FORGOTTEN FACES
by Jon Riordan
"Seeking to remember the past in many ways"
The Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage areas (situated in Nelson Mandela Bay) regularly get overlooked in terms of the significant role they played during the South African “Struggle”. Yet both territories contributed disproportionally to the battle for democracy: Civic organisations were created here; progressive trade unions were put into motion amongst Uitenhage’s automobile manufacturing companies; and the core of student activism in the country were deemed to be right here in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage. Heroic deeds from these regions reverberated throughout South Africa. Not surprisingly, these events were masterminded by larger-than-life struggle identities such as Henry Fazzie, Ernest Malgas and Edgar Ngoyi who were all born, raised and learned the tricks of survival and protest in the surrounding townships.

“The Forgotten Faces” Exhibition is however not about these people but rather a focus on some local anti-apartheid activists whom you most probably never heard about; those who neither got a seat in Parliament nor rose to powerful business positions either.

“Forbidden Faces” provides a glimpse of what happened during the horrors of Apartheid. It also allows you to explore first hand the actions that people needed to take to allow democracy to take hold in our land but most importantly it allows you to look at the faces of these people and to remember them and everything that they have done.
I was born a protestant in Northern Ireland and grew up with all the Protestant prejudices against the Roman Catholic people. We lived in separate areas, not by decree of the law but by choice. A Protestant could move into a Catholic area but they would be driven out and vice versa. Houses would be burnt down... It would be made clear that you were not welcome there.

When I was 18 I suddenly felt that God was calling me. It wasn't a voice; it was just a sense. So I went to Methodist College in England. I applied for a position in South Africa and to my great surprise they sent for me to be interviewed in London in July and they told me I was starting in September.

I first went to Benoni and discovered there as divided a community as the one I had left in Northern Ireland but here it was structurally divided. What shocked me deeply as a young Christian from Northern Ireland was that the public should agree to this. Fortunately for me, John Gray, an English minister came to Benoni for a year. He truly exposed me to the gospel and Jesus' teaching. It was anti prejudice; it was talking about establishing a kingdom or a rule of God where we were able to live differently to the rules of our world.

He also took me to attend the Treason Trial. The treason trial helped me become aware. I became aware of a different way of reading the words of Jesus. I suddenly realised that if you're just using Jesus as somebody to save your soul so you can go to heaven and blow the earth you're living in, you're not reading Jesus right.

After the Treason Trial I went to Rhodes University where I met my wife. When I finished university I was sent to Roodepoort, it was a very divided society. I remember the white leaders of the church and the Sunday school teachers walked out in block because I said detention without trial is wrong. That's just the way it was.

I came to St Johns in 1976. It was a turbulent year in Port Elizabeth. First of all I started Lifeline so I could put my roots in the area as someone who cares for the community. Then we began to move more deeply into the political issues. Honestly, I don't think the church did nearly enough to stand against Apartheid. Too much depended on the lead taken by the priest or minister.

I organised and led a number of marches. There was a march where we met at Livingstone Hospital and walked to New Brighton. I think about 800 – 1000 people came. As we got closer to New Brighton we saw a black haze and there must have been 80 000 blacks all gathered with a big, big placard hanging across the road saying, 'Welcome home to our brothers and sisters.' We all burst into tears. That was a very moving experience.

I was harassed a lot by the police. It seemed as if the security police produced a kind of human animal. They became a personification of evil, of that I am sure. The thing that kept me sane was a verse from St Paul and he said, 'Our fight is not against flesh and blood [human beings] but against the principalities and powers of evil.' I used to tell them that my fight wasn't against them but the system that had corrupted them.

When Mandela was released we were totally overjoyed. We never thought it would happen. We didn't think he would live long enough. When De Klerk began his move I think we were pretty convinced that we had gotten to the end... or gotten to the beginning of the democratic South Africa.

In 1992 I left Port Elizabeth and went to work in Durban. I was there until 1999. That was a very hard time. As Bishop in Natal I had to go into the Richmond area, the killing fields of Kwazulu-Natal. After we came out of Apartheid we were physically and mentally drained. Then Richmond was a terrible... That whole area there was such blood spilt; it was such a terrible shame.

Then in 2000 I retired and for three years I worked for the Southern African Methodist Church. I travelled with a black colleague for two years around churches throughout Southern Africa. There was a lot of travelling. I think I was only home for 10 weekends over that two year period.

I have now started the Institute for Spirituality which does a number of things. One of these is that I still preach and teach by invitation. We also run interfaith things, like events including Jews, Muslims and Christians.
PARTICIPATING IN THE BOYCOTTS OF 1985

Organisations. In 1980 I formed the Bethelsdorp Youth Organisation, I was the original chairperson. We were the central groups in resistance in the Northern Areas. We were at the forefront of the Struggle; we were very energetic, very militant.

It was a very difficult period for us as young people because there were no opportunities for us. We would just go to school and then we were only taught about certain professions. That was one of the ways that they indoctrinated our people. They only taught us to become a teacher or a nurse or a policeman or you worked in a factory. There was also a serious lack of facilities like sport fields, recreational facilities and cultural facilities... Even in the community itself, people would only indulge themselves in alcohol and drugs. People would work all week then get paid on Friday and go to the shebeen because there were no other entertainment facilities where people could enjoy themselves.

I also participated in the campaigns against the Tricameral Parliament in 1984. We called them the puppets - like the Alan Hendricks’s and the Labour Party. There was also a Northern Areas’ management committee... it was spearheaded by the puppets. The government just wanted to have people there so they can say: “Look we’ve given these people an opportunity to become a part of parliament.”

1985 was a very volatile year. I was studying in Cape Town at that time. I was at the Peninsula Technikon while I was there I became involved with the Belhar Youth Organisation. I was involved as a class representative and as part of the SRC. I was actively participating in the boycotts of 1985. The police were involved then... it was hard. But there are no stones in Cape Town, what we did is take the bricks and then break them in half because you are not going to throw a brick very far. Cape Town is full of sand but Port Elizabeth (PE) is full of stones. That’s why PE people can throw properly.

