

# Horst's 49th Newsletter

## January 2022

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

*Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

Irish poet William Butler Yeats' poem *The Second Coming*, written in 1919, is about foreboding, chaos, prophecy and meaninglessness. Yeats sees a world falling apart and a new ominous reality that may emerge. The idea of 'the Second Coming' Yeats insisted, is not meant in a Biblical sense.

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Dear friends, dear relations, herewith my take:

### 1. THE STATE OF US

Never was it more urgent for South Africa to implement that which the Bill of Rights in our Constitution provides for. The ANC Government has failed to deliver when it could have during past decades. It's talk of renewal now fails to inspire. No opposition party has come to fill the glaring gap. Instead all the parties hog the centre-right where old and new elites grab of the cake whatever they can. I perceive growing anger and alienation by those who have nothing. Doing for the common good is ever more distant. The July 2021 Durban moment, the countrywide multiple daily demonstrations and the violent political debate tells me that the centre is not holding.

To take a closer look at the mounting tensions in our country you might like to read Dinga Sikwebu, *Sisulu's political inauthenticity is astonishing*  
<https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/dinga-sikwebu-sisulus-political-inauthenticity-is-astonishing-20220119>

Durban moments can erupt any moment as the gap between rich and poor widens further. The populist faction in the ANC, hostile to democracy, is planning for war the Rev Frank Chikane told a meeting recently. The EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters) and now the super-funded Action South Africa (Herman Mashaba) party are openly racist in their populist rhetoric. Like elsewhere we may soon find ourselves ruled by a right-wing – pretending to do it 'for the people'. It has happened before. The right-wing threat, as so often, arises when political and economic elites are feathering their nests beyond the endurance of those looking on.

It is not viable for an incapable ANC to hold on to its centre-right position and believe it is the only or best option to stop populist right-wing rule. The masses of the poor, unemployed, disaffected and aggrieved will be swayed by the right that is in the making. At the same time those with viable progressive agenda's are no-where to be found. Those like Abahlali Basemjondolo are too small to politically educate and organise adequately amongst the poor and in that way counter the would-be dictators from finding traction. It looks all too much as though we are sleep-walking into our self-made morass.

The first State Capture Commission report by acting Chief-Justice Raymond Zondo catalogues the extent of ANC, and thus state failure. The consequences of this will revisit us in coming years! Zondo in summary says that those who now want to correct the corrosion of the Zuma years, seemed to 'simply [to] not care....or slept on the job, or had no clue what to do'. This accusation points at the very people who now speak of 'renewing' the ANC!

You hear my anger and frustration. I feel shame that I fell for the rhetoric in exile that the ANC would bring equality and justice to all and today the poor are remain marginalised. I wrongly believed that I worked for and within a movement that would deliver us from racism and exploitation. Despite this, in my remaining time, I will be there wherever honest progressive voices emerge.

## 1. ON LEARNING THAT ONCE I WAS A WHISTLE-BLOWER TOO

Throughout the early years of democracy there were many who wanted to build a new and capable administration – as the Zondo report shows – but who were removed. Many others were edged out. The still-entrenched ANC gate-keepers use their pet words 'counter-revolutionaries' and enemies of 'transformation' to assert their way.

I too lost my job as head of the Fisheries department in 2005 for countering political interference, exposing corruption and not allocating fishing quotas to ANC front companies, COSATU trade unions and Transkei royalty. When I blew the whistle on a fishing company and fishing inspectorate collusion to secure great riches for the corruptor and the corrupted, guns were bought and people hired to take me out. To be precise, the car park on the first floor at Foretrust building was the place where I would be killed. Nominal support came from the then Scorpions. The corruptors pursued me in the courts for fifteen years, long into my retirement. If it had not been for a lawyer friend who was equally hounded I would have come to financial ruin. Those at the top were disinterested, could not care.

I knew my time as a civil servant was up when the fickle and mostly lazy ANC MPs designated to oversee fisheries asked me (January 2005) why I had become an "enemy of transformation". I was asked why I had not kicked-out eminent and highly experienced marine scientists and replaced them with (Black) honours graduates. Where previously the MPs addressed me as "comrade Horst" I now became Mr Kleinschmidt. I thought even if I could defend myself I would not be heard. I thus asked the up-and-coming other-complexioned young scientist Theresa Akkers to describe what we had achieved to support Black marine scientists. She told the MPs, that since 1994, 40-odd scientists had been supported up to Masters level – only one was White, and she was female. Her report was accepted but I was called back to the podium. What had I done to rid my Department of 180 too many "Coloureds" (my total staff complement was around 750). Attempts to explain that the demographics of the Western Cape ("Coloured" majority) from where the Department operated, and the historic connection to fisheries, was dismissed. My retort to the acting Director-General that she demanded a racial quota system was reminiscent of Nazi Germany, was a fatal mis-step. I said that her ruling reminded one of Nazi Germany when Jewish lawyers, it was ruled should not exceed as a percentage, the percentage number of Jews living in Germany at the time.

