Horst's 52nd Newsletter
www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za
May Day 2024

Dear friends and relations,

Thank you all who asked why I had not posted a Newsletter in recent times. You provided the stimulation for this one.

On my website you will find new entries:

- Details of the celebration of 28 people who once worked closely with the Christian Institute and made their mark in resistance to Apartheid. They are honoured at Goedgedacht, outside of Cape Town. We who attended the event on 2 December 2023 planted 28 olive trees – a peace grove in memory of them. More persons will be added in time.
- My review of the book, published in Germany, by my cousin Ursula Trüper with the title (translated) *Zara, or striving for Freedom*. This is a historical novel about our, Ursula and my Namaqua ancestor who lived from ca.1790 till 1831 south and north of the Great Gariep, Northern Cape. My review of the book is in English.
- My website now has an additional page that records present-day activism and struggles.

My manifesto re SA elections on 29 May 2024 **(I'm not seeking election!):**

- Making quality education at all levels a national priority with the aim to make us a nation equal amongst all others.
- Building a campaign that demands an end to SA as a manufacturer of armaments.
- Making environmental goals a national priority with targets that are enforced by Government.
- A progressive taxation system that counters our social pyramid from becoming ever steeper and inequality ever more crass. Which party is willing to tax the profits of the rich, millionaires and billionaires?
- Education and debate that challenges the notion that 'growth' is the answer to unemployment and poverty.
- Calling out the wide swathes of White South Africans who in the face of the woe's the ANC has led this country into, who use this to speak racism and hatred of the 'other'.
- Build a new political base on the left of our political spectrum that stops the poor, marginalized and disaffected from being 'delivered' to those who pose as progressive or left-wing but who harbour sectarian nationalism, seeds fascism and antidemocratic agenda's. The ANC has clearly forsaken them, the DA never sought their support, but the EFF and now MK are a threat I see growing, because of the 30 years of promises and non-delivery by the ANC.
- To counter party political dependency on the less than 10 financial moguls, Godmothers and fathers, who fund them: They are Michiel le Roux of Capitec (R50m to DA), Martin Moshal a gambling tycoon (R30m to DA and R14.5m to Action SA, Patrice Motsepe mining magnate (R11.7m to ANC, R4.2m to DA, R2.1m to EFF and to other parties), Victoria Freudenheim "philanthropist", (R18.5m to Action SA), Mary Slack, an Oppenheimer daughter (R15m to DA), Jessica Slack-Jell another Oppenheimer daughter (R4.1m to Action SA and R2m to the DA), Rebecca Oppenheimer, the third daughter (R3.3m to Action SA0, Herman Mashaba, former business man now leading Action SA (R2m to his own party). Unknown are the amounts that tobacco smuggler Adriano Mazzotti donates to the EFF, nor what

United Manganese of Kalahari – connected to Russian oligarch Viktor Vekselberg donate to the ANC (Source DM, September 2023, Rebecca Davis). At any rate the DA scores over R100million, probably the highest investment for each vote they get. The parties mentioned above do not get my vote.

- The new kid on the block, the *Rise Mzanzi* party speaks of Social-Democracy, but not democratic socialism. Cautiously they deserve a vote, but we should watch them. They too have an Oppenheimer Godmother in their cupboard (R15m), their policy toward Israel is less than I want, and lack policy to tax the rich.

Internationally, my manifesto would say:

- To isolate Israel for as long as it remains a racist and war-mongering country. To call to boycott, isolate and disinvest from it until 'from the river to sea', one democratic state for all who live there.
- To applaud the large numbers of Jews who stand up, against great odds, against Zionism.
- Condemning Christian Zionists who give succor to Israel's racial war on flawed biblical teachings.
- To Condemn Germany for its idiotic policy toward Israel. Instead of having learnt to guard against racism, Germany, by its Israeli support, has made itself guilty of complicity in yet another genocide.
- To stand with South Africa for not following USA dictate's, be they over BRICS or the ICJ
- To condemn the UK for 'commodifying' its illegal refugee migrants and 'selling' them to Ruanda.
- Without punting for Putin's Russia, to stand opposed to NATO and its military expansionist agenda.

Expanding on the above:

1. We used to say that SA Apartheid was the last remaining country that was ruled by a racist minority. Somehow we kept our eyes shut to what was going on in Palestine/Israel. How were we so blind?

2. If the ANC gets much less than 50% of the vote, alliance politics is likely to provide for a volatile time post the elections. I heard big business seek comfort in the period ahead, believing SA might 'muddle along' for the next decade, 'sufficient' to still make 'good profits'.

3. The distance between hunger/poverty/unemployment, and the rich and super-rich continues apace. The pyramid of inequality is rapidly getting steeper – ours is possibly the steepest pyramid globally. This disparity will eventually lead to unprecedented upheaval.