So I was there for 1985 and 1986 then I came back to PE and became very involved in the Northern Area’s Youth Congress even though I was still serving in the Bethelsdorp Youth Organisation. The youth organisations would try and recruit members, you have to start from a base so we would conscientise them and educate them. We would work with these people to further them politically. We would go from area to area recruiting people. It was tough doing that in the Northern Areas because... it’s different in the townships, people unite easily there. You don’t need to do a lot of groundwork, if there was an issue you could call a meeting and people would respond. Here its different if you call a meeting, people will tell you: “No, Its short notice” even if they have nothing to do.

In 1988 the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) was formed. This group became the umbrella body of all the youth organisations. We were involved with SAYCO because of the UDF and also because we were on the committee of the NAYCO. I was the treasurer of NAYCO but later I became the media officer and had to make all the banners and posters. We were responsible for getting our messages out to the public.

We knew when they released Nelson Mandela that things would definitely change. De Klerk knew that they could not continue any longer. He had to be bold enough to make that step.

I have been involved with local politics since the end of the struggle. We formed the Bethelsdorp branch of the ANC branch. Ampie Williams was the chairperson there. I was also a founding member of the African Nation Congress Youth League (ANCYL) in the Northern Areas. I was the deputy chairperson and Gota was the chairperson. Irvin was the secretary but we later changed it so that I would be the secretary. We also launched the first communist party branch. Eldritch Jerry was the chairperson and I was the media and publicity officer of the communist party.

These things did change when the ward based system came in. Bethelsdorp is ward 40/1 and it includes Booyens Park and Palm Ridge and Bethelsdorp. The ward system changed how branches operated. In the past we were more area based. I worked with the ANC branches for a long time. I’m still involved with them but at the moment I am not so active.

The youth forum was a tremendous success but I had to move on and that structure didn’t last very long after I moved. It’s all a matter of deployment; you can get a job in government because if people are deployed to do other type of work for the government or the ANC then a new breed of people moves in.”

CHARLES HANS

I was born in 1965 in an area called Pearl Road which was in Korsten. In 1976 we were moved by the Apartheid Government. We were moved to the old Bethelsdorp Village.

When we moved from Korsten I began to ask myself: “Why are we moving?” My parents would say: “We have to move to Bethelsdorp.” It became physically clear to me when I saw how white people treated black people, like they were inferior people. That helped me become conscious as a person and as an individual and made me realise what we were up against in this country. Specifically in high school, that’s when I really became aware.

The first school I went to was in Schauderville but then when we were moved to Bethelsdorp I went to Chatty High School. That’s where I met Godfrey Ackley. We weren’t in the same class but we got to know each other.

I got involved with student’s organisations at first and then with the youth organisations. In 1980 I formed the Bethelsdorp Youth Organisation, I was the original chairperson. We were the central groups in resistance in the Northern Areas. We were at the forefront of the Struggle; we were very energetic, very militant.

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NOBUZWE MOFOKENG

ACTIVE IN UITENHAGE THROUGH THE INTERFAITH ADVICE OFFICE

“I was born and grew up on a farm called Wellington Farm. My mother took us to Langa whilst I was in standard 3. I became involved in the struggle when I attended the Limkhaya High School. In 1976 Afrikaans was introduced as the school language. I was one of the best students but couldn’t understand a word.

In 1980 I got a job working at Gubb and Inggs. In 1982 I resigned and went back to school and did a diploma in commerce. Then I went back to Gubb and Inggs as a lab assistant and got promoted as a personnel officer.

My mother was part of the struggle. She would explain to us all the things which happened in the 1960’s. My mother was not a free person, she did not get to see the elections, but she guided us in the right way.

I wasn’t involved in the Langa Massacre. My first child was not even a month old and I couldn’t go to the march. My husband was there so I heard what happened. I worked with the victims and I also worked with the Kannemeyer Commission. I don’t think that Commission did a good job!

In 1985 many people were being detained. I made sure that detainees were visited and when people were arrested I would get them legal representatives. I also made sure that the prisons worked with the Red Cross and the South African Council of Churches (SCOC). The SSOC moved to these offices in Constitution Street and was named after Molly Blackburn. I remember once she forced her way into Church Street Police Station and found Norman Kona was being assaulted by the police. She came in and found him with an electric cable around his leg.

One of the worst jobs we had to do at the Advice Office was helping people to find out where their children were. When I started working at the Advice Office I became a target of the Apartheid System. What was even worse was that they tried to convince the people in the township that I was an informer. Once there was a letter with funds for the Advice Office. The police took that and said it was money from overseas meant for the comrades and that I was using it for myself. They even used a helicopter to scatter pamphlets saying this around Uitenhage. The police also tapped our phones – whenever we used the phone we would insult them.

On the 4th of January 1987 the Ama Africa went into Langa. The police escorted them and they would just watch and do nothing while the Ama Africa destroyed all the houses. What was worse was that the Ama Africa would kill people and they were protected by the police. I think they came for me twice, luckily they never got me!

When Mandela was released it was like a miracle because we did not know it was going to happen. Since the end of the Struggle we have been teaching people about the laws and about how Government works.”
I was born on 5 December 1958 in New Brighton. In 1976 I went to Newell High where I was introduced to the South African Students Movements (SASM). We began to oppose the system vehemently and in 1977 we were expelled from our schools. Soon after that all the organisations were banned.

In 1979 Ephraim Mogale and Wantu Zenzile - came down to organise the Congress of South African Students (COSAS). I was involved in that organisation. We wanted an end to Bantu education in its totality and of course the release of our leaders. I helped organise a boycott that lasted the whole year. Then on the 10th of July, the police raided the schools where the students had gathered and assaulted the students and even some teachers. We went to lawyers who helped us at the time but the matter was not taken any further because South Africa was more of a police state.

In May 1981, the South African republic was to celebrate 20 years of being a republic. We had to organise a protest over this as we were left out of the constitution. I was arrested in Fort Hare for my part in this campaign and spent a month in jail.

