



**Not just a Supporting Act or a Backing Vocalist:
Locating Gertrude Shope in the Memory and Heritage
of the South African Liberation Struggle: Towards a
Biography**

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Supervisor
Professor Siona O'Connell

DECLARATION

I, Motsane Getrude Seabela, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work, except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise. Neither the whole work nor any part of it has been or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

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Signature: 

Date: 20 September 2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Mankodi Magdaline Seabela (Ngwana' Ramohlola) and the memory of my father Mohure Joel Seabela. Dinkwe le Ditau, ke leboga dithuto le go mpotšha bohlokwa bja bohwa bja rena. To my sons, Mapogo and Bogoši, thuto ke lesedi.

KEYWORDS

Gertrude Shope

Heritage

Memory

Liberation Struggle

Women

Biography

Marginalisation

Oral History

Memorialisation

Patriarchy

African National Congress

ANC Women's Section

ABSTRACT

This study sets out to highlight the marginalisation of women with Gertrude Shope at the centre by examining her presence and absence in the memory and heritage of the South African liberation struggle. By so doing, weaving together glimpses of her life towards the ultimate writing of her biography. This thesis seeks to illustrate through the perusal of the African National Congress' policies to redress the racial, colonial, and apartheid South African society. I argue that these policies are entrenched in masculinities and patriarchal outlooks rooted in ANC traditions. Notwithstanding the colonial and apartheid legislation that thrived on segregation and relegating Africans to the lowest barrel of society. My thesis proposes that irrespective of long periods of contribution to the liberation struggle of South Africa, women have continuously been marginalised in the memory and heritage of South Africa. While the study puts the spotlight on Gertrude Shope as one of the sidelined female leaders in the African National Congress (ANC) who contributed to the fight against the oppressive apartheid system, broadly this research seeks to highlight the importance of recognising women and their contribution in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle of South Africa. In its thrust, this is an interdisciplinary study which chiefly lies in feminism studies and also draws from the visual, memory and oral history studies to illustrate how patriarchal attitudes and traditions within the ANC have played a role in how women are memorialised post-apartheid. I do so by also examining the South African heritage landscape and the various biographical representations such as monuments, streets, and songs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
KEYWORDS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
CHAPTER OUTLINE	xvii
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
CHAPTER 1: GETRUDE SHOPE: NOT JUST A SUPPORTING ACT OR INCONSEQUENTIAL	11
INTRODUCTION	12
FAMOUS AND UNKNOWN: 'INTRODUCING' GERTRUDE SHOPE	15
GERTRUDE AND MARK SHOPE: FAMILY, POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND EXILE	20
FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN	29
ON MATRIACHISM AND ACTIVISM FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS	30
GERTRUDE SHOPE, HEAD OF THE ANC WOMEN'S SECTION AND WOMEN'S LEAGUE PRESIDENT	31
CONCLUSION	38
CHAPTER 2: ARCHIVES: A CONCEALER AND REVEALER OF HISTORY	39
INTRODUCTION	40
DISCOVERING AND INTERROGATING THE DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY (DSL) RECORDS	43

THE UNVEILING AFTER DECLASSIFICATION	45
PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN OBJECT OF VIOLENCE, GERTRUDE SHOPE THE 'TERRORIST'	50
PHOTOGRAPHIC AND THE PRESERVATION OF MEMORY AND HISTORY	54
CONCLUSION	73
CHAPTER 3: GOOD ENOUGH TO MOBILISE JUST NOT TO LEAD: HEROIC MASCULINITY AND THE GENDERING OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ANC	75
INTRODUCTION	76
HEROIC MASCULINITY AND THE GENDERING OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE HISTORIOGRAPHY	78
SUPPRESSED BUT NEVER SILENCED: WOMEN'S VOICES WITHIN THE ANC	80
THE ANC CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES	83
THE ANC AND THE GENDER/WOMEN QUESTION	86
CONCLUSION	93
CHAPTER 4: A PATRIACHISED MEMORY AND LIBERATION HERITAGESCAPE	95
INTRODUCTION	96
TOWARDS A TRANSFORMED HERITAGE LANDSCAPE POST- APARTHEID	99
MEMORIALISATION AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION: ON PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION	106
SONGS AS MASS MOBILISERS FOR AMPLIFICATION OF MEMORIES	113
TOPONYMS AS HERITAGE	120
STREET NAMES AS MONUMENTS	122
IMPULPABLY ACCOUNTING FOR THE UNEVENNESS	124
CONCLUSION	130
CHAPTER 5: GERTRUDE SHOPE'S LIFE THROUGH ORAL TEXT	132
INTRODUCTION	133

ORAL HISTORY AS A METHOD	137
WOMEN STUDIES AND FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON ORAL HISTORY	138
THE COLLOQUIES	141
GERTRUDE SHOPE SPEAKS	148
MOM'GERTY: 'A CADRE OF PEACE'	149
A REVOLUTIONARY MOTHER	152
BEING A CHILD OF A FREEDOM FIGHTER	174
'A SNIPER OF NOTE, A SHARPSHOOTER'	188
THE HOMECOMING	193
CONCLUSION	199
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	202
TOWARDS A BIOGRAPHY: NOT JUST GERTRUDE SHOPE'S STORY BUT A STORY OF WOMEN	202
REFUSAL TO BEING MARGINALISED	205
THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES	208
REFERENCES	221

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LIST ACRONYMS

AME: African Methodist Episcopal

ANC: African National Congress

ANNC: African Native National Congress

ANCWL: African National Congress Women's League

APLA: Azanian People's Liberation Army

CODESA: Convention of a Democratic South Africa

COSATU: Congress of South African Trade Unions

DACST: Department of Arts Culture Science and Technology

DOA: Daughters of Africa

CPO: Coloured People's Organisation

COD: Congress of Democrats,

DSL: Directorate of State Legislation

FEDSAW: Federation of South African Women

FEDTRAW: Federation of Transvaal Women

IDT: Independent Development Trust

IEC: Independent Electoral Commission

MK: uMkhonto weSizwe

NAHECS: National Heritage and Cultural Studies

NARSA: National Archives and Records of South Africa

NASAA: National Archives of South Africa Act

NCAW: National Council of African Women

NEC: National Executive Committee

NHLR: National Heritage Liberation Route

NHRA: National Heritage Resources Act

PAC: Pan Africanist Congress

SACTU: South African Congress of Trade Unions

SACP: South African Communist Party

SAIC: South African Indian Congress

SAPS: South African Police Service

SSA: State Security Agency

SOMAFCO: Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Two copies of Malibongwe: Celebrating our heroines (2002 and 2006)	Pg 13	MG Seabela
Figure 2. Signed copies of Malibongwe: Celebrating our heroines (2002 and 2006) by Gertrude Shope	Pg 14	MG Seabela
Figure 3. Gertrude Ntiti Shope	Pg 16	MG Seabela
Figure 4 Excerpt from interview with Julie Fredrikse	Pg 27	SAHA
Figure 5. Gertrude Shope	Pg 32	NAHECS
Figure 6. CODESA Poster	Pg 38	Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History
Figure 7. DSL Document	Pg 50	NARSA
Figure 8. Gertrude Shope mugshot in the Terrorist Album	Pg 53	SAHA
Figure 9. Entry page featuring Gertrude Shope in the Terrorist Album	Pg 54	SAHA
Figure 10: Gertrude Shope, Frene Ginwala, Connie Braam, Rose Motsepe and Unknown lady	Pg 57	NAHECS
Figure 11. Gertrude Shope and Rebecca Kotane	Pg 60	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure 12. Gertrude Shope, Albertina Sisulu, Adelaide Tambo	Pg 60	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure 13. Gertrude Shope and Ellen Kuzwayo	Pg 63	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure 14. Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati	Pg 64	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure 15. The posthumous awarding of the Order of Baobab to Mark Shope by former President Thabo Mbeki	Pg 67	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure.16 Gertrude Shope after receiving Isithwalandwe	Pg 69	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka
Figure 17. Gertrude Shope, Angela Davis and other delegates	Pg 71	Lyndall Shope-Qubeka

Figure 18. Gertrude Shope Primary School Emblem	Pg 100	Gertrude Shope Primary School Gertrude Shope Primary School Facebook Page
Figure 19. A. NCAW Conference program, Seshego, 1986 (front)	Pg 136	MM Seabela
Figure 19. B. NCAW Conference program, Seshego, 1986 (inside)	Pg 137	MM Seabela
Figure 20. Gertrude Shope	Pg 143	MG Seabela
Figure 21. A&B Gertrude Shope special vote casting in Botswana	Pg 149	T. Shope-Soumah
Figure 22. Jackie Sedibe	Pg 150	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 23. Baleka Mbete	Pg 154	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 24. Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka	Pg 157	MG Seabela
Figure 25. Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba	Pg 160	D. Letsatsi-Duba
Figure 26. Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka	Pg 165	Soundcloud
Figure 27. Naledi Pandor	Pg 167	Wikidata
Figure 28. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma	Pg 170	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 29. Thabo Mbeki	Pg 173	City Press
Figure 30. Thaninga Shope-Soumah	Pg 176	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 31. Lyndall Shope-Qubeka	Pg 179	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 32. Gertrude and Mark Shope	Pg 181	ENCA
Figure 33. Cuba Scholarship letters	Pg 182	NAHECS
Figure 34. Jerry Matjila	Pg 183	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 35. Sheila Shope-Sithole	Pg 184	Sheila Shope-Sithole
Figure 36. Gertrude Shope, Charles Nqakula, Joe Modise, Nosiviwe Maphisa-Nqakula	Pg 189	NAHECS
Figure 37. Mongane Wally Serote	Pg 190	Masi Losi
Figure 38. Gertrude Shope Screenshot	Pg	South African History Online
Figure 39. Gertrude Shope and Joyce Keemenao Keitseng	Pg 192	Tumi Keitseng
Figure 40. A sculpture by Noria Mabasa to commemorate the 1956 women's march	Pg 207	Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History

Figure 41. Thandi Lujabe-Rankoe	Pg 216	Skye Mediatainment
Figure 42. Sophy De Bryn	Pg 220	Skye Mediatainment

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE

GETRUDE SHOPE: NOT JUST A SUPPORTING ACT OR INCONSEQUENTIAL

This chapter examines distinct spheres of Gertrude Shope's life: her family background, childhood, adulthood and political activities. This will include her childhood in Zimbabwe, her teaching days, and joining the African National Congress, Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and her time in exile. To this effect, I also will highlight especially the apartheid era and the excessively oppressive laws that were imposed on black people and ultimately pushing many of them to leave South Africa into exile and engaging in the armed struggle.

CHAPTER TWO

ARCHIVES: A CONCEALER AND REVEALER OF HISTORY

This chapter seeks to track through archival records a trail of Shope's contribution to the liberation struggle and her sidelining in the heritage and memory of South Africa. Although the liberation archives have been positioned as a mediator of the colonial and apartheid archives' oppressive legacies, it would seem that in practice and in their composition, they contribute to "denial of women justice", particularly the National Archives and Records of South Africa in their documentation of the African National Congress Women's League records from 1960 to 1990 (Natshakhuma 2019). I peruse photographs from different institutions and a collection shared by the Shope family. In addition, I also examine the Directorate of Security Legislation (DSL) records which I argue that they serve a dual purpose of concealing and unearthing the story of Shope.

CHAPTER THREE

GOOD ENOUGH TO MOBILISE JUST NOT TO LEAD: HEROIC MASCULINITY AND THE GENDERING OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ANC

In this chapter, I explore the issue of heroic masculinity and the gendering of leadership within the ANC by reflecting on its history of side-lining women as influential leaders who contributed to the struggle against oppression. To that effect, I will also highlight historical events in which women mobilised and led protests and

organisations that marked the turning points of South African resistance politics. I will through a historical overview of this subject attempt to show that the ANC intentionally barred women from participating as full political players and downplayed their leadership (Unterhalter 2000; Hassim 1991, 2004, 2014; Masola 2018). Thus, the elevation of men as heroic leaders has resulted in the overlooking of women in the history, memory and heritage of South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PATRIACHISED MEMORY AND LIBERATION HERITAGESCAPE

In this chapter I will look at the transition politics pertaining memorialisation post-apartheid and discuss in the main, the Legacy Projects and National Liberation Heritage Route Project. I will also demonstrate how the aforementioned have contributed to the marginalisation of women in the memory and heritage of the South African Liberation Struggle. Additionally, I will deal with songs as memory representations of cultural and historical expression, with a focus on songs of liberation struggle so to unearth their biographies relating to representation of women.

CHAPTER FIVE

GERTRUDE SHOPE'S LIFE THROUGH ORAL TEXTS

In this chapter I will examine oral accounts from Gertrude Shope, her family, colleagues, comrades, and that may have insight to tell their stories of her both personal and political life. I will attempt to show that oral history can be used as a source to address the void and the debasing of the contribution of women in the historiography, memory and heritage of the liberation struggle. Then, testimonial remembrance and oral accounts become “a way of witnessing the lives of women who have been erased and concealed from the public records” (Tagore 2009: 67). Addedly, in this chapter I will focus on how others frame Shope and if they see her contribution worthy of being celebrated and commemorated.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a conclusion to my study.

In the complex, contested landscape of the 'new' South Africa, the negotiated foundations of its new constitutional democracy and the history of these foundations-intersect with modes of silencing and displacement effected by discourses of reconciliation and healing; nation building and reconstruction. The stories that make official memory are rewritten in relation to the 'new', to beginnings and to the bounded imaginary body of the nation (Grunebaum-Ralph 2001: 198)

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

After completing a rather underwhelming Postgraduate Diploma in Museums and Heritage Studies in 2015 with the University of Pretoria, I returned to the University of South Africa to register for an Honours in Anthropology to commence my studies in 2016. As underwhelming as it was, what I took away from the Postgraduate Diploma was the module in Heritage Management which would later come in handy in my professional career of being a museum curator and dealing with heritage legislation. I found the Conservation module particularly problematic in the way in which western methods of handling and restoration were imposed on indigenous material. There was no consideration of how these materials were being handled or how their makers would have liked them to be handled, they were just things that needed fixing.

As a black person, I found the disregard of the cultural observances offensive. The stories of the makers were rendered invisible. I enrolled for the Honours Anthropology programme in 2016 and that too was uninspiring. I found the four modules of the five really dull. It was only the research report in which I had a choice in selecting a topic that after completion of the Honours that made me feel like I took something with from the program. My research topic was, *Oral Testimony as a Source: An Inquiry on the Oral History of the Birwa of Mamadi in Limpopo Province, South Africa*. Among the Babirwa people of South Africa, the Mamadi group is considered small and not having any 'influence', thus unimportant. It was precisely their being regarded 'unimportant' that motivated me even more to want to investigate their history. During my research I found that they are an interesting breakaway faction from the Tauyatswala, contrary to how they were purported to be.

Following the completion of my honours degree in Anthropology in 2017, I was certain that I did not want to continue studying Anthropology. I needed something more stimulating, whatever that meant. In 2018 I began with my Master of Social Sciences in Heritage and Museums Studies with the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Professor Siona O'Connell. Here it was no longer safe, no longer comfortable and no sugar coating. In my Masters dissertation entitled *Un-Silencing Histories of Black Servants at Zwartkoppies Farm: A Transition from the Sammy Marks House to the Sammy Marks Museum*, I had to deal with the painful past of this country that was brought about by the three crucial periods in the South African history, those being

slavery, colonisation and apartheid. I had to unsettle a territory that is embedded in colonial legacies, the museums space. I had to deal with the issues of space and belonging, representation and citizenship, identity and marginalisation of black people at the Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum, a site I was managing at that point. The history and contribution of black workers who also lived on the Zwartkoppies Farm had been buried and the silences and marginalisation were being endured by the current generation in a supposedly public space of a democratic South Africa. The master's programme was a turning point, my worldview shifted. It was a reawakening period, my consciousness of being black was ignited. I knew I had a responsibility to tell the stories of my people, black people, those who were enslaved, colonised and oppressed by apartheid. As a curator of an anthropology collection in a museum which has its roots in colonisation and apartheid, I'm often confronted with the lingering layers of violence that took place when the so called 'objects' which I refer to as ancestral possessions were displaced from their places of origin into a museum, a space that is obsessed with perpetuating unending lifespans of these belongings. On a continuous basis, I feel compelled to bring to the fore the stories that are embedded in these belongings called 'objects' in museums. As (Balachandran: 2016) posits, "as long as these tangible sites and objects exist, there is evidence that people were here, that their histories, their memories and their past mattered, and that they are here, still matter and will continue to matter in the future".

A whole lot makes sense now as to why my mother was adamant that oppressive boundaries should be broken down at all costs. She demonstrated that from 1980, before I was even born right up to 1995 with the annual ritual of visiting the Kruger National Park with my family. My mother proposed to my father, I was told, that the family visit the Kruger National Park every September for a week. And those trips were undertaken for fifteen years without fail. It has always been in her nature not to conform or follow rules, especially when they are unfair or disadvantageous to others. This act of us visiting the Kruger National Park was an act of resistance towards the apartheid segregation laws. A white friend and a colleague of my father helped my parents with bookings under his name. Although they were never turned away upon their arrival, the personnel at the gate would always phone my father's friend to confirm if he had made the booking for them. Ruth Simbao (2011: 39) appositely points out that "subtle resistances existed during the liberation struggle by women in various forms and

means”. The subtle resistance Simbao is alluding to I have witnessed with my mother, not once. From visiting the Kruger National Park when it was unheard of for black people to do so, to her opening our home to being a safe house to freedom fighters who were labelled as terrorists and being the first woman to study towards a degree in a village where a woman’s place was considered to be the kitchen while the husband will be working in *makgoweng*¹ and only coming back home during Easter holidays or Christmas holidays.

My interest in this topic follows my work in the museums and heritage spaces of investigating marginalisation of black people in spaces that were established during colonisation but entrenched in colonial remnants post-apartheid. As mentioned, Gertrude Shope’s life appears as fragments in different sources thus, through this study I intend to weave Shope’s life story to locate her in the liberation history and heritage and contribute to dismantling the masculinised memorialisation of the South African liberation struggle heritage. My thesis intends to demonstrate through Shope’s life that irrespective of continuously being defined as political outsiders or as second-class citizens whose entry into the political sphere was regarded as either obsolete or short-term or conditional upon their maternal social role (Hassim 2006: 6), women like Gertrude Shope continued to breakdown patriarchal and oppressive boundaries through their leadership.

The study on locating Gertrude Shope in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle towards the writing of her biography expands on long established debates from prominent scholars such as Megan Healy-Clancy, Natasha Erlank, Nomboniso Gasa, Deborah Gaitskell, Jacklyn Cock, Cheryl Walker, Dawne Curry, Julia Wells and Shireen Hassim, Pumla Dineo Gqola and Raymond Suttmer who have foregrounded the writings on the historiography of black women in South Africa in relation to the gender question, feminism, family life, marriage, pass protests and social clubs. The narratives in the work of these scholars have been useful in answering the question “where are the women?” (Masola 2018:60).

¹ Direct translation from Sepedi is a place of the whites but generally refers to those who work in Johannesburg.

In addition to the aforementioned, I have also benefited from several writings of scholars such as Makhosazana Xaba who Baleka Mbete describes as “one woman determined to wage the struggle on the recognition of women”². Xaba has indeed been deliberate in inserting stories of women’s contribution in the different spheres of the South African history and reinserting those that have been sidelined or at risk of historical genocide. In illustrating her commitment to the capturing of women’s stories, Xaba has facilitated the reissuing of *Malibongwe: Poems from the Struggle by ANC Women* (2020) which was edited by Sono Molefe (Lindiwe Mabuza) and first published in 1981. This book features sixty poems that dealt with the following themes: *Africa shall be free, Birth and genocide, Spirit of Soweto: The ghetto, massacres, resolve, Women in struggle, Our men who fought and died and fight and Phases of struggle: Resolution Exile, Perspective, Love, Call to justice and Arms*. In the 1980s the book was published and distributed across Europe, however, it was consequently banned by the apartheid regime. This book “shows the evidence too often airbrushed out of the narratives of national liberation of a deep and unrelenting radicalism within women, of a dream of a South Africa in which not only freedom reigned but justice too”³.

In her book, *Guerillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa* (2023), Siphokazi Magadla presents a compelling intensive view of the stories of women who participated in the South Africa’s Armed Struggle. The book provides in depth “accounts of women who were formally trained in guerilla warfare in Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the combative mothers who received military training participated in the rural-based insurrection of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC’s) armed wing, Poqo, in 1963 and the township based self-defence units in the 1980’s, who made the country ‘ungovernable’, leading to the final years of the National Party’s apartheid government”.

Guerillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa (2023) intently calls us to always be reminded of the contribution that women made in the different forms of armed struggle, both in exile and within South Africa, inclusive of townships and rural areas. The book further provides us with accounts of women who in their own voices relates how they became politicised and joined the armed

² This was highlighted during an interview I had with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2024.

³ See inside cover page of *Malibongwe: Poems from the Struggle by ANC Women*.

struggle. Some of these women have crossed paths with Gertrude Shope and others were directly impacted by her while she was the head of Women's Section in exile. Among others are Baleka Mbete⁴ who left the country in 1976 to Swaziland and later met Gertrude Shope in the structures of the ANC Women's' Section whom she reveres as having known her way with the gun. Gertrude Shope too had joined the MK in the early 1960's which led to her arrests and eventual fleeing to exile.

Through her study on Charlotte Maxeke, *Theorising Women, the Intellectual Contribution of Charlotte Maxeke to the Liberation Struggle of South Africa* (2012), Thozama April premises Charlotte Maxeke as an intellectual and advances that she deployed that acumen in her struggle for liberation. April challenges the notion that in the main women only contributed to auxiliary deployments and contends that 'the intellectual trajectory of Charlotte Maxeke is an embodiment of the intellectual contributions of women in the struggle for liberation in South Africa'. Through this study, April locates the different identities and roles of women in the liberation struggle of South Africa.

In pursuing this research, I'm following in the footsteps of artists such as Sue Williamson who went against the norm of gendering the liberation struggle that emphasised on male leaders by creating art that recognised the role of women in the fight against apartheid. Through her series *A few South Africans*, Williamson focused on women struggle heroes, such as Virginia Mngoma, Black Consciousness activist Mamphela Ramphele, Annie Silinga and Charlotte Maxeke. Williamson further highlighted "the non-racial character of the antiapartheid struggle by including portraits of leading Indian and white activists, such as Amina Cachalia and Helen Joseph" (Simbao 2011: 57).

Photography in chapter two of this study seeks to foreground a visual and historical presentation and representation of Gertrude Shope's life. In my methodology and theory, I turn to prolific scholars such as Suzan Sontag and Allan Sekula and Roland Barthes. In my analysis of these photographs. I draw from a scholar of Interdisciplinary and African Studies, Professor Siona O'Connell's thesis, entitled, *Tonal Landscapes: Re-membering the interiority of lives of apartheid through the family album of the*

⁴ Baleka Mbete shared in an interview I conducted on 03 May 2023.

oppressed (2012). Although O’Connell’s research deals with family photographs, the study underscores issues of belonging, citizenship and displacement, thus, as a model of analysis her thesis has demonstrated that the intriguing aspect of analysing photographs with or without captions or background as would be seen in chapter two of this thesis is that:

These old snaps deliver summons for us to look, to answer, to provide a voice for those silenced and unable to speak — the muted. This call demands that I step into the frame as a hesitant witness, knowing the burden of representation and the difficulties and dilemmas of retrospective witnessing. It is to these...photographs that I must now respond; looking to find resolution in the many ghostly faces that will emerge from this archive (2012: 15).

I have taken photographs of Gertrude Shope each time I met with her, both in South Africa and Botswana. Being behind the camera in each of these occasions felt like a binding contract. It felt as though the camera was whispering to me and saying that as you bind yourself now by capturing these moments, you are contracting and committing to be witness to history when the future calls you to do so.

In this thesis I explore the notion of heroic masculinity and draw from Elaine Unterhalter’s (2000) argument that the ANC has purported men as being representatives of historic projects and in turn rendering women as cheer leaders who “should be taking the lead from their male counterparts”, hence the marginalisation of women in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle. Raymond Suttner cautions us in his paper titled *Masculinities and Femininities within the ANC-Led Liberation Movement (2004)* and holds that, in addition to thriving on separatism, colonisation and apartheid also emphasised denying Africans “of what it meant to be a man, by virtue of the humiliations heaped on men (and women), which meant that manhood (and adulthood) was denied”. So, while I deal with the concept of heroic masculinity and the continuous sidelining of women by the ANC even when it became the ruling party, I am also not oblivious to the repressive history of South Africa that led to African Nationalism as would be observed in this thesis.

After contacting Gertrude Shope's daughter Lyndall Shope-Qubeka, she upon discussing with her mother, indicated that they have a personal archive that include photographs, and Gertrude Shope's unpublished autobiography which they will give me access to for this research. Although I was only allowed to have a glimpse of the autobiography, the segments that which I was able to access, coupled with archival material and oral accounts collected through interviews have enhanced this study and mitigated the gaps that had resulted in Shope's story being told in fragments and to that effect, towards the writing of her biography. As James Wolcott asserts, if there are no diaries, letters, and other private papers, any biography is doomed to be just a progress report or an interim statement (Hughes 2011). The use of oral histories as a method in this study seeks to broaden "participation in history through faithfully recording of the life stories of those usually excluded from consideration" (Cauce, 1994: 10-11). Autobiographies are often criticised on the basis that the author defends their side of the story hence this study documents Shope's biography through traces that are in the archives, her family stories, those from colleagues and memory representations. By using individual activists' personal stories in this research, I seek to highlight 'actor stories' within ANC history which allows the space between an individual and institution to be examined (Ludin 2019: 325).

Banner (2009: 582) points out that in the main biographers are no less than historians, they operate as detectives and interpreters attempting to illuminate the past and to interweave its threads in new and compelling patterns. A life deeply lived, like any complex historical narrative, moves across space, time, and areas of human involvement both capriciously and predictably, validating certain accepted historical constructions while challenging others. I should declare that at this point, the writing of Gertrude Shope's life is not a critical biography but rather takes a descriptive form which is in the main a celebratory biography highlighting Shope's contribution to the liberation struggle of South Africa. Even though Barman (2010: 63-65) suggests that celebratory biography should be the first and most common to avoid as it emphasises the 'great man's' exceptional qualities, his outstanding character and notable achievements often in the face of difficulties and adversity", and as a result their personal life often skirted or deliberately avoided so as to avoid their private life scrutinised publicly which is likely to result in the public image being tainted. I precisely elected celebratory biography approach and drawing on the thought of Gerder Lerner

who is regarded as the pioneer of women's history in the United States of America in 1967. Lerner belongs to the same school of thought as the early 1970's feminist and historians who emphasised that it was important to uncover "the life stories of women forebearers to serve as role models to define" them in a male dominated profession saturated with masculinity (Banner 2009: 579).

Although this research is done towards a book, it seeks to locate the biography of Gertrude Shope "beyond the written text such as visual mediums and memorial landscapes" (Rassool 2004: 51). Generally, it has become common for states to prescribe what should be remembered, commemorated and memorialised through a heritage discourse. South Africa also saw this trend post-apartheid in its effort to respond to the "aftermath of conflict, repression, suppression and gross violation of human rights" that has been characterised by a political agenda framed by transitional politics such as the legacy project and heritage route (Dondolo 2021: 319). In 1998 and 1999, a few Legacy Projects were approved to be delivered in South Africa and among them was The Luthuli Museum and the Nelson Mandela Museum. Biography seemed to have been at the centre of establishing these sites and public campaigns as people were told that not only will these national heroes be commemorated for leading the nation into democracy, but their homesteads too will be declared monuments. To counter the colonial and apartheid heritage landscape, another list of heritage sites to commemorate the fight against apartheid was announced most of these sites presented a biographic characteristic as they were associated with Mandela (Rassool 2000: 14-15).

Heritage sites are distinct spaces that make up some of the most familiar tangible elements of 'the past'. Occupying a space on both the physical landscape and within the landscape of memory these places can act as markers or way-stones for individuals to connect to a wider sense of heritage and to locate themselves within the larger group and existing identities. As cultural constructs we know that heritage sites can be key to locating ourselves in time and space. As landscapes that take in both the tangible elements of a landscape of heritage and also the intangible, experiential qualities (Garden: 2009: 270-271).

