

Of all the people on the scene at the time, I think I ~~do~~ <sup>at least</sup> ~~gladly~~ <sup>of some</sup> ~~advocate~~ <sup>whom I had</sup> my "Chambres," ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> bent down as if to tie his shoelaces, ~~dipping~~ <sup>dipping</sup> his fingers in his sock, ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> pulled out a tightly folded piece of paper. <sup>and said:</sup> "Can you keep this for a little while, someone will call for it?" ~~asked.~~ <sup>Some while</sup> ~~later,~~ <sup>later,</sup> I was back at my desk working through some law reports, the slip of paper securely tucked in my sock, when ~~the~~ another comrade appeared. This time I bent down as if to tie my laces, pulled out the piece of paper <sup>in turn,</sup> and handed it to him; he, of course, bent down as if to tie his laces . . . . . and the piece of paper was <sup>soon</sup> on its way out into the corridor, down the life and into the street.

Article in Dawn to commemorate anniversary of MK. For Peter Mayelbuz (Joel Detshtenze)

Of all the people on the scene at the time, I think I can lay claim to having made the least ~~glorious~~ <sup>dramatic</sup> contribution towards the launching of ~~some struggle~~ <sup>MK.</sup> ~~in South Africa~~. I was an advocate in Cape Town, and one day a comrade whom I had frequently defended appeared at my "Chambers"; ~~closing~~ <sup>closed</sup> the door behind him, and ~~he~~ bent down as if to tie his shoelaces, ~~dipping~~ <sup>Dipping</sup> his fingers in his sock, ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> pulled out a tightly folded piece of paper. <sup>(and said: "Can you keep this for a little while, someone will call for it?")</sup> ~~asked~~. <sup>Some while</sup> ~~later~~, I was back at my desk working through some law reports, the slip of paper securely tucked in my sock, when ~~the~~ another comrade appeared. This time I bent down as if to tie my laces, pulled out the piece of paper <sup>in turn</sup> and handed it to him; ~~he~~, of course, bent down as if to tie his laces . . . . . and the piece of paper was <sup>soon</sup> on its way out into the corridor, down the lift and into the street.

Only afterwards did I learn - or, rather, guess from something which someone had let slip - that that piece of paper had contained the MK oath, and that I had done my bit towards the launching of armed struggle in South Africa.

I was in my mid-twenties then, part of a generation that had grown up politically in the golden decade of the 1950's. We had taken part as youth in the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People and the national work stoppage after Sharpeville. Often, during these years we had asked older comrades to explain to us 'from a theoretical point of view' how it was possible to believe in a non-violent end to apartheid, let alone to capitalism in South Africa (we were all socialists), and come to nationalism through socialism, just

~~also through political~~ just as ~~the~~ a different generation of today is coming to socialism through nationalism). Our older comrades resolutely defended the possibility of peaceful change - if the people, especially the workers, were sufficiently mobilised, and if they would take a strong enough stand, then it was possible to destroy apartheid and build a new society peacefully. The fact is that at that time, when the ANC was legal and could lead mass campaigns without serious repression, when papers like the Guardian could openly express the people's wishes, the masses were not in a mood <sup>were they</sup> not physically prepared for armed confrontation with the regime. It was the State of Emergency ~~of 1960~~ <sup>and</sup> the banning of the ANC in 1960 that convinced us all - not

theoretically, but in practice, that new forms of struggle had to be found. The Stayaway Campaign of 1961, timed to coincide with the declaration of South Africa as a racist republic, was the last attempt at using mass pressure <sup>(We threw everything into it, but</sup> on its own ~~as a means~~ <sup>but in vain.</sup> of ~~challenging the state~~. With meetings, newspapers and individuals progressively banned, we just knew there had to be a different response. The question <sup>then became:</sup> ~~was:~~ <sup>if</sup> ~~armed struggle started~~, <sup>when</sup> where would it be, who would take part, what form would it take? Each one of us had to make personal choices. Presumably ~~some~~ people ~~were~~ were making lists, approaching people. I was never asked, I was doing a lot of public work, in the courts, writing, addressing meetings. Denis Goldberg seemed to be fraying always around less and less, other people me

knew, seemed to disappear. No one asked any questions. It was ~~better~~ <sup>better</sup> not to know.

