory speeches by the accused, informing the court that the police had unearthed more evidence of a highly dangerous conspiracy. The country, he said portentously, was sitting on top of a volcano. It was an effective and highly dramatic performance. Pirow changed the atmosphere of the trial. We had become overconfident, and were reminded that we were facing a serious charge. Don't fool yourselves, counsel told us, you people might go to jail. Their warnings sobered us.

After thirteen months of the preparatory examination, the magistrate ruled that he had found "sufficient reason" for putting us on trial in the Transvaal Supreme Court for high treason. Court adjourned in January with the ninety-five remaining defendants committed to stand trial. When the actual trial would begin, we did not know.

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ONE AFTERNOON, during a recess in the preparatory examination, I drove a friend of mine from Orlando to the medical school at the University of the Witwatersrand and went past Baragwanath Hospital, the premier black hospital in Johannesburg. As I passed a nearby bus stop, I noticed out of the corner of my eye a lovely young woman waiting for the bus. I was struck by her beauty, and I turned my head to get a better look at her, but my car had gone by too fast. This woman's face stayed with me — I even considered



turning around to drive by her in the other direction — but I went on.

Some weeks thereafter, a curious coincidence occurred. I was at the office, and when I popped in to see Oliver, there was this same young woman with her brother, sitting in front of Oliver's desk. I was taken aback, and did my best not to show my surprise — or my delight — at this striking coincidence. Oliver introduced me to them and explained that they were visiting him on a legal matter.

Her name was Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela, but she was known as Winnie. She had recently completed her studies at the Jan Hofmeyr School of Social Work in Johannesburg and was working as the first black female social worker at Baragwanath Hospital. At the time I paid little attention to her background or legal problem, for something in me was deeply stirred by her presence. I was thinking more of how I could ask her out than how our firm would handle her case. I cannot say for certain if there is such a thing as love at first sight, but I do know that the moment I first glimpsed Winnie Nomzamo, I knew that I wanted to have her as my wife.

Winnie was the sixth of eleven children of C. K. Madikizela, a school principal turned businessman. Her given name was Nomzamo, which means one who strives or undergoes trials, a name as prophetic as my own. She came from Bizana in Pondoland, an area adjacent to the part of the Transkei where I grew up. She is from the Phondo clan of amaNgutyana, and her great-grandfather was Madikizela, a powerful chief from nineteenth-century Natal who settled in the Transkei at the time of the iMfecane.

I telephoned Winnie the next day at the hospital and asked her for help in raising money for the Treason Trial Defense Fund from the Jan Hofmeyr School. It was merely a pretext to invite her to lunch, which I did. I picked her up where she was staying in town, and took her to an Indian restaurant near my office, one of the few places that served Africans and where I frequently ate. Winnie was dazzling, and even the fact that she had never before tasted curry and drank glass after glass of water to cool her palate only added to her charm.

After lunch I took her for a drive to an area between Johannesburg and Evaton, an open veld just past Eldorado Park. We walked on the long grass, grass so similar to that of the Transkei where we both had been raised. I told her of my hopes and of the difficulties

of the Treason Trial. I knew right there that I wanted to marry her — and I told her so. Her spirit, her passion, her youth, her courage, her willfulness — I felt all of these things the moment I first saw her.

Over the next weeks and months we saw each other whenever we could. She visited me at the Drill Hall and at my office. She came to see me work out in the gym; she met Thembi, Makgatho, and Makaziwe. She came to meetings and political discussions; I was both courting her and politicizing her. As a student, Winnie had been attracted to the Non-European Unity Movement, for she had a brother who was involved with that party. In later years, I would tease her about this early allegiance, telling her that had she not met me, she would have married a leader of the NEUM.

Shortly after I filed for divorce from Evelyn, I told Winnie she should visit Ray Harmel, the wife of Michael Harmel, for a fitting for a wedding dress. In addition to being an activist, Ray was an excellent dressmaker. I asked Winnie how many bridesmaids she intended to have, and suggested she go to Bizana to inform her parents that we were to be married. Winnie has laughingly told people that I never proposed to her, but I always told her that I asked her on our very first date and that I simply took it for granted from that day forward.