The conclusion of this thesis takes place at a crucial moment in South Africa, the year we commemorate the 30th anniversary of our democracy. It is also the sixth elections since black people were allowed to vote, some have dubbed this year, '2024 is our 1994', a phrase which gained traction particularly on social media due to calls from civic and political fronts in the main demanding critical change in government and the improved economy. Only this time it is not against the apartheid administration, but the ANC led government. Election day, 29 May 2024, came and passed and saw the ANC experiencing a seismic loss in votes and being toppled from being the ruling party. So, what did this mean for my research, I wondered? I still needed to interview some knowledge holders who are ANC members. I had postponed pestering them for interviews to allow them to focus on the elections but now that ANC has lost power nationally and, in some provinces, how will this then affect the heritage landscape. Will there be a call to have a more 'balanced' memorialising now that the future of coalition government is no longer bleak? Are we about to witness yet again a transformed South African heritage scape through a crop up of heritage institutions and other memory symbols to reflect the marriage between political parties forming the so-called Government of National Unity (GNU)?

Public memory takes various forms that communities employ to deal with the pasts. Yet, public memory "refers not only to what we remember about the past, but what we forget, and how we chose to frame these recollections" (Swartz, et.;al 2019:1). Upon assuming power in 1994, the ANC had an opportunity to implement its vision and programmes in a new state. This thesis shows that the purported objectives of the liberation struggle "aimed at replacing the apartheid racial order with a non-racial and non-sexist society where all its members are equal citizens" (Solani 2013) is a delusion as the heritage landscape is still saturated with male figures. This biographical approach was regarded as one of the chief modes of negotiating the past in the public domain and was a central feature of stories of resistance and reconciliation. In these biographical activities, Nelson Mandela assumed the leading actor role (Rassool :13). Mandela's name was attached to new museums and the renaming of streets alike. Almost every town and city bearing a street name called Mandela, at times one street being named Mandela while the other is Madiba as observed in Pretoria/Tshwane centre city.

Like many other left-wing organisations around the world in the latter half of the 20th century, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) for a long time refused to acknowledge that gender discrimination needed to be addressed ahead of national liberation. Women would be liberated as a direct consequence of national and class liberation. Feminism, meanwhile, was an indulgent bourgeois preoccupation dictated by white women in ‘the West’ and as such it did not apply to a radical liberation movement. The ANC – like most male-dominated political movements in this era – also feared that a focus on gender liberation would fracture an already divided organisation. Nevertheless, both the worldwide second wave feminist movement, which started to radiate outwards from its North American and western European bases in the 1960s and 1970s, and the development of black pride as a political tool and ideology directly affected the mobilisation and politicisation of multiple generations of South African women. ANC women were aware of these and adopted some of their vocabularies and outlooks after adapting them to suit their own ideology and needs. These influences and their gendered reception within the ANC and other South African liberation movements remain largely overlooked (Lundin 2019: 323).

CHAPTER ONE

GETRUDE SHOPE: NOT JUST A SUPPORTING ACT OR INCONSEQUENTIAL

The liberation of the African woman will not come about as the result of a fairy-tale-like wave of a magic wand. The subjugation of women dates from ancient times. And through the centuries, the suppression of women has taken different forms. The tradition of men regarding themselves as superior to women, has found root in our socio-cultural norms. It is not possible to undo this injustice with a stroke of a pan. Therefore, it is the task and a challenge to women to be in the forefront of the struggle to bring about equality (Shope 1992).

Introduction

One afternoon in a colleague's office, Tersia Perregil, a discussion ensued on women who participated in the liberation struggle of South Africa. Particularly those who were imprisoned during apartheid and those that ultimately went into exile. The name of Gertrude Shope came up constantly and what would turn into a lengthy discussion on her role in the liberation struggle pursued. At this point I realised just how little I knew about the role of women, particularly black, in the liberation struggle of South African history. I wanted to know more about who Gertrude Shope is and why is it that so little is known about her and of course a whole lot of other women that were her comrades in the fight against apartheid. I felt compelled to investigate this figure further. After finding out that she was still alive although very old, I decided to track her down and Dr Luli Callinicos along with Dr Noel Solani helped me to do so. I eventually got hold of her daughter Lyndall Shope-Qubeka who then led me to *Koko*⁵ Gertrude Shope. I spoke to them about my intention of locating her in the history of the liberation struggle of South Africa towards the writing of her biography through a doctoral study and that was welcomed.

My first encounter with Koko Gertrude, as I would call her, was on 27 October 2021. I had been talking to her daughter *Mama*⁶ Lyndall Shope-Qubeka who in the beginning cited that Koko Gertrude was no longer taking part in interviews but eventually confirmed she will be available for interviews for this study. I then asked that Mama Lyndall arrange our meeting for that Wednesday 27 October 2021. I was of course anxious and at the same time felt honoured to have been given an opportunity to proceed with interviews after much convincing. Upon arrival at their home, I was received by Lucy, the assistant in the Shope household. Koko Gertrude was sitting by the big window in the living area wearing a beautiful cape, dressed fancy, like the woman I had seen on visuals, she looked much older though not that was a surprise. "Malibongwe!"⁷ she exclaimed. "Igama lamakhosikazi" I responded. That was my

⁵ *Koko* is a Sepedi term for grandmother. I will from time to time in this study be referring to Gertrude Shope and other elderly women as *Koko* as a form of respect and politeness because of her advanced age.

⁶ I will also be referring to some of the women as *Mama* as a form of respect as they are not my peers.

⁷ Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi is a Zulu phrase directly translated, praise be to the name of women or let the contribution of women be acknowledged. The phrase is usually

welcoming by Koko Gertrude into her home. I introduced myself and she asked me if I was comfortable, and I said yes *Koko*. The interview went well given her age and the details she had to recount pertaining to her childhood, education, and careers among others. It is the nature of any oral history and memory, as Vansina (1985: 43) articulates, that, “due to the manner of transmission in oral history, it is only normal for historical accounts to vary or appear distorted. Its mechanisms are cuing and scanning. Cueing as the main mechanism consists of attaching a cue to every item that is being memorized”. Müller (2009: 29-32) also posits that memory is not merely a storage place for information thus should be viewed as an intricate, continuous, and complicated process of selection and negotiation over the details of what is remembered or forgotten. At the end of our interview, she gave me two books that she compiled and signed and said, “I will see you next time”.



Figure 1. Two copies of *Malibongwe: Celebrating our heroines* 2002 and 2006 (Photographed by Motsane Gertrude Seabela)

used to greet, particularly in gatherings with women or where issues relating to women, the same way as Gertrude Shope greeted me. Also see Sophia Williams-De Bryn’s article in *Malibongwe Igama Lamakhosikazi, Praise be to women: Remembering the role of Women in South African History through Dialogue*. This publication is from proceedings that took place at the Mandela Foundation on 30 May 2007 at the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

https://www.nelsonmandela.org/uploads/files/Malibongwe_WEB.pdf

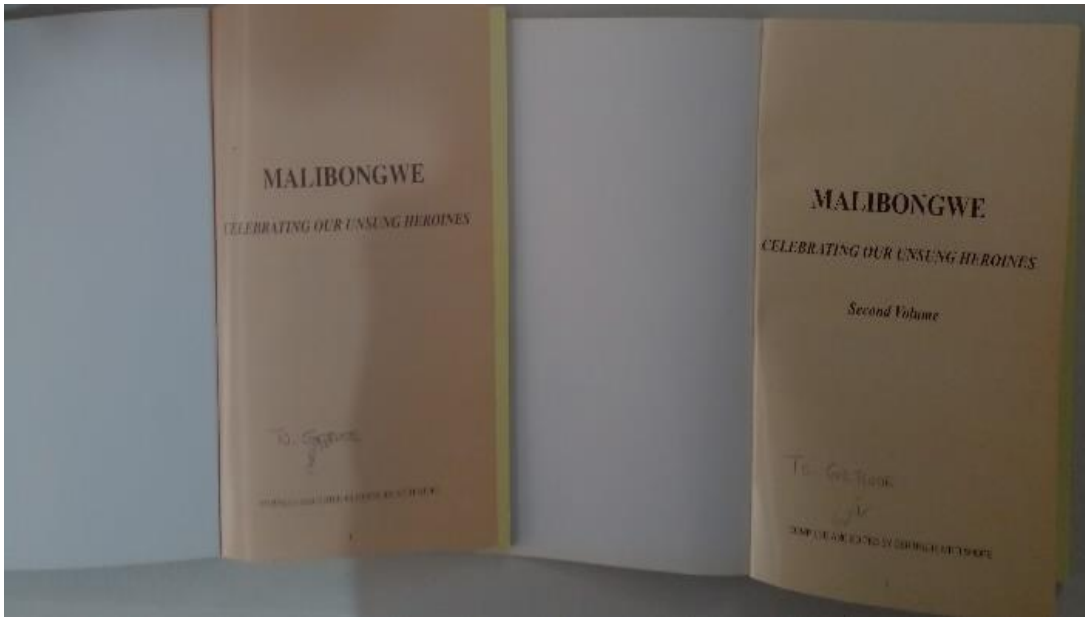


Figure 2. Two signed copies of Malibongwe: Celebrating our heroinesm 2002 and 2006 (Photographed by Motsane Gertrude Seabela)

This chapter seeks to weave from different sources, facets of Gertrude Shope's life: her family background, childhood, adulthood, and political activities until 1994. This will include her schooling, teaching days, leading the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), African National Congress Women's Section and the African National Congress Women's League. To this effect, I also will highlight the excessively oppressive laws that were imposed on black people and ultimately pushing many of them to leave South Africa into exile and engaging in the armed struggle. As Sigmund Freud's work stresses, "the influence of childhood on our lives has rendered it unthinkable to start with someone's adult achievements" (Hughes 2011: xvii). Therefore, my beginning with Shope's life history and entering it from her childhood is important for this study not only because of this general point but also because certain key elements shaped her life. By and large, this chapter is descriptive and somewhat takes a form of a narrative biography (Barman 2010: 65), aptly so as it intends to explore the in-depth personal and political life of Gertrude Shope and her leadership roles in the political liberation struggle while locating her in the memory and heritage of South Africa towards the writing of her biography.

Famous and Unknown: ‘Introducing’ Gertrude Shope

Throughout this PhD journey, the most asked question each time I share details about my study has been “who is Gertrude Shope”? Conversely, the other lot would respond with excitement and great interest that I am conducting a study about “Ma Shope” as she is fondly known. Each time I am met with these moments, I get reminded of Thozama April’s research on Charlotte Maxeke, entitled “Theorizing Women: The Intellectual Contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa”. In particularly chapter one of her thesis, “A Doubling of an Account of a Celebrated and Neglected Figure in History” which “traces the intellectual trajectory of Charlotte Maxeke as an embodiment of the intellectual contributions of women in the struggle for liberation in South Africa and further examines and incorporate Maxeke’s legacy of active intellectual engagement as an integral part of gender politics in the activities of the Women’s Section of the African National Congress.” Thozama’s research is calling us to interrogate in entirety, the contribution of women in the liberation struggle of South Africa and not just features that are popularly emphasised such as women’s marches against pass laws which has widely been the case with Maxeke (2012). This chapter will attempt to answer the ‘who is Gertrude Shope?’ question by presenting an introductory to her biography and contribution to the liberation struggle of South Africa.



Figure 3. Gertrude Ntiti Shope

On Saturday 15 August 1925, Gertrude Ntiti Moeketsi, later Shope, was born in Southern Rhodesia. Her uncle David Dichuene Moeketsi who was a minister of the Methodist Church had been transferred from South Africa to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). David Dichuene Moeketsi took along his father, Nokotima Moeketsi who was also a widower and Gertrude Shope's grandfather. Shope's father John Ratlhajwa

Moeketsi and his brother Peter Mpuu Moeketsi also followed with their families. John Ratlhajwa Moeketsi brought along Shope's mother, Mary Mmakate (Mangwanyana) Moeketsi and their children, Laura Ntshabeng from John Moeketsi's first marriage and Iris Segomotso, their first born. Gertrude Shope was first of their children to be born in Southern Rhodesia then her brother Lincoln Molefe who died at two years old, Patricia was the last-born child. Gertrude Shope's father, John Moeketsi was employed by the Anglo Africa Agricultural Iron Steel Company to repair farming implements. Due to the nature of his work, Gertrude Shope's father travelled extensively within Southern Rhodesia and the neighbouring countries such as Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyasaland (Malawi) and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique).⁸

Shope grew up in Zimbabwe, Victoria Province (now Masvingo Province) and attended school at Epworth Mission Station near Harare where her family had settled (G. Shope⁹, Personal Communication, 27 October 2021, and L. Shope, Personal Communication. 13 March 2023¹⁰). This is where she completed her schooling and primary teacher's course. After some years, the Moeketsi family returned to South Africa and settled in Mafeking (Mahikeng). However, Gertrude Shope later moved to Natal and attended St. Hilda's College in Ladysmith. Here she also completed her teacher's domestic science course. From 1948-1951 Shope was a teacher at Indaleni High School in Richmond, Natal (G. Shope, Personal Communication 10 February 2022), however had to leave due to health issues. Then she moved to Johannesburg and taught at Pimville High School in Soweto. ¹¹

After the introduction of the Bantu Education Act of 1954, Shope left teaching in protest (Gastrow 1990: 304). The Bantu Education Act aimed at introducing a new administration in the education of Africans: "(1) by a system of apartheid to place the education of the Bantu under the control of the Native Affairs Department, a step which implied taking it away from the control of the Provincial Councils of the Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal, which had hitherto been responsible for the

⁸ Excerpts from Gertrude Shope's unpublished autobiography.

⁹ In person interview with Gertrude Shope on 27 October 2021.

¹⁰ In person interview with Lyndall Shope Qubeka on 13 March 2023.

¹¹ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated Transcript, University of Witwatersrand.

primary and secondary education of all races and which still dealt with the education of Europeans, Coloureds (mixed-blood) and Indians; and (2) to take Bantu education out of the hands of the Churches and Missions, which had borne the burden of it since its inception about 140 years ago, and to place it in the hands of the Bantu people themselves, through committees or other tribal authorities working under the Department of Native Affairs”.

The Minister of Native Affairs at the time, Dr. H. F. Verwoerd argued that the education previously offered by churches and missions and the conditions it was offered under “had led to the production of frustrated Africans, who had been made to feel that they were above their community, and wanted to become integrated with the life of the European community by obtaining posts in a European setting and through the elimination of Europeans”. Verwoerd postulated that when these Africans did not get “European posts” they became rebellious and tried to influence their communities due to their misdirected and alien ambition (Shepherd 1955: 138). In the same year that the Bantu Education was introduced, Gertrude Shope joined the African National Congress when she was 29 years old. Shope highlighted that one of the things that motivated her into joining the struggle against the repression of African peoples was the poverty, the lack of health facilities and accommodation. She saw her mother having to take children of relatives due to those circumstances, a practice she would pass on to her children and teaching them that “anyone can be your sister or brother, you should help them if you can”. In an interview with Julie Frederikse¹², Shope further pointed out that her other reasons for joining the struggle against the oppressive system were that:

I saw men getting arrested, being sent to potato farms to go and work there, dig potatoes with their fingers-now all these things happened to the people I knew. People who were my neighbours, some of whom came from countries out of South Africa, and because they wouldn't have employment, they would just be sold to these farms...all of these things sort of built up in a person step by step-but then one day when I was in town, I saw a group of women going to

¹² South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, undated. University of Witwatersrand.

the railway station, back to their different homes, so I went to find out who they were, what their slogans were, where they were coming from, only to find that they were coming from...what was called the Native Commission Office-they had gone to protest against the rising rent, the increase in the transport fares and the soaring cost of living. So, when I asked them, and they told me...I just joined them and walked along with them-we discussed this right through in the trains until we get to our different stations-but then there was going to be a meeting on a certain date. I then attended this meeting, got to know what they were discussing about, and I then joined the ANC.

I also learned my lesson during the course of the removal of the Sophiatown residents...I was at the Coronation Hospital at that time, I saw trucks and trucks and trucks transporting people in the rain from Sophiatown into Soweto...and some people trying to resist, others running to the church where father Huddleston was a church leader, trying to seek refuge there, but not without much help, in the end they were just taken-they were all taken away. So it's all these things that built up within one, and you know, revolted...within yourself-I think in the end someone must sacrifice- we learned about our leaders who were being arrested everyday-people like Lillian Ngoyi-about a certain woman called Madinoge, who was eventually sentenced to death-Lillian Ngoyi told us about this woman, she told us that she went to jail to see her, to her death cell, she asked her how she felt as someone who has been condemned to death, but Madinoge Kgolokoe said she was not sorry about this. All she said that only if the women could look after her two-year-old son-at that time she will not mind...to die...because it's for a good cause. So, you know it's all these things, you know, that one gets to know, gets to hear from our leaders when they address us, that you feel that you have to take part...you are part of the whole thing and therefore you have to take part in the whole struggle to help liberate those who will be coming after us¹³ .

Evidently after observing the inhumane treatment of blacks by the apartheid officials, Gertrude Shope felt compelled to fight against the injustices such as seeing Africans being forcefully removed in Sophiatown as landowners and rendered landless

¹³ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated. University of Witwatersrand.

proletariats. Before the 1950s Groups Areas Act, Sophiatown was one of the two areas (the other being Westbury) in Johannesburg where black people could own land. In the 1940s and towards the 1950s Sophiatown was engrained in political activism and a flourishing urban culture until the residents were forcefully removed (Erlank and Morgan 2015: 2). Shope witnessed the enforcement of the Native Labour Regulation Act 1911 as people she knew were forced into labour and sent to the farms. The Native Labour Regulation Act sought to regulate the recruiting and employment of Native Labour and to provide for compensation of native labourers in certain cases. Other regulations that would follow was the 1952 Native Laws Amendment Act No. 52 which limited the rights of Africans to live in urban areas and extended influx controls to all urban areas and to Black women who had previously not been affected (Horowitz 1991: 11). Of course, this Act was taken up a notch through the Native Labour Regulations of 1959 which intended to control the employment of 'Africans' in urban areas. Many of black people who were arrested for different offences and could not afford to pay fines were sentenced to hard labour as there was also 'influx' in prisons. Offenders such as those who resisted being removed from Sophiatown were sent to work on farms, allegedly 'as a way of separating them from hardened criminals (Horrell, 1971: 37-38).

After leaving teaching to be part of the campaign to Boycott Bantu Education, Shope moved to Coronation Hospital and worked in the occupational therapy section. In 1956 she joined the Johannesburg City Council and assisted the disabled and organised women's clubs that trained women in crafts and with youth rehabilitation. She also volunteered at Margaret Ballinger Hospital when she was not working at the City Council.

Gertrude and Mark Shope: Family, Political Activism and Exile

On 11 July 1957 Gertrude Moeketsi got married to Mark Shope¹⁴. They would later have three children, Lyndall born in 1958, Thaninga in 1960 and Lenin in 1962. Mark Shope had three children from his first marriage, Sheila Shope-Sithole, Ntombi Shope-Kubai and George Shope.¹⁵ Gertrude Shope and Mark Shope lived in Central Western

¹⁴ Interview with Julie Fredrikse in 1987.

¹⁵ In person interview with Lyndall Shope-Qubeka on 13 March 2023.

Jabavu house number 600 situated in Soweto township with all their six children until Gertrude Shope left for exile ¹⁶.

Although only originated in 1963, Soweto township, acronym for Southwestern Townships, cannot be separated from the foundations of Johannesburg which formally came into existence in 1886 after the discovery of gold. In 1887, only 3000 diggers lived in Johannesburg, however, few decades later as the gold rush motion grew, Johannesburg became the most popular city in South Africa. By 1911 there were 240 000 people living in Johannesburg. Soweto came into being through an aggressive enforcement of the Groups Areas Act of 1950 which saw a hasty expansion of townships in the south-western areas of Johannesburg. The 1904 plague, the establishment of Orlando in 1930, and Mpanza's squatter movement of the mid-1940s marked the three crucial moments in the pre-apartheid development of the township. Each of these contributed in its own way to making Soweto the pre-eminent location of Johannesburg's African population (Nieftagodien and Gaule 2012: 1).

Adjacent to the city centre in Johannesburg was the 'Native Location' which comprised: 'Coolie Location which was synonymous with Indians, Kaffir Location, stayed Africans and Malay Location, Coloureds'. The 1904 Pneumonic Plague resulted in Indians being accused of disseminating the illness due to their "filthy environment that possibly have contaminated the soil" (Phillips 2013: 311). In March 1904 'Coolies Location' was surrounded by police to facilitate the forced removal at the directive of the Rand Plaque Committee. Initially, the suggestion was to find two locations, one for Africans and the other for Indians and Coloureds, but in the end, everyone was placed at Klipspruit farm. Initially this location was meant to be temporary, but in the end, it was a permanent residence that would later be expanded and named Soweto in 1963 (Phillips 2013: 311).

Central Western Jabavu is one of the locations that emerged due to forced removals that took place in the western part of Johannesburg where black people were forcefully removed from areas closer to whites and settled at the edge of the city to ensure complete segregation of the native population out of the white areas (Maré 1980:25).

¹⁶ Telephonic interview with Sheila Shope-Sithole on 04 August 2023.

It is worth noting that even though Gertrude Shope and her family stayed in Central Western Jabavu as a result of the Groups Areas Act of 1950, the beginning of the Native Policy pertaining forced removals and restrictions of land use and occupation can be traced approximately to 1830 following the Despatch of Sir Lowry Cole dated 02 January 1830 and the reply of the Colonial Secretary, Sir George Murray dated 06 May 1830 in which Murray replied as followed:

I have received your despatch of the 2nd January last, in which you report the results of your recent visit to the eastern frontier of the Colony under your government, and I am happy to learn that all serious apprehensions of invasion from Caffraria¹⁷ has subsided. I concur with you, however in regretting that a portion of the ceded Territory continues to be occupied by bodies of Caffres whose numbers I collect from the tenor of your despatch to be very considerable. This is undoubtedly a great evil; for while on the one hand, it is not to be expected that these people will voluntarily evacuate the colonial territory, I am not on the other hand prepared to authorise you to expel them by force of arms from the land of their birth.

At the same time, it is clear that, without entirely abandoning the policy which sought to set up a bar of separation between the Caffres and the Colonist, the former cannot be allowed to remain as owners of the soil in permanent occupation of the colonial territory. That policy which embraces the interest of the Caffres themselves should not be lost sight of. It was a wise measure to remove them from temptations which must attach to their close proximity to the borders of the Colony; and it would

¹⁷ In the 19th and 20th centuries, southern Africa's white colonists used the word 'Caffre' to refer the region's black majority as an inferior race of African origins. "While this historical context explains why the term 'Caffre' is considered hate speech in post-apartheid South Africa, the word's history dates to the beginning of Europe's engagement with the region in c. 1500. Caffraria would be used as a descriptive name which means the land of the Kaffirs. See Jochen Arndt (2017), *What's in a Word? Historicising the Term 'Caffre' in European Discourses about Southern Africa between 1500 and 1800. Journal of Southern African Studies. 44 (1).*

Also see, Mark Mathabane's *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York, Free Press, 1986), p. xiii. In his autobiography he points out that, in South Africa the term is used disparagingly by most whites to refer to blacks. It is the equivalent of the term nigger. See Also see, Kidd, D. 1904. *The Essential Kafir*. New York: v.

be not only sacrificing the ultimate hope of their civilisation, but the immediate welfare of an extensive district of the colony to allow the Caffres to retain their present locations without some effectual guarantee that they will not abuse the temporary indulgence which you have felt yourself induced to continue to them. That guarantee should be their peaceable conduct; and it must be fully understood that every attempt which they shall make to plunder the farms or property of the colonists, will, as in the case of Makomo¹⁸, be visited by the immediate expulsion of the whole tribe to which the plunderers shall belong. I confess, I see no other course that can be followed consistently with the safety of the Colony for leading these people to adopt the habits of civilised life; and this should not only fully be explained to them, but arrangements should be made and promulgated by proclamation for enforcing their expulsion from the Colony simultaneously with the occurrence of any gross misconduct on their part¹⁹.

The scale of the forced removals of people from their ancestral land were enforced through legislation like the Land Act of 1913, the Native Areas Act of 1923²⁰, 1937 and

¹⁸ King Maqoma (spelled Makomo) of the AmaRharhabe division of the Xhosa nation forcefully opposed his father Ngqika's ceding of the land between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers to the Cape Colony to make way for Kat River Settlement. Consistently unfaced, Maqoma vowed to regain his ancestral home. Moving west from Ngqika's kraals, he pushed his way into the "so-called Neutral Zone in 1822 to a new chiefdom on the banks of the Kat River. Despite taking every effort to placate the Whites from his position, Maqoma was hounded continually by colonial raids and expelled from his territory in 1829", the year his father died. In 1834, Maqoma and Tyali (his half-brother) were faced with increased military pressure from the colony and in turn retaliated by taking up arms in an attempt to prevent further dispossession. Maqoma was conquered by colonialist who invaded his land in 1835. Nevertheless, Maqoma remained the most powerful AmaRharhabe chief and by 1837 a cost-conscious colonial office had ordered British troops to withdraw from Xhosaland. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/chief-maqoma>

Also see Ross, R. 2013, *The Borders of Race in Colonial South Africa: The Kat River Settlement from 1829-1856*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ See Brooks, E.H. *Native Policy in South Africa from 1830 to the Present Day*. Cape Town South Africa: 12-13.

²⁰ The Native (Urban Areas) Act 21 of 1923 which enabled the development of separate residential areas for black residents in the vicinity of urban centres. In particular, the Act regulated the housing spaces where black inhabitants could legally settle by authorising local authorities to demarcate, plan and develop separate locations. The Act also empowered local authorities to approve trading licenses to African location residences. See (Davenport 1987: 551).

1945 and from 1948 more oppressive measures came into effect. When the National Party came to power, it tightened its colonial clasp through the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the pass laws. These fascist instruments of control have come to define the 21st century South Africa. The year 1994 marked the official rescind of these oppressive laws, however their remnants have stayed with us (Hlongwane 2021: 107). Jeremy Cronin aptly captures this sense of loss and holds that “the prevailing sense of loss is not a pining for a dreadful apartheid past but, rather, a conviction that our present reality is less than we had struggled for, less, perhaps, than we deserved” (Jeremy Cronin: 2005 quoted in Grunebaum 2011: 2). In 1960, Phorohlo Mamogobo too accentuated this loss that spans over three hundred years and characterised by repressions, theft, trauma, murders, dispossessions and displacements in his poem called *Afrika Bowa (Africa Return)*:

Bowa Afrika fase la borre twehlanyaditšhaba

(Return Africa, the land of our forefathers)

Mohlabamonolo thari ya bana ba mosadi yo moso,

(The land of children of a black woman)

Mpho badimo bangmagola madulagodimo maakakaleng.

(A gift from the ancestors you are, the owner of vast of land, you who reign supreme)

Bowa wena naga boroko makhura a bana ba mosadi yo moso

(Return, you who give us sleep, you who feed the children of the black woman)

Bowela go beng, beng ba tseba tshinyi ba phala maswena matlakagothopa

(Return to those you belong to, for they know how to care for you better than the colonisers who just take without permission)²¹

The majority of South Africans remain landless and homeless as a result of the social, political and economic rapture caused by the colonial and apartheid regime. In Johannesburg, black people who had title deeds to their properties were removed from Sophiatown and Fiestas in 1953. They were also barred from occupying residential areas close to white areas such as Newclare and Westdene (Weinberg 1981: 101).

²¹ First stanza of Phorohlo Mamogobo’s *Leduleputswa*, his Northern Sotho/Sepedi poem published in 1960.

Marabastad in Pretoria had as far as 1888 been a segregated location and multicultural community for Africans, Coloureds and Indians. 'Those classified as 'African' were moved to Atteridgeville in 1945. In 1963 those classified as 'Coloureds' were moved to Eersterus. The last group to be moved was the Indians in 1968 to Laudium (Khangela 2022: 115).

