

It takes a lot of things to change the world:  
Anger and tenacity. Science and indignation,  
The quick initiative, the long reflection,  
The cold patience and the infinite perseverance,  
The understanding of the particular case and  
The understanding of the ensemble;  
Only the lessons of reality can teach us to transform reality.

~ Bertolt Brecht

Which is worse, the global political crises or our domestic South African crisis? Whichever, there can be no doubt that the scramble for the last spoils on earth by those with power or wealth is upon us wherever we live. The struggle for equality by the poor here and anywhere cannot happen without also supporting Greta Thunberg and the Extinction Rebellion now mounted by young people everywhere. Ultimately the struggle for equality and the management of the remaining resources on earth have the same roots and belong to the same struggle. Will they come together? The evidence is scant as yet.

In my neighbourhood the City of Cape Town approves building plans that are developer influenced and driven. Instead of planning the undoing the unequal City apartheid left us with Cape Town is still building the wrong City. It's a longer story but money is wasted on wrong roads, wrong spacial planning developments and wrong supermarket complexes. At the apex of our social pyramid politicians and those who make their riches on the stock market continue in an embrace that ever increases the divide between have and have-not. Even for the middle class they leave no space. That is also a bigger debate but our new mega developments crush rather than allow for small and medium-sized business. And as for housing, the physical distance between rich and the rest is continually expanded, by design!

Each new complex kills the small shop-keeper on the corner because she/he cannot afford the rental. Our Blue Route Mall or Long Beach Mall are home for big franchised businesses only and hardly for home-grown entrepreneurs. Checkers, Pick n Pay, Dis-Chem, Steers and the like are the villains aided and abetted by the City Council. They call it growth. The state claims it encourages small-business but instead it feeds a process to ever narrower monopoly at the top. The narrative they spin about housing for the poor is deception. Democratic Alliance policy toward Masiphumelele means one thing only: we want you out of here because you occupy real estate we want for a luxury suburb. As one City politician put it to me: you don't understand, we could get real good money for this land and the higher the price the better would be the houses we'd move these people to. Where? To the edge of the City. This has no other implication than moving the poor, speak Black community, to the same disadvantage that apartheid did. It's the old rich-poor divide, and in our case, it's mainly based on the colour of your skin.

I might sound frustrated but it has not left me without passion to do and say what I think is right.

**Today, 19 October, we remember Black Wednesday, 42 years ago.** On Wednesday 19th October 1977 the apartheid government arrested, detained and banned activists aligned to the Black Consciousness Movement. Additionally 18 organisations involved in anti-apartheid activism, the **South African Christian Institute** amongst them, were banned. Three newspapers

were shut down on this day. Every year the date now serves to commemorate Media Freedom Day.

Things that kept me busy:

1. Speaking in ***The Heart of White Silence***. On 24 September South Africans celebrated National Heritage Day. I was invited to address the annual gathering of families evicted from Simon's Town over half a century ago. They come from Ocean View, Gugulethu and places on the Cape Flats to remember the racist violence 50 years ago that broke their families and ruined their livelihoods. They come back to Simon's Town every year to remember and to warn that racism and violence against fellow citizens shall never again be tolerated. Sadly it's only the victims who recall past atrocities here in Simon's Town while the whites who benefitted, directly or indirectly, are noted for their absence and silence of the apartheid past. I called my talk: ***The Importance of being here in the Heart of White Silence***. You can read my address on the cover page of my website.
2. ***David Stuurman vs Nelson Mandela***. Only one man was convicted three times to terms of imprisonment on Robben Island. He fled twice, and so he would not flee a third time, the English colonial rulers took him to a prison in Sydney, Australia. After serving his sentence he was denied the right to return to South Africa. He died in Australia. His acts of treason included uniting Khoi, Slave and Xhosa who, in their hundreds, on horseback went into battle against the colonial occupier. He was born ca. 1773 and died in 1830. He fought for liberty 150 years before ANC and others were imprisoned on the island. Yet he gets only scant mention on Robben Island when compared to the exhibits on the political prisoners of recent times. This error or omission must be rectified! The Ruben Richards Foundation gathered forty persons on Robben Island in April to articulate the correction requested of the museum's management. See photos of the event on my website.

As an induction into the conference we were treated as prisoners for the initial hours we spent on the Island. It included being given a number by which you were called to attention, being cuffed to another prisoner and then marched us in 'span' formation to the lime quarry. In the evening we experienced 'prison' alone in a dark cell with a mat and blanket only. For the rest our accommodation was in double-bunk mass cells while our gathering was in a prison court-yard. I was present and am glad to join the call for David Stuurman to be acknowledged. I addressed the gathering about my ancestor, Zara Schmelen, a Khoi contemporary of David Stuurman. (Photos of event on website.)

3. ***'The Stompie affair kills the International Defence and Aid Fund'***. This is the title of a chapter in a recently published book by Frank Bridgland with the title ***Truth, Lies and Alibis*** published by Tafelberg. The book deals with the so-called Stompie case and Winnie Mandela's culpability in his death. Opinion on her guilt or otherwise is divisive to this day. International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa is deeply intertwined with Winnie and the trial in which she was charged with Stompie's death. As the IDAF director I withheld but under pressure granted the funds demanded by her defence team. This single episode brought IDAF to a premature end. It also wrecked the relationship I had with the Mandela's. Bridgland cannot be failed for his research and connecting diverse pieces of a story that is important. His condemnation may be harsh but that does not distract from what it is he analyses.