The Treason Trial was in its second year and it put a suffocating weight on our law practice. Mandela and Tambo was falling apart as we could not be there, and both Oliver and I were experiencing grave financial difficulties. Since the charges against Oliver had been dropped, he was able to do some remedial work; but the damage had already been done. We had gone from a bustling practice that turned people away to one that was practically begging for clients. I could not even afford to pay the fifty-pound balance still owing on the plot of land that I had purchased in Umtata, and had to give it up.

I explained all this to Winnie. I told her it was more than likely that we would have to live on her small salary as a social worker. Winnie understood and said she was prepared to take the risk and throw in her lot with me. I never promised her gold and diamonds, and I was never able to give her them.

The wedding took place on June 14, 1958. I applied for a relaxation

of my banning orders and was given six days' leave of absence from Johannesburg. I also arranged for *lobola*, the traditional brideprice, to be paid to Winnie's father.

The wedding party left Johannesburg very early on the morning of June 12, and we arrived in Bizana late that afternoon. My first stop, as always when one was banned, was the police station to report that I had arrived. At dusk, we then went to the bride's place, Mbongweni, as was customary. We were met by a great chorus of local women ululating with happiness, and Winnie and I were separated; she went to the bride's house, while I went with the groom's party to the house of one of Winnie's relations.

The ceremony itself was at a local church, after which we celebrated at the home of Winnie's eldest brother, which was the ancestral home of the Madikizela clan. The bridal car was swathed in ANC colors. There was dancing and singing, and Winnie's exuberant grandmother did a special dance for all of us. The entire executive of the ANC had been invited, but bans limited their attendance. Among those who came were Duma Nokwe, Lilian Ngoyi, Dr. James Njongwe, Dr. Wilson Conco, and Victor Tyamzashe.

The final reception was at the Bizana Town Hall. The speech I recall best was given by Winnie's father. He took note, as did everyone, that among the uninvited guests at the wedding were a number of security police. He spoke of his love for his daughter, my commitment to the country, and my dangerous career as a politician. When Winnie had first told him of the marriage, he had exclaimed, "But you are marrying a jailbird!" At the wedding, he said he was not optimistic about the future, and that such a marriage, in such difficult times, would be unremittingly tested. He told Winnie she was marrying a man who was already married to the struggle. He bade his daughter good luck, and ended his speech by saying, "If your man is a wizard, you must become a witch!" It was a way of saying that you must follow your man on whatever path he takes. After that, Constance Mbekeni, my sister, spoke on my behalf at the ceremony.

After the ceremony, a piece of the wedding cake was wrapped up for the bride to bring to the groom's ancestral home for the second part of the wedding. But it was never to be, for my leave of absence was up and we had to return to Johannesburg. Winnie carefully stored the cake in anticipation of that day. At our house, number 8115 Orlando West, a large party of friends and family were

there to welcome us back. A sheep had been slaughtered and there was a feast in our honor.

There was no time or money for a honeymoon, and life quickly settled into a routine dominated by the trial. We woke very early in the morning, usually at about four. Winnie prepared breakfast before I left. I would then take the bus to the trial, or make an early morning visit to my office. As much as possible, afternoons and evenings were spent at my office attempting to keep our practice going and to earn some money. Evenings were often taken up with political work and meetings. The wife of a freedom fighter is often like a widow, even when her husband is not in prison. Though I was on trial for treason, Winnie gave me cause for hope. I felt as though I had a new and second chance at life. My love for her gave me added strength for the struggles that lay ahead.

## 27

THE MAJOR EVENT facing the country in 1958 was the general election — “general” only in the sense that three million whites could participate, but none of the thirteen million Africans. We debated whether or not to stage a protest. The central issue was: Did an election in which only whites could participate make any difference to Africans? The answer, as far as the ANC was concerned, was that we could not remain indifferent even when we were shut out of the process. We were excluded, but not unaffected: the defeat of the National Party would be in our interest and that of all Africans.