In Cape Town, the District Six had existed as a formal municipal district since 1867. "It became a vibrant and diversely inhabited port city home to Jewish families fleeing the pogroms in Eastern Europe, to the formerly enslaved and their descendants, and to those coming into the city to seek work from other parts of the country". The evil segregationist apartheid government declared District Six a 'whites only' location on 11 February 1966. Similar to Marabastad where people's homes were destroyed for an estimated period of twenty-three years while they were being uprooted, in District Six, the forced removals lasted over a period of approximately 15 years. Bennet (2021: 47) aptly captures the impact of forced removals and writes that:

An estimated 60 000 people lost not only the bricks and mortar of their residences but also their community coherence, their sense of identity and belonging, and what many refer to as 'the spirit of District Six'. It was a strong spirit which sustained people as they battled life on the Cape Flats, and it was not possible to replicate it in the new places where people went to live, built on the back of resentment as these areas were, complicated by increased economic hardships and a desire to be elsewhere.

Indians in Natal and Transvaal were already affected by the Pegging Act of 1943 that allowed them to retain property that was bought before March 1943, thereafter, it was illegal, and they were prohibited from occupying or acquiring property in a white dominated area. Also, that the Indians may not engage in any transaction relating to the occupation or acquisition of property without first acquiring permission from the Minister of Interior (Maharaj 1995: 37). As alternative settlement options, the Act provided for the lease of municipal plots to black tenants and endorsed hostel accommodation for single black men working in urban areas. A prominent rationale underlying the accommodation of black persons in pre-apartheid urban areas was the

need for steady access to affordable labour to advance the economy. Urban residential segregation thus enabled local authorities to implement influx control measures and to administer stricter pass laws²². Elaine Unterhalter (1987) observed that from 1960 to 1983 an estimated 3.5 million people had been forcefully removed.

At the time that Gertrude and Mark Shope's family lived in Central Western Jabavu, the area had 31000 residents, and they shared one medical clinic with 54 000 residents of Moroka (Gunther 1959: 46).

Getrude Shope's husband, Mark Shope, an activist in the ANC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), was detained during the 1960 state of emergency (Odendaal 2022: 63). Gertrude Shope recalled that her husband "...was one of the first people to be collected-and at that time I was expecting my second daughter, who was born on 23 August 1960, six days before my husband came back"²³. Mark Shope led a group of twenty-six on a long journey in 1963 into exile, some of which were part of the seven-person uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) regional committee members in Cape Town. The likes of Chris Hani and Zola Skweyiya walked with Shope and crossed the border of Botswana by foot, then got onto a lorry and train via Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), into Dar es Salam to meet up with Tambo and other ANC leaders (Odendaal 2022: 63).

In 1960, the ANC declared going into the armed struggle. During the 1960s, women played a critical role in the effective functioning of the underground structures. Albertina Sisulu, Gertrude Shope, Greta Ncaphai, Hunadi Motsoaledi, Irene Mkwayi, Tiny Nokwe, June Mlangeni, Beauty Makgothi, Rita Ndzanga were among women that worked with leaders that were not arrested. A variety of roles were performed by these

²² The Native Urban Areas ACT of 1923 was further enacted by the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act 25 of 1945 no 91 which enabled the implementation of formal influx-control policies. The provisions of the Act, in conjunction with the Regulations Concerning the Control and Supervision of an Urban Black Residential Area were eventually used to establish formal townships for black inhabitants in urban areas under apartheid. Specifically, section 2(1) of the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act 25 of 1945 empowered local authorities to demarcate and plan spaces for black occupation. These areas included locations, vacant municipal land or buildings, and hostels. See (Strauss 2019: 147-149).

²³ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope Transcript, Undated. University of Witwatersrand. Pg 8.

women. From “organising accommodation for those who were on the run, managing an elaborate communication network...attending to the welfare of victims of struggle”. Gertrude Shope was the link between the Communist Party leader, Braam Fischer and the ANC underground in Soweto. Among other responsibilities, Shope received money from the Communist Party leadership through Violet Weinberg which she subsequently sent to MK leaders particularly, in the African townships. Consequently, she was arrested and charged with mailing instructions from the ANC leadership in Johannesburg to regional leaders in Cape Town, such as Elijah Loza²⁴ (Houston 2004:603).

A man had to come from Cape Town all the way to Johannesburg to be detained there - the duty of the women in Johannesburg was to see to it that these men whose wives are very far away from them should be given clean laundry, should be taken food to, should be given the moral support on the days when they appear in court and so forth -

So it was a very, very broad role indeed that the women had to play - we also had people who - who were banished to remote areas - among them men and women - some of them were just banished and their wives and children were left behind - among other things the women in the A.N.C. in these areas had to go round collecting whatever thing people - some people gave us something like 25 pounds (?) of sugar, a bag of rice, a packet of tobacco, whatever -

And then towards the end of the year around November we'd bring all these things together from the different townships, get a whole list of banished people - who is a man, who is a woman - if it's a man, if he smokes, maybe somebody might have given you an old pair of shoes, you take to him, a shirt and so forth - dresses also for - for a woman and so forth - and we then made a date whereby all these were parcelled and sent to these different

Figure 4. Excerpt from Julie Frederikse interview with Gertrude Shope in 1987, Zambia.

²⁴ Elijah Nkwenkwe Loza was a trade unionist and member of the ANC. He was first detained 1 May 1963 and then in 1976 was banned for five years under the Suppression of Communism Act 44 of 1950. After getting arrested on 27 May 1977 under the Terrorism Act no 83 of 1967, he was detained at the maximum-security section of the Victor Vester Prison between Franschoek and Paarl in the Cape. On 1 August 1977 he died in Tygerberg Hospital, apparently from a stroke he suffered while in detention. Despite results of the postmortem, his family expressed dissatisfaction as Loza “was a healthy man before his detention”. See Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu, *Death in Detention in Apartheid South Africa: Commemorations, Remembrance and Making Sense of and the Wall of Names at Freedom Park National Heritage Site in Ndlovu, S.M. and Hlongwane, A. K. Public History, Heritage and Culture in South Africa: The Struggle Continues*, 2021 pg.238.

During the 1963-1964 Rivonia Trial where Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada were primary suspects, Gertrude Shope was named as co-conspirator. In her interview with Julie Fredrikse, she said that:

It was during the time of the (Tape Off)-during the Fisher trial-I was also implicated in that trial...that is when they started calling me for questioning, then they would say go and come back on a certain day, we knew exactly that one time when I go there, they will never let me come back again.²⁵

Following her being implicated, Bram Fisher who was a member of the Congress of the Democrats and an advocate who defended Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and eighteen other members of the ANC for their participation in the Defiance Campaign²⁶, urged Shope to leave the country. Indeed, she left South Africa for Botswana on 12 February 1966 due to her immense involvement in political activities of FEDSAW and the ANC. Eli Weinberg, Violet Weinberg and Leslie Schermbrucker eventually served their five years imprisonment. Shope's father, John Moeketsi had died a year earlier, in July 1965²⁷. Although Gertrude Shope's parents were not actively involved in political activities, they understood why she and her husband participated in the liberation struggle political activities.

After her husband Mark left the country in 1963, Gertrude Shope's parents helped with taking care of her children. Shope took some of her children to go and stay with her parents in Mafeking (Mahikeng) and shortly before leaving in 1966, she took the rest of them too. After leaving South Africa, Shope requested her friend to go on her behalf to Mafeking to tell her mother that she had left the country but would arrange for the children to join her in Botswana²⁸. Lyndall, Gertrude, and Mark Shope's first child was born in Johannesburg but had to move to Zimbabwe to live with her aunt Iris, Shope's older sister because her father had already fled to exile when she was just five years old (Odendaal 2022: 327; Shope-Qubeka, Personal Communication, 13 March 2023).²⁹

²⁵ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated. University of Witwatersrand. Pg 10.

²⁶ See Clingman, S. 2013. *Bram Fischer: Afrikaner Revolutionary*. Jacana.

²⁷ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated. University of Witwatersrand. Pg 8.

²⁸ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated. University of Witwatersrand. Pg 2.

²⁹ In person interview with Lyndall Shope-Qubeka on 13 March 2023.

When Lyndall was nine years, she went to join her mother in Botswana. Thaninga was six years and Lenin four years. Shope stayed in Botswana until November 1967 then left to join her husband in Prague. At the time Mark Shope was working for the World Federation of Trade Unions. In 1971 the Shope family moved to Tanzania until October 1972. They then moved to Zambia and worked in the ANC office. In 1978 they moved to Nigeria, but Gertrude Shope returned to Zambia in 1981 after the first conference of women in the external mission of the ANC (Gastrow 1990: 305).

Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW)

In South Africa women have for a long period been politically active and continuously mobilising against colonial and apartheid oppressive rules. Although imperceptible in the 1940s, the ANC Women's League provided a base for the Federation of the South African Women (FEDSAW) and its members played leading roles (Meli 1989: 132). Regarded as the non-racial women's movement FEDSAW "operated within the Congress Alliance, the umbrella group formed by the ANC, the white Congress of Democrats (COD), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), and the Coloured People's Organisation (CPO) to oppose apartheid". FEDSAW was driven by a federal approach in which women first affiliated to their racial groups then a to the broader movement a model that NOW and UWO sought to move away from as they regarded it as perpetuating the notion that race significantly influenced identity (Hassim 2006). Led by Lillian Ngoyi, on 9 August 1956, FEDSAW organised a March of 20 000 women to the prime minister's office protesting against passes (Healy-Clancy 2017: 844).

Following the banning of the ANC and the other arms of the Congress such as the Congress of Democrats (COD), the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), FEDSAW introduced women to sewing and self-help clubs that enabled it to function until 1964 (Leggassick and Saunders 2004:). Ruth Mompati helped launch FEDSAW in 1954 and was involved both in organising the Congress of the People in 1955 and the 1956 women's march in Pretoria (Magubane et.al. 2004: 76). In 1965, Gertrude Shope served with Albertina Sisulu, first as secretary of Central Jabavu then at the national structure, where Sisulu was the president. As secretary of FEDSAW she played a central role in assisting the families of imprisoned members of the Congress

movement by attending court cases and visiting the sick in hospital (Ndlovu 2004: 603).

FEDSAW demonstrated that indeed women did not rely on men for leadership or to function as an entity. Broadly FEDSAW rejected the model of affiliation through one's racial group. It was also through its innovation of camouflaging as an amalgamation of self-help and social welfare clubs that the facilitation of many of ANC members to leave the country materialised.

On Matriarchism and Activism for Women's Rights

Shope became a member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC in 1985. In the same year, she also led a delegation of women to the Conference in Nairobi. Shope recalls the beginning of the conference as being tense as white women delegation from the apartheid South Africa budged into the conference and demanded to represent South African women. Seemingly this stunt was received with dismay from the ANC's women delegation as they also demanded to have their voices heard and that their experiences of a repressive South Africa should not be filtered down to just 'normal' challenges that women across the globe face. Ultimately Gertrude Shope and other ANC delegates were afforded a fair opportunity (Shope 2007: 211-214).

Also, in 1985 several revelatory letters were published in African Confidential, a London newsletter and later testimonies from uMkhonto we Sizwe mutiny which were published in the Southern African Searchlight. In these publications, it was revealed that there were leadership feuds that had strategic implications which extended to ethnicities, in this case the Zulus and Xhosas. Other crucial details that were revealed were allegations of corruption, criminal activities, and sexual exploitation by the security organ, Mbhokodo. Prior to these reports, the tension between the mutineers and Mbhokodo reached a volatile climax after the 1984 takeover of Pango camp in Angola. Successively, mutineers were defeated by "Umkhonto loyalists". Following the defeat, the mutineers revealed that their actions of "going against authority" resulted in tortures, public executions, and confinements in ANC prison-camp, Quatro. Even though there was a partial acknowledgement from the "security department in that officials had over-reached themselves". Gertrude Shope along with nine other ANC male leaders visited the notorious Quatro camp where reports of tortures, executions and sexual abuses were revealed for intervention. The visit took place after the

execution of four women that were imprisoned, sexually abused, and eventually losing their minds due to the inhumane treatment at the camp (Scoltz and Scoltz 2009: 222-223). The abuses were ceased or fixed through the intervention of the more courageous humanely predisposed leaders such as Gertrude Shope who succeeded in ending the torture of mutineers at Pango after she visited the camp (Lodge 1992: 4). It is no surprise that Shope intervened in the reported violations and abuses as she has always emphasised that irrespective of colour, women bring life to earth thus are responsible for its protection (Hassim 1991: 69). When many young people left South Africa and joined the uMkhonto we Sizwe in exile, they were reported to have missed their parents, Gertrude Shope was asked to spend two days instead of one in the camps because “there were so many young men and women who wanted to be with a motherly figure” (Suttner 2005: 99).

Gertrude Shope, Head of the ANC Women’s Section and Women’s League President

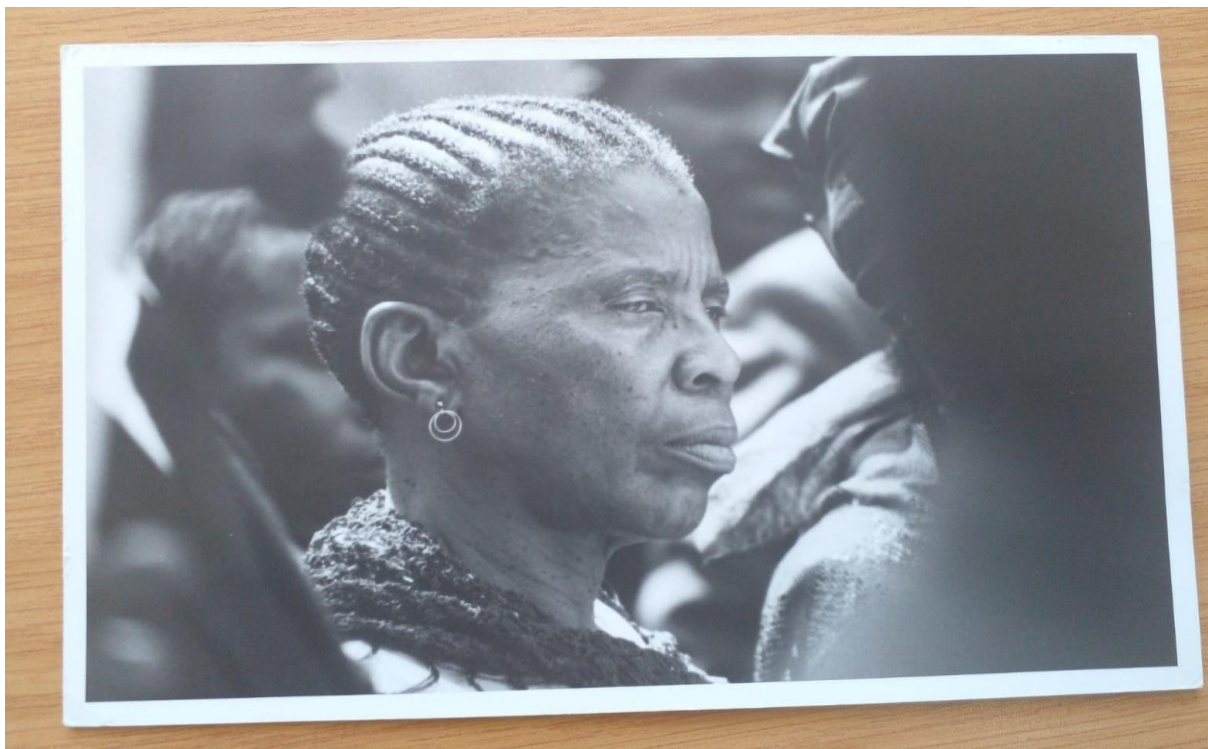


Figure 5. Photograph of Gertrude Shope, ANC Women’s League Collection

Ma Shope or Mom Gerty as she is affectionately known, realised early on that no one will free the people of South Africa but themselves and subsequently in this regard said that “we shall never rest until we win for ourselves and all the children of South Africa, the fundamental freedoms and human dignity that they all deserve” (The

Department of International Relations and Cooperation 2017: 78). With each role that Shope occupied, she emphasised the issue of gender equality and encouraged even traditional leaders to be gender sensitive and re-evaluate some aspects of culture and traditions that oppresses women. She highlighted that before the distortion of the African culture “women had more say and nothing could be decided in the home without their approval”. Also, that women were rulers and regents, thus the leadership of women in traditional affairs is not new. She further stressed that women should not only be recognised as child bearers but also be allowed to play an active role in the education, health care, housing, and the general employment in South Africa (CONTRALESA 1994: 47-48).

In 1943, the ANC resolved that a Women's League be formed. The debate on the status of the League continued with the women calling for autonomy and the men wanting greater control (Ginwala 1990: 65). The ANCWL was led by Madi-Hall Xuma and was officially inaugurated at the 1948 Annual General Conference of the ANC (Meli 1989: 93). Later the ANCWL was suspended in exile. Undoubtedly, the ANCWL was pioneered by Charlotte Maxeke’s demonstration of a solid conviction about her role as a representative leader of the African race even before the ANC could officially allow women into their membership (Cooke 2018: 36-37). Maxeke migrated these traditions into the Bantu Women's League (BWL), which she founded in 1918 as a female auxiliary to the ANC, and later to the National Council of African Women (NCAW) which was an amalgamation of social welfare groups she founded shortly before her death (Masola 2018: 61).

While based in Tanzania, Morogoro, Ruth Mompoti headed the Women Affairs for the ANC’s External Mission. In 1969, the women in the ANC reorganized and formed Women’s Section which was under the Women’s Secretariat (Hassim 2006: 87). From 1970-1971, Gertrude Shope became secretary to the head of the ANC’s Woman’s Section Florence Mophosho. Subsequently these two women started the publication of Voice of the Women (VOW). This publication was launched in the 1971 to highlight the plight of women in South Africa and the women’s role in the broader liberation struggle (Sandwell 2014:18). VOW was also created with the aim of educating the international community about the disabilities being suffered by Black women; particularly African women as they suffered the three-fold oppression and exploitation under Apartheid system. The publication also exposed the inhuman conditions under

which children suffer, even before they were born (Hurley 2003: 13-14). Mavivi Manzini Myakayaka mentioned that, after finishing her degree in Political Science and developmental studies, she joined the Women's Section full time and that's when she started working very closely with Gertrude Shope. She worked in the area of publication and contributed to the writing and distribution of copies of Voice of Women. In order to distribute the VOW copies to women in South Africa, Manzini-Myakayaka said:

we smuggled it inside the country and also sent internationally. We were working in units at that time. So, there would be people who are based in countries which were based next to South Africa, like Botswana, Swaziland, etcetera. So, we would find people from those areas, and they would find a way to smuggle them³⁰.

Dissimilar to *Sechaba*³¹, whose cost of printing and distribution came from the German Democratic Republic Solidarity Committee, VOW "was forced to rely on funding left-over in the ANC's rather paltry coffers and later, subscription fees, fundraising efforts and requests for funding from international organisations. The lack of time, resources, personnel and funding meant that VOW, though begun as a quarterly journal, came out sporadically from its inception until about 1976" (Hurley 2003:14).

Shope then became the ANC's chief representative in Lusaka and in 1981 was promoted to head of the Women's Section. The Women's Section's key tasks were to mobilise women into active membership of the ANC and to mobilise political and material support internationally. Although in many ways like its predecessor, the Women's League, and with a similar role within the ANC, the Women's Section functioned and was organised along different lines (Hassim 2004). A substructure called the Women's Executive Committee was constituted by the Women's Secretariat in 1983. This substructure focused on the day-to-day running of the Women's Section (Hassim 2006: 87).

³⁰ In-person interview on 29 November 2023.

³¹ Before VOW's appearance in 1971, the main body of the ANC had been running a monthly publication, *Sechaba* as "the official organ of the African National Congress" for four years. See Kameron Hurley, 2003. *The Voice of Women? The ANC and the Rhetoric of Women 's Resistance, 1976-1989*. Masters Thesis. University of Natal: pg13.

As leader of the women's Section, Shope worked with different international women's organisations. Most of these organisations focused on peacebuilding, conflict resolution and mediation (Department of International Relations and Cooperation 2017: 82). She also led it to the End of the Decade Conference in Nairobi in 1985 and at the same time was secretary of the ANC mission to Nigeria. After her appointment into the ANC's National Executive Committee in 1985, Gertrude Shope formed her own committee of women that would make up the ANC Women's Section. This group of women were responsible for the overseeing and the output of Women's League propaganda and additionally they were to write up the year's agenda pertaining to issues to be discussed, and campaigns undertaken. Shope and her committee were drafting the programme of action for each year (Hurley 2003:35)

Shope together with Albertina Sisulu were tasked with convening of the ANC's Internal Leadership Corps Task Force from 1990-1991 (Hassim: 2004). This ANC Women's League that was being reconstituted greatly differed from the structure that had been banned in 1960 and associated with auxiliary duties. By 1990 younger women were demanding that the ANC should reassure and "commit itself to the emancipation of the women once it came to power". The Women's League Task Force highlighted their demand for the redefinition of roles and responsibilities and put forth that "the ANCWL is a mass organisation of women within the ANC. It cannot be equated to a department. It has structures and membership which it must represent and take care of". Gertrude Shope argued that:

We have never fought shy of committing ourselves to the struggle against national domination and racial oppression. Equally, we cannot afford to surrender our rights to end our oppression as women. How we define ourselves will determine how we relate to the ANC as a mother body (Hassim 2006: 122).

After the unbanning of the ANC, the ANC Women's League held its first conference in April 1991 in Kimberly, Northern Cape. At this gathering, more than one thousand delegates from branches and regions elected the National Executive Committee (NEC). During the conference, the Women's League was immediately plunged into a leadership crisis. At the core, was the issue relating to the role of Winnie Mandela who was running against Gertrude Shope for the position of president. Mandela was president of the league's powerful Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) region in the

Transvaal. At the time of the conference, she was also facing criminal charges which was a great concern to majority of the delegates. Mandela was on trial for the murder of Stompie Moeketsi, a child in her care and killed by her bodyguards. In addition, others cited that her being Nelson Mandela's wife might result in the ANCWL turning into a 'presidential wives club' (Hassim 2006: 125). Conversely, Shope had been the head of Women's Section in exile and an obvious choice³², particularly for exiles despite some delegates' holding that she is 'soft and old'. These divisions were not only in the ANCWL but could also be observed as other men who were senior officials of the ANC such as Alfred Nzo showed dissatisfaction with the exclusion of Winnie Mandela from her nomination to head of the ANC Social Welfare. Simultaneously, 100 branches in the Witwatersrand Region protested against her nomination to being the director of social welfare of the ANC. The basis of these protests was that Winnie Mandela had not provided answers pertaining the Moeketsi murder, thus, deemed her appointment inappropriate (Lodge 1992: 9). In the end, Gertrude Shope defeated Winnie Mandela with 422 votes to 196. The executive committee comprised of both 'older women activists and younger women feminists but was dominated by exiles.' Gertrude Shope was elected president and Albertina Sisulu became the deputy president, Baleka Kgosietsile the Secretary-General, Makho Njobe the Treasurer General, Nosiviwe Maphisa the National Organiser. The six additional members were Thandi Modise, Hilda Ndude, Mavivi Manzini, Winnie Mandela, Ruth Mompoti and Ivy Ncina (Hassim 2006: 125).

One of the issues that were raised upon election results was the lack of representation in terms of race. The concern was that the executive committee comprised African women thus did not reflect demographics of the South African society and the ANCWL membership (Manicom 1991: 9). It was apparent that the ANCWL had not confronted the political racial implications and organisational differences. In April 1991 during her presidential address, Gertrude Shope put forth that she "foresaw unity as eminently achievable. She argued that black and white women should work together united by the force of motherhood. Shope was of the view that women, black or white, suffer the same problems, therefore should all fight for the same problems" (Hassim 1991: 78).

³² Interview with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023.

Both Shope and Sisulu were sensitive to the concerns of younger women and recognised that they were critical in shaping the future and direction of the league. During her address, Shope also contextualised the period in which the conference was taking place and highlighted that it was in the midst of evolving negotiations. She put forth that “the task facing the ANC during negotiations is to remove all obstacles in the way of coming up with a new constitution of South Africa” (Manicom 1991:7).

In her paper entitled *Liberation of the African Woman*, Gertrude Shope highlighted that:

The liberation of women worldwide was defined way back in 1975 during the international Women’s Year in the discussions that formed the basis for their status and recognition as full participants in society under the broad theme of Equality, Development and Peace. A decade later, this was articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women- a document that set most governments to reviewing their policies and taking a stand. Later at a conference entitled” End of Decade for Women” held in Nairobi, Kenya in July 1985, with many women attending reported that their governments have responded positively by ratifying the Convention. Much as this action gained prestige for many governments which ratified the document, much still must be done. Until and unless matters affecting women and children are urgently given the attention they deserve, the liberation of the African woman will remain mere words (Shope 1992: 1).

Shope further pointed out the patriarchal makeup of the African society, and how that has resulted in the African woman being relegated to a minor position that subjects them to the guardianship of men. This relegation of the African woman prevented her to participate fully in “decision making and upkeep of the family or the affairs of the community” (Shope 1992: 2). Mompoti and Gertrude Shope recalled that the Women’s Section made concerted efforts to provide a measure of support and counselling for abused female cadres, particularly with the arrival of the 1976 generation. After the arrival of the 1976 cohort, Mompoti mentioned that reports on abuse and sexual

relationships with teenagers who were confronted with unwanted pregnancies escalated (Ndlovu 2004: 471).

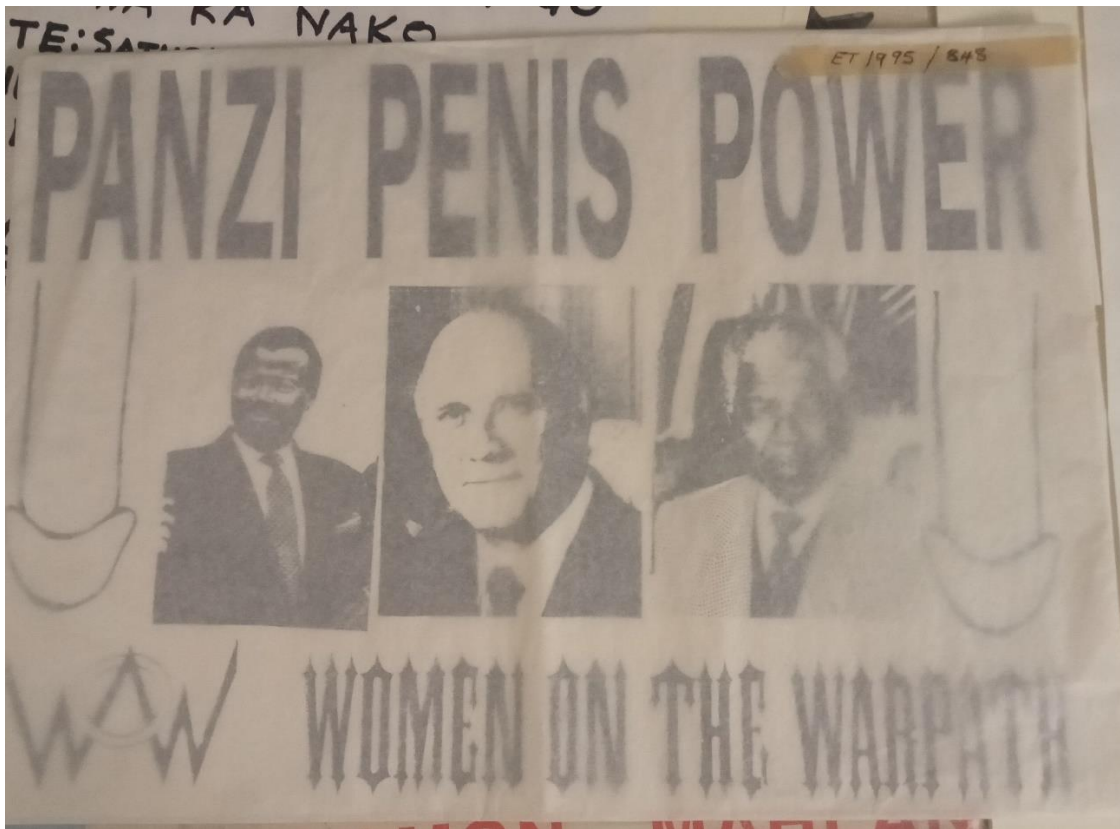


Figure 6. CODESA poster

Shope played an active role at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The participants were largely males, and Ma Shope displayed that women could participate fully in the discussion of the Government of National Unity. At the ANCWL Conference in Kimberly, Shope was already signalling that “the league would have to mobilise support for women representation even from non-ANC sources”. She put forth that the league needed to take a stand for women’s emancipation. Shope’s efforts to push for the voice of women to be heard was translated by some reports dubbing her “a well-known opponent of negotiations and in favor of a power takeover” (Mellet 1992). Together with Albertina Sisulu, Shope and other women were compelled to hold a big protest during the CODESA negotiations as they were side lined by their male counter parts to participate fully in all the peace talks. Gertrude Shope held the position of president of the ANC’s Women’s League from 1991 until 1993. She then became a member of parliament in the Government of National Unity in 1994 (Hassim: 2006: 123).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I've provided an entry into Gertrude Shope's life and attempted to answer the question 'who is Gertrude Shope' which I've been getting through this PhD journey. This chapter provides a base for the writing of Shope's life story. It also ties with chapter two and chapter five which I use to weave Shope's life through different modes. By touching on the different spheres of Shope's life I was able to show that indeed she is not minor but has contributed significantly to the liberation struggle and dedicated her life to the attainment of freedom and justice. The chapter also demonstrated the different roles that Gertrude Shope assumed during the liberation struggle from her time in FEDSAW, the ANC Women's Section and ultimately being the president of the ANCWL. Shope's achievements and leadership roles is motivation enough for us to search for other women whose stories are currently muted.