In 1982, we had a COSAS national conference in Woodstock in Cape Town where we realised that we needed to make a home for the students who were sent to Robben Island in 1976. I had to set up the youth movement in the Eastern Cape. In Port Elizabeth some other comrades and I spent sleepless nights trying to put the constitution together for the youth organisation, but it had to be more non-racial. We were completely moving away from the black consciousness movement. So that was how we formed the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress.

In 1983, there was to be this trilateral parliament. It was opposed by every democratic person in South Africa. The NP would hold their own meetings and we would disrupt those meetings.

It was around that time that I was recruited by the likes of comrade Vuyo Kwinana to work underground for Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). I used to assist in taking people out of the country. I used to assist in organising funds for people to get out of the country, especially in 1985. We would drive them out to Lesotho.

In 1985 we had lots of people who wanted to go out the country. Because there were tensions between Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) and there were other organisations that we perceived to be anti-ANC. In 1986 we started accepting guerrillas from outside the country. I would find them safe houses and drive them around. I found them better people to train, highly disciplined comrades amongst ourselves. It was very dangerous work. Once I had guys in my cars, one was a guerrilla, and we got stopped at a road block. The policeman saw that the guy had his hand behind his back and thought he was a guerrilla so he shouted, 'Get back!' The guerrilla started to shoot and we drove off. After a while we saw a second road block. We deliberately turned left and avoided it. Then they started to chase us. I was driving but the guy who was the commander was left handed and had an AK. He opened the window and da-da-da-da and the police van turned into a mealie field. They never followed us so I don’t know what happened to those guys, but we got rid of the car and then we had to walk for hours and hours and hours.

After 1994 I worked for the South African Railways and Harbour Workers Union (SARWHU). I worked there as an organiser and then as the regional secretary. Then the union formed what was known as SARWHU Investment Holdings. I worked with Sandile Zungu there but they wanted me to move to Joburg. I couldn’t man, I love my PE. Then I resigned. I started with this small family business and still sustain it somehow. The business is Dyasi Funeral Services in Zwide. It started in 2000 and we’re beginning to make something with it now.
I joined the struggle around 1977. I was motivated by the 1976 uprising. I was employed and working for Mobil. So I joined the civic structures. These groups sympathised with the students but we were quite informal. We formalised our structure. These groups were quite informal. We formalised our structure. These groups employed and working for Mobil. So I joined the struggle around 1977. I was motivated by the 1976 uprising. I was employed and working for Mobil. So I joined the civic structures. These groups sympathised with the students but we were quite informal. We formalised our structure. These groups were.

In 1982 the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO) was formed and I became a member of PEYCO and Ama Africa began to strongly oppose it. They used to call us 'Charterists' because we used to mobilise people around the Freedom Charter. I don’t think they were really connected to the AZAPO because later on AZAPO denied them and said, 'There is nothing called Ama Africa in AZAPO. We don’t know Ama Africa.' That man Reverend Maqina just used the banner of AZAPO I think. He knew all AZAPO slogans and ideologies were different to the UDF so he knew he could use AZAPO against the UDF. They were the only group that could be used against us. So we had to fight both the Ama Africa and the system.

We used to lose a lot of comrades those days. The police used to drive around in these Casspirs at night and they used to kill people. They would kill anybody, even if they were not comrades - just drunkards who were coming home from the shebeen. They also used to put the tyre on them and burn them so it would look like it was done by the Amabuthos but it was actually the system. The security cops were ruthless. I remember once we were at a funeral in the townships. I worked in the underground. We would go out to Lesotho. I still continued working for the underground. We would go out to Lesotho. Some of the guys who were harassed by the system, I would take them outside to Lesotho you know. It was bad in the townships. I worked in the underground right up until about 1989.

I applied for a special pension but I never got it. That system is not right. I don’t know why I didn’t get it. A lot of guys are not getting it. I just don’t understand it. I had my own MK name and SP number. I wasn’t involved for compensation so I am leaving it. I was involved because I wanted to free people from the oppression of the system.

I joined the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO) was formed in 1982. I immediately became a member of PEYCO. When the UDF was formed things were very hard because the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) and Ama Africa began to strongly oppose it. They used to call us “Charterists” because we used to mobilise people around the Freedom Charter. I don’t think they were really connected to the AZAPO because later on AZAPO denied them and said, “There is nothing called Ama Africa in AZAPO. We don’t know Ama Africa.” That man Reverend Maqina just used the banner of AZAPO I think. He knew all AZAPO slogans and ideologies were different to the UDF so he knew he could use AZAPO against the UDF. They were the only group that could be used against us. So we had to fight both the Ama Africa and the system.

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Transkei. The Transkei was already a home
parents decided to take me to school in Swaziland. I was still young then and in the school there were the children of the Mandela's and the Sisulu's. We were in the classes and most of the children had fathers in prison. You know the difference when you're a kid; you want to find out what happened to the parents that are in prison. You get to learn what has happened. It was only then that I learnt about the politics of South Africa. We would speak about the political situation in South Africa. What affected me then was that when you were in Swaziland you were all equal. There were no race incidents but the minute you left the borders some children who were in the same class at school would go to a different compartment on the train because they were white. It was then that I saw that I was interested in the South African situation.

After two or three years in Swaziland my parents decided to take me to school in Transkei. The Transkei was already a home-
land and a seed had been sewn within to understand the South African situation. I attended a school called the School of Commerce in Mount Frere. It was 1969 and South African Student's Organisation (SASO) was coming up around that time.

In 1973 the Black Consciousness (BC) was starting up. You know, because of my background and understanding of the South African situation I could not fit into the Black Consciousness. I went into the Institute of Race Relations. Mrs. Pityana was the director here in PE. We spoke for a long time and they said that they saw BC as another way of continuing the struggle given that the ANC was banned. The only organisation that was operating then was the BC and so I channeled my energy towards that. I still continued with the Institute of Race Relations when Mrs. Pityana left and another lady named Nikki Roussouw became the director. I was arrested when I was sitting together with her: We were just sitting you know and then the police came and the police wanted to make a big issue out of it. Why was this guy sitting with a white girl? They couldn't have a case with that though. So they left us but the whole situation was suffocating. I felt that I had to do something; I just couldn't find a place to do it. So I met Moki Cekisani, a BC activist who took me to King Williams Town and introduced me to Steve Biko in 1973. He convinced me that it was our only way of continuing the struggle given that the ANC was banned.