I was edged out. I became just another White man tainted with apartheid. The former Apartheid National Party Minister, now ANC Fisheries Minister begged me to become his advisor. Mistakenly and without a job or pension to look forward to I accepted to become his advisor. My input to him was fruitless but much worse was that I had agreed to stay mum about the reasons, why I left my job. – I regret my choice.

Fast-forward to 2022. I am not alone to say that we who spent a vast part of our life for what we believed was for the common good, that we feel betrayed by a group who cannot get beyond words of 'renewal of the ANC'. They are the collective group who feel that the end justifies the means, who wanted power more than wanting justice for all, equality for all, land and wealth re-distribution, and access to decent education, health care, housing, water, sanitation and electricity supply for all. The worst is that we now stand embarrassed and humiliated in front of those who never joined us, who had qualms about apartheid but in the end thought the system could be reformed who, I sense laugh or belittle us and say: I told you so. They say that we wasted our lives in a cause that sold us out. I know because I am white and meet them more often than maybe others and I cannot escape their pity. I might not care about it, but I feel I've had to cede the moral high-ground I once thought I occupied.

Right now what we need is for civil society to get organised once again, like it did when the UDF project was launched in 1983. It is civil society who this time must not be hoodwinked by fault-ridden exiles who wanted power without wanting it for the majority. We now need democratic socialism! We need selfless and accountable leadership not swayed by the trimmings of glitter and riches. We must be able to dismiss by popular action those who betray the people.

## 1. ALARMING INDICATORS.

The SA barometer must be measured by the steepness of our social and economic pyramid – the exceptionally high and increasing **distance between the 1% (or 5%) and the rest**. Besides what the media report I think the following merits alarm:

1. Statistics say that more South Africans buy groceries from supermarkets than virtually any other country – over 75% - this tells us how caught and beholden we are to **the monopoly that Checkers, PnP, Woolworths and Spar** constitute. They exercise hugest control over producers – farmers and manufacturers – all, to allegedly, bring us the cheapest product. Can we ever escape this noose?
2. Apartheid demanded disdain and hatred of the 'other'. It seemed reasonable to expect that those who succeeded them would show solidarity with those previously downtrodden. Alas this did not happen. Neither ruling politicians nor the buddy-buddy system of civil servants they appoint (in general) show **little compassion, kindness or fairness, never mind professionalism**. 'Othering' has changed from race to class.
3. He who pays the piper calls the tune. The recent disclosure of party funding (for the municipal elections) requires our attention.
  - The ANC got R5.8m from Patrice Motsepe, the Presidents brother-in-law, who himself donated R366,000 to ANC coffers. The other big ANC donor was Chancellor House, an ANC big money group who gave R15m to the ANC. So: roughly R21m to gain the loyalty 45.5% of the voting population xxx
  - The DA got one super-large donation of R15m from a Mr Moshal. Who is he to play big politics in SA? That budget, besides smaller donations got the DA 21.6% of the vote.
  - Action SA (Herman Moshaba) got R9.9m from three Oppenheimer heirs – no surprises there – the Cecil Rhodes tradition of creating beholden relations remains perfectly intact. But the mysterious Mr Moshal also gave Mashaba R5m. These four donors paid a lot for the 2.34% of the vote this racist party got. (Admittedly they were a new party and did not campaign nationally)
  - All the other parties who declared their income sink into insignificance by comparison. The odd million here or there but most parties got less than R1m in total.

- The EFF failed to say who financed them or what budget they were working on!

1. And now some personal news.

Christine and I have come through Covid and lockdowns comparatively well. We've not been tested positive at any point but mild versions may have manifested themselves without being branded Covid. Christine's Studio-Gallery in the heart of Kalk Bay has had fewer visitors and fewer buyers, but the rent gets covered and the artist remains inspired. We know what privilege it is to live here and to have False Bay to look across, to have friends nearby and at 76 and 74 respectively, to be old enough not to restlessly wait to book the next trip overseas. We long for the daughters and grandchildren to visit – and plans for them to visit are in the making.