CHAPTER TWO

ARCHIVES: A CONCEALER AND REVEALER OF HISTORY

The archive-all archive-every archive is figured. Acceptance of this in South Africa has shaped fundamentally-the argument-and the process built upon it-that the country's archives require transformation or refiguring. The refiguring by our apartheid and longer pasts must be challenged, and spaces must be opened up in the archives by a transforming society (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002: 7).

Introduction

The unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and numerous other organisations in February 1990, and the subsequent initiation of formal negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid, marked the beginning of what many journalists and other commentators termed South Africa's period of "Pretoriastroika". Terms such as "transparency, accountability, stakeholders, public participation, restructuring, reconstruction, and transformation exploded into public discourse. The sphere of archives was no exception. A transformation discourse, one informed by the assumption that archives require redefinition, more precisely, reinvention for a democratic South Africa quickly emerged" (Harris 2007: 181). Due to its long traditions of oppositional discourse, the ANC occupied a paradigm that sought to transform and reconstruct apartheid policies through development of concepts such as "people's education, people's history, and cultural liberation" so as to amplify its voice in the archives. Henceforth, the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture established a Commission on Museums, Monuments and Heraldry in 1992 "that convened an Archive Subcommittee whose responsibility was to examine the state of management of archives in the country; formulate a draft policy document regarding archives in a democratic South Africa; formulate guidelines regarding interim measures and to make recommendations regarding transformation, popularization, and democratization of archives structures" (Harris 2007: 181). Contrary to colonial and apartheid archives that thrived at the erasure and silencing of records relating to Africans, liberation archives sought to democratise and forge towards representation of the often-muted voices. However, it would seem that the liberation archives too continue to be entrenched with underplaying and sidelining women, thus diverting from the initial goal (April 2012: 202).

During the struggle of emancipation from apartheid, "South Africa's information system laboured under a draconian system of censorship that could have crippled the media". However, it was through the tradition of defiance and the rise of a strong civil rights movement that relentlessly challenged censorship and preserved a remarkably extensive documentary record of the national condition (Marrett 2001: 50). Similar to the likes of Maxeke, the journey of locating Gertrude Shope, particularly in archival records presents difficulties in finding a trace of her contribution in the liberation struggle. While this is the case in the archival records, the same trends ascend

pertaining to books that Shope wrote or those that have been written about her, particularly in the 1980s. Although the liberation archives have been positioned as a mediator of the colonial and apartheid archives' oppressive legacies, it would seem that in practice and in their composition, they contribute to "denial of women justice", particularly the National Archives and Records of South Africa in their documentation of the African National Congress Women's League records from 1960 to 1990 (Natshakhuma 2019). It is for these reasons that this chapter seeks to track through archival records a trail of Shope's contribution to the liberation struggle and her sidelining in the heritage and memory of South Africa.

The photographic archive in this chapter features Shope, her colleagues and comrades and is employed to explore their lives and afterlives by construing for "no image, has an existence or memory of its own. It is what we do with them and how we situate them against the backdrop of other narratives...that enables them to speak in various ways about the past and its bearing on the present" (Koepnick 2004: 102). Photography plays an important role in the preservation of heritage due to their ability to transcend into and back to history. Photographs bear witness to historical events and acknowledge objects and subjects captured (Tostões and Braga 2013: 83).

In her article, a prolific thinker of photography, Susan Sontag accentuates that the early decades of photography saw some people treating photography merely as "some kind of a copying machine" or just a tool used to dispense some form of visual information and not an "independent source of seeing or of material that would fundamentally change our visual sensibility as it has. Sontag further asserted that photography's place in the humanities should be viewed as central due to its ability to offer us a place where "all kinds of sociological, moral and historical questions can be asked" (2003: 60).

In dealing with archival records, historians in South Africa have exercised cautiousness, warrantably so, due to biasness of the colonial and apartheid origins while simultaneously considering the selective general nature of archival records collection and preservation (Hamilton, Harris and Reid 2002:9). In the introduction to *Refiguring the Archive*, an edited book of essays on archives, Carolyn Hamilton professor of anthropology and history advances that "the archives are often documents of both exclusion and monuments to particular configurations of power"

(2002: 9). Whether in written or oral form, the archive is a “natural creator of history”. Archives portray what people once thought was worth recording or holding on to, suppressing, forgetting or even passing on. Equally, archives reflect decisions made by state officials and the interests they were meant to serve (Appiah 2011: 99). Carolyn Hamilton describes the archives as the circumscribed body of knowledge of the past that is historically determined as that which is available for us to draw on when thinking about the past” (Mangcu 2011: viii). In *Contesting the Archives: Finding Women Sources* Burton (2010: vii-xv) calls us to ask critical questions about the “role of archives in shaping the conceptual framework of women’s and gender history” and not just as terrains that women have navigated.

Women historians too have pointed out the marginalisation of women who until recently were not regarded as legitimate subjects of history in archival collection. Traditionally women are represented in the archives, however, their voices are usually found in fragments and silences. Some of women stories and experiences are found in numerous records meant to capture male-centred narratives. When present in the archives, reconstructing and excavating their lives presents many methodological challenges. That said, I am in agreement with Hamilton that despite the methodological shortcomings present, archives are a site concerned with preserving the past that anyone interested in unearthing evidence beyond what may be presented elsewhere may engage (Hamilton 2011: 119), as is my case in excavating Shope’s story in the archives. Instantaneously, they are also social constructs that boils down to power and their origin emanating from the information needs and social values of the rulers, governments, businesses, associations, and individuals who establish and maintain them. (Schwartz and Cook 2002: 3). The power of what will be preserved, thus whose stories will ultimately be captured, forgotten or remembered.

As Derreida articulates, “the archive must inevitably be accompanied by juridical and thus political transformations” (1996: 17). Harris appositely calls us to question, to contest, to disrupt, undefine and redefine professional and societal norms and find buried stories and hidden narratives through the cracks that are inherent in archives (Harris 2007: 101) and this chapter seeks to archive that.

Discovering and Interrogating the Directorate of Security (DSL) Records

Xolelwa Mangcu (2011) professor of sociology and history postulates that often the archive is employed to privilege certain identities' histories over others. At its worst, this claim-making leads to the genocide of individuals and groups. The inauguration of the national archives systems into law and subsequently enacting the operation of the National Archives of South Africa Act (NASAA) in January 2007 aimed at creating a "space for voices previously excluded, to make the process" of constituting the archive both transparent and accountable, to open the archives according to principles of freedom of information to overcome systematic barriers to accessing the archive, to call into being new publics for archives, to ensure that public archives audit state record-keeping, and to foster synergies between the intersecting archival, museum, library and heritage terrains" (Harris 2007: 160).

Until this study, Gertrude Shope's records pertaining to the Directorate of Security Legislation (DSL) had been classified and practically hidden. Upon incidentally meeting and discussing my study with Madeleine Fullard, I contacted Zahira Adams Ngoepe at the National Records and Archives of South Africa (NARSA). I was in turn advised by Ngoepe to obtain Authorisation Letter from Gertrude Shope or her next of kin detailing that that they are giving me permission to access the records of both Gertrude and Mark Shope as I had requested access to both. It appears that the efforts to give space to previously silenced voices have been limited to few oral history projects and with much focus on preserving liberation struggle records, particularly the ANC (Hamilton 2011, 138-139). This superficial rhetoric around prioritising the 'previously disadvantaged' was unmasked when I discover that not only did I have to go through a tedious process of getting access to Gertrude Shope's records, but I also discovered that they are not part of the ANC collection. It is not clear as to why Gertrude Shope's records are not part of the ANC collection, however, according to Ngoepe and Netshakhuma (2018: 66) the main hinderance in accessing some of the liberation archives collected in the host countries like Cuba is that they did not contain dates, times or signatures of authors, which in turn presented difficulties in proving the provenance of such records. A sizeable number of the records did not indicate who they belonged to, who holds or held the rights or whether these people were alive or not. In turn, the ANC conducted an audit of the collection so to avoid violations of copyright laws. The liberation archives consist of a variety of personal and

organisational records from the apartheid era in South Africa, thus, “documents that fall in this category are not available for public access for the duration of the privacy protection agreement, unless the consent of the person(s) whose privacy has to be protected is obtained”. Since Shope’s records do not belong to the aforementioned category, I will conclude that they were purposely ignored.

The tools of forgetfulness, of state-imposed amnesia, were crucial to the exercise of power in apartheid South Africa. The state generated huge information resources which it secreted jealousy from the public view. It routinely destroyed public records in order to keep certain processes a secret. More chilling tools for erasing memory were also widely utilised. With many thousands of oppositional voices being eliminated through media censorship, various forms of banning, detention without trial, imprisonment, informal harassment and assassination...the tools of forgetfulness were also important to the transfer of power between 1990 and 1994, the state engaged in a sanitation of its memory resources designed to keep certain information out of the hands of a future democratic government (Harris 2007).

Perhaps it is by sheer luck that the DSL records containing information on Gertrude Shope have been spared or at least the little that the apartheid archivists chose not to destroy them. My contact at the National Archives and Records of South Africa, Zahira Adams-Ngoepe mentioned that although they managed to declassify the first batch of Gertrude Shope’s records, I would still need those connected to the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the State Security Agency (SSA) to be declassified, a process which she would facilitate. This declassification process illustrated that, regardless of changes that may take place in archives, their uses and the need to preserve those records all boils down to power. Power is a critical element of archives which usually involves maintenance of power. This power, wherever it resides, continuously strives to control what will be known about the past, and what to remember or forget. Archives capture history through the perspective and purpose of those who have been privileged to write and record it. Archives tend to present a dominant narrative that narrows our understanding of the full experience (Sealy& Dafour 2017). After settling photocopying and access related costs, I finally received

correspondence from Zahira Adams-Ngoepe on 16 July 2023 containing the first batch of the DSL files. I was elated, it first like a breakthrough, like I had decoded something. This moment felt like I had unveiled something that had been buried. But chiefly, this meant I am presented with further opportunity to tell Shope's story.

In the July 2023 correspondence, Adams-Ngoepe indicated that some of the records relating to the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the State Security Agency (SSA) were removed from the file as they needed to be declassified. Haris (2007: 167) notes that South Africa inherited cultures of secrecy and intolerance for dissent. This has been as a result of old "apartheid milieus, the exile experience, and the underground". The negotiation period to transition from oppressive apartheid to democratic South Africa gave the oppressor enough "time to destroy records and provide the space for more or less secret deals that stimulated sensitivity to later disclosures". A few days thereafter, I received communication from Lieutenant-General Van Zyl who guided me through the process of the declassifying records. Subsequently, Adams-Ngoepe shared the SSA records with me. It was through the perusal of the SSA and the National Archives and Records that I found 'Nancy', a name Gertrude Shope operated under at times for underground activities. Upon enquiring from Lyndall Shope, it was revealed that Nancy is actually Gertrude Shope's name although she seldom used it. Until this study, Gertrude Shope's records pertaining to the Directorate of Security Legislation had been classified and practically hidden. Thus, this concealment almost led to their genocide. By excavating the Shope records has translated to their un-silencing and saving from genocide (Mangcu 2011).

The Unveiling after Declassification

In 1988 Gertrude Shope's name was officially added to the list of banned or restricted names of people under the Internal Security Act No 74 of 1982. Other ANC leaders that were added alongside Shope were: Barbara Masekela, Chief of the Cultural Section; Umkhonto We Sizwe Chief of Staff, Victor Moche key Spokesman in the Information Division, Chris Hani and military leader, Steve Tshwete. For many years, prior to Gertrude Shope's name being added to the list, other leaders and key members of the ANC were on that list. The likes of Oliver Tambo the ANC President, the General Secretary Alfred Nzo, Head of Information Thabo Mbeki, and Tom Sebina

the ANC Chief Spokesperson were already banned³³. The Internal Security Act 74 of 1982 is a resultant of a 1979 commission of inquiry that was appointed by the apartheid government “to enquire into and to report and make recommendations on, the necessary fairness and efficacy of legislation pertaining to the internal security of the Republic of South Africa”. Headed by the appeal judge Rabie Justice who would later be appointed chief justice, the commission came up with recommendations that saw the promulgation of four Acts. In addition to the Internal Security Act 74 of 1982 was, Demonstration in or near Court Prohibitions Act 71 of 1982, the Intimidation Act 72 of 1982 and the Protection of Information Act 84 of 1982 (Lambrechts and Maree 1998: 51). Gertrude Shope’s name was part of the 417 names whom quoting them without the permission of the Justice Minister was regarded as an offence in terms of the Internal Security Act. People were included on the list on several grounds³⁴:

- They are automatically included if they were ever detained in terms of the “preventive” detention clause of the Internal Security Act Section 28.
- They are automatically included if they have been convicted of specific security offences or of treason.
- If the minister is satisfied that a person of South African origin acts in a way that endangers state security or the maintenance of law and order or that she or he promotes the objects of communism, he may place them on the list, even if they live abroad.
- If at the time of the enactment of the present legislation in 1982, people’s names were on earlier lists compiled under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 or the Internal Security Act of 1976, their names may be carried forward.
- The names of the Sharpeville Six of assassinated Cradock Four leader Matthew Goniwe and of many ANC members convicted of treason appear on the list.

³³ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N. The Star, August 1988. Pg 2.

³⁴ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N. The Star, August 1988. Pg 2.

- Writers and journalists-some of them dead for years-remain on the list. They include Can Temba, Lewis Nkosi, Dennis Brutus, Alex la Guma and Bloke Modisane.

Gertrude Shope's name to the list was added under the section that the Minister of Justice was "satisfied that their activities endanger the security of the South African State and the maintenance of law and order or that they advocate or defend the objects of communism" ³⁵. A Direktoraat van Veiligheidswetgewing/Directorate of Security Legislation record titled OPTREDE KRAGTENS ARTIKEL 23 (1) VAN DIE WET OP BINNELANDSE VEILIGHEID, 1982 (WET 74 VAN 1982): GERTRUDE SHOPE, KINGSLEY XUMA, CHRIS HANI AND SOLLY SMITH in the DSL 1963 Shope N Gertrude file 2 highlights one of the examples pertaining to how Shope's "...activities endangered the security of the South African State as follows:

Shope, who is currently head of the Women's Section of the ANC in Lusaka, left the Republic in 1966. Interviews with Shope are regularly broadcasted on Radio Freedom and Radio Moscow. In 1982, for example, she declared in the Danish press that the armed struggle was the only way to persuade the RSA government to listen to the ANC. She also regularly makes calls on Radio Freedom for the women in South Africa to rally behind the ANC in actively getting involved in the "struggle for liberation". During 1985 she was elected a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC³⁶.

The execution of apartheid bureaucracy was intricate and multifaceted, penetrating almost every sphere of the citizens lives. "Controls were put over racial classification, employment, movement, association, purchase of property, recreation and so on" (Harris 2007: 2). Gertrude Shope was among ANC leaders who were under constant surveillance of National Intelligence and Security Police and great efforts were put in place to ensure that every detail deemed significant in relation to their location, movements and activities were captured. It was outlined in file 2/3/2/1963; 8333; 8302; 8325 (V/C) of the Directorate of Security Legislation:

³⁵ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N. The Star, August 1988. Pg 2.

³⁶ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N. Directorate of Security Legislation, File 2/3/3, 1963; 8333; 8302; 8325 (V/C).

Shope Ntiti Getrude, also known as Nancy, Kingsley Xuma also known as Mamabolo Jerry Nyamane, Hani Martin Thembisile also known as Chris Hani and Chris Nkosana and Khunyeli Sefofane Samuel also known as Murdock Ngwanya and Solly Smith...all four hold important positions in the ANC and as such they participate in activities that endanger the security of the State in the maintenance of law and order.³⁷

After being banned in 1982 under Section 67 of the Internal Security Act no. 74, Gertrude Shope's name was on the list of 38 individuals who were granted indemnity from prosecution so they may visit South Africa. The notice was released by the Acting State President, Dr Gerrit Viljoen who also mentioned that the indemnity will only be valid for three months, from 19 May to 19 August. 1982. Other persons that qualified were Ruth Mompati and Oliver Tambo...³⁸

As endorsement to the banning of Gertrude Ntinti Shope, Chris Tembisiile Hani, Samuel Sefofane Khuyeli and Nyamane Jerry Mamabolo, a notice signed by the Minister of Justice, Hendrich Jacobus (Kobie) Coetsee was put out in terms of section 23 (1) of the Internal Security Act of 1982³⁹. This Act "allowed the authorities to control individuals and organisations, proscribe publications and, in effect, declare war on the anti-apartheid movement by regulating peaceful expression" (Merrett 2001: 51).

³⁷ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N. Directorate of Security Legislation, File 2/3/3, 1963; 8333; 8302; 8325 (V/C).

³⁸ Government Gazette Publishes Indemnity List. Apartheid: Global Perspectives, 1946-1996. Johannesburg SAPA. May 19, 1990.

³⁹ National Archives and Records of South Africa (NARSA), DSL File 1963, Shope Gertrude, N.pg.2.

1963

Staatskoerant No 11421 ged. 15.7.1988

DEPARTEMENT VAN JUSTISIE

No. 1429 15 Julie 1988

KENNISGEWING KRAGTENS ARTIKEL 23 (1) VAN DIE WET OP BINNELANDSE VEILIGHEID, 1982

Kragtens die bevoegdheid my verleen by artikel 23 (1) van die Wet op Binnelandse Veiligheid, 1982 (Wet 74 van 1982), verklaar ek hierby die bepalinge van artikel 56 (1) (p) van genoemde Wet van toepassing ten opsigte van die persone in die Bylae genoem.

Geteken te Kaapstad hierdie Eerste dag van Julie 1988.
H. J. COETSEE,
 Minister van Justisie.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

No. 1429 15 July 1988

NOTICE IN TERMS OF SECTION 23 (1) OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT, 1982

By virtue of the powers vested in me by section 23 (1) of the Internal Security Act, 1982 (Act 74 of 1982), I hereby declare the provisions of section 56 (1) (p) of the said Act applicable in respect of the persons mentioned in the Schedule.

Signed at Cape town this First day of July 1988.
H. J. COETSEE,
 Minister of Justice.

BYLAE/SCHEDULE

Naam van persoon Name of person	Datum van geboorte Date of birth	Adres ten tyde van vertaling van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika/Address at time of departure from the Republic of South Africa	Beroep ten tyde van vertaling van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika/Occupation at time of departure from the Republic of South Africa	Huidige verblyfplek Present whereabouts
Hani, Martin Tembisi, ook bekend as/also known as Chris Hani en/and Chris Nkomo	28/6/1942	Langa, Kaapstad/Cape Town	Student	Lusaka, Zambi/Zambia.
Khunyeli, Sefofane Samuel, ook bekend as/also known as Murdoch Ngwanya en/and Solly Smith	18/9/1928	Molapo 1464/1464 Molapo, Johannesburg	Klerk/Clerk	Parys/Paris, Frankryk/France.
Mamabolo, Jerry Nyamane, ook bekend as/also known as Kingsley Xuma	13/8/1955	Soweto, Johannesburg	Onbekend/Unknown	Maputo, Mosambiek/Mozambique.
Shope, Ntiti Gertrude, ook bekend as/also known as Nancy	15/8/1925	Central Western Jabavu 600/600 Central Western Jabavu, Johannesburg	Maatskaplike Werkster/Social Worker	Lusaka, Zambi/Zambia.

Figure 7. DSL 1963 Gertrude Shope, N.

At the core of apartheid, was maintaining divisions, exploitation and an authoritarianism that involved the law, administrative process, and physical force. Delusional at its roots, Merrett highlighted that when Christopher Hope's book *A Separate Development* was banned, he pointed out that "what really disturbed [the authorities] were glimpses of themselves". Of fact is apartheid's delusional foundations, so resilient and sure of itself that had "permanent intellectual and psychological weaknesses and a visceral need to control expression". Despite the obsession with control, apartheid was a philosophy that had an innate sense of insecurity hence anything that opposed it "opposition is made to appear as treason to the State". During apartheid South Africa, censorship involved the straightforward

banning of the printed word with the aim of rendering individuals and corporate bodies invisible in a literary sense. “This was achieved through the Publications Act of 1974 (banning specific titles) and the Internal Security Act (banning all the work of an author or organisation)”. The banning of these publications was a fundamental part of police state culture, although it was frequently ineffective as distribution of those banned material still found its way into the country (Merrett 2001: 52).

Photography as an object of Violence, Gertrude Shope the ‘Terrorist’

Unlike individual photographs, some of the albums were manufactured just as decorated stands. However, by and large albums gave their owners an opportunity for creativity in the way photos were displayed and seen. The owners had an input in how they are “sequenced, captioned, and even imaginatively embellished according to individual whim”. Photo albums are often presented in museums in a static fashion behind glass cases to serve visitors’ gaze. Although today in archives and preserved for their historical significance, the ‘Terrorist Album’ demonstrates that albums are mobile objects and were always experienced as such. They demand we add the physical intimacy of touch to the more distanced experience of looking”. When we touch and turn each page “we put the album back into motion” (Batchen 2002: 68). To get to the truth of a photograph, we need to also analyse its power and the social and political aims (Bolton 1989: xvi).

My first introduction to the word ‘terrorist’ was around 1989 and early 1990 during discussions between my two eldest siblings and their peers. One name that would always come up in these heated discussions was that of ‘Pat Tshabalala’, the ‘terrorist’ and ‘jailbird’ that resided at the nearby village. He was labelled a terrorist due to his underground activities and was arrested on many occasions, possibly under the Internal Security Act of 1982. It was only during my teenage years that I discovered that ‘Pat Tshabalala’ was William Magoro’s underground name and that he operated under so as to avert being traced and arrested. On Wednesday 05 May 2023, a meeting had been arranged at the Department of Sports Arts and Culture to discuss a potential project at the ‘notorious’ Vlakplaas⁴⁰. Among the attendees was Madeliene

⁴⁰ “Vlakplaas is a secluded 100-acre farm situated in the Skurweberg mountains on the outskirts of Erasmia, a suburb alongside the banks of Hennops River. It is hidden from the

Fullard, Head of the Missing Persons Unit at the National Prosecuting Authority. I was intrigued by most of the points she made to the discussion, but what stood out chiefly was her mention of the apartheid Security Police album dubbed the terrorist album that contains photographs of 7000 people that went into exile during apartheid. Upon concluding our Vlakplaas meeting, I went up to Fullard to inquire about this album and if Gertrude Shope featured. My inquiry led to a discussion on my study and Fullard mentioning and showing me Shope's photograph in the album. She also pointed out that Jacob Dlamini wrote comprehensively on his investigation of the three surviving copies in his book entitled *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police* (2020) which I subsequently accessed. In this photo album Gertrude Shope's image is photograph 4578. I would later visit the South African Historical Archives (SAHA) at the University of the Witwatersrand to view the album. My first reaction of this album was that people have been objectified and reduced to a thumbnail; a mugshot. An oppressive regime decided that it was right to control black people's lives and movements be tracked through a passbook. I was triggered and thought a minority of invaders felt it was right to control black people in a country of their birth. Unlike the likes of Gertrude Shope whose mugshots appear in the Terrorist Album as a result of their political activities, Lungile Magxwalisa picture was taken while he was just a school going child who ended up in the terrorist album as his mother was trying to protect him from the inhumane apartheid. Seemingly, the dompass mugshot that was meant to help him navigate the apartheid laws put him in an even more danger than he was before the mugshot was taken. His mugshot was the same dompass picture that would later be used in tracking him upon leaving for

public eye but close enough for helicopter access by generals and other high ranking official of the apartheid government. The South African Police purchased Vlakplaas in 1979 as a secret hideout for a handful of white policemen and askaris to carry out clandestine operations against people identified as enemies of the state. The farm was the brainchild of Brigadier Jahan Viktor who had learnt in Rhodesia that captured soldiers could be 'turned' and used against their own comrades. 'Askari' was a term used to describe the policemen, mainly black, who had been members of one of the liberation movements, such as the African National Congress (ANC), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO). Once they were captured by the Vlakplaas operatives, they would be brought to Vlakplaas, tortured (if needed) and 'turned' into askaris who would then be sent to places such as Soweto to carry out murders and atrocities against their own people. They became highly effective as their victims would be unaware of their change of allegiance". See Robin Binckes (2018) *Vlakplaas: Apartheid Death Squads, 1979-1994*.

exile in 1983. ⁴¹ “Behind each mug shot was an individual who inhabited a world of feeling not just objects and laws” (Dlamini2020: 217). In the eyes of those who have been labelled terrorists and captured through mugshots, I see anguish, simultaneously displaying courage and tenacity. Their mugshots in this album reflect a people whose mission was to do whatever it takes to see South Africa liberated.



Figure 8. Gertrude Shope in the Terrorist Album, mugshot 4578

⁴¹ See Dlamini, J 2020, chapter nine, entitled, Dompas in *The Terrorist Album: Apartheid's Insurgents, Collaborators, and the Security Police*. Pg 217-233.

131.

4546 DAMOYI, Dumisani Caywood	-	P-NATAL	-	4/61372
4547 MAJOLA, Christopher Phumzuyise Mtuswa	-	P-NATAL	-	V.9424
4548 MBATHA, Ntando Michael	-	P-NATAL	-	4/62187
4549 QQWARU, Tandeka Terris	-	P-NATAL	-	S4A8572
4550 MAQUBELA, Tsediso Tseliso	-	GRENS/TS	-	4/68200
4551 MADUNA, Sipho Oscar	-	P-NATAL	-	V707
4552 LEMENA, Nteboheng Aphaphia	5776714	OVS	84/14142	4/65025
4553 MBINGELELI, Thandeka* (Id 4774)	-	GRENS/TS	4/67529	4/67529
4554 MOTAUNG, Daniel Sello	-	SOWETO	-	4/65770
4555 MABENA, Sipho Wilfred	-	N-TVL	-	4/57732
4556 SIZANI, Buyiswa Hilda	-	BOLAND	-	4/66068
4557 MBELE, Themba Henry	-			4/A8599
4558 DHLOMO, Siphwe Raynort	-	P-NATAL		4/68201
4559 DLODLO, Ayanda	6064484	SOWETO	87/48023	4/50509
4560 MTIRARA, Ndileka	-	GRENS(TS)	81/36268	V29874
4561 TISANA, John*	6880504	BOLAND	85/14143	V28292
4562 SISWANA, Pearl-Petrina Nompumelelo	5628910	GRENS(TS)	85/20838	V26045
4563 XIMBA, Sibusiso Brian	6696550	P-NATAL	85/23147	4/61356
4564 XINIWE, Joseph Sipho	-			4/66070
4565 MAKI, Mzingaye Alex	6590660	GRENS	85/39824	V30943
4566 MPHIRIME, Donald Thabiso	-	W-RAND		4/65858
4567 MBHAMALI, Obed Fama	7029026	N-NATAL	85/9370	V26877
4568 HLONGWANE, Khangelani Vincent	5853671	P-NATAL	85/8388	4/65465
4569 MALAZA, Mhlaseleni Elzemon*	3970792	O-TVL	72/32479	V28089
4570 FONON, Montgomery	-	N-TVL		V13247
4571 JACK, Sindile	7025941	GRENS	85/22543	4/66077
4572 LITLHAKANYANE, Oupa Wensel	-	W-RAND		4/65907
4573 RALANE, Pule Pedro	-	GRENS		4/60188 4/60188
4574 MFENE, Mhambi Berman	-	W-RAND		V24930
4575 TEMBE, Pascoal Jassefa	-	O-RAND	86/57618	V.8929
4576 MAPUA, Ronald Mosebetsi	-	OVS		4/57147
4577 BANDA, Vronda Zablani	-	SOWETO		4/50849
4578 SHOPE, Ntiti Gertrude	3403909	SOWETO	66/8940	4/14342
4579 MZIMELI, Weziwe	-	GRENS		4/65908

1058HMC

Figure 9. Entry page featuring Gertrude Shope's name and address in the Terrorist Album

Photography has since its creation been used as a surveillance tool and a mode for social control. Francis Galton, the founder of the pseudoscience of Eugenics who is also the cousin to Charles Darwin developed a composite photography technique in the 19th century to isolate and recognise the so-called 'racial types'. Similarly, Alphonse Bertillon frontal developed the standardised and photographic convention for ease of use in identifying criminals. The method would later be used by law enforcement institutions and also has been seen used in various television dramas in the line-up of identifying criminals. Both Galton and Bertillon advanced to categorise

people into typological organised archive (Modrak and Anthes 2010: 327). Galton sought to embed the archive in the photograph. While their projects were specialised and idiosyncratic, these pioneers of scientific policing and eugenics mapped out general parameters for the bureaucratic handling of visual documents. Roughly between 1880 and 1910, the archive became the dominant institutional basis for photographic meaning. Increasingly photographic archives were seen as central to a bewildering range of empirical disciplines, ranging from art history to military intelligence (Sekula 1989: 373). Conversely, August Sander, the German Photographer, intended to compile, although never completed or published, a collection of a non-racist, non-sexist devoid of prejudice Germán society inclusive of all citizens. Sader was evidently ahead of his time; hence the original plates of his book were seized by the Nazis (Modrak and Anthes 2010: 327).