The situation was very volatile in all the townships. So we started pamphleteering, writing pamphlets with Mrs. Pityana and putting placards all over the townships. Unfortunately one day I had to go home to change my clothes and I was arrested. From February 1977, I could not tell you how many times I was detained. The whole of 1977 I was in and out of prison sometimes for 14 days, sometimes a week.

In 1979 I could not operate because I was banned and house arrested - I could not move. Then I went to Lesotho. In Lesotho I joined the ANC. I stayed there 'til 1980 when I was taken to Mozambique. Then from Mozambique I was taken to Angola for training. I was in Angola until 1987. In 1980 and some of 1981 I was militarily and politically trained in Angola and then I was deployed in Angola. At that point I was responsible for political training inside the camp.

My worst memory was staying in the camps for so long. I think I would have done something much better had I not stayed in the camps. It was really frustrating. I think that if there was better leadership at that time I think the people in the camps would have been better trained and would be able to govern and manage the country. Most of us were from Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and there is nothing that they couldn't do once we had enough time to train them. I don't think we were ready. I left Angola in 1986. Then I went to school in Tanzania. I lived in Morongo. I stayed there for three or four years. I was just studying there, doing accounting but I took the wrong course because I lost interest in my third year. So I left and went to stay in Mazimbu in 1991. I got married there in Tanzania and then came back in 1992.

In 1994 I became a councilor for a year here in Port Elizabeth. Then I left and went to the army but I didn't feel that was for me. In 1996 I went back to council for my area, Ward 22, which is in Kwazakhele. I enjoyed it; I'm more into politics than any other thing. After council I got some land in Lorraine and have spent this time building my house. I want to stay in politics, there is nothing else I want to do except that.

People have a lot of expectations from the government and they do not understand what it does. So we had to explain what it does and what the council does - its role and all that. The only problem is greed. People are not doing it for themselves; they are doing it for money.
**YOUTH ACTIVIST IN NORTHERN AREAS**

“I was born in Veeplaas on 8 November 1962. There were Xhosa speaking people and Indian and Coloured people living there at that time. Then the government wanted to separate the Xhosa speaking and the so called Coloured people. So it became a Xhosa speaking area and Bethelsdorp became a Coloured area. I just remember there were lots of trucks and things and they told us: ‘Ja, you must go now.’ People are still talking about Veeplaas. People will still say: ‘It was better there in Veeplaas than here.’ I blame it on the leadership... Alan Hendricks... I blame it on them. They had the power to stop it but they were with the government.

I completed my education at Chatty High. In my last few years I started the SRC at the school and through that we organised school boycotts.

After finishing school I met a guy called Andrew Sauls and he invited me to a meeting with the Chatty Youth where I met Irvin Pieterse. He was the one that would give us our political education. After that he was involved with the formation of the UDF and it was through him that we became introduced to the UDF:

In 1987 we started NAYCO (Northern Areas Youth Congress) which was the umbrella body for all the youth groups in the Northern Areas. We then began working hand in hand with PEYCO (Port Elizabeth Youth Congress) and Khusta Jack. We had many campaigns: there were some to protest the Triumphant Parliament and some to stop Mike Gatting’s cricket tour coming to Port Elizabeth. Soon after NAYCO was formed, SAYCO (South African Youth Congress) was formed under the leadership of Peter Mokaba.

I became well known with the police and in 1989 I heard there was a hit-list with my name on it. Ronald Niegaardt was also on that list. We both had to go into hiding then. The youth groups had some secret houses around the Northern Areas. I still remember my safe house, it belonged to a man named Eugene Prima, he’s a councilor now. Now what would happen is when the youth groups would meet then afterwards the three of us would just disappear. We couldn’t even trust our own comrades at that stage because if the police caught them they could torture them and make them tell the police where we were staying.

In 1990 we organised a rent campaign. The families in the Northern Areas had to pay rent for the land they were living on. We were saying this renting had to stop. Mike Gatting’s cricket tour was coming to Port Elizabeth. Soon after NAYCO was formed, sons of the Northern Areas Youth Congress was formed under the leadership of Peter Mokaba.

We were addressing the public at the Greenville Sport Fields. There were more than three thousand people there, people from Kleinskool, Ext 21, Ext 28, evens workers from Eveready and Firestone. There was a strike on that day. Then as we finished we sang Nkosi Sikelele, the police came, we approached them with the permission notice. They said: “No, this is an illegal meeting.” Then I heard shots and they fired teargas into the crowd. This was a problem because there were three entries into the field and the police had blocked two of the entries.

The police arrested me immediately and took me to Struandale police station. They locked me up for 3 or 4 days. I came out of jail then people and I remember picking up dead bodies in Helenvalle. We had a big truck. The uprising carried on for a week, it spread through the Northern Areas. The people were angry, they would burn stuff like shops, it was the frustration for all those years.

After that we started recruiting people for the ANC because Nelson Mandela had already been released. I became the first ANCYL chairperson in the Northern Areas.

Then I got tuberculosis and I had to write to the regional head they released me from my duties.

But in terms of jobs and things... no... there is nothing for me now. No jobs, nothing, no recognition. I remember people in the Northern Areas, people like Derek Swart, and gave us a thanksgiving party with food for our parents to thank them for giving us to the struggle. They gave me a key, its somewhere in this cupboard. It’s a replica of Nelson Mandela’s key from Robben Island. Well, they gave it to my parents to thank them... The problem is that we have political freedom but we don’t have economic freedom. The economy is still in the hands of the few.

At the moment I do some voluntary work for a housing group.”
I was born on a farm in the Port Elizabeth (PE) area called Greenbushes on 9 November 1936. My father had a very serious problem because the white farmers wouldn’t accept a black person with a lot of cows so we had to move from Greenbushes into Korsten in PE.