One day, Denis rolled up at my place and asked if, <sup>seeing that I was a keen mountaineer,</sup> I could take a <sup>crowd of young</sup> ~~on Table Mountain~~ people for a very vigorous bike <sup>one</sup> Sunday. I agreed, and we met near the Kirstenbosch Gardens, and I really took them up hill and down dale, till they were gasping and exhausted, though none of them complained openly, since they were not going to let a white man (me) do better than them.

Later, Denis asked if I could give a class to a group of rangers on a political education holiday at a place called Mamore, not very far from Cape Town. I agreed, and a ~~short~~ <sup>few weeks</sup> ~~while~~ afterwards I was sitting in a tent, baking hot, talking about the history of South Africa from a people's point of view. It was mid-summer, and

I don't remember what I said, but I do recall some of those present dozing off. The person in charge, Looksmart Solwandle, had a thin branch in his hand, and everytime someone's eyes closed, he would flick the branch on the person's arm to wake him up. "If the teacher makes them fall asleep" I told <sup>comrade</sup> Looksmart "you should hit the teacher." <sup>Looksmart, the gentlest of comrades, was quite</sup> ~~Not long afterwards, the~~ <sup>stem when it came to respecting the teacher, however. In any event,</sup> the class was interrupted: The police had arrived, and in large numbers. The place was surrounded, we were taken off to the nearest police station, and processed one by one. There was no hard evidence against anyone, and we were told to be ready to face charges on some technical violation <sup>(or other)</sup>. (These were the days, when the police needed evidence!).  
though I suspect that Lieutenant Lawrence

About a year or so later, another knock on the door in my 'chambers', and this time it was a woman who introduced herself <sup>to me</sup> as the wife of comrade Looksmart. Slowly she took me through the story of how her husband had been detained under the 90 day law, how the police had moved him from one police station to the next. I kept interrupting to say sadly that there was nothing we lawyers could do, ~~in terms of the 90 day law~~, until she reached the end of the story: comrade Looksmart had been found ~~hanging~~ dead, allegedly after hanging himself in his cell. This was the first time in our generation that a comrade had been tortured to death. The shock was overwhelming. But there was something we as lawyers could do - we could demand an inquest, and at least try to expose what had happened.

This was a bitter time for all of us. Our movement was taking heavy blows. The



dark decade of the 1960's was upon us. Our  
main function was to survive and regroup. The  
capture of our leaders at Rivonia, with Denis  
amongst them (so that was where he had ~~been~~  
been!), led to more and more detentions, and  
soon I was amongst them, being questioned on  
a whole range of things, including that camp  
at Mamore. Fortunately, we had managed to  
get many comrades out, which was not all  
that easy, Cape Town being far from any  
border. One of them ~~was~~ <sup>we were especially</sup> sorry to see go -  
his name was Martin, and he was younger and  
~~softer and more intellectual than the other~~  
~~comrades, all of whom~~ ~~softer than most of~~  
~~the comrades and had introduced~~  
and although he seemed a bit soft for the  
city, having spent most of his life in educational  
institutions in the Transkei, he had been ~~soft~~  
virtually the only ANC intellectual in what we  
called 'the locations'; ~~at the time~~ the other

intellectuals being mainly with the ANC.  
I remember going to fetch Martin one  
night to take him to a safer  
hideout - the police were after him,  
~~after~~ a car ~~in~~ in which he was travelling  
had been found to contain ANC pamphlets -  
and this required real courage on my  
part, since the dogs in the location  
~~set~~ <sup>set</sup> up such a howl, and there was  
no way of convincing them that this  
white man marching along nervously  
was a comrade who believed in the  
Freedom Charter.....

Twenty and more years later, at  
the ANC ~~South~~ National Consultative Conference  
in Kuluwe, ~~three~~ <sup>a</sup> comrade comes up to  
me, stares in my face, looks again, and  
asks if I am comrade Albio Sachs. I  
stare back at him, there is something

familiar about him, but I can't really  
recognise him. "Remember me?" he  
asks "from the camp in Manure ...."  
And another comrade, and another, all  
~~had been~~ <sup>were</sup> in the first detachments of  
MK, and had ~~seen~~ <sup>saw</sup> action in Zimbabwe  
before being imprisoned for a dozen  
years by Smith's forces. Now they  
and I ~~were~~ <sup>are</sup> together again, all of  
us still struggling, active and alive,  
parts of this indestructible thing called  
the ANC, hugging each other in  
celebration of our survival and <sup>of our</sup> confidence  
in the future. And there up on the  
platform, is the soft, solitary  
intellectual, only now he is not  
called Martin any more, he is known  
as Chris .....