In the early 1960s the South African Security Police was tasked with documenting “every known enemy of the state”. As consequent, the police would put together a photo album as one of the tracking methods of exiled individuals who were regarded as “enemies” of the state. Every exiled person during apartheid was labelled a terrorist or enemy of the state and the Security Police used every method to track and monitor the individuals they considered to be terrorists. By the 1990s the apartheid Security Police had made about seven thousand mug shots. They used this “small object for a big project devoted to provision of a list of all South Africans who had fled the country because of opposition to apartheid” (Dlamini 2020: 4-7).

Photography and the Preservation of Memory and History

Photographs as a memory genre, in this study serves as visual biographical narratives displaying the story of Gertrude Shope and its marginalisation in the national memory of the liberation struggle. Thus, photographs are also used as maps that help us navigate through diverse journeys seeking to recover strands of conflicting worldviews. The image of the archive as an encyclopaedic repository of exchangeable images was articulated most profoundly in the late 1850s by the American physician and essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes when he compared photographs to paper (Sekula 1989). Photographs are in their form forceful because of photography’s privileged status as a guaranteed witness of the actuality of the events it represents. “The photograph

seems to declare: This really happened. The camera was there. See for yourself” (Tagg 2001: 93-94).

In essence, photographs often become a vehicle that provides a necessary narrative and a “way through which to enter history without words”, therefore, bridging the gap between oral memory and documented text (Hooks, 2003: 393). While the nucleus of this study pertains locating Gertrude Shope in the liberation struggle memory and heritage, other equally silenced and marginalised women’s stories resurface through the photographic archive which was either found at University of Fort Hare NAHECS, the University of the Witwatersrand’s South African Historical Archives (SAHA) and William Cullen: Historical Papers or Gertrude Shope’s personal archive shared by Lyndall Shope-Qubeka which was built over time from various sources. I thus digest every photograph and unveil those featured in order to deduce their stories. Apart from the women in the ANC, as a leader of the ANC Women’s Section, Gertrude Shope also worked with other women from different organisations globally that were in support of opposing apartheid.⁴²

⁴² University of Fort Hare, NAHECS, ANC Women’s Section Archives, Women and Children under Apartheid Publication, 1986-1988. Wos/125/0515/06.



Figure 10. From right, Gertrude Shope, Frene Ginwala, Connie Braam, Rose Motsepe and Unknown lady

Photographs change, depending on the context in which they are seen. At times they become “exploitative”, or just items and at other times “they are visual commodities to be flipped through as you move on to something else”. They are also vulnerable to interpretation and investigation (Sontag 2003: 65).

Photograph Figure 10. was acquired during my archival research at the University of Fort Hare and there was no context or accompanying text besides that they were in the Women’s Section file, thus we can assume that the photograph was taken at one of the Women’s Section gatherings, possibly after 1981 when Gertrude Shope was the president. Even after inquiring about the location of the photograph from Dr Noel Solani who forwarded it to the ANC WhatsApp groups, no one could provide an answer pertaining to venue it was taken. At first glance, the smiles on the women’s faces screams a happy moment and clearly exuding positive energy. Gertrude Shope, Frene Ginwala, Bram, Rose Motsepe and the ‘unknown lady are up on their feet, this time not in protest but giving a standing ovation to probably a moving speech at one of the ANC women’s conferences in exile. Photographs taken after the exiled freedom fighters returned to South Africa in 1990 are in colour so this also indicator that the image was taken in exile. The ‘Just Juice’ container box on the table also suggests

that the gathering is jolly. While we may not know where the location of this gathering is we do know that it constituted a multi-racial leadership.

The narrative extents of photography and text have been explored pertaining who chose to depict stories of a more personalised nature than those seen in the 1930s documentarians and later by photojournalists. As Emerling (2012: 32) postulates, ‘the camera offers us only a surface appearance of things because it is unable to capture the social relations that comprise and intersects the social field that it represents’. In this image, Gertrude Shope is standing next to Frene Ginwala, one of the ANC leaders who grew up in a Parsi family in Johannesburg that had business interest in Mozambique. Ginwala received her law degree in London and a Philosophy PhD in Oxford. Upon completion of her PhD, she chose not to pursue a career in London and moved to East Africa to assist the ANC following the Sharpeville Massacre. She worked very closely with the president of the ANC at the time, Oliver Tambo. Ginwala worked as a journalist and broadcaster in Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. In Tanzania she also held the position of managing editor of *The Standard* and editor of *Spearhead*, a monthly journal that highlighted the liberation struggle. In exile, Ginwala wrote extensively on issues of “sanctions, and defending her argument with international law and the responsibility of a democratic world”. Among the ANC comrades, Ginwala was regarded as forceful and independent-minded who continuously voiced out and pointed out how the overwhelmingly male ANC leadership suppressed women member through their “traditional sexist expectations and behaviour (Odendaal 2022: 324).

This photograph is also used by Andre Odendaal (2022) in *Dear Comrade President*. He does so only to acknowledge Gertrude Shope and Frene Ginwala while completely dismissing Connie Braam, Rose Motsepe and the other lady who is possibly a leader too whom I mentioned earlier that at this stage she could not be identified. This inability in identification brings to the fore how archives can be both a concealer and revealer of history. Here lies an opportunity to inquire further on who the lady is and her relationship with Gertrude Shope and the liberation movement so to draw her back from history and insert her into the present.

Next to Frene Ginwala is Connie Braam who has been described as a vocal and tireless opponent of Apartheid and who was highly instrumental in launching the Dutch

Anti-Apartheid movement in Amsterdam in 1971. She was tasked with disguising the apartheid government's "most wanted" high ranking exiled ANC leaders so that they could slip into South Africa undetected. In addition, she was responsible for locating safe houses in neighbouring countries. Braam's high risk secret mission consumed five years of her life as she dodged assassination attempts. The existence of her mission was unknown even to prominent leaders in the ANC such as Thabo Mbeki. In 1987 she was almost poisoned while in Mozambique. This mission was called Operation Vula and uncovered in 1990 when nine operatives, including Mac Maharaj and Sphiwe Nyanda, were arrested inside the country⁴³.

Together, Shope, Ginwala and Braam are with Rose Motsepe who was born in Mamelodi township of Pretoria on 10 October 1934. She is remembered through her role in the external missions of the ANC particularly in Algeria, BENELUX (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg) countries and Ethiopia. Rose contributed actively to the ANC women's struggles and linking them to Solidarity Movements in the countries she was deployed to. In 1982, a year after Gertrude Shope was elected head of the ANC Women's League, Motsepe hosted a United Nations Committee Against Apartheid Conference in Brussels where the ANC sent a multi-racial delegation of six who shared testimonies of apartheid atrocities. Motsepe passed on a year after a democratic South Africa on 13 January 1995 (Shope 2002: 91).

⁴³ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2014-09-24-the-dutch-connection-conny-braam-holding-a-unique-part-of-south-africas-history-and-heritage/>



Figure 11. Gertrude Shope and Rebecca Kotane



Figure 12. Seated are Gertrude Shope (right) and Albertina Sisulu (left), standing, Adelaide Tambo standing

A portrait of a person stands in for that person when they are absent...Memory is a way of keeping something, not losing it. Yet these pictures, like snapshots, documentary or photojournalism photographs, also show viewers something (people, places and things) that they may never have visited or seen before...when photography is combined with other instruments...it has extended the human capacity for sight, photography becomes a device that adds to the memory of things that the naked human eye cannot see Bate (2009: 9).

One of the things that have been prevalent in this PhD journey has been the sisterhood that has incessantly been portrayed among the women I interviewed and interacted with, similar to Figure 12. The generation of Gertrude Shope, Lillian Ngoyi, Sophy De Bryn, Florence Mophosho and others modelled this unity to those that came after them. At Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday celebration in Botswana on 17 August 2024 I observed this sisterhood that has carried these women during the struggle until the attainment of democracy. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Baleka Mbete, Thandi Lujabe-Rankoe, and Jackie Sedibe shared the stories of how they relied on each other to survive, hence they remain united to date. Similarly, the same sisterhood was highlighted by Brigadier General Thandi Mohale during her talk at the DITSONG: National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg on 28 August 2024. Rebecca Kotane in Figure 11, was an active freedom fighter in her own right, particularly known to have been part of the women that took part in the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings as part of the defiance campaign. She was arrested at the march and spent two weeks in detention, sharing a cell with fellow women freedom fighters such as Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi and Amina Cachalia⁴⁴.

When I first saw the image in Figure 12, I read it as bonds that have been formed over a long period of time, through comradeship, sisterhood, motherhood and fellow freedom fighters. Albertina Sisulu worked with Gertrude Shope very closely in the Federation of South African woman in the 1950's and 1960's before leaving for exile. Even after the unbanning of the ANC, the two women still led the ANCWL and ensured

⁴⁴ <https://ewn.co.za/2021/02/02/freedom-fighter-women-s-march-campaigner-rebecca-kotane-dies-aged-108>

that the structures in the country were revived. Their partnership and friendship continued as Gertrude Shope led the ANCWL as president while Albertina served as deputy. Nontsikelelo Sisulu⁴⁵, the granddaughter of Albertina Sisulu has also expressed how the Shopes and Sisulus have remained such close family friends even years after the passing of her grandparents. In Adelaide Tambo standing up in the image, I also saw an equally formidable leader as Shope and Sisulu. However, I could not help but be reminded of a conversation I had with Mama Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023 when she lamented and said “it cannot be that MaTambo...when you piece together the information you get about her, it says, the wife of Tambo. MaTambo, and I say this thing knowing I heard directly from her. [She and Oliver Tambo] ...met in an ANC Youth League meeting. When she was a teenager, he was a young leader older than her a bit. She herself joined the youth league in her own right even as a teenager then, mid teen 14/15 and you only see this person as a wife of somebody? No! No! It's wrong. And there are many like that”.⁴⁶ The outfits by the four women in figure 11 and figure 12 are clearly from the 1990s and reminds me of my mother who had similar dress and jacket or skirt and jacket which she would without fail accessorise it with her cream pearls.

⁴⁵ Personal conversation in Botswana, at Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday celebration on 17 August 2024.

⁴⁶ In person interview with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023.



Figure 13. Gertrude Shope (left) and Ellen Kuzwayo (right).

According to Lyndall Shope-Qubeka, in this picture her mother Gertrude Shope was attending a rally of the ANC and is here pictured with Ellen Kuzwayo, one of the prolific women in the liberation struggle of South Africa. Indeed, photographs are texts inscribed in what they may call photographic discourse, thus discourse like any other, engages discourses beyond itself. “The photographic text like any other, is the site of a complex intertextuality, an overlapping series of previous text taken for granted at a particular cultural and historical conjuncture”. While the nucleus and focus of this study is mainly on Gertrude Shope, incessantly, other histories and narratives about other women alike intertwined with hers gets uncovered. Ellen Kuzwayo’s feature in this image forces us to question her relation to Shope, thus her story inserts itself. I therefore am unabatedly called by the photograph to share the concealed text that Burguin (2003) refers to of Ellen Kuzwayo, the Secretary of the ANC Youth League in 1946. She became the General Secretary of Young Women Christian Association from 1964 to 1976. In 1984 she was appointed the first President of Black Consumer Union (Kuzwayo 2018: xxi-xxii). Kuzwayo is said to have on many occasions been the only woman or one among a few women who would be present in smaller gatherings pertaining political strategies and tactics devised and analysed by “the male dominated leadership of the ANC” (Shope 2006: 20).



Figure 14. Gertrude Shope (right) and Ruth Mompoti (left).

In figure 14, Shope and Mompoti are in a meeting. The seriousness and attentiveness in their faces suggests that they are engaged in discussions that demands their utmost attention. Perhaps this is the CODESA negotiations or one of the ANC National Executive Meetings in which Shope and Mompoti were the only females in 1985. The earphones also suggests that they may be listening to testimonies at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) session. Gertrude Shope's frowning may also be due to disturbing and painful testimonies they had to listen to. Ruth Mompoti seems to be staring at space, her throat probably welling up as she restrains tears from falling. I'm imagining they are listening to accounts of those who were tortured, their family members killed, and others still don't have closure of their loved ones as due to the devious apartheid regime. As O'Connell (2012: 16) puts forth "In looking at the photograph, one is placed within and out of the frame". My reading this 'photograph from within and out of the frame', is to assume a position of a witness in search of a history that continues to haunt us. We are haunted by a history that purported an institution, the TRC to be a 'maverick' of shaping a 'new nation'. Conversely people's

suffering and trauma were reduced to “nation-building”. (Grunebaum-Ralf 2001: 201-202) describes the TRC as an institution which was claimed to be ‘properly’ positioned to deal with the collective and individual traumatic memories of South Africans, instead, the reality is that “it has been the narrative mode of discourse that has been privileged in the representation of the past. This is so because it has been framed simultaneously as a psychological, moral and theological project underpinned by a political project of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation”.

By looking at this image is as though Shope and Mompoti are automatically mandating me to commit to demand from the making of this history, to account for its unfairness and retraumatizing of those who suffered. To ask questions which they couldn’t ask during the TRC.

Ruth Mompoti was born on 14 September 1925 in Ganyesa, a rural village that is ten kilometers away from the Transvaal town of Vryburg. She obtained her Primary School Teacher’s Diploma in 1944 and went to teach at Dithakwaneng. Mompoti played a critical role in the formation of women’s tea clubs by female activists. These clubs operated throughout South Africa as a front of the banned ANC Women’s League. They served as an “alternative strategy illustrating women’s commitment to keep ANC branches alive during the state of emergency”. Ruth Mompoti was solely responsible for organizing women around the Vryburg region in the campaign against women carrying passes. Upon moving to Johannesburg, Soweto in Orlando West in 1952 Mompoti joined the Defiance Campaign. Her neighbourhood boasted of prominent ANC members that included Diliza Mji, Duma Nokwe and Nelson Mandela, amongst others. Shortly after her moving to Soweto she established contacts with her activists neighbours and joined the ANC and the Women’s League. Mompoti quit her teaching career in 1953 when Bantu Education was introduced and took part in organizing the ANC’s campaign against Bantu Education. In 1954 she was one of the activists who launched the Federation of South African Women (Ndlovu 2002: 489). It was also in the same year that Mompoti started working as an administration assistant to Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo during their convention-defying law practice in Chancellor House in downtown Johannesburg (Odendaal 2022: 99). As an administration assistant she had the opportunity to meet committed activists from across the colour divide and from various areas of South Africa. Subsequently she started organising meetings and campaigns which included the 1955 Congress of the People Kliptown

mass meeting, and the 1956 women march to Pretoria. When the ANC was banned in 1960, Mompoti became one of the members that constituted the ANC underground, a risky task that had to be undertaken. It was against the law to be in possession of these banned materials that Mompoti and her comrades had to distribute. Despite the difficulties, Mompoti successfully distributed these illegal documents in Soweto and other African areas. After surviving the security police, Mompoti left South Africa in 1962 together with Themba Mqotha (Alfred Kgokong) and Flag Boshielo (Ndlovu 2002: 490-491).

Andre Odendaal (2022: 99) describes Ruth Mompoti as a trusted aide of Oliver Tambo and an influential figure in Lusaka. She was among the first ANC comrades to leave the country in 1960, four years before Gertrude Shope left. She helped establish the first external mission and Head Quarters of the ANC along with Duma Nokwe, J.B Marks, Thomas Nkobi and Mendi Msimang the duo trained that trained at Pius XII University College. In addition to her role as administrative secretary in the general-secretary's office, Mompoti also served as PMC, which became the executive arm of the NEC in relation to all matters pertaining to the conduct of the political and military struggle inside South Africa. She also was a regular contact person for the Constitution Committee. Mompoti also headed "women's affairs" for the ANC external mission while based in Morogoro, Tanzania (Hassim 2006: 87).

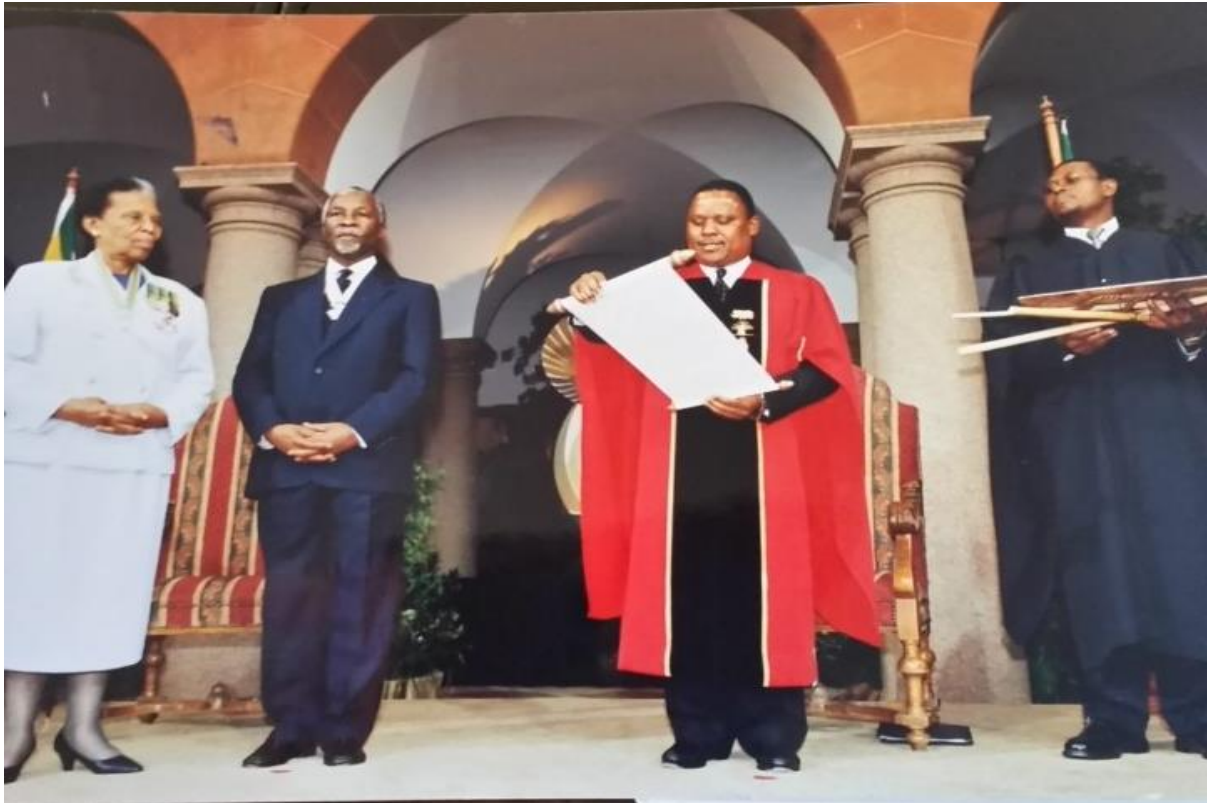


Figure 15. Gertrude Shope (left), Thabo Mbeki (Right) at the posthumous awarding of the Order of Baobab to Mark Shope by President Thabo Mbeki in 2002

In this image, figure 15, Gertrude Shope is seen standing side by side with former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki to receive The Order of the Baobab posthumously awarded to her late husband, Mark William Shope who was also an activist. The Order of the Baobab is awarded to South African citizens for distinguished service. It is an award for contributions in the following area: Business and the economy, Science, medicine and technological innovation and community service⁴⁷. The Order of the Supreme Counsellor of the Baobab, Gold was bestowed upon Mark Shope for his exceptional contribution to the struggle against apartheid and the development of the Labour Movement. Mark Shope was the former General-Secretary of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. One of South Africa's outstanding working-class intellectuals who embraced the revolutionary philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. He headed the education department of SACTU for many years. In this image Gertrude Shope's face looks as though she is in a reflective mode, probably in her head recalling about the contribution he made to the liberation of South Africa.

⁴⁷ <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders>

Mark Shope was active in different organisations such as the ANC, Freedom Charter Commission and SACTU since 1954 and was confined during 1963. He left the Republic on 16 May 1963 and currently resided in Prague (Czechoslovakia). He regularly wrote articles for national publications in which the Republic is attacked⁴⁸. Mark Shope was confined and prohibited in terms of sub-section (1) of Section nine of Suppression of Communism Act No 44 of 1950 for a period of five years starting 8 February 1963 to 31 January 1968. This prohibition meant he was not allowed to attend any political gatherings within the Republic of South Africa or South-West Africa, he was also not permitted to enter any factory for any reason other than seeking employment.⁴⁹ He was the founder member of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity and of the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council. He was a commissar in the people's army, Umkhonto weSizwe, and as an MK soldier, was among the first to be trained in the Soviet Union. He was a leading member of the South African Communist Party alongside distinguished freedom fighters such as JB Marks, Moses Kotane, Moses Mabhida and Joe Slovo. After he returned from exile, he was chosen as an honorary president of the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association, now known as the Communications Workers' Union. Mark Shope remains an inspiration to the organic intellectuals of South Africa and all the many workers who crossed his path⁵⁰.

Apart from him being Gertrude Shope's late husband, the photograph invites us to inquire about who Mark Shope is and what his contribution has been to warrant the bestowment of the Order of Baobab upon him. Defining the photograph as a motionless image does not merely imply that the figures it represents do not move, "it means that they do not emerge, do not leave, they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies. The photograph does not call up the past. The effect it produces is not to restore what has been abolished by time and distance but to attest that indeed what I see has indeed existed" (Barthes :57-87). When new lens of gaze is applied to old photographs, a visual public memory for contemporary viewers is then created. Old photographs expand the range of possible interpretations and deepens their transformative power. reclaimed (Kadar, Perrault and Warley 2009) contend that, the

⁴⁸ National Archives and Records, DSL File 1033 Mark William Shope,

⁴⁹ National Archives and Records, DSL File 1033 Mark William Shope

⁵⁰ <https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders>

confrontation between memory and history plays itself out when an old photograph is reclaimed. In that reclamation, new questions are posed pertaining the subjects, the event and the memory inscribed.

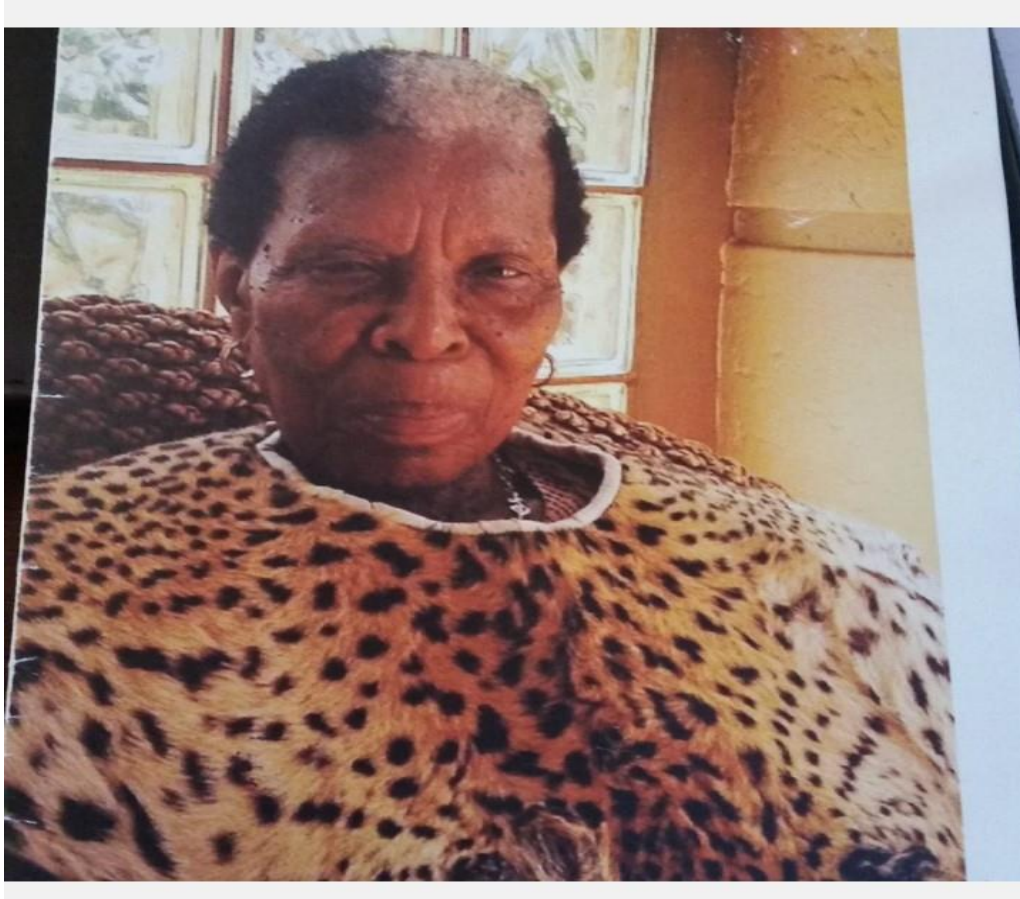


Figure 16. Gertrude Shope after receiving Isithwalandwe in 2014

On the paradoxical facts pertaining individual photographs is their laconic nature, in that they “describe everything but explains nothing”. That as it may be, it is important to read the “context in which they are produced, distributed, and consumed, therefore have a bearing on how we are to interpret them and ask the complex questions around them (Bright 1989: 133). Pictured here is Gertrude Shope adorned in a leopard skin cape. Seldom women are seen wearing the cape unless they are queens or of royalty as it is usually worn by men, particularly of high stature, kings⁵¹, warriors and those

⁵¹ Watch King Misuzulu ka Zwelithini coronation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZyUjGFM9L4>

associated with royalty or great leadership⁵². The cape, Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe⁵³ is regarded as the highest honour awarded by the ANC to those who have made an outstanding contribution and sacrifice to the liberation struggle. Isithwalandwe, literally translated, “the one who wears the plumes of the rare bird” and was traditionally bestowed only on the bravest warriors of the people, on those who distinguished themselves in the eyes of all the people for exceptional qualities of leadership and heroism”⁵⁴.

Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati both received this award in 2014 being the fourth and fifth female recipients since the inauguration of Isithwalandwe. To date, only nine of the twenty-nine recipients are women. The first having been Lillian Ngoyi in 1982, followed by Hellen Joseph in 1992, Ray Simons 2004, Ruth Mompati and Gertrude Shope 2014, Sophia De Bryn, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Albertina Sisulu and Charlotte Maxeke in 2019. Photographs, are, of course, artifacts, but their appeal is that they also seem, in a world littered with photographic relics, to have the found objects-unpremeditated slices of the world. They are clouds of fantasy and pellets of information (Sontag 1977: 69). Thus, they trade simultaneously on the prestige of art and the magic of the real.