My big brother led us all to join the ANC in 1953. You know we would just try and break all the apartheid laws then, it was during the defiance campaign. The youth league was very involved in those things but we were very disciplined and didn’t stone any buses and all that at that time.

The first company I worked for was Firestone Tires in 1955 and then after that I went to General Motors (GM). When I started at GM it was a bad time for me because I used to work with Afrikaners. They would call us “kaffir” and hit us. I left that job because I was still a young man and the young “boer” boys, they never joked. I was treated like a dog. Whatever they wanted they would just say, “Kaffir do this” and I was just fed up about it. So I just left that job. Then in 1958 I joined Giddys, actually at that point it was called Modern Appliances. It became Giddys in 1960. I stayed there until I was arrested in 1964.

On 24 June 1964 I was arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act. They held me for 90 days before I was sentenced on 15 October. For those 90 days I was held in North End Prison. I started to get sick there because it was so stuffy. It was very bad when I left there. Then on 14 October we were taken down to Graaf Reinet. At Graaf Reinet I got a five year sentence on Robben Island.

The next morning at about 2am we were put in handcuffs and these handcuffs led from one prisoner to another. We drove until George and we slept there for the night while we were still in the cuffs. They took us right to the sea and they brought in a big boat. The boat had water on the floor and we had no shoes. We stood in the water from Cape Town to Robben Island. It was about a half an hour. It was difficult because there was water on the floor and the walls were smooth, you couldn’t hold anything, just stand.

On Robben Island we had no privileges. We used to mix the cement and hide the bags it came in. We’d make the bags nice and bring them to the cells and use them like books. The warders would then come during the day and take all those papers and burn those things. They did not want us to study. Then we went on hunger strike to solve these problems. We went for nearly 9 days without food. We couldn’t walk then. It was so hard. We managed to win that one. They began to give us a chance to order books. That was almost a year before I left there. Those students that came in there after; like Faku, who came in the 70s; it was like a school then. They had that privilege then. We started that. I got very sick on Robben Island. It got so bad, after two years I had to be taken off Robben Island so I could go to hospital. I spent about 2 months in hospital. While I was in hospital they tried to charge me with being a member of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) but they had no proof. Then I was taken to Kroonstad Prison where I was kept for 11 months. They took me back to Robben Island until I was released in October 1969.

I must say I thank my wife because all those years I was in prison she kept on writing to me and sending me some cards and some pennies to keep me going. She said, ‘You mustn’t worry.’ So I didn’t worry. It was so important. I haven’t said thanks enough to her. I need to make a big party to say thank you so my children can know what my wife has done for me.

In the 70’s the security police did not want me in PE so I had to leave my wife and children. They wanted to send me to the Linga Township in the Transkei. I refused to stay there, I was not born there and I didn’t know anybody there. It was a completely new township. As a result of that I never took my house there. I refused. Today I still don’t know who lives in that house. It was very painful for me at that time. When I left Linge I was looking for work but there was nothing. Then I heard the rumour that Savage and Lovemore were looking for people in Cathcart. I only had a little bread and a little bit of sugar water and tied it up with brown plastic. I couldn’t eat it all; I could just eat a little at a time. I took a lift all the way to King Williams Town and then another one to Cathcart where I got a job as a mechanic. I had to leave the job in Cathcart because I had bought a flask in Kwazakhele and so this guy asked me, ‘Why can a kaffir have a nice flask?’ So then he grabbed the flask and drank the coffee. Then we started to argue and I hit him myself, so then they chased me off from there. Lots of people asked me if I wanted to go and work at Prieska, so I moved off to Prieska. That’s a terrible place. I was working as a mechanic. After I worked there for 2 years the director of Savage and Lovemore said I should go and work for him in Oudtshoorn.

In 1974 I got a job in Plascon in PE. I could go back home to my wife but they said I needed to make a contract from here with the Transkei. In 1990 when Madiba was released I left that contract because I didn’t bloody understand how it worked. You always had to pay money for this thing and go back and forth between the Transkei and here. Then when the organisations were unbanned I was part of the first ANC branch at Kwazakhele. In 1993 I became the chairperson of that branch. In 1996 I was elected into council which I left in 2000. I didn’t want to take the severance package when I finished being a councillor: There were lots of people that needed me there. My son supported me after that; he did a BComm at the University of Fort Hare. Then he also started working for local government, the municipality. He continued with his education also and started doing law. In December 2004 he was shot dead. Even today I’m not right when I talk about that. Then I started to struggle because he was really helping me. So I needed to get work, and I tried…. I tried…. but I struggle you know.

I never left the struggle and I will never leave the struggle. There is still a lot to do. The veterans of the ANC need to say something now. We have experience and can help the country.”
I was born on the 6th of October 1962 in the older section of the Uitenhage Township. I was first recruited into the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) around 1982. Prior to that, I was involved in different drama groups which made protest plays around the townships. The major group was AFROS drama Society under Fikile Kobese. I was still in school when I was doing that, it was around 1981. Except for acting we also organised political debates.

I was recruited by some older students when I was in standard 10 who were present in the formation of COSAS in 1979. We had a committee there and I was the chairperson. It was very difficult trying to meet, we tried to organise an SPC but the school authorities were very harsh. Then in 1983 they found out that we would say we were held study meetings at school but they were also political meetings.

In May 1982 there was a COSAS congress in Cape Town. I was part of the delegation that went on behalf of AFROS. Soweto Youth Congress and the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO) came out of that. So after that we called a meeting and made up a structure for which we recruited and elected an executive committee. I was elected the president of the youth congress. We would invite prominent people like Oom Fazzie, and Edgar Ngoyi and they would address us and discuss the political situation with us until the early hours of the morning.

When we launched the UDF, we organised mass meetings about the community councillors. We got the churches involved and that really helped with the mobilisation of the community. We continued the campaign until all of the councilors resigned except one, Kikiki. All the others had resigned because of the pressure.