The ANC joined with the other congresses and SACTU, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, to call a three-day strike during the elections in April. Leaflets were distributed in factories and shops, at railway stations and bus stops, in beer halls and hospitals, and from house to house. “THE NATS MUST GO!” was the main slogan of this campaign. Our preparations worried the government; four days before the election, the state ruled that a gathering of more than ten Africans in any urban area was illegal.

The night before a planned protest, boycott, or stay-away, the leaders of the event would go underground in order to foil the police swoop that inevitably took place. The police were not yet monitoring us around the clock and it was easy to disappear for a

day or two. The night before the strike, Walter, Oliver, Moses Kotane, J. B. Marks, Dan Tloome, Duma Nokwe, and I stayed in the house of Dr. Nthato Motlana, my physician, in Orlando. Very early the next morning, we moved to another house in the same neighborhood where we were able to keep in touch by telephone with other leaders around the city. Communications were not very efficient in those days, particularly in the townships where few people owned telephones, and it was a frustrating task to oversee a strike. We dispatched men to strategic places around the townships to watch the trains, buses, and taxis in order to determine whether or not people were going to work. They returned with bad news: the buses and trains were filled; people were ignoring the strike. Only then did we notice that the gentleman in whose house we were staying was nowhere to be found — he had slipped out and gone to work. The strike was shaping up as a failure.

We resolved to call off the strike. A three-day strike that is canceled on the first day is only a one-day failure; a strike that fails three days running is a fiasco. It was humiliating to have to retreat, but we felt that it would have been more humiliating not to. Less than one hour after we had released a statement calling off the strike, the government-run South African Broadcasting Corporation read our announcement in full. Normally, the SABC ignored the ANC altogether; only in defeat did we make their broadcasts. This time, they even complimented us on calling off the strike. This greatly annoyed Moses Kotane. "To be praised by the SABC, that is too much," he said, shaking his head. Kotane questioned whether we had acted too hastily and played into the state's hands. It was a legitimate concern, but decisions should not be taken out of pride or embarrassment, but out of pure strategy — and strategy here suggested we call off the strike. The fact that the enemy had exploited our surrender didn't mean we were wrong to surrender.

But some areas did not hear that the strike was called off, while others spurned our call. In Port Elizabeth, an ANC stronghold, and other areas of the Cape, the response was better on the second and third days than the first. In general, however, we could not hide the fact that the strike was a failure. As if that were not enough, the Nationalists increased their popular vote in the election by more than 10 percent.

We had heated discussions about whether we ought to have relied

on coercive measures. Should we have used pickets, which generally prevent people from entering their place of work? The hard-liners suggested that if we had deployed pickets, the strike would have been a success. But I have always resisted such methods. It is best to rely on the freely given support of the people; otherwise, that support is weak and fleeting. The organization should be a haven, not a prison. However, if the majority of the organization or the people support a decision, coercion can be used in certain cases against the dissident minority in the interests of the majority. A minority, however vocal, should not be able to frustrate the will of the majority.

In my own house, I attempted to use a different sort of coercion, but without success. Ida Mthimkhulu, a Sotho-speaking woman of my own age, was then our house assistant. Ida was more a member of the family than an employee and I called her Kgaitsemi, which means "Sister" and is a term of endearment. Ida ran the house with military efficiency, and Winnie and I took our orders willingly; I often ran out to do errands at her command.

The day before the strike, I was driving Ida and her twelve-year-old son home, and I mentioned that I needed her to wash and press some shirts for me the following day. A long and uncharacteristic silence followed. Ida then turned to me and said with barely concealed disdain, "You know very well that I can't do that."

"Why not?" I replied, surprised by the vehemence of her reaction.

"Have you forgotten that I, too, am a worker?" she said with some satisfaction. "I will be on strike tomorrow with my people and fellow workers!"

Her son saw my embarrassment and in his boyish way tried to ease the tension by saying that "Uncle Nelson" had always treated her as a sister not a worker. In irritation, she turned on her well-meaning son and said, "Boy, where were you when I was struggling for my rights in that house? If I had not fought hard against your 'Uncle Nelson' I would not today be treated like a sister!" Ida did not come to work the next day, and my shirts went unpressed.