⁵² See, Duggan-Cronin, A.M. 1931. The Bantu Tribes of South Africa: Reproductions of Photographic Studies. The Suto-Chuana Tribes, Sub-Group II, The Bapedi (Transvaal Basotho)

⁵³ Isithwalandwe (Zulu), Seaparankwe directly translated to mean ‘the one who wears a leopard skin’.

⁵⁴ <https://www.anc1912.org.za/isithwalandwe-seaparankoe/>



Figure 17. Gertrude Shope (left with cornrow), Angela Davis (opposite right with an afro)

Taylor Le Melle (2018) opens the introduction of their edited book with Yolande Zola Zoli Van der Heide, *A Lasting Truth is Change* by painting a picture about the liberating power of Angela Davis's photographs, whether used for missions or courses associated with issues of freedom and her convictions and activism. Indeed, without context or constitution, a photograph will remain a composite of paper and ink. In a photograph (figure 17) that Gertrude Shope's daughter Lyndall shared with me, I first enquired about the story behind the photo. However, Mama Lyndall had no other information at the time except that they were at a women's conference. Only after Lyndall shared an excerpt from Gertrude Shope's unpublished autobiography did I get the context of the photograph. In her recount of their meeting Gertrude Shope said that:

I met Angela Davis in Moscow in 1972...to a Women's International Conference. She related to us the experience she had gone through with faked charges proffered against her and how she subsequently was

saved by peace loving people of America. She related how she fell victim to the American Administration while under arrest. She was undermined and humiliated in a very bad way⁵⁵.

Angela Yvonne Davis is one of the most recognised political figures from the 1960s to the 1970s. She is a black feminist philosopher, an activist and author and a founding member of the Critical Resistance. In 1970 Davis was arrested and charged as accomplice to conspiracy, kidnapping, and murder. However, she was acquitted in 1972 following a high-profile trial. As Sontag notes, a photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is what's in the picture' (Sontag 1977: 5). Unlike the white men sitting against the wall in suits and ties, looking at the women, I see liberation in terms of how they are dressed, they each seem to be dressed in their most comfortable clothes and would not be dictated on what to wear. The afros and cornrows worn by the ladies on each side of the tables also speaks to the 1960s and 1970s black women and their embracing blackness. In this moment, I am reminded of Maya Angelo's poem *Phenomenal Woman* (1978):

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.
I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
But when I start to tell them,
They think I'm telling lies.
I say,
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please,
And to a man,
The fellows stand or
Fall down on their knees.
Then they swarm around me,
A hive of honey bees.
I say,

⁵⁵ Gertrude Shope's unpublished autobiography.

It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them,
They say they still can't see.
I say,
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.

Phenomenal woman,
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me

I can't help it but find myself filled with pride at the glance of what 'black girl magic'
⁵⁶looked like in the 1970s. Amid all sorts of oppression that they fought tirelessly

⁵⁶ See Jordan-Zachery, J. S. and Harris. 2019. *Black Girl Magic Beyond the Hashtag: Twenty-First-Century Acts of Self-Definition*, University of Arizona Press. #BlackGirlMagic is "a social and

against; their strength radiates through this image. Indeed, photography bears witness to history and serves as a tool for recollection and remembering and in this moment this image reminds me of those who came before me, Angela Davis and Gertrude Shope who walked so I could run.

CONCLUSION

While the democratically ANC led government was striving for the unbanning of previously banned material, it would seem that those of the likes of Gertrude Shope were not prioritised. Although one is able to locate some of Shope's literature, the extensively documented ones, be it written by Shope herself or others are still not in South African libraries or archives. Among those are Paquetta Anne Palmer's *Interview with Gertrude Shope: African National Congress Women's Section Head* (1985), Gertrude Shope, *the ANC Women's Section Presents International Dishes from Africa, Asia, America and Europe: Sie Frauensektion des ANC Stellt vor International3 Gerichte* (year unspecified), Gertrude Shope (1985) [*Statement to World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women*].

I'm in agreement with April (2012: 17-18) in that in order to address the deficiencies in the historiography of the liberation struggle we need to critically evaluate the archival documentation of the struggle for liberation as the usual focus on "oral narrations of the struggle for liberation tend to limit our understanding of women to the role of support in nationalist movements". It is for that reason that in this chapter I perused various forms of archival documentation so as to further strive to compile Shope's biography and locating her in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle. Archival records may have to a greater extent limited the trace of Shope's contribution, however, the photographic archive is testament to her work and endorses her collaboration trail in the liberation struggle. Photographs have played an evidentiary role to Shope's contribution, and this chapter offers a visual aspect of Gertrude

political phenomenon of the modern moment, emerged on Twitter in 2012 as a collective for Black women and girls to celebrate who they are; it gained traction by arming them with the full use of the technological tools of their time (Sinclair 2016). #BlackGirlMagic is part of an emerging sphere of social experiences where thoughts and ideas, communicated via a hashtag, act as a catalyst for building community. Black women, however, are not new to such culturally centred efforts to build and sustain community". See Harrison, R. L. *MOVEMENT MAKERS: A Historical Analysis of Black Women's Magic in Social Movement Formation*.

Shope's life history. Carolyn Hamilton has stressed that archival security matters to those who actively "research the past and those in whose care evidence is reposed" (2011). But on whose detriment? Apart from being an arduous exercise, the "so called" security of archives has proved in the case of Gertrude Shope, the difficulty in accessing her records which in this instance also required a declassification application. That has created a further impediment of accessibility. Records relating to Gertrude Shope's too have demonstrated that what has mainly been 'preserved' by the apartheid government served an agenda of the state at the time, that being records related to her 'terrorist activities and a threat to the overthrowing of government as seen in the Directorate Security Legislation Record.

CHAPTER THREE

GOOD ENOUGH TO MOBILISE JUST NOT TO LEAD: HEROIC MASCULINITY AND THE GENDERING OF LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ANC

We have never fought shy of committing ourselves to the struggle against national domination and racial oppression. Equally we cannot afford to surrender our rights to end our oppression as women. How we define ourselves will determine how we relate to the ANC as a mother body, Gertrude Shope in (Hassim 2006: 122)

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the issue of heroic masculinity and the gendering of leadership within the ANC by reflecting on its history of side-lining women as influential leaders who contributed to the struggle against oppression. To that effect, I will also highlight historical events in which women mobilised and led protests and organisations that marked the turning points of South African resistance politics. The likes of Charlotte Maxeke in her formation of the Bantu Women's League, Florence Maphosho in the Alexandra Bus Boycott and later meddling of men in the Women's Section which Gertrude Shope headed from 1981 (Healy-Clancy 2014). I will through a historical overview of this subject attempt to show that the ANC intentionally barred women from participating as full political players and downplayed their leadership (Unterhalter 2000; Hassim 1991, 2004, 2014). This chapter is important for this study in that it demonstrates that narratives about black women should not merely be confined to public protesting, finding work in urban spaces dominated mostly by men at the time, and the active process of domesticating black women both in rural and urban areas (Masola 2018). That should not be so because even in pre-colonial times, African customs have always given women a recognised position. Despite the barring of women from occupying political office, there were exceptions such as those among the VhaVenda and Basotho women in the Transvaal who could attain the position of village head. The BaLobedu have always been known for their dynasty of female rulers (Schapera 1967: 19-20; Shope 1992).

The launch of the South African Native National Congress in 1912, later renamed the African National Congress (ANC) was a culmination of a process that began even before the Union (Mbeki 1992: 25). At its inception, the ANC did not envisage non-racialism, nor did it include women as members. Indirectly then, the notion of the 'national' with which the ANC advanced was one consisting of African men only. Here too, women demonstrated their breaking of boundaries when they took to the streets of Bloemfontein under the banner 'We have done with pleading. We now demand!'. These women had infiltrated the public field, supposedly the preserve of men. Their entrance into this terrain was more radical and popular, and they formed on the streets of Bloemfontein, a city considered to be one of the most conservative cities in South Africa (Suttner 2005: 77-78).

Apartheid did not emerge from thin air in 1948, and neither did South African women's opposition to the segregation that had characterised South African society for a long time. Thus, when the ANC started accepting women as full rather than simply auxiliary members in 1943, a full 31 years after its founding, women had for decades been organising and mobilising opposition to government policies at the grass-roots level. Many of these women remain unknown and little celebrated if at all, having remained grassroots activists before disappearing into the silent historiographical space where so many women waste away. Of course, there are notable exceptions, such as Charlotte Mannyne Maxeke, who founded the Bantu Women's League (BWL) in 1918 and was able to rise through ANC ranks even before women were officially given entry into the party (Lundin 2019: 326).

By and large, black women have been absent from South African narratives of nationalism and the struggles for freedom before 1912. It has been "accepted that those who started 'the struggle' and the ANC were men, the 'founding fathers' to use the language of patriarchy and that women's involvement in politics postdates 1912" (Odendaal 2013: 213). South African women's battle to get their 'voices' heard has a long history dating as far back as the 18th century when they challenged how missionaries perceived black women and African culture in general. Their sites of struggle were among others, letters, short fictional stories, drawings and paintings, diaries, and historical accounts in which they chronicled the harsh realities of colonialism and missionary teachings. Emma Sandile a black Xhosa woman wrote an epistolary note, around 1860, narrating how she was sent to Cape Town together with her two brothers to receive a Western education so that they would become, "... hostages of peace and prosperity of their country" (Khan 2016: 3). As early as 1894, women in South Africa refused to carry passes, passports, and documents of identity before the state of South Africa was formed (Gasa 2009: 71).

During the 1950s arose a vital and exciting upsurge of Black women's political resistance in Montgomery, Alabama in the United States (US) and Johannesburg, South Africa against apartheid structures that attempted to bind them and changed the face of their movements in the process. These women acted in defiance of control by the state, they refused to be subdued by their male counterparts, and political organisations aimed at keeping them on the margins of economic and political activity

(Brooks 2003: 85-86). During the 1980s opposition politics in South Africa were dominated by organisations whose focus was on the mobilisation of women for the national liberation struggle as opposed to mobilising them for women's liberation. In turn, the mobilisation process served as a way of reinforcing rather than challenging patriarchal relations of domination. Tackling these practices became critical because the transitional period created the space for a feminist movement to emerge to challenge these existing forms of women's organisations (Hassim 1991: 65-66).

Heroic Masculinity⁵⁷ and the Gendering of the Liberation Struggle Historiography

Much of the work done on African nationalism and the struggle against racism in South Africa has elevated the actions of men. Male action about the foundation of the ANC in 1912 is privileged despite the often obscuring by gender-neutral language. The elevation has persisted despite the existence of a body of solid feminist research and theory, over time, academic work on resistance and gender-focused primarily on women's roles in a formal protest, such as those against the carrying of passes that intended to restrict their general mobility and freedom from poor wages (Elark 2003: 654). The masculinist spectacle is not an abrupt occurrence but exists alongside other cultures of gendering politics in South Africa. This may explain why it is inhabited by men who otherwise embraced heroic, militant masculinities within the liberation movement. It is important to note that there is a history of spectacular masculinities being demonstrated within the ANC and that there are wide-ranging masculinities in both organisation and the political (Gqola 2009: 65).

The marginalisation of women from the African National Congress was not unique for the time. Similarly, this was also the case for both the newly constituted South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the African Political Organisation (APO), which was formed to fight the "denial of the franchise to all people who were not white", but which had become 'primarily concerned with defending-colored civil rights.' It was the

⁵⁷ This is a concept that was coined by Elaine Unterhalter (2000) to refer to men as being representatives of historic projects and rendering women as cheer leaders "often waving men goodbye as they depart to face danger" and whose place is at home and should be taking the lead from their male counterparts.

exclusionary policies and strategies of such organisations which reflected a clear consensus among South African men that the South African polity itself was gendered male. As noted by Gasa (2009: 71), the barring of membership in political organisations for women did not deter them from engaging in patriarchal organisations and indeed acting autonomously. To discourage militant women from participating in political activities, strategies had to be devised to bring them under the authority of men (Spuy & Clowes 2012: 348). Despite the gendering of nationalist history to include women, African nationalist historiography has focused less on male activity than gendered activity. "Laura Chrisman's work on Sol Plaatje and Elaine Unterhalter's on heroic masculinity in nationalist autobiography are, however, beginning to address this lacuna" (Elark 2003: 656).

In 1935, Alfred Bitini Xuma, ANC president from 1940 to 1947, wrote a paper detailing his confidence in the ability of Africans to participate responsibly in governmental politics because they had come to the "status of full manhood." Following was Anton Lembede, leader of the ANC Youth League who wrote a charged newspaper article in 1946 describing how a "young virile nation" was in the process of being rebirthed, drawing strength from nationalism that fed on the idea of Africa as a "black man's country". Of course, Xuma and Lembede were not the only African nationalist leaders who resorted to "rhetoric-saturated references to masculinity". "Language redolent with metaphors calling the reassertion of a denied manhood had a prominent rhetorical place in the nationalist discourse in the first part of the century". Even though it is rarely acknowledged, this discourse is important to understanding the political strategies of the ANC and other nationalist groups from the 1920s through the 1950s. This also explains some of the gendered currents that motivated nationalist activity during this period and some of the reasons why African male leaders were opposed to involving African women in political activities that aimed at opposing policies to the white South African (Elark 2003: 653).

Professor of literature and gender activist, Pumla Dineo Gqola (2009: 65) advances that masculinist spectacle is not an abrupt occurrence but exists alongside other cultures of gendering politics in South Africa. This may explain why it is inhabited by men who otherwise embraced heroic, militant masculinities within the liberation

movement. Much of the work done on African nationalism and the struggle against racism in South Africa has elevated the actions of men (Elark 2003: 654). Despite the gendering of nationalist history to include women, African nationalist historiography has focused less on female activity than gendered activity. "Laura Chrisman's work on Sol Plaatje and Elaine Unterhalter's on heroic masculinity in nationalist autobiography are, however, beginning to address this lacuna" (Elark 2003: 656).

Suppressed but Never Silenced: Women's Voices within the ANC

In 1937 Cecilia Lillian Tshabalala stressed in a conference of South African women that African American women "have all types of fraternal organizations to build and consolidate their race as a whole educationally, economically, socially and otherwise". The African American women had a great influence hence Cecilia Lillian Tshabalala formed the Daughters of Africa (DOA) five years before, as a club movement by which women could "uplift the African race" through educational initiatives, agricultural projects, small-scale enterprises, savings schemes, and public meetings. By the early 1940s, the DOA had installed branches across the province of Natal and in the gold mining centre of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg" (Healy-Clancy 2014: 450).

Their Johannesburg members took on state authority with the growing assertion which saw them being instrumental in the successful 1943 boycott against rising bus fares in the black Johannesburg township of Alexandra, which marked the rising challenges of black urban life. Between its founding in 1932 and 1943 which marked the first admission of women as full members of the African National Congress (ANC) and its new Women's League (ANCWL), the DOA served as a small but influential forum for women's engagement in nationalist public culture (Masola 2018). By and large, scholars have characterized women as marginal to African nationalism during this period, contrary to that perception, women were actually "only marginal to the realm of male-dominated political groups, in which the ANC was prominent" (Healy-Clancy 2014: 450).

The all-female social welfare organizations like the DOA, the National Council of African Women (NCAW), and the Zenzele Clubs, brought about new forms of national allegiance that transcended regional and ethnic identities. Having followed the lead of African American women's movements, the South African ones bore their imprints

hence the founding president of the NCAW Charlotte Maxeke who studied in America. Susie Yergan (Higgs) who was an African American social worker became a leading force in the Zenzele movement (Masola 2018: 64). The ANCWL too had American ties with its first president being Madie Hall Xuma, the North Carolina-born wife of the ANC's president, Alfred Bitini Xuma. Although scholars have examined how African nationalists borrowed and revised American ideas about racial unity to forge a mobilizing identity in segregationist South Africa, the nationalists on whom they have focused have been overwhelmingly male. The glimpse of South Africa in the scholarship of the black Atlantic political imagination has portrayed women as silent partners in male-led projects or as participants in welfare and Christian activities at the margins of formal politics. Charlotte Maxeke though has been an exception in that she is discussed as an influential female nationalist channel of transatlantic connections. Maxeke and her husband used the Wilberforce model, their Ohio alma mater to install a school in Transvaal and launched the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in South Africa (Healy-Clancy 2014: 451).

Maxeke demonstrated a solid conviction about her role as a representative leader of the African race (Cooke 2018: 36-37). She migrated these traditions into the Bantu Women's League (BWL), which she founded in 1918 as a female auxiliary to the ANC, and later to the National Council of African Women (NCAW) which was an amalgamation of social welfare groups she founded shortly before her death. Women's contributions to the ideological and practical development of African nationalism in South Africa have often received scant analytical attention. Nevertheless, an increase in literature on the evolution of African nationalism between the 1912 formation of the South African Native National Congress and the advent of apartheid in 1948, neither features biographies of prominent women nor in-depth analyses of key women's groups (Masola 2018: 61). This omission is significant when contrasted with women's public engagements during this period.

The women who created and participated in a nationalist body politic made it known that their public engagements were an expression of their concerns about 'welfare', as 'social clubs', or as 'self-help' groups. In the same way that the segregationist state dismissed all-female groups like the Bantu Women's League, the National Council of African Women, the Daughters of Africa, Zenzele, and the early African National

Congress Women's League essentially stabilizing and conservative influences so did progressive historians, particularly those writing during the anti-apartheid struggle who were more comfortable in documenting male-led political congresses or conventions and trade unions. African women's political exclusion did not just lead them to carve out space for themselves in a male-dominated society (Healy-Clancy 2014: 450-452). The 1950s saw a shift in the articulation of women's roles, however, were ceased by political movements of the 1960s. During the period of the suspension of the ANCWL. Ruth Mompoti headed the 'women's affair' for the External Mission of the ANC while based in Morogoro Tanzania. Following recommendations of the Morogoro Conference, the women in the ANC reorganized in 1969 as the Women's Section under the Women's Secretariat. Florence Mophosho headed the Women's Section in 1971 with Magdalene Resha, Edna Mgabaza, Kate Molale, and Theresa Maimane as members. Ten years later, in 1981 Gertrude Shope assumed the position of head of the Women's Section (Hassim 2006: 87).

At the beginning of the South African apartheid regime's issuing of passes to African women in 1956, the "ensuing resistance campaign focused on the theme of insult to female dignity and motherhood". Women drew strength from the fear of arbitrary arrest by physical abuse at the hands of policemen in search of new identity documents fuelled by an unprecedented surge of popular protests and demonstrations. The impressive nature of this struggle has invited sweeping judgments on the amazing ability of women to protest, with the attendant tendency to oversimplify their motives (Wells, 1983: 55). By and large, when there is a mention of leaders of the 9 August 1956⁵⁸, the likes of Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Albertina Sisulu and Sophy de Bryn, come first due to their leadership role in the march. However, several women such as Gertrude Shope who contributed to the planning⁵⁹ and the ultimate participation in the march remain invisible in the documentation of this historic event. Although little is known about her, Ma Pauline Nombayiso Mbenye from New Brighton in the Eastern Cape too was one of the women who participated in the march and

⁵⁸ On 9 August 1956 approximately 20 000 women from all over South Africa marched to Pretoria, South Africa. The marchers' aims were to protest the introduction of the Apartheid pass laws for black women in 1952 and the presentation of a petition to the then Prime Minister J.G. Strijdom. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/1956-womens-march-pretoria-9-august>

⁵⁹ In-person interview with Lyndall Shope-Qubeka on 13 March 2023.

have never carried a pass despite suffering harsh repercussions, from being disqualified for housing, a formal job, and a pension⁶⁰.

While the ANC had long recognised that women must be mobilised for national liberation, the emancipation of women after liberation did not receive much attention. In exile, it was through the efforts of the Women Section and the support of the ANC President Oliver Tambo that several women were given opportunities within the ANC. It was a norm for men to always interfere in women's activities, even in the name of 'support' and that was also observed in 1987 when the Commission for the Emancipation of Women was led by Oliver Tambo, at the head (Maritz 2014: 68).

The ANC Constitutional Guidelines

The ANC's Constitutional Guidelines came about as a result of the Statement on Negotiations and represent two years of preparatory work by their Constitutional Committee. The Guidelines "do not comprise a constitution" but sought to set out general principles upon which, according to the current provisional insights of the ANC at the time, the constitution of post-apartheid South Africa ought to be based. The Constitutional Guidelines were described by the ANC as "an ideological instrument, a morale booster, and a clarification of our objectives in our present struggle against apartheid". Chiefly, though, the Guidelines were intended to be no more than provisional directives but the basis for further debate (Van der Vyver 1989: 134). In his paper entitled "The Lusaka Amendments" Tom Lodge (1988: 17) describes the appearance of the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines as the first time since 1962 that a liberal party rooted in "Non-Racial Democracy produced a detailed blueprint and a rationale for a unitary democratic constitution document that any South Africa political organisation has produced". Lodge further asserts that the intention of the Constitutional Guidelines was not to replace the Freedom Charter, but rather, to transform its principles broadly and explicitly. Constitutional Guidelines of the ANC served as the implementation plan of the 1955 Freedom Charter in post-apartheid South Africa. In the immediate the ANC Constitutional Guidelines sought to:

⁶⁰University of Fort Hare, NAHECS, ANC Women's Section Archives, Women and Children under Apartheid Publication, 1986-1988. Wos/125/0515/06.

Create a just and democratic society that will sweep away the centuries-old legacy of colonial conquest and white domination and abolish all laws imposing racial oppression and discrimination. The removal of discriminatory laws and eradication of all vestiges of the illegitimate regime is, however, not enough; the structures and the institutions of apartheid must be dismantled and replaced by democratic ones. Steps must be taken to ensure that apartheid ideas and practices are not permitted to appear in old forms or new. In addition, the effects of centuries of racial domination and inequality must be overcome by constitutional provisions for corrective action which guarantees a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth and opening up of facilities to all. The Constitution must also be such to promote the habits of non-racial and non-sexist thinking, the practice of anti-racist behaviour, and the acquisition of genuinely shared political consciousness Van der Vyver (1989: 129-130).

In these circumstances, the ANC on its own accord launched initiatives to assert the right of the oppressed to find a democratic alternative to apartheid and to pursue the establishment of a system of one person, one vote in a democratic and non-racial South Africa, as the only solution that can bring justice, peace, and democracy to our country. The Constitutional Committee of the ANC was established in January 1986 to promote this salient objective. The Committee, in essence, was responsible for the planning for a new South African constitution and the political negotiations that would go with it (Odendaal 2022: 51). The function of the Constitutional Committee was to distil the principles and declaration of intent contained in the Freedom Charter into a set of constitutional formulations specially declaring what the ANC believes the foundations of government in a liberated South Africa should be' (Van der Vyver 1989: 134).

Despite being regarded as the most important document since the Freedom Charter, the Constitutional Guidelines did not "meet the requirements posed by ANC feminists even after revisions following meetings with the Women's Section and the drafting committee" (Hassim: 2006:111). On women, the Guidelines inscribed that "women shall have equal rights in all spheres of public and private life and the state shall take affirmative action to eliminate inequalities and discrimination between the sexes".

Predictably women were excluded from the guidelines discussions while issues that affected them were deliberated on. Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati have had to forcefully insert themselves into these committee meetings. Ruth Mompati highlighted that while there was an increase in calls for more women to be represented in the NEC, she also put forth that the ANC Women's Section was even more concerned about the quality. The Women's Section called for ANC to implement its policy and warned that the appointment of a few women into positions or providing training to overcome some of their disadvantages was a 'hogwash' way of 'transformation'. Instead, their view was that the ANC needed to put in place measures that would challenge traditional patriarchal and chauvinistic attitudes impeding women from participating fully in all structures and decision-making roles of the ANC (Odendaal 2022: 132).

Until Bridget Mabandla joined the Department of Legal and Constitutional Affairs in 1987, all those involved in the drafting of the Constitutional Guidelines were men. Only two women out of the more than thirty NEC members are responsible for overseeing the work of the Constitution Committee. They were the feisty head of the Women's Section, Gertrude Shope, and the equally forceful Ruth Mompati who played a critical role as administrative head of the secretary-general's office. At the time Shope, Mompati, Lillian Ngoyi, and Florence Maphosho were the only women to have served on the seventy-five-year-old ANC's highest body. For more than 70 years of its existence, the ANC was imbued with patriarchy, and in nature, the movement was fundamentally in contrast with its policy that proclaimed equality between men and women. Daily, women faced patriarchal attitudes and treatment and continuously were relegated to secondary roles and members of the organisation (Odendaal 2022: 4-5).

Attempts by the patriarchal nature of the ANC did not deter or discourage women from making their voices heard from within, they were even strengthened by the shared international struggles for equality. A gradual shift towards focusing on women's issues was emphasized during the mid-1980s. The Kabwe conference in 1985 and the In-House Seminar in 1989 "resolved that liberating woman from discrimination by gender, race, and class in society and inside the ANC was essential to giving real content to the idea of national liberation". In December 1989, a second internal seminar was held in Lusaka to deliberate on issues of women in the Constitutional

Guidelines. The seminar, which was given the status of a conference aimed at critically interrogating and challenging historic gender discrimination, starting with twelve changes to the previously approved Guidelines for a future constitution (Odendaal 2022: 5).

At the meeting to discuss the Foundation Document, where Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati were the only women leaders, Shope cautioned against supporting liberal democracy. She held that it was vital to understand the need to be both tactical and revolutionarily sceptical, thus announcing the multiparty system would be immature as that might be opportune for 'reactionary elements' such as the PAC who will 'exploit the loophole' Tambo put forth that it was going to be difficult to keep the multiparty proposal a secret as they needed to consider that the 'enemy' was harping on the assumption that the ANC aspired for a one party state (Odendaal 2022: 133; 137). The December 1989 Women's Seminar in Lusaka forged a significant path for gender relations which would later be incorporated into the changes on the 'Constitutional Guidelines and becoming the core values of the 1996 Constitution democratic South Africa'. In 1991 at the first conference of the ANC after its unbanning, the number of women represented in the NEC increased from four to eight, which included representations from the 14 regions of the Women's League in South Africa, seventy-eight years of the existence of the ANC (332-333).

The ANC and the Gender/Women Question

Since the launch of the Constitutional Committee in January 1986, women's voices have been absent. On the second day, Ruth Mompati made a 'Statement by the Women's Section on the Gender Question' by introducing Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri's paper entitled 'Constitution, Law and the Gender Question'. In her presentation, Matsepe-Casaburri was assisted by Bridget Mabandla who had been a legal advisor for the Democratic Lawyers Congress Association (DLCA) from 1986. At the time, Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati were the only two women serving with twenty-nine men in the NEC. The patriarchal saturation of the ANC had ensured that women did not get recognition for decades. After studying Law in Zambia and lecturing in Botswana, Gaborone, upon her return to Lusaka in 1986 Bridget Mabandla is one of the women that complained about that fact to Oliver Tambo. In response, Tambo suggested that she be appointed to take special responsibility for women and children,

in consequence, she was incorporated into the Constitutional Committee. Later, Tambo also appointed her to serve as a judge of the ANC's National Tribunal, to which Mabandla later declined, citing conflict of interest (Odendaal 2022: 226).

The contribution of women in the fight against apartheid was valued by their fellow African men, however, the men tended to place limits on what they could do. Despite this marginalisation by men, women were not discouraged from forging on fighting for equality. In 1984, about 500 women from the Federation of Transvaal Women (FETRAW) gathered outside the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg and later proceeded to the British Council to demand the lifting of restrictions imposed on the 16 anti-apartheid organisations by the regime. Leading the march was the secretary of FETRAW, Jesse Duarte, who would shortly be detained, and Feroza Adam who was an executive member. Along with them were Caroline Motsoaledi and June Mlangeni whose husbands were sentenced to life imprisonment during the Rivonia Trial⁶¹.