I wake up on the open-air veranda each morning feeling positive and strong to 'work'. The past year was taken up by writing chapters for very different kinds of books: A chapter for a book that celebrates Swedish-South African friendship is due to appear later this year. My contribution concerns the colossal act of solidarity of Sweden's contributions to the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF) that I had the privilege of leading in the 1980's until we closed shop; the job was done. A much shorter chapter on IDAF's solidarity with those in the trenches of the struggle against apartheid appears in *International Brigade Against Apartheid* published by Jacana in December 2021. A very different contribution is my chapter to a book due to appear in Germany about the inadequacies of reparations by Germany for the genocide against Nama and Herero people in Namibia during the colonial period. In the chapter I trace our family, over a hundred year - as victims and as perpetrators caught in the race dictums of both the colonial and apartheid periods. After the book is published I will, through this website, provide an English version of my contribution. Lastly I contributed to a Cape Muslim publication the meaning of inter-faith (and non-faith) solidarity that stands proud here at the Southern tip of Africa to this day. Remembering the death in detention of Imam Abdullah Haron in 1969 gave rise to this.

Many of you know of my penchant to keep documents and to have recorded events that in some way or other affected my life. My family and my own past spans close to 20 meters of date-ordered box files. They have attracted increasing attention from academics. Associated is an index with annotation that covers 3150 items – and growing by the day. In a collaboration with Exeter University an initial 20 box files, covering the period 1972 – 1977 is currently being digitised and coded such that it meets academic standards with search facilities that meet international standards. With two academic assistants we will complete this phase by end January. I am hopeful that the next phase will cover the period 1978 – 1990, covering the height of the struggle as connected with by myself.

The above project has provided the impulse to register, in coming months, a family trust and to have the Schmelen-Kleinschmidt-Bam-Uirab and wider family records to be digitised and logged in a way so they become accessible to family and researchers. This will, I hope, lead to a wider family collaboration such that records held in Finland, Germany, Namibia, here and elsewhere are linked and become accessible. The planned Trust and digitisation project are also intended as a hand-over to the next generation.

Lastly, my website has many new entries. New texts and images deal with current debates, books that stirred me (see review below) and items from my archive that might interest you.

Thank you all for your emails and good wishes. I do appreciate these very much.

Yours,  
Horst.

## 1. BOOK REVIEW.

**In my previous Newsletter I commented on the former SB cop Paul Erasmus. His autobiography 'Confessions of a Stratcom Hitman' was published, posthumously, by Jacana.**

**My review of the book:**

**Forgiveness cannot be attained by writing a racy political thriller.**

My sense of the man up till the last page: deceptive and manipulative till the end. I interviewed Paul Erasmus twice on camera last year. We wanted more than what he told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, principally because Beyers Naudé was number two on his list of people to dispose of. His 'confessions' have just appeared in book form. He died, aged 65 in July 2021. I take no pleasure in kicking a man no longer able to defend himself.

Other attributes I would accord him: eloquent, intelligent, confident, obscure and dishonest. A man who spent his life in the service of the apartheid police and got to work for Vlakplaas, Koevoet and Stratcom; the worst of the worst killing machines apartheid operated. Yet he made it no further than Warrant Officer – he complains about repeatedly. Why do some treat him as an oracle on the doings of the worst elements of the police killing machines? Why are his statements to the TRC treated as confessions? Is he viewed as a 'hitman' just because the real hitmen did not come forward and never confessed?

Our interviews like his book, never speaks to his act of torturing or his having pulled the trigger. No names of his victims. "I was given some 13 orders to kill various people while I was in the SB" but he does not say once that he actually killed anyone. Was that a why they did not to promote him? Rev Frank Chikane and Ds Beyers Naudé were on the 'list' Capt Cronwright asked him to kill. He sought and got amnesty for 500 offences "that I committed during my time in service" (P252-3).

Somehow the killer or torturer is always the guy next to him or those 'bad guys' in the force, all of whom he claims to have fought against. He wants us to believe that he was a decent man amongst a group of thugs. Only once does he admit to lunging out hitting someone. And the only time he 'nearly' uses his pistol is when he points between the eyes of his wife – who wanted to divorce him. On page 129: "We didn't blow up, set alight or murder people – at least not directly. Instead we were trained to manipulate people's minds – and, yes, often with **physical interventions**" – what a euphemism for torture!