During that time there was a lot of brutality from the police, people were killed every weekend. We used to bury people every weekend. We buried so many people that we said that Uitenhage Youth Congress was becoming the Uitenhage Burial Society. They would just be shot, anyone, even old women coming from the shops. The youth were also fighting back, stones were thrown, and police cars were damaged. The youth were fighting back so much that the police had to leave the township. Then they were accommodated in one of the stadiums in town.

After that I had to go into hiding. But my luck ran out on 4 April 1985 when I was arrested with some other comrades. We were charged falsely with having burnt a policeman’s house. When we were caught, the police didn’t know what to charge us with. So they had a big book that had all the properties that had been burnt down and they paged through it looking to see whose house was vacant. They were just looking to see where to place us. So they found somebody’s house and they said we did it. I didn’t know that house. I didn’t even know the address.

They took us to St Albans for 14 days. On the 14th day we were released with some other people from Grahamstown. They took me to the area where they gave people train tickets. Then from there we would catch the train through to Uitenhage. They were giving everybody else their tickets but before I got mine they came and said, ‘Wonga Nkala’ and I said that’s me. They then asked me to come inside. So I went into this office. The guy said that I had visitors. They were coming to pick me up. My legs went weak hey and then two white guys came and they handcuffed me and took me back to Uitenhage. They said that I had burnt three houses. I was released and they issued a court order that said: I had to be in doors from 6 o’clock in the afternoon until 5 o’clock in the morning, I couldn’t meet more than 5 people, every Friday I had to report to the police station and I couldn’t leave Uitenhage without permission of the investigating officer. It was just like a banning order. This was because of the work I was doing with COSAS and the Uitenhage Congress.

In 1986 I went to Vista and was active there in the South African Student’s Organisation (SASO). Unfortunately we held a caucus on the boycotts on June 30th and the campus was closed and we were all expelled. There was a group that called themselves ‘Ama Africa’ here. They openly collaborated with the municipal police which were based here. They would aid the police and harass the comrades. There were skirmishes, sometimes there was shooting between the comrades and this group and the municipal police.

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In 1986 we were taken to St Albans and kept there until our release in March 1989. We would hear some rumours about talks between the liberation movement and the government. It was beginning to reach a stage where the police could not afford to arrest us. We were forcing them to release us. Once we went on hunger strike to get released. The hunger strikes started going in the Transvaal and then in the Western Cape and then it came to the Eastern Cape. The main centre for that was St Albans because it held people from Cradock, Grahamstown, Uitenhage and PE. So we said we wanted to be released and we wrote our statement and it was sent to some comrades. In the first week the security police ignored it. In the second week they called us one by one to the offices. We were in a very bad condition. After a week they started to release us.

Freedom came to us and in 1994 I was elected into the Uitenhage town council, as the councilor of Ward 2. I left there in 1996. Since then I have still been active in the ANC. I was elected that year to be the secretary of the local branch of the South African Communist Party (SACP) that would cover Uitenhage, Lange and Despatch.

At the moment I’m the political education officer for the branch executive of ward 27. I am positive. I think the foundation has been laid; the thing is the implementation of the policies of the government.”
I asked, "Your name is Mxhosana?" I said: "No, that's not my name." He put his pen down and said, "So what is your name?" I said, "my name is Africa not Mxhosana." He asked but why is your mother saying, "Mxhosana?" I said, "My father gave me the name 'Africa'." So he asked where my father was and I said he was on Robben Island. Then he started laughing. When my mother came back the guy said, "Can you tell me the name of your son?" So she said: "Mxhosana" and he said "No...it's "Africa".

My father was arrested in 1964. He was sentenced in 1965 and sent to Robben Island for 8 years. When he was arrested they didn't even allow him to even put on shoes. These were two influences on me to get into the struggle.

After this my mother told us that she decided to leave working as a domestic worker and went to work in a factory. To go to work she would wake up very early at 4:30 in the morning and come home at 5:00 in the afternoon. Then we decided as elder brothers that we had to go and work, we couldn't continue with school. For me it was a blessing and a curse. If I went to school until university level I could have been an attorney. I could have been someone. Or if I was in school in 1976 I could have been sent to Robben Island or into exile. Instead I went and worked and transferred my influence into the trade union movement where I spent my life.

I was working at Ford when the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) was formed in October 1979 and straight afterwards we had to strike because they fired the chairperson of PEBCO. That was a very hard time. We were assaulted by the police. It was a black Christmas in 1979. In January the next year they brought us back to work and then we became involved in the trade unions when we formed Motor Assembly and Component Workers' Union of South Africa (MACWUSA) in 1981. It was a very exciting time. We had a big voice with that trade union.

In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed. That process was the beginning of the revolution inside this country. I sang freedom songs in the UDF. The enemy used to call me "the Hi-Fi of the UDF". I would sing at all the gatherings, I sang at the funeral of Matthews Goniwe in Cradock.

I also became a member of my street committee. You could not run away from the street committee. Why would you fight for equal rights as a worker when you came out and found that your house had no water and you had no rights? So I had to be on the street committee because they were the accepted forums then. My role in the street committee was to check the problems that are affecting the residents.

Nelson Mandela was released on the 11 February 1990. There was great excitement that day...

I worked with Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) for a while after 1994; I was running a project for Arts and Culture. It was all over the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, Transkei, East London, King Williams Town.

I also worked for IBEC (Independent Business Enrichment Centre) with a feeding scheme. I was the link between the local government and the communities. IBEC was an NGO that got a tender for...
and couldn’t fix the roof but they still had to pay their service charge.

When I finished my honours in 1986 I went and worked in Windhoek. I was working for the broadcasting corporation on the English news desk. Eventually I left because essentially we were just translators. Then I just got stuck in NGO’s. I started out volunteering in the Port Elizabeth Anti Removals Committee (PEARC). They didn’t have any money for salaries I think the whole organisation got about R60 000 a year and that had to include buying a car for fieldwork, buying a copier and a computer.