In Natal, about 160 women from the trouble-torn townships marched to the Supreme Court to hand over a petition to the Judge President, John Didcott. These women called themselves, the UDF/Inkata Peace Talk Movement, and their concern was regarding the violence in Natal townships that had claimed many lives and properties. The COSATU Women's Conference held on 22-24 April 1988 showed prospects to set up a national women's structure within the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) but were overthrown by the male leadership. Similarly, calls for women's representation within the trade union were resisted by men within COSATU despite having been the majority of delegates at the 1988 conference. Already in 1988, 70% of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWSU) comprised women and was one of the largest affiliate unions of COSATU⁶². In the same way, in 1990 there were no women among the top six national office bearers of the organisation due to resistance by men in the ANC. In the following year, the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) proposed that a minimum of 30% of the positions on the National Executive

⁶¹ University of Fort Hare (UFH) NAHECS Archives. ANC Women's Section Archives. Bulletin of the National Commission for the Emancipation of Women April 1992. Wos/125/0015/11.

⁶² University of Fort Hare (UFH), NAHECS African National Congress Archives, Women and Children under Apartheid Publication, 1986-1988.

Council (NEC) be occupied by women but was rejected by males at the 1991 Conference (Mushonga & Seloma 2018: 196-201).

In 1985, the ANC Women's Section called for a regional seminar to discuss the "role of women in the struggle and within the ANC". Subsequently, in June of the same year, the ANC held its Second Consultative Conference in Kabwe at which a special session was dedicated to women. Before the conference, a paper was circulated, for the first time overtly calling out "the collusion of men in the ANC with traditional, conservative and primitive constraints imposed by man-dominated structures within the movement" (Hassim 2006: 105). At the core of the conference, the ANC was to deal with its moral code as a revolutionary movement (Odendaal 2022: xi). Among other issues, the Kabwe conference dealt with the problem in both MK and the ANC of widespread patriarchal attitudes and gender discrimination and in some cases, abuses faced by women in exile. The report of the Commission of Ideological and Political Work included 'The women's question'. It concluded that the tendency to refer women's issues to the Women's Section needed to change, the organisation in its entirety needed to take responsibility, both in the political approach and also in relationships within the life of the organisation. Ruth Mompati testified that there were gender imbalances, referring particularly to the camps in Angola. She alluded that you could find six women against two hundred men, thus presenting "pressure on the women to start unwanted sexual liaisons". The report conceded that, in the ANC, there were men in senior positions, who because of traditional attitudes took advantage of women. The commission also recommended that 'it was vital to stop practices that were unethical and contrary to the high principles of the organisation'. From there on, the commission also agreed that programs forging the equality of men and women should be undertaken. It was also highlighted that 'urgent measures should be introduced to ensure that women participated at all levels of the struggle, including the forward areas and the underground (Odendaal 2022: 24).

In his presidential statement on 10 September 1981 at the Women's Section Conference held in Angola Luanda, Oliver Tambo said:

The mobilisation of women is the task, not of women alone or of men alone, but of all of us, men and women alike, comrades in struggle. The mobilisation of women is the task, not of women alone or men alone, but of all of us, men and women alike, comrades in struggle. The mobilisation of the people into active resistance and struggle for liberation demands the energies of women no less than of men...We need to recognise that the capacity of women to contribute fully to the liberation struggle depends, in part on what we in practice conceive to be their role as women...On the other hand, women in the ANC should stop behaving as though there was no place for them above the level of certain categories of involvement. They have a duty to liberate us as men from antique concepts and attitudes about the role of women in society and the development and direction of our revolutionary struggle...We need to move from revolutionary declarations to revolutionary practice. We invite the ANC Women's Section, and the Black women of South Africa, more oppressed and more exploited than any other section of the population, to take up this challenge and assume their proper role, outside the kitchen, among the fighting ranks of our movement and at its command posts. The Women's Section is not an end in itself. It is a weapon of struggle, to be correctly used, against all forms and levels of oppression and inequality in the interests of the victorious struggle of the people.⁶³

Not only are Tambo's utterances at the 1981 Women's Section Conference contradictory but also condescending. While he claimed to encourage the ANC men to recognise women as equal players and contributors to the fight against the oppressive apartheid regime, he at the same time burdened women with the responsibility of teaching men to recognise the value of women in the ANC. He further suggested that women do not have confidence in themselves enough to prove to men in the ANC that their powers and influence extend beyond the kitchen. Sachs recalls some of the absurd patriarchal debates and one was where there were questions on whether "married women should do high kicks on the stage". This recollection from Sach resonated with my visit to the South African Historical Archives (SAHA) at the

⁶³ NAHECS Archives. University of Fort Hare. Bulletin of the National Commission for the Emancipation of Women April 1992.Wos/125/0015/11.

University of the Witwatersrand when I came across a letter by Oliver Tambo who in his response expressed regret towards Mark Shope's refusal of Gertrude Shope to represent the ANC Women's Section in Cuba. Tambo replied by saying " The claim that the ANC has no right or authority to give tasks to comrade Gertie without your prior approval is startling as it is unknown in the practice of the ANC or our political association with her over the years"...Although Tambo blatantly opposed the contents of Marks Shope's letter, he at the same time suggested that since Mark Shope raised the issue of policy in that the ANC gives men the power of approval over their spouses, the mission to Cuba will either be cancelled or another comrade will be assigned the task. This was another anecdotal revelation moment of the ANC's gender inequality and constant obsession with restricting women from performing leadership duties.⁶⁴ Indeed, the question of women's liberation, for so long treated in an abstract way, finally forced itself onto the agenda of action and thought, a profound question of cultural transformation (Sachs 1991: 189).

Undoubtedly, the ANC has been consistent in acknowledging their continuous marginalisation of women, despite conceding that women have played a critical role in the liberation struggle. According to Mavivi Manzini, during the 1970s the ANC did not have clear policies regarding women. She highlighted that since its inception in 1969, the primary role of the ANC Women's Section "was to act as a social worker" (Hassim: 2006: 87). The statement by the National Executive Committee (NEC) on 02 May 1990 also reiterated their commitment to eradicate patriarchal attitudes, particularly about women occupying positions of decision making at the highest level of the organisation⁶⁵. As one of the leaders of the Women's League Task Force, Gertrude Shope put forth that the "ANCWL is a mass organisation of women within the ANC" with structures and membership that it is responsible for, thus it being treated just as a department is undermining its significance. Bounded by their 02 May Statement, the ANC National Executive Committee agreed to the launch of the ANC Women's League as an autonomous body that will also make its own decisions.

⁶⁴ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), Letter, Tambo, OR to Mark Shope, 3 April 1978

⁶⁵ NAHECS Archives. University of Fort Hare. Bulletin of the National Commission for the Emancipation of Women April 1992.wos/125/0015/01.

Consequently, Frene Ginwala said that "for the first time, the women's is not a subsection or a department as it was the case in the past" (Hassim: 2006: 122).

In April 1992, a Commission for the Emancipation of Women was formed and its program of action would include: the undertaking of a survey on women's participation in all structures of the ANC, examine ANC policy proposals to ensure that they are gender-sensitive, and further the emancipation of women, circulation of briefing document on affirmative action and lastly, in co-operation with other ANC departments, organize a national workshop on the status of the customary and religious law concerning the Bill of Rights⁶⁶. Despite the different policies on women emancipation, the ANC still rejected the more assertive women as seen with Winnie Mandela's appointment to different roles:

Her rhetorical excesses probably delighted as many as she offended, her showy assertiveness might be welcomed in a movement in which women still tend to be relegated to stoic, demure, and supportive roles, and her ostentation easily forgivable in someone who for so long had suffered very intense material and emotional hardship. But her trial for the assault and kidnapping of Moeketsi and the events surrounding it raised rather more serious issues (Lodge 1992).

In reality, the women in the ANC never needed permission from their male counterparts to lead, mobilise or be militant. Charlotte Maxeke already started challenging the issues of equality in the 1920s and forged a theorization of "The Woman Question and the Native question towards an aspired nationalisation" (April 2012). The role of the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) as part of a broader women's movement in SA has been crucial to achieving many of the legislative and constitutional gains for women in the post-apartheid democracy. The ANCWL played a critical role in the emergence of gender consciousness in the ANC and society more broadly. For much of the twentieth century, the ANCWL was a symbol of the struggle for gender equality in South Africa. However, that later changed as the women started legitimising the struggle which relied on a "romanticised

⁶⁶ NAHECS Archives. University of Fort Hare. Bulletin of the National Commission for the Emancipation of Women April 1992.wos/125/0015/06.

retrospective engagement with the struggle against apartheid, rooted specifically in women's anti-apartheid struggles". This legitimisation of the liberation struggle rhetoric was reflected in the 2011 press release from Parliament on the occasion of the Women's Parliament, which also served as a brief history of the ANCWL. It was here that South Africans were reminded that women's participation in the struggle in the 1930s and 1940s was led by the ANC (Hassim, 2014: 13). These sentiments directly undermined the efforts of leaders such as Charlotte Maxeke and Cecilia Lillian Tshabalala who formed the Daughters of Africa.

In her book *RAPE: A South African Nightmare*, particularly chapters five and six, Pumla Dineo Gqola, professor of gender studies and a feminist dissects the case of the woman who was known as 'Khwezi', a daughter of a friend to former president Jacob Zuma. In 2006 Zuma was on trial for raping her. In chapter five titled *Making Sense to the Responses in Zuma Trial*, Gqola analyses the reactions of the women in the ANCWL alliance partners who garnered support for Zuma and expressed that their loyalty to him surpasses any form of violation against women. For instance, Mamorena Moloji from the South African Textile Workers (SACTWU) said that she was concerned about Jacob Zuma contracting HIV but was confident that the sex was consensual, and the rape charge was a fabrication. Furthermore saying "I don't care about the girl...We want him as our leader." Thandi Dimba, a member of the National Education and Health Workers Union (NEHAWU) travelled from Durban to Johannesburg to support Jacob Zuma. Dimba pointed out the immateriality of whether or not Zuma is guilty. She intently declared and said that "we will support him, whether guilty or not...we need to stand up for the truth and not support chancers that are against Zuma (Gqola 2021: 110). The ANCWL like their alliance partners, publicly declared their support during the 2006 Zuma's rape trial. Philile Ntuli describes the response as one of the continuous anti-feminist campaigns by the ANCWL.⁶⁷

In 2017, the ANCWL appointed six men to represent them at the ANC Policy Conference. Following public distaste, from particularly, gender activists and feminists, the then president of the ANCWL, Bathabile Dlamini defended the decision and pointed out that "women are too emotional during debates". Shireen Hassim, professor

⁶⁷ Philile Ntuli, *Buttocks Protest Sabotages Fight for Equality in Daily Maverick*, 31 October 2015.

of politics and feminist theory reacted to Dlamini's utterances in an interview with Eusebius McKenzie on Cape Talk/702 and said that that is "exactly what we have come to expect from the ANCWL: They have no analysis of gender power; no analysis of patriarchy; basically, they are cheerleaders for male leaders within the ANC, and usually they choose the side that is least favourable for a transformed gender politics".⁶⁸ In one of the interviews after being appointed as the ANCWL president in 2023, Sisisi Tolashe proclaimed that the ANCWL is still relevant in the fight against patriarchy and further added the following: "As we speak, a woman might be raped and killed. The women's league took it upon itself to fight that scourge. We are calling on all women in the organisations they belong to [join the league in fighting] patriarchy bedevilling our society." ⁶⁹ It shall remain to be seen when the ANCWL returns to its former glory of being the voice of women's emancipation.

CONCLUSION

Although the ANC has made efforts to deal with the gender question through their development of policies around gender equality, more should be done to address the disparities in the representation of women.

This chapter premises the argument I make in chapter 4, that the memorialisation of women in the heritage and memory of the liberation, or the lack thereof is influenced by ingrained ANC patriarchal attitudes. Unsurprisingly, one hundred and thirteen years since its inception, we are yet to witness a 50% representation of women in the top six or seven of the ANC or a female president because of the entrenched masculinity traditions within the party. These attitudes would later influence how women were memorialised or not when the ANC took over as government.

The ANCWL 's diverting from total emancipation of women in recent years has presented a regress in the fight against patriarchy. Surely this is not the ANCWL that

⁶⁸ <https://www.wits.ac.za/news/latest-news/in-their-own-words/2017/2017-07/ancwl-has-never-had-a-strong-history-of-dismantling-patriarchy.html>

⁶⁹ <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2023-07-25-anc-womens-league-still-relevant-in-fight-against-patriarchy-sisisi-tolashe/>

Gertrude Shope and Ruth Mompati fought for. The ANCWL that went out of its way to ensure that children have proper education through bursaries all over the world would not have organised a march that would jeopardise the strides of the 2015 #feesmustfall movement thus tantamount to counterrevolutionary. Ruth Mompati must have been heart-wrenched and disenchanted to witness an ANCWL that protects sexual predators thus undermining her efforts, those of Gertrude Shope's and their generation after they did their best to protect and call out men when they abused especially some of the 1976 cohort in exile which resulted in 'unwanted teenage pregnancies' (Ndlovu 2004: 471). This cannot be the ANC that Winnie Madikizela Mandela would be proud of after she laid her life down to liberate South Africa. I hope Nomvula Mokonyane, the First Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC utterances made on 15 August 2024, Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday were not just to impress the SABC viewers. What would make an impression is if her saying Gertrude Shope's birthday forces them to reflect and strive towards the repurposing and recommitting of the ANC for the total emancipation of women is seen noticeably. There is no time than the present for the ANC and the ANCWL for total redemption.

On 15 August 2024, Thabo Mbeki highlighted that the matter of women empowerment has been on the agenda of the ANC for many decades, so it was 'natural that [the ANC] had to do it in terms of appointments of women...and advancement of women and that responsibility remains. He further added by saying that "I think what we all need to realise is that the advancement of women is not going to happen on its own, because of the inherited prejudices, patriarchy and all that. It's a very heavy burden from our past. To break that is a conscious decision. You've got to take a conscious decision to say you've got to break from that past and ensure the advancement of women. That's what we would need here in South Africa and the world. It's an important decision that needs to be taken and acted upon.

May we continue to expose and break down the walls of patriarchy, even if it's just brick by brick.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PATRIACHISED MEMORY AND LIBERATION HERITAGESCAPE

...key African feminist tool has to be our thinking about how to hear the mute, and what that hearing might look like. Similarly, my aim is not to romanticise silence and thus undermine the power of giving voice and exposing oppression. It is rather to remind us that under conditions of scarcity and imposed limits, those who are oppressed often generate new meanings for themselves around silences. Instead of being absent and voiceless, silences in circumstances of violence assume presence and speak volumes (Gqola 2006: 50).

Introduction

The 20th century produced several memory projects that sought to promote the biography of certain individuals by remembering their history through physical structures. Where I practice my craft, at Ditsong Museums of South Africa, there are two biographical museums, the first is the Kruger Museum situated at W F Nkomo Street, and the second is the Sammy Marks Museum which was a subject of my master's thesis. It would seem that the apartheid state never saw it necessary to create monuments for women except in the context of mothering like the Bloemfontein statue dedicated to the Anglo-Boer War. Women are memorialised in the context of their husbands in the main, like both at Kruger Museum and Sammy Marks Museum under Ditsong Museums of South Africa in Pretoria. The post-apartheid state seems to have followed suit and created museums dedicated to the memory of men, like the Nelson Mandela Museum and the Luthuli Museum for example. While these men played a critical role in society, some equally many important women played such roles, and their memory and heritage deserve to be commemorated.

Although it may be presumed that a large number of the majority of South Africans share the government's values of freedom, equality, and non-racialism, the same can't be said about everyone being in accord with the 'specific politics of representation and identity that underscore individual heritage projects.' The state's desire to promote reconciliation and nation-building sometimes requires an adaptation of the past to the political needs of the present which may be for obvious political reasons and affiliations. This can lead to serious distortions and omissions, for instance when the memory of a group or individuals is suppressed in favour of a desirable sense of unity. It can also lead to contestation and conflict over which narrative should take precedence or which individuals to memorialise (Marschall 2006:182). Thus, my analysis of this patriarchised heritagescape draws from African feminist discourse which rejects separatism from the opposite sex. Although indebted to the global feminist movement, African feminism is not "antagonistic to men but challenges them to be aware of those aspects of women's subjugation which differ from the generalized oppression of all African people" (Mekgwe 2006: 11).

As a starting point in this chapter, I will look at the transition politics of memorialisation post-apartheid and discuss in the main, the Legacy Projects and National Liberation Heritage Route Project. Additionally, I will deal with songs as memory representations of cultural and historical expression, with a focus on songs of liberation struggle to unearth their biographies relating to the representation of women. As highlighted by Solani (2013: 8), "In freedom songs and poetry, as in auto/biographies, they tend to give an entry into the history of individuals and social conditions". Likewise, documentary films also have the same effect and impact visually, as do museums and monuments. Here I particularly emphasise how choral music through the South African Schools Eisteddfod (SASCE) now ABC Motsepe Schools Eisteddfod has been used as a tool to conscientise and propel the likes of Mandela and Tambo as having played the most significant roles as leaders while sidelining women, in a similar fashion that freedom songs were composed prior to democracy.

At the beginning of the 21st Century, South Africa brought to the fore how sensitive the subject of place names is and how they represent issues of racial identity and are contested along race and ethnicity. "Place names, or toponyms, are directly related to the place of the people: place in which inhabitants are included, or from where they are excluded, as well as to "ideological and nation-building constructions". Thus, it emphasises the question of memory of a past that new names want to rectify or clear. Change of place names is at the intersection of spatial strategies and representations of all individuals and serves as an entry point to study the evolution of present identities in South Africa. (Guyot, Cecil Seethal 2008: 1).



Figure 18. Gertrude Shope Primary School emblem

What is known today as the Gertrude Shope Primary School was once called *Nontsikelelo*⁷⁰ Primary School. After being forcefully removed from various locations, such as Soweto Fiesplaas, in 1992 a school was built for the community of Bethelsdorp, Eastern Cape, South Africa. At its inception, the school was named Nontsikelo by the government, a name the community would later reject. About a few months into the operation of the school, the community suggested a name change from Nontsikelelo to Gertrude Shope.

According to Ms Thembeke Ngqati, while the community members appreciated the installation of the school, they also, expressed that they did not feel blessed given that the community was established as a result of forced removals. Instead, members of the community suggested that the school renaming should reflect the journey of their struggle, and to them, Gertrude Shope epitomised that. Ngqati highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, to celebrate her 95th birthday, Gertrude Shope made a financial donation to the community towards the formation of a bakery to be run by women. This was in response to job losses experienced by many in South Africa. According to Ngqati, Shope pointed out that even with job losses, the women in the community shouldn't plunge into despair, instead they should self-employ, create jobs and feed their families.

⁷⁰ Nontsikelelo is the isiXhosa name which means Blessings.

During an interview with Sheila Shope⁷¹, she mentioned that Gertrude Shope loved baking, a skill she also passed down to her. It would seem that because of her passion for baking, Gertrude Shope also figured that that might be an easier way to create jobs for women. On numerous occasions, Gertrude Shope portrays her passion for women's empowerment, from the different missions she led during exile until she returned to South Africa and assumed the role of ANCWL president in 1991 (Hassim 2004; Suttner 2005: 99; Lodge 1992: 4; Shope 1992; Shope 2007).

Seemingly, toponyms in South Africa do not represent all individuals. As it is, place names in South Africa reflect gender inequality. To that effect, this chapter will also explore toponyms, and I deliberately chose Pretoria as the main research site about street names because it is the capital city of South Africa. The decision to choose Pretoria is also due to the "understanding that the official cultural landscape of a capital city is critical in the constitution of national identity. The cultural landscape in a capital city is more politically charged than that of any other urban area in the country because the capital city is the official seat of government (Mamvura 2020). I explore toponyms as biographical indicators through androcentric analysis and employ a hegemonic masculinity framework.

Towards a Transformed Heritage Landscape Post-apartheid

Issues relating to heritage are part of a social and public discourse and a mode to advance a sense of inclusiveness by recognising previously suppressed histories and claims to the past. As part of the democratic dispensation, heritage management also became a constitutional imperative. In terms of Schedule 4, Part A, of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), heritage is a shared competency across the three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local (Manetsi 2017: 92).

In mitigating and responding to many of the questions around heritage in democratic South Africa, new policies and laws were introduced. These new policies included the White Paper on Arts and Culture (1996), the National Heritage Resources Act (1999), the National Heritage Councils Act (1999) and the Cultural Institutions Act (1999). Manetsi (2017: 92) postulates that the introduction of these policies demonstrates "the extent of governmentality and "authorised heritage discourse" in the governance of

⁷¹ Telephonic interview with Sheila Shope-Sithole on 04 August 2023.

post-colonial heritage in South Africa. In supplementing and implementing new policies that sought to be 'inclusive' and striving to redress colonial and apartheid repressive past, the ANC-led government proposed some projects, chiefly were, the Legacy Projects and the National Heritage Liberation Route (NHLR).

Legacy Projects, as inscribed in the *Pocket Guide to South Africa 2011/12*, include, "monuments, museums, plaques, outdoor art, heritage trails, and other symbolic representations create visible reminders of, and commemorate, the many aspects of South Africa's past". The government initiated several national legacy projects to "establish commemorative symbols of South Africa's history and celebrate its heritage"⁷². The purpose of creating legacy projects was aimed at "giving voice and "entrenching" into history the historically voiceless black population and those that official history had marginalised" (Solani 2013: 157-158). A host of heritage sites were recognised by the National Monuments Council many of them linked to Nelson Mandela: his one-time Soweto home was declared a national monument in February, and so was Pretoria's Great Synagogue, scene of the 1956 treason trial of prominent anti-apartheid leaders. On Robben Island, management was reported to have been planning the "possibility of renting out some of the cells for the overnight 'prison experience'". In major cities, plans were also underway to rename streets after Mandela and other leaders such as the late Chris Hani and Oliver Tambo (Rassool 2000: 12-13). In his address at the official launch of the Robben Island Museum (RIM) on 24 September 1997, Nelson Mandela said:

During colonial and apartheid times, our museums and monuments reflected the experiences and political ideals of the minority...Most people had little or no say in the depiction of their history in textbooks, libraries, or research institutions. The demeaning portrayal of black people in particular African, Indian, and coloured people is painful to recall...unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that the redressing of this situation has barely begun. Having excluded and marginalised most of our people, is it surprising that our museums

72

https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/024_arts_and_culture.pdf

and national monuments are often seen as alien spaces? How many have gone to see one of our monuments? In other countries, such places throng with citizens...Through the apartheid years, people responded to the denial and distortion of their heritage with their affirmation-as indeed the Afrikaners had done in an earlier period. They celebrated their heritage outside of the country's museums and monuments: in song and ceremony; in festivals and carnivals; in the selling of their wares and in buying items associated with their heritage; by working the history of their communities into everyday artifacts, as the women of Hlabisa weave their stories into beer baskets.

With democracy, we have the opportunity to ensure that our institutions reflect history in a way that respects the heritage of all citizens. The government has taken up the challenge. Our museums and the heritage sector as a whole are being restructured. Community consultation, effective use of limited resources, and accessibility are our guiding principles as we seek to redress the imbalances. The recently established Legacy Project will promote a fuller representation of our nation's heritage, through new monuments and heritage sites. This will ensure that we have national monuments that live in our people's hearts...It challenges us to ensure that future generations of South Africa can claim the heritage of a nation that has eradicated the legacy of grinding poverty that our generation inherited for most of its people; the heritage of a nation that has deracialised all spheres of social life and secured the dignity of all its diverse communities (Ramoupi et.al 2021: 62-63).

In 1996 the Department of Arts Culture Science and Technology (DACST) announced approval of eight legacy projects: the Chief Albert Luthuli Commemoration, Blood River Commemoration, Women's Monuments, Samora Machel Memorial, Centenary of the Anglo-Boer War, Nelson Mandela Museum, Freedom Park and the Khoisan heritage. These projects would form the initial series (Solani 2013: 157-158). The Dulcie September Legacy Project, Sarah Baartman Centre of Remembrance, and the Chief Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture were among those added during the 2011/2012

period.⁷³ Unsurprisingly, Mandela's sentiments in his speech about the government's redressing of the imbalances of the heritage scape is not aligned with the reality that the heritage landscape would later represent. It was also in 2011/2012 that the Free State Province Department of Sports Arts Culture and Recreation requested assistance from the national government to allocate funds for the completion of the Winnie Mandela House in Bredfort. Subsequently, the Independent Development Trust (IDT) was contracted to implement plans for the renovation of the Winnie Mandela house, the building of a new structure, the refurbishment of the old, bombed house, and turning it into an interpretative centre. The IDT would also be responsible for the development of OR Tambo Garden of Remembrance, JL Dube⁷⁴ site, exhibition at Waaihoek, and the refurbishment of Dr Moroka House⁷⁵.

In September 2011, Paul Mashatile, the Minister of Arts and Culture, announced a National Liberation Heritage Route, "to honour the women and men who fought against apartheid". It was also declared that R20 million has been set aside for the construction of a museum at OR Tambo's home in the Eastern Cape. A proposal for funding of R70 million was developed for the building of a museum, and monuments and upgrading of roads in Mvezo, the birthplace of Nelson Mandela. By mid-2012, work on the Steve Biko Centre in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape was also in progress. Funding totalling R50 million was set aside for Ngquza Hill, where the Pondoland revolt and massacre of 1960 occurred. There were also plans to set up museums and sites across the border in countries such as Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, and Zambia (Pocket Guide to South Africa 2011/2012: 224)⁷⁶. The instituting of the National Liberation Route in South Africa resulted from the adoption of *Resolution 33C/29* by the Commission for Culture (Commission IV) of the United Nations Education and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) General Conference in

73

https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/024_arts_and_culture.pdf

⁷⁴ John Langalibalele Dube was the first president of the South African National Native Congress (SAANC), to be called the African National Congress later from 1912 to 1917.

⁷⁵ Dr James Sebe Moroka was the president of the ANC from 1949-1952.

76

https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/024_arts_and_culture.pdf

October 2005. At this conference, it was declared that liberation struggle heritage was thereby recognised as being of universal value and significance. The reason for this resolution was premised on: “recognising African liberation heritage as a common heritage of shared global values (human rights, freedom, democracy, etc.); promoting dialogue amongst nations and cultures; developing and promoting a culture of peace; contributing to the memory of the world; and generating data and databases that raise awareness on the African liberation”⁷⁷. Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route is described as "a national memory project aimed at commemorating, celebrating, educating, promoting, preserving, conserving and providing a durable testament of South Africa's road to independence". The project draws on heritage as testimony and depiction of South Africa's journey from the first contact with colonists to the attainment of democracy through a series of connected multi-dimensional sites at the local, provincial, national, and international levels. The Liberation Heritage Route, recognise the role of several local leaders and communities in the struggle for political self-determination. In the main, the aims and projected outcomes of the routes are concerned with the recognition of the role of African leaders in the Liberation (or 'Frontier') Wars, recording oral histories, managing and protecting heritage sites for future generations, and educating visitors and local populations, to contribute towards social cohesion and nation building (Snowball and Courtney 2010: 564). The National Heritage Council of South Africa pointed out that the project assumes the format of a route comprising a network of heritage sites, with some having world heritage status, and others having national, provincial, and local significance⁷⁸. The National Liberation Heritage Route (NLHR) is a long-term ongoing project of the National Heritage Council (NHC), designed to develop and manage heritage resources related to the legacy of the liberation struggle throughout all nine provinces (Kotze and Zuma: 2018).

The mapping of the Liberation Route in South Africa is not a new phenomenon but stems from the long and short journeys that were undertaken by the various groups

⁷⁷ Houston, G. Sausi, K. & Dumisa, S.2014. *The South African Liberation Struggle and National Heritage Sites*. Paper presented at the Historical Association of South Africa's Biennial Conference History, Wars in History, and other "other Southern African Histories, 26-27 June 2014. Blue Waters Hotel, Durban.

⁷⁸ Houston, G. Sausi, K. & Dumisa, S.2014. *The South African Liberation Struggle and National Heritage Sites*. Paper presented at the Historical Association of South Africa's Biennial Conference History, Wars in History, and other "other Southern African Histories, 26-27 June 2014. Blue Waters Hotel, Durban.

resulting in economic, cultural, and political, links to the different regions in Southern Africa. Economically the links were made by the migrant labour system that brought together Africans from, Bechuanaland and the Central African Federation (Nyasaland, Northern, and Southern Rhodesia). Politically, "the rising tide of African nationalism during the 1960s and the coming of independence in Africa meant that political ties between the different liberation movements in Southern Africa were cemented" (Ndlovu 2002:481). Additionally, Ndlovu (2002:480-481) posits that the mapping of routes in South African history was first "popularised by what he calls the Bantu 'migrations' theory that was abused by historians and others to fill the empty land thesis" which suggested that land distribution in contemporary South Africa was, as result if devastations endured by blacks in the early 19th century. In marking these routes, Ndlovu refers to several journeys by freedom fighters from the ANC, PAC, and APLA who were forced into exile around the 1960s and eventually settled in Bechuanaland, Tanzania, and Zambia. Also, some of these freedom fighters were forced into exile within the country through the enforcement of Section 5(1) (b) of the Native Administration Act of 1927 which empowered the State President, whenever he deemed it expedient in the public interest, 'without notice to banish to exile and order any tribe, portion of a tribe, or individual African to move to any stated place. The 1960s then saw many fleeing the country into external exile, both in Southern Africa and overseas (Ndlovu 2002: 480-481).