## 28

FEW ISSUES touched a nerve as much as that of passes for women. The state had not weakened in its resolve to impose passes on women and women had not weakened in their resolve to resist. Although the government now called passes "reference books," women weren't fooled: they could still be fined ten pounds or imprisoned for a month for failing to produce their "reference book."

In 1957, spurred by the efforts of the ANC Women's League, women all across the country, in rural areas and in cities, reacted with fury to the state's insistence that they carry passes. The women were courageous, persistent, enthusiastic, indefatigable, and their protest against passes set a standard for antigovernment protest that was never equaled. As Chief Luthuli said, "When the women begin to take an active part in the struggle, no power on earth can stop us from achieving freedom in our lifetime."

All across the southeastern Transvaal, in Standerton, Heidelberg, Balfour, and other dorps, thousands of women protested. On recess from the Treason Trial, Frances Baard and Florence Matomela organized women to refuse passes in Port Elizabeth, their hometown. In Johannesburg, in October, a large group of women gathered at the central pass office, and chased away women who had come to collect passes and clerks who worked in the office, bringing the office to a standstill. Police arrested hundreds of the women.

Not long after these arrests, Winnie and I were relaxing after supper when she quietly informed me that she intended to join the group of Orlando women who would be protesting the following day at the pass office. I was a bit taken aback, and while I was pleased at her sense of commitment and admired her courage, I was also wary. Winnie had become increasingly politicized since our marriage, and had joined the Orlando West branch of the ANC's Women's League, all of which I encouraged.

I told her I welcomed her decision, but that I had to warn her about the seriousness of her action. It would, I said, in a single act, radically change her life. By African standards, Winnie was from a well-to-do family and had been shielded from some of the more

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unpleasant realities of life in South Africa. At the very least, she never had had to worry about where her next meal was coming from. Before our marriage, she had moved in circles of relative wealth and comfort, a life very different from the often hand-to-mouth existence of the freedom fighter.

I told her that if she was arrested she would be certain to be fired by her employer, the provincial administration — we both knew that it was her small income that was supporting the household — and that she could probably never work again as a social worker, since the stigma of imprisonment would make public agencies reluctant to hire her. Finally, she was pregnant, and I warned her of the physical hardship and humiliations of jail. My response may sound harsh, but I felt responsibility both as a husband and as a leader of the struggle, to be as clear as possible about the ramifications of her action. I, myself, had mixed emotions, for the concerns of a husband and a leader do not always coincide.

But Winnie is a determined person, and I suspect my pessimistic reaction only strengthened her resolve. She listened to all I said and informed me that her mind was made up. The next morning I rose early to make her breakfast, and we drove over to the Sisulus' house to meet Walter's wife, Albertina, one of the leaders of the protest. We then drove to the Phefeni station in Orlando, where the women would get the train into town. I embraced her before she boarded the train. Winnie was nervous yet resolute as she waved to me from the train, and I felt as though she were setting out on a long and perilous journey, the end of which neither of us could know.

Hundreds of women converged on the Central Pass Office in downtown Johannesburg. They were old and young; some carried babies on their backs, some wore tribal blankets, while others had on smart suits. They sang, marched, and chanted. Within minutes, they were surrounded by dozens of armed police, who arrested all of them, packed them into vans, and drove them to Marshall Square police station. The women were cheerful throughout; as they were being driven away, some called out to reporters, "Tell our madams we won't be at work tomorrow!" All told, more than one thousand women were arrested.

I knew this not because I was the husband of one of the detainees but because Mandela and Tambo had been called on to represent



most of the women who had been arrested. I quickly made my way to Marshall Square to visit the prisoners and arrange bail. I managed to see Winnie, who beamed when she saw me and seemed as happy as one could be in a bare police cell. It was as if she had given me a great gift that she knew would please me. I told her I was proud of her, but I could not stay and talk as I had quite a lot of legal work to do.