Kleinskool was an area that they tried to get declared a coloured group area. When that didn’t work they said they wanted to upgrade the area. This meant that they would need to move people to install services and all that. Upgrading became another form of control. I helped train people to do surveys would take turns to be in the area if there were questions. I also dealt with squatter issues a lot.

There was rivalry between the two groups, Umncedo and SABTA (South African Black Taxi Association). SABTA was the established group and Umncedo were the new guys who said they were here to help the people. So for them it was an opportunity to demonstrate this. I mean we only really needed to use 3 or 4 taxis every couple of days...

The pay off was that eventually the Lbhayi municipality decided to give the people a legal place to stay and those became Silvertowns. What they did was find land then they arrived and the four walls were already done, they would just come and nail them together and then you have a roof and a door and then they would have a little bit of land around them. Nobody could come and demolish the shacks, it was a legal foothold. It was a small victory, although in terms of quality of life and luxury... it was just one room. Then people would immediately start to add on. The point was that at least they didn’t have to worry about coming home at night and finding their shacks demolished. We could never have gotten there though, if we hadn’t kept people together: Which meant finding them alternative accommodation as a group. A major factor of this success was the Port Elizabeth Women’s Organisation (PEWO) women who were so willing and available and had more power than us in convincing priests to let the squatters sleep in their church.

Working with the squatters was much more of a commitment than supporting the RLAC because the RLAC had a community structure with a constituency and residents. The informal squatters didn’t know each other; they hadn’t lived together for more than two weeks. There wasn’t a sense of unity; there wasn’t a sense of anything. So really, it was hard keeping them together.

After we had been working with Kleinskool, we had our senses out for anything that said, Group Areas Board. Then we heard that Hendrickse was applying to the Group Areas Board to have Langa proclaimed Coloured. What started as anti-removals work eventually changed and we became the Langa Development Committee. We would negotiate all sorts of things. We would organise to fix roads, clean the grave yard, the cemetery needed to be fenced. We would take up a number of issues. We had to help in Langa as it was quite off the radar at that point because the Uitenhage civic organisation was very Kwanobuhle based.

I worked at Kagiso until the end of 1996 when they had to close the offices because the European Union was now funding the government not NGO’s. I carried on working for them on a part time basis until about 1999. Now I am a contract worker for Ikala Trust which is mostly capacity building for community organisations for small donors.
In 1977 the Government established a Commission of Enquiry to decide whether or not to allow the mine workers to be unionised (Behan and Riekerts Commission). The ANC decided to deploy its various cadres to the mines. That took me to Stilfontein mine where I stayed in the compounds with groups of workers in big communal rooms. While I was there I was involved in political education and group discussions.

This changed in 1980. There was a band called the Soul Brothers which the mine management organised. The singer in this band was really, really popular. Apparently he made it to Klerksdorp but not to Stilfontein. The crowd became agitated and was shouting for this man. The crowd began to riot — obviously the riot police was called in and they chased us all out.

I was arrested immediately thereafter. I was handcuffed and beaten. Then I was taken to Klerksdorp where I was interrogated. The trial was held here in Port Elizabeth and I was sentenced to 8 years on Robben Island.

Some people were kept in single cells for the rest of their sentences like the Rivonia trialists. It was almost a privilege to stay in a communal cell because there you would interact with people; you would be helped and advised with whatever things you were doing or get some training on certain things you did not know.

I only served 7 of my 8 years because my sentence coincided with many dramatic changes in South Africa. In 1987 we saw the release of Govan Mbeki. I was released in 1988. Then after maybe 3 months I was asked to revise the project on adult basic education. The name of the project was ECALP (Eastern Cape Adult Learning Project) — it spread to Cradock, Grahamstown and other smaller towns in the Eastern Cape. It became a formidable structure.

In 1991 the Soviet Union offered training about social and political services to the communist party through the ANC. I was selected from the seven inside the country. We had to go to Moscow for six months for a very intensive course.

I came back to Port Elizabeth and continued with the ECALP project. Then I was elected to serve on the Executive Committee of the ANC. In 1993 I became the spokesperson for the Department of Information and Public safety. I also ended up serving on the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The worst feeling I had, was that of being paid by ECALP but working so hard for everybody else. So with a feeling of guilt, I resigned from ECALP in 1993.

In 1994 I worked for the Local Government Election Forum as a provincial coordinator for training. In 1996 I decided to play a low profile in politics because after the elections of 1994 we had the problem of everybody wanting to serve in parliament or similar positions and the situation became quite ugly. I was elected to serve on the provincial legislature as MPL but somehow the names got lost on the way to Bisho. In 1996 I worked for the Western District Council in the training division until I got invited by the Minister for Public Works to serve in his office. I resigned after serving there for one year.

I went to Robben Island to work as tour guide in 2000. Then I came back and worked at Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC) till 2006. At that point I could not cope with relocation to Umtata. I was just going further and further away from my family. They were all still in PE.

After I came back that I decided to register a training company with the Department of Labour for training contracts. I survive because I do receive some of the training from time to time, but it's not a very stable thing.”
I think the structures of the Amabutho started in 1986. We were all over South Africa. The Amabutho were the inside military wing of the ANC - we used to have a uniform and everything. We'd wear khakis and a black beret. Umkhonto weSizwe was the outside military wing of ANC, but we had to look after the townships. When comrades came back into the country from exile we would look after them.

We would get trained out in the bush because it was safer then having meetings in the townships. The training was all about how to handle a weapon. It was how to clean it, and take it apart and put it back together. We couldn't shoot the weapon at training because we didn't have enough ammunition. The training would last for about two days... sometimes even shorter: They didn't have enough time to do more. Say today we were learning how to drive a car; they would teach you how to get the car to move. Then they would say that you can drive. They didn't have time to spend days teaching you how to use the gears and change direction. As long as the car is moving forward then you can drive. That was all that is important. Afterwards you can learn everything else...