My Newsletter 21, written shortly after Madiba's death in 2013, traces my close but ultimately broken relationship with the Mandela's. (See details about the book on my website)

4. **Nelson Mandela Day 2019 celebrated in Vienna.** My part work, part holiday in Europe earlier this year coincided with the annual global Nelson Mandela Day on 18<sup>th</sup> July. With others I shared the podium at Mandela Place in Vienna. In my address I applauded the 150 Viennese who came to proclaim the quality we need to revive: international solidarity! See my address, in both German and English on my website.
5. **Masiphumelele** – The on-going segregation and deprivation the City dispenses in my neighbourhood. For over a decade now I have observed developments in Masi. It is evident to me how the situation consistently got worse and will continue to get worse in present circumstances. Overcrowded living conditions have led to shacks now being double and even triple story high. Two separate fires destroyed close to 150 homes in Masi recently. There are countless Non-Governmental Organizations and Churches active in Masi. Their collective effort might offer some relief but has not improved life for the residents. For me this raises questions civil society should ask themselves: Is their band-aid role defensible when overall policy leads toward deeper misery? When they should know that their respective contributions have not helped address the flawed dispensation dished out by the authorities. This should have been recognized years ago. Together churches and NGO's could have immense bargaining power with the City administration. They should weigh up their collective impact and on the basis of the evidence demand that the City provides land it owns, builds essential infrastructure and offers better services. In the wake of them standing up I submit that the help they provide is largely wasted.

In the absence of changing the way the City deals with Masi in the short term, I can claim no more than playing a small role in supporting Masi community leaders raising funds and collecting materials for those who lost everything in the fires. See photo's on my website.

6. **Kritisches Christentum. Critical Christianity** is an Austrian magazine dedicated to progressive thinking. On my website find my article in both English and German. In it I explain how we smuggled the KC publications into South Africa during the 1980's. Beyers Naudé and a few others who could read and speak German, found confirmation for their radical Christian thinking in this magazine which covered liberation theology emanating from Latin America during the struggles that were taking place simultaneously on another continent. Micro-film had just become available and provided an ideal means to hide text on persons and parcels. By means of this we communicated into and out from South Africa for over a decade without the SB's (Security Branch) finding out. This is the topic of a book I and others are researching and writing on at present.
7. **Windhoek Perspectives.** I had a rare opportunity when I was invited by a German Windhoek (Namibia) congregation to explain race and racism and how it impacted on my family during colonial times. The title page refers to: *Namibia's difficult handling of its colonial past.* More precisely, I would have said: German Namibians and their reticence to come to terms with their colonial role. I am grateful for the opportunity to have made my points. My contribution is in English. See details on my website.

Items newly added to my website:

8. Present day **Ghaub Game Lodge** has a history that goes back to the birth place of my father in 1914 when my grandfather was a farm assistant on what was then a Rhenish mission station. In 1915 German colonial troops had retreated to this farm where they were defeated by South African troops. The peace of Khorab was signed a few days later. See extract from the Lodge brochure on my website. The Lodge had asked me to submit the text and photos.

9. Ursula Trüper, our family historian, provided an essay to a study series that appears in Berlin. The goal of this edition was the connection between colonialism and race during the time Germany had colonies prior to WWI. (Text, in German, yet to be uploaded)
  10. ***Death of my first mentor: Peter Horn***, poet and rebel. Acclaimed South African poet Peter Horn died in August 2019. He taught at the German School Johannesburg in the early 1960's after his family emigrated from Germany. He was a wonderful teacher and mentor who opened my eyes and made me understand the world beyond the narrow confines of race and nationality that home and school had nurtured me into until then. See obituary and a poem Peter wrote in recognition of my work (on my website).
  11. The friendship between ***Franco Frescura*** and myself goes back to student days. His ability to pen political cartoons stand out to this day. He often got into deep trouble, for example when he created an image of a man in baggy trousers, seen from the back, bending down and between his legs appears to grab a bottle of brandy from his liquor cabinet. The caption read: The Prime Minister re-shuffling his cabinet. The man in question was John Vorster, known to imbibe, then ruler over South Africa. In a recent memoir called ***Franco's Greatest Hits*** he included several images he created for us at the Christian Institute for several of our publications. See a selection on my website.
  12. ***Memories of Rain***. This is a DVD in which two former MK members reflect on their decision to overthrow apartheid through violent means. One Black and the other White they speak of their motivation to join an underground guerilla force, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Both are decent and humane human beings. In the film both test their assumptions before, during and after the struggle they were willing to give their lives for. There are many other former MK soldiers, never recognized, given due respect or being celebrated by the ANC or society at large. I'm not referring to the MK Veteran's League. I'm also not judging MK's role and strategies. I seek better recognition of individuals in our society who chose to put their lives on the line, more than any other, when apartheid sought to crush us all. If you want access to the DVD please contact me.
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