By the end of the second day, the number of arrests had increased and nearly two thousand women were incarcerated, many of them remanded to the Fort to await trial. This created formidable problems not only for Oliver and me, but for the police and the prison authorities. There was simply not enough space to hold them all. There were too few blankets, too few mats and toilets, and too little food. Conditions at the Fort were cramped and dirty. While many in the ANC, including myself, were eager to bail out the women, Lilian Ngoyi, the national president of the Women's League, and Helen Joseph, secretary of the South African Women's Federation, believed that for the protest to be genuine and effective, the women should serve whatever time the magistrate ordered. I remonstrated with them but was told in no uncertain terms that the matter was the women's affair and that the ANC — as well as anxious husbands — should not meddle. I did tell Lilian that I thought she should discuss the issue with the women themselves before making a decision, and escorted her down to the cells where she could poll the prisoners. Many were desperate to be bailed out and had not been adequately prepared for what would await them in prison. As a compromise, I suggested to Lilian that the women spend a fortnight in prison, after which we would bail them out. Lilian accepted.

Over the next two weeks, I spent many hours in court arranging bail for the women. A few were frustrated and took their anger out on me. "Mandela, I am tired of this case of yours," one woman said to me. "If this does not end today I will not ever reappear in court." With the help of relatives and fund-raising organizations, we managed to bail them all out within two weeks.

Winnie did not seem the worse for wear from her prison experience. If she had suffered, she would not have told me anyway. While she was in prison Winnie became friendly with two teenaged Afrikaner wardresses. They were sympathetic and curious, and after

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Winnie was released on bail, we invited them to visit us. They accepted and traveled by train to Orlando. We gave them lunch at the house and afterward Winnie took them for a tour of the township. Winnie and the two wardresses were about the same age and got on well. They laughed together as though they were all sisters. The two girls had an enjoyable day and thanked Winnie, saying that they would like to return. As it turned out, this was not to be, for in traveling to Orlando they had, of necessity, sat in a non-White carriage. (There were no white trains to Orlando for the simple reason that no whites went to Orlando.) As a result, they attracted a great deal of attention and it was soon widely known that two Afrikaner wardresses from the Fort had visited Winnie and me. This was not a problem for us, but it proved to be one for them: the prison authorities dismissed them. We never saw nor heard from them again.

## 29

FOR SIX MONTHS — ever since the end of the preparatory hearings in January — we had been awaiting and preparing for our formal trial, which was to commence in August 1958. The government set up a special high court — Mr. Justice F. L. Rumpff, president of the three-man court, Mr. Justice Kennedy, and Mr. Justice Ludorf. The panel was not promising: it consisted of three white men, all with ties to the ruling party. While Judge Rumpff was an able man and better informed than the average white South African, he was rumored to be a member of the Broederbond, a secret Afrikaner organization whose aim was to solidify Afrikaner power. Judge Ludorf was a well-known member of the National Party, as was Judge Kennedy. Kennedy had a reputation as a hanging judge, having sent a group of twenty-three Africans to the gallows for the murder of two white policemen.

Shortly before the case resumed, the state played another unpleasant trick on us. They announced that the venue of the trial was to be shifted from Johannesburg to Pretoria, thirty-six miles away. The trial would be conducted in an ornate former synagogue that had been converted into a court of law. All of the accused as well as our defense team resided in Johannesburg, so we would be forced

to travel each day to Pretoria. The trial would now take up even more of our time and money — neither of which we had in abundance. Those who had managed to keep their jobs had been able to do so because the court had been near their work. Changing the venue was also an attempt to crush our spirits by separating us from our natural supporters. Pretoria was the home of the National Party, and the ANC barely had a presence there.

Nearly all of the ninety-two accused commuted to Pretoria in a lumbering, uncomfortable bus, with stiff wooden slats for seats, which left every day at six in the morning and took two hours to reach the Old Synagogue. The round-trip took us nearly five hours — time far better spent earning money to pay for food, rent, and clothes for the children.