He did not 'confess' because of qualms about what he had done for several decades. No, it's his increasingly bad relationships colleagues and superiors that cause him to testify, initially, before the Goldstone Commission; not moral qualms about what 'they' did. He is frustrated about the lack of recognition or promotion, that motivates him, not morals. This leads him to the TRC to 'tell' but not a belated ethical awakening. One gets the impression that he's a productive and inventive cog in the police structures but his rancorous personality stops him getting the promotions he wants. There is, in the end, a vast distance between telling 'all' and feeling personal shame.

Those who look for great revelations will not find such in this book. In his TRC testimony and my interviews with him, he engages with real events but none of the apartheid murders or acts of torture are concretized. He's no Jeffrey Benzine who showed the TRC Commissioners how he sat himself upon his spread-eagled victims, face-down on the floor, to torture them. Clearly he knows of detailed events that I, for one, knew about from the other side. That is chilling, coupled with his incredible memory of detail, but never that which might have indicted him then or that impinges on the hero figure he wants his children to believe in.

As a foremost agent of disinformation in the police – according to him one of the best there was – I read the book wondering how many times he writes, in his book, to yet further manipulate and get away with his fabrications. His prowess as an information manipulator gave him as much pleasure one concludes as petrol-bombing, on duty but in drunken stupor Beyers and Ilse's car in the driveway or painting a hammer and sickle on our garden wall – and then first to leak these pranks to his journalist informers.

His entire engagement with Winnie Mandela is a mix of spreading falsehoods then and more

falsehoods now. Did Winnie truly give his, Paul's daughter Candice the wedding-ring Nelson once gave to Winnie? Did Winnie call him to express her indignation at Thabo Mbeki having hit at her on a public platform? For him and her to have travelled to Nairobi to meet a quack who had a medicine against AIDS. He revels in Winnie's 'forgiveness' with the remotest sense of humility. Both appear to be casualties and are damaged – the one as the police's victim the other as their perpetrator.

Stratcoms engagement with British MP's with far-rightwing group takes his machinations to foreign shores. Their hope: to smear the ANC abroad, notably in London, by inferring links to the 'terrorist' IRA. His mention MP Hunter (page 81) I recall because Hunter tried to implicate me in IRA links. The occasion was the Irish AAM annual meeting in Dublin. Both Jerry Adams (IRA) and I addressed the meeting and were seen to sit next to each other in the audience. Someone took a photo and a few weeks later MP Hunter waved the photo in the House of Commons to 'prove' that the ANC and IRA were working together.

Another apparent close shave he describes is when they rented offices in Portland Place, Jorissen Street, Braamfontein. Here were also the offices of the SACC, CI and related organisations before Pharmacy House (later re-named Diakonia House) across the road was purchased. Erasmus et al wanted to launch a fake new political party here – whilst eavesdropping on their neighbours. When they appear to have moved in, most of us had already moved out, but eavesdropping with directional micro-phones across the road was probably still in their sights. As it was in CI days, all sensitive talk did not happen in our offices but on the roof of Diakonia House. SB files on Beyers Naudé and myself reveal no successful bugging in this aspect. – A amusing addendum I recall: Long after all church folk had left Portland Place, the landlord asked us to remove a locked and heavy cupboard from one of the corridors. Inside we found hundreds of copies of the book 'Black Theology', banned several years earlier. We were delighted and made sure we got it to as many worthy recipients as possible.

His relationship with money raises some questions. On at least two occasions he seems to have stolen money or goods (Jay Naidoo's mobile phone) from those whose premises he and others were raiding. He complains that as a Warrant Officer he was always short of money and that his family suffered accordingly. Despite this his lifestyle afforded him ownership of homes, including one overlooking the sea, a boat – and ultimately a property, where I visited to interview him.

One intriguing, laughable and stereo-typical admission appears on page 21: "Attempts to show that Naudé was running the banned SACP, or that he was a surrogate of Bram Fischer, or that he was in the leadership of the underground ANC within the country's borders, were all bungled". As Beyers Naudé's SB files reveal, they suspected but never found out about the role Naudé played in the popular underground in the 1980's, nor how he applied foreign funds to build and sustain that underground.

Those who believe that the SBs had skill and prowess need to rethink. Their operations were mostly, shambolic alcohol-infused operations. Hate, racism, male ego drives complete the picture.

[See more on the cover page.](#)