We didn't get much equipment from outside the country so we needed to make a plan. Sometimes we would make our own weapons, we would use whatever we could find: wood, pipes, pieces of tyres. We would also disarm the police and take their weapons and ammunition. You know those big Hippos with the open backs? We would take petrol bombs and throw them in the back and then the police didn't want to burn in the trucks so they would throw their weapons out and jump out. We would then have weapons. We would also dig big holes in the road and then we would cover these holes with whatever we could find. Then when the police came in their big hippos they would get stuck in these holes. Then when the car is stuck we would go out and we would just shoot. It would work like, if we got one of the police, the police would get five of us. It was not easy.

We as Amabutho managed to get the police out of the township. We saw ourselves as the peoples' security inside the township. We can't say we were like the police because the police were very bad, but I can look at us like the security for the people. The people knew we were looking after them, they were very proud of the Amabutho. If there were tsotsis making trouble we would stop that.

In the struggle people needed us, but now that we are free; we suffer: Today we are free but nobody came to the Amabutho and said thank you. We have a saying, 'When you go to war you don't forget me but when you go to eat you do forget me.'

In those days we would have meetings around the townships and there was a curfew. So we would move from day to day and from area to area. We would only meet in the areas where there were shacks and no proper roads because it was easier to escape in these areas. When we went to a meeting, we had to look at the area and find how we would leave afterwards. Once there was a meeting and we worked out that there were big storm drains that went next to the house we were meeting in. They were big storm pipes that ran under the township and went straight to the house. So later the police came and we all left through these pipes and they found nobody at the house. They must have been quite surprised.

The Amabutho are not operating now. When Mandela was released and the ANC came into power in 1994 we had to recognise the police. Nothing is coming to us now. We get no special pension, our friends from the struggle don't come and speak to us. They are too busy to take our calls, they don't phone us back. We haven't been taught the process to tender for work. We are trying to start a small business but we don't know how. We don't expect the government to just give us money. We don't. We want to work hard but nobody helps us. We don't have the opportunity. We aren't educated. We have standard three; we couldn't do more when we were young. So we don't get work hard but nobody helps us. We don't get the opportunities.

In the Amabutho we all had nicknames so when the police detained us we would give them our real names and our ID. The police would just look for our nicknames and they wouldn't know our real names. Today people still don't know my real name. They know I'm called 'Gatsha' but that's all they know and we used to fight together.

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IRVIN PIETERSE

YOUTH AND UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT ACTIVIST

"I was born in Fairview and as a child I was part of the forced removals under the Group Areas Act. My family had to move from Fairview to Arcadia where I spent most of my youthful years. Almost the whole area, except for maybe a few shops, was relocated to the Salt Lake area and the buildings in Fairview were just destroyed.

I grew up in a “grey area” then. Ag, you know an area where there were some African families, some Indian families and some so called Coloured families.

My sister then used to work in the supermarket. One of the first supermarkets, she used to bring the newspaper in the evening. I think I was in Std 2... then I was trying to organise a safe house for some students. Then they took me to St Albans and held me for 6 months. While I was held I developed psychiatric problems that still trouble me today. We are all freedom loving and moving from a sort of free environment into a totally repressive environment where you have to be in a cell all day and you have no access to reading matter... you begin to have lots of thoughts, anything could happen to you and you begin to imagine it... The idea of the repressive nature of the state had a severe impact on my mental health.

The last 2 months of my detention coincided with the start the negotiations regarding the democratic movement in this country. This did in some part ensure that we would not be killed and tortured. There was a small light at the end of the tunnel... There was a hope that we would soon be released.

The release of Nelson Mandela was something good, but the school of thought that I came from said that we needed to take charge of our own lives.

From 1990 till 2005 I was not working. I was trying to pursue a role on the branch executive of the ANC. I was also a member of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and the South African Communist Party. I played this role until 2005 when I was recruited by the chairperson of the Bethelsdorp Development Trust.

We believe that political organisations and political parties cannot fulfill the role of ultimately helping towards the development of the individual and the community. We need to play an active role in rebuilding the morale and dignity of our people and restore the imbalances brought about by apartheid such as the material disenfranchisement. We in the Bethelsdorp Development Trust need to play that role in ultimately ensuring that we plan execute and ensure the delivery of services and offer programs within the community towards the upliftment of our community.

I am the beneficiary and community relations officer of the Bethelsdorp Development Trust. We have a youth council, a women’s organisation and an organisation for people living with a disability. I am responsible for these groups to have constitutions, AGMs, annual programmes and annual budgets. I also need to ensure that they role out their particular programs for their communities."
**TERMS**

*Ama Africa* – Group of black township dwellers which opposed the UDF and was supported by the police

*Amabutho* – Controversial groups of armed youths within the townships

*Black Sash* – A women’s group dedicated to protesting Apartheid

*Broederbond* – A society that was created in 1918 to further the interests of Afrikaners in South Africa

*Cadre* – A member of the ANC underground

*Caspir* - A large armoured vehicle that the SADF used

*Cradock* – A Karoo town that became a focal point during the struggle.

*Dompas* – Identity document that all black South African’s were forced to carry.

*Group Areas Board* – A structure within the Apartheid government responsible for the areas in which people lived.

*Hippo* – A large armoured vehicle that the SADF used

*Homeland* – Areas where people of certain ethnic groups were forced to live

*Kwanobuhle* – Township in Uitenhage

*Kwazakhele* – Township in Port Elizabeth

*Langa* – Township in Uitenhage

*Northern Areas* – The area where the Apartheid government forced the coloured community to live

*Port Elizabeth Anti Removals Committee* – The group responsible for challenging any attempts at the group removal of residents of areas in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.

*Progressive Trade Union* – A trade union not allied to the state, and thus able to work against it.

*Red Location Action Committee* – The civic organisation responsible for the improvement and protection of the Red Location

*Shebeen* – An unlicensed bar within the townships

*St Albans* – A large prison on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth

*Toyi-Toyi* – A form of dance that became synonymous with protest in South Africa

*Tricameral Parliament* – South African parliament from 1984-1994 which gave Indian and Coloured people marginal representation but excluded the black populace.

*Tsotsi* – Slang for a thug

*Umkhonto we Sizwe* – The armed wing of the ANC
This book contains edited excerpts of the live interviews of the Forgotten Faces by Jon Riordon