Once more we were privileged to have a brilliant and aggressive defense team, ably led by advocate Israel Maisels, and assisted by Bram Fischer, Rex Welsh, Vernon Berrangé, Sydney Kentridge, Tony O'Dowd, and G. Nicholas. On the opening day of the trial, they displayed their combativeness with a risky legal maneuver that a number of us had decided on in consultation with the lawyers. Issy Maisels rose dramatically and applied for the recusal of Judges Ludorf and Rumpff on the grounds that both had conflicts of interest that prevented them from being fair arbiters of our case. There was an audible murmur in the courtroom. The defense contended that Rumpff, as the judge at the 1952 Defiance Trial, had already adjudicated on certain aspects of the present indictment and therefore it was not in the interest of justice that he try this case. We argued that Ludorf was prejudiced because he had represented the government in 1954 as a lawyer for the police when Harold Wolpe had sought a court interdict to eject the police from a meeting of the Congress of the People.

This was a dangerous strategy, for we could easily win this legal battle but lose the war. Although we regarded both Ludorf and Rumpff as strong supporters of the National Party, there were far worse judges in the country who could replace them. In fact, while we were keen to have Ludorf step down, we secretly hoped that Rumpff, whom we respected as an honest broker, would decide not to recuse himself. Rumpff always stood for law, no matter what his own political opinions might be, and we were convinced that when it came to law, we could only be found innocent.

That Monday, the atmosphere was expectant when the three red-robed judges marched into the courtroom. Judge Ludorf announced that he would withdraw, adding that he had completely forgotten about the previous case. But Rumpff refused to recuse himself and instead offered the assurance that his judgment in the Defiance case would have no influence on him in this one. To replace Ludorf, the state appointed Mr. Justice Bekker, a man we liked right from the start and who was not linked to the National Party. We were happy about Rumpff's decision.

After the success of this first maneuver, we tried a second, nearly as risky. We began a long and detailed argument contesting the indictment itself. We claimed, among other things, that the indictment was vague and lacked particularity. We also argued that the planning of violence was necessary to prove high treason, and the prosecution needed to provide examples of its claim that we intended to act violently. It became apparent by the end of our argument that the three judges agreed. In August, the court quashed one of the two charges under the Suppression of Communism Act. On October 13, after two more months of legal wrangling, the Crown suddenly announced the withdrawal of the indictment altogether. This was extraordinary, but we were too well versed in the devious ways of the state to celebrate. A month later the prosecution issued a new, more carefully worded indictment and announced that the trial would proceed against only thirty of the accused; the others would be tried later. I was among the first thirty, all of whom were members of the ANC.

Under the new indictment, the prosecution was now required to prove the intention to act violently. As Pirow put it, the accused knew that the achievement of the goals of the Freedom Charter would "necessarily involve the overthrow of the State by violence." The legal sparring continued through the middle of 1959, when the court dismissed the Crown's indictment against the remaining sixty-one accused. For months on end, the activity in the courtroom consisted of the driest legal maneuvering imaginable. Despite the defense's successes in showing the shoddiness of the government's case, the state was obdurately persistent. As the minister of justice said, "This trial will be proceeded with, no matter how many millions of pounds it costs. What does it matter how long it takes?"

Just after midnight on the 4th of February, 1958, I returned home after a meeting to find Winnie alone and in pain, about to go into labor. I rushed her to Baragwanath Hospital, but was told that it would be many hours before her time. I stayed until I had to leave for the trial in Pretoria. Immediately after the session ended, I speeded back with Duma Nokwe to find mother and daughter doing extremely well. I held my newborn daughter in my arms and pronounced her a true Mandela. My relative, Chief Mdingi, suggested the name Zenani, which means "What have you brought to the world?" — a poetic name that embodies a challenge, suggesting that one must contribute something to society. It is a name one does not simply possess, but has to live up to.

My mother came from the Transkei to help Winnie, and planned to give Zenani a Xhosa baptism by calling in an *inyanga*, a tribal healer, to give the baby a traditional herbal bath. But Winnie was adamantly opposed, thinking it unhealthy and outdated, and instead smeared Zenani with olive oil, plastered her little body with Johnson's Baby Powder, and filled her stomach with shark oil.