4. The convergence of interest between rich White and newly-rich Black class is ever closer aligned – the DA and one section of the ANC might finally acknowledge that they are in an embrace with one-another and coalesce, after the elections – notably if the ANC get much less than 50% of the vote. Neither stand for economic justice.

5. If the ANC vote deceases to say 40%, on the other side of the spectrum, one section still within the ANC, with the lunatic new MK party, the EFF and some others may equally seek power through a coalition. Their defence our democracy, of the Constitution with its Bill of Rights is dubious, given statements from these quarters. Race or colour politics is bubbling under the surface.

6. The uncouth way in which, within the ANC, yesterday's revolutionaries are today's wealth accumulators still incurs my anger. How could ANC politicians find it in order to become 'filthy rich' with other ANC folk just looking on? The vile display of riches, pomp and display of arrogance happens without restraint. And all of this whilst still dangling the rhetorical goal of 'national democratic revolution' before the masses. Even worse, by calling each other 'comrade'! Shame on them.

7. The callous and arrogant way the top behaves, starting with Cyril Ramaphosa and emulated by Jacob Zuma (Nkandla) has eroded morality and ethics from the top all the way down the social ladder. If the top steal – as they have proven they do – the message down the line is: take what you can, whenever you can, for yourself. Selfish greed and theft has been the message from the top and it has infected society all the way down the social ladder. Trust and building for the common good, has all but evaporated (this must not be confused with charity, which cannot replace either value if we want justice for everyone.)

Enough said, from this old man.

But first two more acerbic tales:

#1 The way I will remember the now utterly disgraced Public Protector, and now EFF parliamentary member Bhusi Mkwebane:

Shortly after her appointment she came to Masiphumelele to see for myselfthe plight of those living in shacks below the waterline in a long-compromised wetland. It had just rained and there were shacks standing in puddles everywhere. To help showing her this desperate situation someone got an old mattress to serve as a bridge between the water-logged shacks.

In pompous style her three car delegation had arrived. Men in suits and pointy shiny shoes surrounded madam as she emerged dressed to the ten's; Gucci written all over the stylish outfit, shoes and handbag, olive being the colour denominator. And all of them busy on the mobile phones.

After some hand-shakes with the local civic leaders we crossed the mattress 'bridge'. Madam did not get very far. Her stiletto heels got stuck in the springs of the old coil mattress. The solution? Two flunkies lifted her across while she ordered another one to get her alternate suede shoes from her car – all fitting with the olive theme. She soon made an about turn declaring that she had seen enough.

She promised and signed an agreement between the DA local officials, her office and the civic, to find alternate land and accommodation. Needless to say, five years later the people living in E.coli contaminated water are still waiting.

#2 The way I shall remember Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who died 9 September 2023

In 1970 NUSAS, the National Student Union I was Vice President of in that year, invited British Labour politician, Denis Healey to give our annual academic Freedom lecture. He did not rate as particularly progressive but this meant he was unlikely to be barred from entering South Africa.

Neville Curtis, President of NUSAS was indisposed which is why I became Healey's host for the duration of his country-wide trip. Together with my friend, Steve Biko we collected him from Durban airport on his arrival. The three of us were to immediately drive to Ulundi to meet with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi – a seemingly more open-minded 'homeland' leader. Such were the times!

By midday we reached Empangeni and Healey suggested we go and have lunch. Steve and I looked at each other; Healy was about to learn his first lesson. No eatery would accommodate us together given our racial-colour composition. To his credit Denis suggested we buy take-aways and sit on the only round-about in the middle of this small town. Nasty looks from the Whites, others looking out of curiosity, but no-one remonstrated with us.

By late afternoon we got to the as yet very humble abode of the Chief. He received us graciously. Two and then a third image remain with me forever. He sat in front of a table laden with images of every high-powered individual he had ever met. Second was the disproportionately large, old-fashioned chesterfield seating we sank into in this modest lounge. The third recall is that of the Chief inviting us to have dinner with him. The following unfolded: of young maidens entered with trays with our food on it. They kneeled down in front of us while holding the tray on which was our plate of food, our cutlery and glass of juice. Incongruously the conversation continued as we ate, with a young woman's face peering at you less than 25 cm opposite one. The dictum 'when in Rome' was not broken. When done the maidens rose and now had to carry the trays while reversing to the door. Not facing the Chief could obviously not be countenanced. Oh what dishonor on us men!

The brilliance of the day was however the way that Steve engaged Gatsha. Denis and I just listened as Steve made it clear that the time for compromise with Apartheid policy or Apartheid rulers was long past, if it ever existed. I am forever grateful for the lesson Steve taught me that day. It turned out to be equally instructive for Denis whose next port of call was Robben Island where he met with Nelson Mandela. Needless to say my request to join Denis to that encounter was turned down.