As soon as Winnie was up and about, I undertook the task of teaching the new mother of the household how to drive. Driving, in those days, was a man's business; very few women, especially African women, were to be seen in the driver's seat. But Winnie was independent-minded and intent on learning, and it would be useful because I was gone so much of the time and could not drive her places myself. Perhaps I am an impatient teacher or perhaps I had a headstrong pupil, but when I attempted to give Winnie lessons along a relatively flat and quiet Orlando road, we could not seem to shift gears without quarreling. Finally, after she had ignored one too many of my suggestions, I stormed out of the car and walked home. Winnie seemed to do better without my tutelage than with it, for she proceeded to drive around the township on her own for the next hour. By that time, we were ready to make up, and it is a story we subsequently laughed about.

Married life and motherhood were an adjustment for Winnie. She was then a young woman of twenty-five who had yet to form her own character completely. I was already formed and rather stubborn. I knew that others often saw her as "Mandela's wife." It was undoubtedly difficult for her to create her own identity in my

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shadow. I did my best to let her bloom in her own right, and she soon did so without any of my help.

## 30

ON APRIL 6, 1959, on the anniversary of Jan Van Riebeeck's landing at the Cape, a new organization was born that sought to rival the ANC as the country's premier African political organization and repudiate the white domination that began three centuries before. With a few hundred delegates from around the country at the Orlando Communal Hall, the Pan Africanist Congress launched itself as an Africanist organization that expressly rejected the multiracialism of the ANC. Like those of us who had formed the Youth League fifteen years before, the founders of the new organization thought the ANC was insufficiently militant, out of touch with the masses, and dominated by non-Africans.

Robert Sobukwe was elected president and Potlako Leballo became national secretary, both of them former ANC Youth Leaguers. The PAC presented a manifesto and a constitution, along with Sobukwe's opening address, in which he called for a "government of the Africans by the Africans and for the Africans." The PAC declared that they intended to overthrow white supremacy and establish a government Africanist in origin, socialist in content, and democratic in form. They disavowed communism in all its forms and considered whites and Indians "foreign minority groups" or "aliens" who had no natural place in South Africa. South Africa was for Africans, and no one else.

The birth of the PAC did not come as a surprise to us. The Africanists within the ANC had been loudly voicing their grievances for more than three years. In 1957, the Africanists had called for a vote of no confidence in the Transvaal executive at the national conference, but had been defeated. They had opposed the election day stay-at-home of 1958, and their leader, Potlako Leballo, had been expelled from the ANC. At the November 1958 ANC conference, a group of Africanists had declared their opposition to the Freedom Charter, claiming it violated the principles of African nationalism.

The PAC claimed that they drew their inspiration from the principles surrounding the ANC's founding in 1912, but their views

derived principally from the emotional African nationalism put forth by Anton Lembede and A. P. Mda during the founding of the Youth League in 1944. The PAC echoed the axioms and slogans of that time: Africa for the Africans and a United States of Africa. But the immediate cause for their breakaway was their objection to the Freedom Charter and the presence of whites and Indians in the Congress Alliance leadership. They were opposed to interracial cooperation, in large part because they believed that white communists and Indians had come to dominate the ANC.

The founders of the PAC were all well known to me. Robert Sobukwe was an old friend. He was the proverbial gentleman and scholar (his colleagues called him "Prof"). His consistent willingness to pay the penalty for his principles earned my enduring respect. Potlako Leballo, Peter Raboroko, and Zephania Mothopeng were all friends and colleagues. I was astonished and indeed somewhat dismayed to learn that my political mentor Gaur Radebe had joined the PAC. I found it curious that a former member of the Communist Party's Central Committee had decided to align himself with an organization that then explicitly rejected Marxism.

Many of those who cast their lot with the PAC did so out of personal grudges or disappointments and were not thinking of the advancement of the struggle, but of their own feelings of jealousy or revenge. I have always believed that to be a freedom fighter one must suppress many of the personal feelings that make one feel like a separate individual rather than part of a mass movement. One is fighting for the liberation of millions of people, not the glory of one individual. I am not suggesting that a man become a robot and rid himself of all personal feelings and motivations. But in the same way that a freedom fighter subordinates his own family to the family of the people, he must subordinate his own individual feelings to the movement.

I found the views and the behavior of the PAC immature. A philosopher once noted that something is odd if a person is not liberal when he is young and conservative when he is old. I am not a conservative, but one matures and regards some of the views of one's youth as undeveloped and callow. While I sympathized with the views of the Africanists and once shared many of them, I believed that the freedom struggle required one to make compromises and

accept the kind of discipline that one resisted as a younger, more impulsive man.

The PAC put forward a dramatic and overambitious program that promised quick solutions. Their most dramatic — and naïve — promise was that liberation would be achieved by the end of 1963, and they urged Africans to ready themselves for that historic hour. “In 1960 we take our first step,” they promised, “in 1963, our last towards freedom and independence.” Although this prediction inspired hope and enthusiasm among people who were tired of waiting, it is always dangerous for an organization to make promises it cannot keep.

Because of the PAC’s anticommunism, they became the darlings of the Western press and the American State Department, which hailed its birth as a dagger to the heart of the African left. Even the National Party saw a potential ally in the PAC: they viewed the PAC as mirroring their anticommunism and supporting their views on separate development. The Nationalists also rejected interracial cooperation, and both the National Party and the American State Department saw fit to exaggerate the size and importance of the new organization for their own ends.

While we welcomed anyone brought into the struggle by the PAC, the role of the organization was almost always that of a spoiler. They divided the people at a critical moment, and that was hard to forget. They would ask the people to go to work when we called a general strike, and make misleading statements to counter any pronouncement we would make. Yet the PAC aroused in me the hope that even though the founders were breakaway ANC men, unity between our two groups was possible. I thought that once the heated polemics had cooled, the essential commonality of the struggle would bring us together. Animated by this belief, I paid particular attention to their policy statement and activities, with the idea of finding affinities rather than differences.

The day after the PAC’s inaugural conference, I approached Sobukwe for a copy of his presidential address, as well as the constitution and other policy material. Sobukwe, I thought, seemed pleased by my interest, and said he would make sure I received the requested material. I saw him again not long afterward and reminded him of my request and he said the material was on its way. I



subsequently met Potlako Leballo and said, "Man, you chaps keep promising me your material, but no one has given it to me." He said, "Nelson, we have decided not to give it to you because we know you only want to use it to attack us." I disabused him of this notion, and he relented, giving me all that I had sought.

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IN 1959, Parliament passed the Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act, which created eight separate ethnic bantustans. This was the foundation of what the state called *groot* or grand apartheid. At roughly the same time, the government introduced the deceptively named Extension of University Education Act, another leg of grand apartheid, which barred nonwhites from racially "open" universities. In introducing the Bantu Self Government Act, De Wet Nel, the minister of Bantu Administration and Development, said that the welfare of every individual and population group could best be developed within its own national community. Africans, he said, could never be integrated into the white community.

The immorality of the bantustan policy, whereby 70 percent of the people would be apportioned only 13 percent of the land, was obvious. Under the new policy, even though two-thirds of Africans lived in so-called white areas, they could only have citizenship in their own "tribal homelands." The scheme gave us neither freedom in "white" areas nor independence in what they deemed "our" areas. Verwoerd said the creation of the bantustans would engender so much goodwill that they would never become the breeding grounds of rebellion.

In reality, it was quite the opposite. The rural areas were in turmoil. Few areas fought so stubbornly as Zeerust, where Chief Abram Moilwa (with the able assistance of advocate George Bizos) led his people to resist the so-called Bantu Authorities. Such areas were usually invisible to the press, and the government used their inaccessibility to veil the cruelty of the state's actions. Scores of innocent people were arrested, prosecuted, jailed, banished, beaten, tortured, and murdered. The people of Sekhukhuland also revolted, and the paramount chief, Moroamotsho Sekhukhune, Godfrey Sekhukhune, and other counselors were banished or arrested

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