Sometime in 1972 Gatsha addressed a gathering of the SA Institute of Race Relations. He advocated the break-up of South Africa into a federal state – not a useful plan as it was likely to consign the mining and industrial parts to Whites and the rest to tribal entities. Maybe this did not worry the well-heeled Chief of the Zulu people.

In 1973 my wife Ilona and I shared a house with the banned Catholic monk, Fr. Cosmas Desmond. He saw the flaw in the Chief's federation proposal, not least because he had studied and then written a book with the title 'The Discarded People'. The Black people Apartheid agents evicted from the mining and commercial towns to barren land in the Homelands, one of which the Chief wanted to be ruler of. Cosmas wrote him a long letter taking Buthelezi's thesis apart. But given the ways of our police-state then, the letter seemingly never arrived having been probably, intercepted by the Security Branch.

When Ilona and I were due to head for Durban a while later, Cosmas asked if we would take a detour via Ulundi and hand-deliver a copy of the letter to the Chief personally. At the gate to his home-office-school compound we were told the Chief was not home yet and we should wait at the gate. Many hours later he came home, took the letter from us but left us sitting in our car at the gate. Word came that we should wait while he fashioned curt reply which we should deliver to Cosmas. We waited. As nightfall came we saw the lights of classrooms turned on when secretarial help arrived. He strutted up and down the balcony that linked the classrooms dictating his reply to Cosmas loud enough for the woman with the type-writer to hear him. He was clearly annoyed as the contents of the letter later revealed. He found it impertinent that his views should be challenged.

He did take pity on us when the letter was eventually handed to us. He had called the near-by nunnery and asked that they put us up for the night – Ilona with the nuns and me in a distant outbuilding.

When I joined the staff of the Christian Institute in 1972 I was somewhat surprised that Beyers Naudé and some of those close to him conducted talks with Gatsha. Beyers was still wedded to support for anyone Black without any notion of class.

In exile, from 1976 onward, I frequently found myself at odds with ANC insiders who refused to take a clear distance from Buthelezi. In fact a faction within the ANC was very partial to Buthelezi. The ANC only took a public position against Buthelezi in 1988 or 1989 when any hope of the ANC asserting itself over Buthelezi flipped and Buthelezi appeared to seek the upper hand in the relationship.

Beyers Naudé finally came out against Buthelezi when, in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto uprising Buthelezi addressed an Inkatha gathering at Soweto's Jabulani soccer stadium. In it he condemned the youth, whether from the scholar uprising or the Black Consciousness Movement. Beyers' much closer connection to the students, finally saw Buthelezi as part of the problem – and with that his liberal stance, that one should be in agreement with any Black critics of the racist regime. This was not the final journey Beyers travelled politically but it was an important turning point of a white man finding his role in the struggle.

From the late 80s Inkatha under Buthelezi's autocratic rule sought to ascertain a dominant political role. No doubt with applause first and then with weapons and training. Gatsha's Witdoeke, trained by the SADF became the source of Black on Black violence.

In June 1992 Gatsha's forces killed 45 people in the East Rand township of Boiphatong. I had, after fifteen years in exile, returned to South Africa permanently where I worked in Pretoria for the NGO Lawyers for Human Rights. When the funeral was held at the Boiphatong soccer ground I, with three other LHR staff decided that to show solidarity with those Gatsha's men had massacred.

I remember clearly driving down the only access road into the township – the usual Apartheid design to exercise police and military control over urban Black communities. We understood that the Witdoeke had now been driven out by what was then still the Apartheid police and military. They could not be trusted but right now their role was to stop the violence which was jeopardizing the peace talks under way in Kempton Park.

Smoldering houses and burnt cars lead us into ever narrower streets when suddenly we were advised to stop and park. To get to the funeral we had to walk the final stretch. The LHR delegation of four, whom I had driven there, were an as yet an unfamiliar sight. Two of us were Black and two White. That and nothing else made locals think we were some kind of VIP delegation and we were waved through the crowd to the front where we faced 45 coffins, surrounded by families in grief with a large contingent of clergy. We hastily explained that our presence did not demand front-row seats and certainly not a chair to sit on. We moved to the edge of the proceedings.

I was not without fear and wondered if afterwards, my car, far away in a congested street, might be burnt and indeed if I would return safely with my passengers. But being there meant solidarity, not from the safety of my office desk or my home, watching a TV screen, but by being with this community in this hour of grief.

Gatsha Buthelezi's taste for power took him down various route's before he could secure his role in Government and in the Cabinet. The need to secure co-operation from him at a time when we were on the brink of civil war must not cloud the coming generations from judging him most harshly.

****