Manetsi (2017:137) points out the contentious nature of the National Liberation Heritage Route project in that, while primarily the project serves "as a testament to the government's noble and ambitious plans to represent previously neglected histories", concurrently, it "reveals the challenges, contradictions, political agendas, power struggles, and contestations that have characterised the seminal period of democracy in South Africa's history".

An article dated 12 September 2011 entitled *Gauteng announces Heritage Month Celebrations* was published on the government website and the following was quoted:

For the country's premier province, the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, and Recreation plans are set on ensuring that its residents have an opportunity to recognise their vast cultures through emotive expressions like historical inheritance, passionate memories, and an impressive array of

languages, all of which will bolster this year's theme: Celebrating the heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle, both living and passed on...The Liberation Struggle Heritage Route Poster Campaign (which also forms part of the Gauteng Chapter of the National Liberation Heritage Route, launched earlier this year) is a call to Gauteng communities to identify at least 60 heritage sites that are associated with the liberation struggle... As Nelson Mandela has repeatedly pointed out, it is not only the well-known stalwarts that shaped this country's landscape, and this is where the Struggle Veterans Personality Profile Campaign comes into play. It profiles certain historical figures associated with the struggle, especially those whose history is not known. Their history will be publicised about the role they played toward the liberation of South Africa. These names will be chosen according to criteria such as credentials in the struggle, gender balance, youth, disability, and the inclusiveness of former liberation movements and progressive forces, such as unions. As a pilot project, only four individuals have been chosen. These include the Vaal's Molefi Congress Mbata, who facilitated the crossing of operatives for military training under uMkhonto Wesizwe; Sam Ntuli who is a former unionist from Ekurhuleni; Charlotte Maxeke who was the first president of the ANC Women's League, and social worker, author and member of the first democratically elected parliament, Ellen Khuzwayo.

On 8 April 2014, Paul Mashatile, the Minister of Arts and Culture announced the completion of the National Heritage Transformation Charter which was submitted by the National Heritage Council. Mashatile stressed that the Charter will:

Help...strengthen efforts aimed at crafting a new and inclusive narrative of where we came from as a nation, of who we are, our common values as well as our shared history and heritage. Furthermore, it reaffirms...commitment to ensuring that the stories and struggles of all South Africans are told and that they are included as part of ...national memory. The Charter will also help in terms of strengthening efforts to build new monuments, commemorative sites, and museums as well as develop new symbols that are reflective of common heritage, shared dreams, and values.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/govt-committed-transform-heritage-landscape>

Retrospectively, the implementation of the liberation heritage route and renaming of streets ran parallel with the celebration of the centenary of the ruling ANC. This was followed by additional new sites being unveiled in 2014 to mark the 20-year celebration of democracy (Manetsi 2017: 28).

Memorialisation and the Politics of Transition: On Presentation and Representation

...Particularly in South Africa in the time after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the discursive economies of reconciliation have been shaped as much through social structures of denial as through the interconnected workings of institutions of power that archive, occlude, silence, and revise the domesticating accommodations of nation-building ideology and neoliberal forms of political democratisation which characterise South Africa's post-apartheid political landscape. Questions of land and home restitution as well as of accounting for the accrued economic and psychosocial costs of dispossession for the people who bore the brunt of colonial expansion and settlement, of apartheid's crimes against humanity, were set aside by this project of national reconciliation. This means that these questions, so centrally tied to the politics of memory and social justice, will return. They must be accounted for (Grunebaum 2011: 1-2).

Globally the process of defining an identity for a new nation can rest on memories of the past. In South Africa, the emphasis is on memories of the colonial experience, particularly, the apartheid past that is now "forcefully harnessed for nation-building and identity construction". We have seen these memories articulated and publicly represented in a variety of forms and forums, ranging from monuments, museums, the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the new History Curriculum 2005, and commemorative rituals such as public holidays (Marschall 2006: 176). Makhosazana Xaba laments in her poem entitled *Our Wounds, our Lips* (2021 quoted in Magadla 2023: 13) on how the TRC was in a hurry to 'reconcile' and

prioritised forgiving even those who did not ask for forgiveness. She paints a picture of how those who laid their lives down and sacrificed during the colonial and apartheid rule were overlooked and their losses and hurt underplayed just to satisfy a sham transition into democracy:

*They wanted us to tell and listen before our wounds healed
And if they didn't know that the thunder of pain is deafening
They didn't even notice that our lips were sealed*

*'We need to move on', they said, and even got laws repealed
They tried to make us believe that the truth was beckoning
'We'd prefer waiting', we said, 'until our wounds have healed*

*One after the other, the stories of other people were revealed
In time, the processes and the performances started settling
By then, no one cared that our lips were still sealed*

*Knotty stories were unpicked, their multiple layers unpeeled
Some truths were deadening, others left audiences trembling
We watched, firm in our resolve to speak, after, our wounds were healed
The audience saw through some perpetrators' telling and squealed
The performance had to go on, the world was watching and questioning,
By then, no one cared that our lips remained sealed*

*Years later, our wounds healed, and the truth is our shield
We open up to be heard, for us, this act will strengthen
After all, today many seem to agree that before our wounds healed
We could not talk and listen. So here we are today: our lips are no longer
sealed.*

The first two lines in the last stanza of Xaba's poem resonate with sentiments shared by Thandi Mohale in a public lecture where both of us were speakers on 28 August 2024 held at the DITSONG National Museum of Military History under the theme, *Reflections on Women in the Liberation Struggle*. Thandi Mohale (nee Monareng), the

now-retired Brigadier General of the South African Defence Force (SANDF) left South Africa in 1976 through Mozambique and eventually settled in Angola where she received her military training. In her reflection, she shared some of the harsh conditions of exile and living in a foreign country where you are at the mercy of your host most of the time. She related how scary food was, thus she even had to learn to eat a python because that was all that was available.

When we were in Tanzania, to go to town we would be taken in a big truck, dropped off, and told that the truck would depart back to the camp at a specific time. When they dropped us off, they counted us, and before we left, they counted us again just to make sure that none of us inserted ourselves into the community.

As a social process, memory is innately selective and interpretive and can take the form of collective and personal memories. Memories are not merely recollections about the past that are ordered in sequence along a timeline but the meaning we give to experience. "It is recollection organised into narratives, cultural vocabularies and interpretive frameworks that select and highlight what is most important and meaningful; what must be remembered, how it must be remembered and why it must be remembered" (Hlongwane and Ndlovu 2019: 156). Furthermore, Hlongwane and Ndlovu (2019: 156-157) appositely describe this phenomenon relating to the South African context in the following fashion:

Memory is thus about the recall of emotions and sensibilities as well as more tangible historical acts and events. The memorialisation process is linked intrinsically to questions of power struggle and contestation in the making and the remaking of the imagined South African nation. The questions of power, struggle, and contestation have manifested as a wave of debates on the place of history, collective memories, identity, and social cohesion in the conceptualisation as well as the functioning of the various memorialisation projects in society.

Public memory is often used to explain the many and varied ways in which communities deal with the past. However, public memory "refers not only to what we

remember about the past, but what we forget, and how we chose to frame these recollections". The idea of memory as including 'what we forget' or choose to forget through 'collective amnesia' often presents impediments in confronting past injustices in South Africa (Swartz *et al.* 2019: 1). It is a global phenomenon that cuts across religions and all different forms of political parties, movements, and organizations, "remembering through symbolic structures and events that form part of the religious or political culture. The Afrikaner memory and the force with which they constructed their monuments displayed Afrikaner power and intentionally created space to marginalise other linguistic groups in South African society. In turn, the authors of an uncritical autobiography of themselves sidelined and silenced the voices of other groups. The transitional period in South Africa sought to ensure that all citizens could equally and publicly debate and critically analyse the past (Solani 2013: 82-83).

The time of "transition" to constitutional democracy in South Africa has been one of great hopefulness, of possibility and expectation, of sadness and celebration, of contradiction and vexing complexity. The work of rendering intelligible the extent of colonial and apartheid state violence—their continued and invisible embeddedness in structure— slowly begins. Unravelling the lived inscriptions of layer upon layer of sentient injustice that have marked everyday life over the past three hundred and fifty years in the southernmost parts of the African continent is still only beginning. Twenty years on and we have hardly scratched the surface of three and a half centuries of colonial and apartheid rule...This warrants reflection (Grunebaum 2011: 1).

Upon attaining democracy in South Africa, debates on memorialisation of the landscape ensued. The heritage landscape was saturated with colonial and apartheid pasts and debates were on whether to conserve them, place them in museums, or destroy them. Others argued that demolishing them would imply an attempted erasure of the South African history thus a false depiction. These debates brought to the fore the "tensions of South Africans and how they relate to the past". In turn, there was a call for transformation of the heritage landscape which meant the construction of new symbols to reflect the story of South Africa in its entirety and the ethos of the liberation struggle. "Memorials and monuments are some of the symbols by which icons are

immortalised by citizens and states". They are elevated above others for a significant contribution made to history (Solani and Ndhlovu 2021: 263-265).

Pre 1994 and even beyond, museums, monuments, and memorials served as citadels and bastions of colonial and apartheid regimes. Architecture, exhibitions, and their respective storylines or narratives or pedagogies continued to promote hegemonic bigoted ideas about civilisation and progress. Largely and most prominently colonialism and apartheid were projected and presented in ways that were supposedly positive and beneficial to the indigenous and local populations. These colonial and apartheid narratives shied away from genocide, and underdevelopment engendered by these epochs and phenomena. The extent of dehumanisation, atrocities, violence, and mutilation that were meted out to Indigenous and local populations was presented in tropes and vocabularies of enlightenment. Counter-hegemonic narratives were bound to emerge under these circumstances. Such narratives were driven by the resistance and liberation movements in general. It was no coincidence that the African National Congress set up the Museums, Monuments, Archives and National Symbols Commission shortly after its unbanning to address issues of reconstruction and transformation of the sector, to engage the state, to develop future policy, and to push for the transformation and democratisation of the country's cultural institutions (Ndima 2020: 1).

Garden (2009: 270-271) holds that heritage sites constitute a "bounded physical space, and cultural constructs which are highly experimental social spaces. As physical sites on the landscape, heritage sites are relatively easy to identify, however, their cultural and political constructs are not always easy to grasp due to their tangible elements of 'the past' and intangible form within the landscape of memory and require analysing to detangle. Contrary to other liberation movement-led states such as Zimbabwe and the Zanu-PF, post-apartheid South Africa is internationally revered for its democratic Constitution. It is a country that proclaims to strive and transform towards 'inclusiveness at all levels in an attempt to redress the exclusiveness and elitism of the previous era'. Also, South Africa consistently proclaims to be a non-sexist country deeply concerned about issues of women's equality at all levels. However, when it comes to memorialising the past, the picture is in discord with inclusivity. South

Africa appears to subscribe to the hierarchical, elitist Zimbabwean model of hero worship, focused on male political activism and military achievement. It is therefore unsurprising to see the unveiling of a statue or monument every few months or year dedicated to the likes of Mandela and Tambo.

Unlike Zimbabwe where military achievements are memorialised, South Africa also tends to honour illustrious groups of heroes “identified at national, regional and local levels, often equipped with a catchphrase label such as, ‘the Guguletu Seven’, the Cradock Four, the Alexandria Three—and publicly revered in real or symbolic heroes’ acres and heroes’ monuments. Bronze busts and statues on pedestals are being set up for the public commemoration of almost exclusively male heroes “(Marschall 2006: 179-180).

Miller argues that in Pretoria, the Union Buildings Monument's "invisibility not only trivializes the political significance of the Women's March but is also a distressing act of post-apartheid erasure of women's political agency" (2011: 295). Despite its purported difference in ideology and artistry, the Women's Monument, in Bloemfontein which was erected by the Afrikaner Nationalists in 1913, and the post-apartheid National Women's Monument in Pretoria 'reveal that once again the women's issue has been appropriated to serve a specific political agenda, infused with the values of a patriarchal society' (Marschall 2010: 1009). As secretary of FEDSAW in Transvaal, Gertrude Shope was among the organisers who worked tirelessly for weeks, day, and night to arrange transportation and distribute train tickets to women who arrived from distant areas⁸⁰. Of course, participating in the 9 August 1956 march came with great risks such as arrests and imprisonment. However, these thousands of women relentlessly forged forth to make the March a success. Unarguably, women's activism and contribution to the struggle against apartheid was long, "extensive, and multi-faceted, the 1956 Women's march is frequently cited as a benchmark moment to provide evidence of the depth and breadth of women's involvement" (Miller 2011: 296). The downside of consistently singling out the 1956 march is that it presents a linear perspective of women's participation in the liberation struggle. The 2012 process of renaming street names in Pretoria has a mere 3% of women and 74% renamed after

⁸⁰ Gertrude Shope's unpublished autobiography.

men has also been an indication of a patriarchal-driven agenda disguised in 'transformation' (Swanepoel 2012; Mkhize and Naidoo 2023). It is also not surprising that there is only one national women's monument at the Union Buildings in Pretoria and a failed one at the Lillian Ngoyi Square along a saturated heritagescape of memorials and monuments of men.

On 10 May 2024, I drove to Pretoria city center to visit the Women's Living Heritage Monument along Lillian Ngoyi Street. As I was heading towards the monument, I was greeted by a worn-out signage that read as follows: "Now open on weekdays from 9 am-4:30 pm...Next to the signage is an inscription bearing the following words: "Beautiful Things Exhibition", I'm suspecting it is meant to entice those walking down Lillian Ngoyi Street. I asked one of the street hawkers if the monument was open to the public. The lady indicated that it was open and directed me to go through the gate next to the State Theatre Church Street entrance. To my disappointment, the security guard at the gate told me that "the monument was still closed and would only be open to the public in November 2024. The Women's Living Monument site along the renamed van der Walt Street to Lillian Ngoyi is a palimpsest of compounded heritages. Named after one of several anti-apartheid activists who were honored with a street name change in early 2012, this is also one of the busiest streets in Central Pretoria (Swanepoel 2012).

The monument is an installation of the third layer of memorialisation embedded in both tangible and intangible properties. The initiation stage of the site was known as the *Markplein* (Marketplace) for trading cattle and produce (Bjornstad 2006: 16). Following, it hosted the statue of JJ Strijdom, the Prime minister of Transvaal from 1970. It was also at this site that on 15 November 1988, the white supremacist Barend Strydom massacred eight black people and seriously wounded 16 others.⁸¹ Today the site hosts the Women's Living Monument which stands in an indeterminate state with a few people moving around and garbage piles heaps, probably for maintenance that is costing the Gauteng Government around R200 000 every month. The Strijdom Square was 'transformed' into a 'Living Women's Memorial' and renamed Lillian Ngoyi

⁸¹ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/barend-strydom-kills-8-people-pretoria>

Square, in honour of departed struggle heroine Lilian Ngoyi in 2015⁸². We can only hope that eight years after its unveiling, it will eventually open.

Songs as Mass Mobilisers for Amplification and Silencing of Memories

By its very nature, heritage values the past and seeks to highlight how the past is constructed and presented in the present. Heritage not only captures historical occurrences but is also a source of documenting past production of knowledge. Written words, songs, and texts cement how knowledge was created and chronicled, embodying and assimilating the particular values of the time when the history was created at a given time as well as how it was incorporated into the historical canon (Soderland 2009: 55). Differing with Solani (2013); Ramoupi (2013; 2019); and Shai (2020) whose writings on the liberation struggle/freedom songs focused on the years prior 1994, this section seeks to interrogate in the main, choral music prescriptions post-1994, particularly in South African schools and argue as would be seen in the discussion that they are used as a tool to mobilise and amplify patriarchy in the liberation struggle memory and heritage. The ANC-led government, through its Department of Basic Education, facilitated this mobilisation.

Many supporters of the ANC within the country relied on Radio Freedom for direct connection and it was also used to influence political mobilization, particularly during the stormy years in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite attempts for the jamming techniques used by the state to block signal transmission, individuals from the younger, more politically active generation of black South Africans did find creative but discreet ways of tuning in to Radio Freedom. Radio Freedom also served as a channel for broadcasting political music and freedom songs through which supporters of the liberation movement within the country were mobilized. (Lekgoathi: 2013). Songs are biographical carriers, and verbal texts can capture and mobilise for or against an idea or individual. Also, they serve as modes of remembrance that constantly renew collective memories about individuals. As aptly articulated by Solani:

Songs are biographies in themselves of people and events, they also retain the ability to inculcate a culture of not forgetting and a constant reminder of the

⁸² <https://www.co-arc.com/lilian-ngoyi-square/>

deeds of the person they are commemorating or whose praises or demeanours they articulate (2013: 112)

Before 1994, protest music was largely composed of people of "African, Asian, and Coloured origin who were marginalised and segregated by the white minority rule of the National Party (NP) regime" (Shai: 2020: 59). Emerging Scholarship and media productions, including 2002's *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony* has helped establish the prominence of song and other cultural performances within South Africa's anti-apartheid struggles, as well as within the international solidarity movement (Jolaosho 2014). Much of the liberation music came off the streets and was a direct and often spontaneous expression of people's feelings. The music held blacks together and gave a voice to their struggle. They used it to record their history, initiate the young into adulthood, and assert their soulfulness. Songs of defiance and songs of determination were the linchpins of survival for an embattled people.⁸³

Growing up in the late 1980's rural Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo Province), GaMamabolo in the late 1980s, I became aware of the struggle through songs such as "uMandela uthi mayihlome/Siyaya ngoMkhonto weSizwe, Lusaka sisayinyofa", Rolihlahla Mandela, *Oliver Tambo thetha no Botha akhulul'u Mandela and O gole o gole South Africa*.

U Mandela the Mayihlome

<i>UMandel' uth' ayihlome X2</i>	Mandela says arm yourselves
<i>Wen' uth' ayihlome</i>	He says you must arm yourselves
<i>UMandel' uth' ayihlom' ihlasele</i>	Mandela says you must arm yourselves and
<i>Siyaya umkhonto wesizw' eLusaka</i>	attack
<i>Wen' uth' ayihlome</i>	We are going, using the spear of the nation
<i>USisul' uth' ayihlome X2</i>	into Lusaka
<i>Wen' uth' ayihlome</i>	He says you must arm yourselves
<i>USisul' uth' ayihlom' ihlasele</i>	Sisulu says arm yourselves
<i>Siyaya umkhonto wesizw' eLusaka</i>	He says you must arm yourselves
<i>Wen' uth' ayihlome</i>	Sisulu says you must arm yourselves and
<i>Uhlaleleni wena ndoda</i>	attack
<i>Uhlaleleni umis 'amadolo</i>	We are going, using the spear of the nation
<i>Uhlaleleni wena nsizwa</i>	into Lusaka
<i>Waz' umkhonto ukumele</i>	He says you must arm yourselves

⁸³ <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/5585/amandla-a-revolution-in-four-part-harmony>

Wee wasala ilanga liyashona
Ilanga liyashona madoda
Saphel' isizwe, Bakhal' abantu
Uyadela siba
Yee Ayihlom' ihlasele
UMadel' uth' ayihlome
Wen' uth' ayihlome X3
UMandel' uth' ayihlom' ihlasele
Siyaya umkhonto wesizw' eLusaka
Wen' uth' ayihlome

Why are you not taking action as a man
 Why are you with bended knees
 Why are you not taking action young men
 The spear is waiting for you
 You'll get left behind, it is nearing sunset
 It is nearing sunset young man
 The nation is being destroyed and people are
 weeping
 Alas!!!!
 Arm yourselves and attack
 Mandela says arm yourselves
 He says you must arm yourselves
 Mandela says arm yourselves and attack
 We are going,
 using the spear of the nation into Lusaka

Rolihlahla Mandela

Rolihlahla Mandela
 Freedom is in your hands
 Show us the way to freedom x2
 In this land of Africa

O gole o gole South Africa

<i>O gole o gole o gole</i> x2	May you grow greater, may you grow greater, may you grow greater
<i>O gole South Africa</i>	May you grow greater South Africa
<i>Tambo o tla tšwelela a swere arka</i>	Tambo will arrive and bring along an ark
<i>O gole South Africa</i>	May you grow greater South Africa

These songs would be sung in pianissimo in my parent's house by a small group of activists from our village whom I, so did everyone else referred to as *makhomo*⁸⁴ A term they used when addressing each other. Of course, my young naïve self was unaware that the meetings were primarily to strategize in the fight against apartheid. I also had no idea what the contexts of the songs were or grasp the Zulu and Xhosa lyrics that were sometimes also sung incorrectly by *makhomo* as they were all Sepedi first language speakers and not fluent in Nguni languages. It was only later that I got to learn that Umkhonto we Sizwe was the armed wing of the ANC, Lusaka being the headquarters of the ANC. Since Umkhonto we Sizwe was established after the 21 March Sharpeville Massacre in 1961, this is indicative that this song would have been

⁸⁴ *Makhomo* is a borrowed SePedi term from English to refer to comrades (in plurality). Thus, the singular term would be *lekhomo* (Comrade).

composed during the early 1960s. *O gole o gole, Tambo o tla tla tšwelela a swere arka*⁸⁵ was often chanted in a high-spirited manner, probably because Oliver Tambo was equated to Noah⁸⁶ and elevated to being a saviour of black people against the evil apartheid regime. On Christmas evening of 1989, my cousin-brother came home intoxicated, a shocker that was to us younger siblings since drinking alcohol was prohibited. What has stuck in my memory from that late night is the song that he burst into and subsequently waking all of us up:

Mandela Wants Water to Bath

<i>Mandela o nyaka meetse a go hlapa</i>	Mandela wants water to bath
<i>O robaletšeng, tsoga tsoga. O robaletšeng</i>	What are you sleeping for, wake up, wake up, what are you sleeping for?
<i>Aye! tsoga tsoga, o robaletšeng</i>	Aye! Wake up, wake up, what are you sleeping for?

The song sung by my cousin brother lingered in my memory for years to come, and during all that time, it propelled Mandela to a superhuman-like, a feeling I certainly shared with many due to how through the media and songs he was venerated. As postulated by Solani (2013), like poetry, "songs expose the feelings of the liberation struggle". Indeed, this 'exposure' can be displayed both explicitly and implicitly. As a young girl my first 'exposure' was songs sung about men and excluding women in the compositions, that were 'sold' to us as the reality of the liberation struggle. The liberation songs silenced women. A trend that incessantly persisted even as I became an adult, through the absence of compositions of liberation songs post-apartheid about women. Even in the school and adult choirs that I've been part of, I hardly sang about women. Also, this absence is present in mass convenings of the ANC such as conferences. Thus, heightening the patriarchised notion that this mass mobilising mode purports men as leaders and heroes of the struggle.

⁸⁵ (in the Bible) the ship built by Noah to save his family and two of every kind of animal from the Flood; Noah's ark, Genesis 6: 19.

⁸⁶ In Genesis 6: 9, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God."

The post-apartheid has seen the likes of Thandiswa Mazwai and Simphiwe Dana through their compositions robustly fighting for the place of women through song. These two artists, through their activist music, have made it their mission to remind us of the role that the likes of Miriam Makeba who "not only used her music as a political tool but went as far as addressing the United Nations in 1963 against apartheid South Africa with as much authority as any of the liberation leaders of the time". Makeba was not alone, we also had other great giants such as Dolly Rathebe, Thandi Klaasen, Dorothy Masuku, Letta Mbulu, Busi Mhlongo, and of course, Brenda Fassie who also engaged the politics of their time through the art they produced towards the liberation struggle of South Africa. For instance, Mazwai intently displays her forceful protest in the contemporary through her album, *Belede* (2016) which is described as honouring her mother whom the album is named after and was an active member of the Pan Africanist Congress that operated underground during the liberation struggle of South Africa. In her review of Dineo Pumla Gqola's book, *Simphiwe a Renegade*, Siphokazi Magadla⁸⁷ (2013) puts forth that, Dana is captivating because she troubles many categories of belonging in the South African imagination in the most remarkable ways...reminding us that making good art in *this* place comes with the burden of speaking truth to power as part of the work of citizenship".

Dineo Pumla Gqola, professor of Literary and Cultural Studies and a feminist, challenges us to deal with issues of heritage and memory more creatively and imaginatively and argues that "creative spaces offer an ability to theorise and imagine spaces of freedom in ways unavailable to genres more preoccupied with linearity and exactness" (Gqola 2006). In her analysis of Sarah Bartman, Gqola repositions Bartman's representation which is mainly of victimhood to that of an imagined urgency she must have possessed. Gqola argues that the representation of Sarah Bartman is somewhat wanting as there is a "near total absence of her person" thus creating a challenge in being representable. She further adds how important it is to move away from writings that mythologise Bartman, "accompany the readings of Black women's bodies in ways that trap them/us in discourses of hyper sexualisation" and accentuating 'white supremacist, Eurocentric beliefs about knowledge and its

⁸⁷ <https://thoughtleader.co.za/simphiwe-dana-is-nobodys-darling/> 13 September 2013, Siphokazi Magadla, Mail & Guardian, Thought Leader, Accessed 19 June 2024.

production' thus, the perpetuation of 'practices that invisibles black women" (Matlanyane Sexwale 1994: 65, quoted by Gqola 2006: 72).

Concededly, "it was in the townships and rural areas of South Africa that the name Mandela was kept alive through singing his name in particular after the apartheid government had legislatively banned his image and name from appearing in any media – print and electronic – when he was sentenced to a life imprisonment on Robben Island" (Ramoupi 2013). The 1970s brought about the Soweto Uprisings of students on 16 June 1976; the mass democratic movement of the late 1980s, and into the early 1990s, the successive generations of children who have never even seen a photo of Mandela" sang liberation songs; and by so doing the mystic and myth of the Mandela persona became larger-than-life. The ANC-led government needed to assert its power by keeping the attitude of elevating their male leaders through the memory and heritage landscape of a new South Africa. Among the modalities of sustaining the patriarchal heritage and memory was the introduction of the South African Schools Eisteddfod (SASCE) in 2010 which coincided with the rolling out of the Legacy Projects and National Liberation Heritage Route. Of course, SASCE was preceded by other forms of school competitions such as the Metropolitan and the Professional Educators Union (PEU) school competitions which I participated in from 1993 to 2003. I argue in this section that the ANC government through their Department of Education used choral music in schools to 'conscientize' school-going children into the belief that the liberation struggle against apartheid was achieved through the leadership of just male leaders by prescribing pieces dedicated primarily to Mandela and Tambo.

In South Africa, choral music was introduced by missionaries around 1850 and that became the style of music sung in the educational institutions they established and within villages of indigenous communities. Consequently, choral music has been prominent in community choirs, schools, and churches since the late nineteenth century. The beginning of the 1950s saw a more highlighted black South African patriotism and a more focused agenda for Africanising choral work by composers such as Polumo Mohapelo, Tholakele Reuben Caluza, JSP Motuba, Michael Moerane, and Mzilikazi Khumalo. Notably, this Africanisation is evidenced by the works of early composers such as Enoch Sotonga, Tiyo Soga, and John Knox Bokwe. Mugovhani (2016 as cited by Yende 2023), holds that "the work of these composers, way of

recapturing the Africanness was to follow the actual speech rhythm of their respective languages, mostly remaining close to stylistic traits common to typical African melodies...their mission was to establish, pioneer and promote indigenous African choral culture”.

After 1994 composers were compelled to contribute to the growth and further development of choral music by incorporating more neo-traditional indigenous music into their choral compositions. Black South African Opera and choral music is almost an automatic choice, given its foundations in South Africa, with composers such as Enoch Sontonga who wrote the first two stanzas of the Republic of South African national anthem then verses to the anthem added by the renowned IsiXhosa national poet, Samuel E.K. Mqhayi. The anthem was made popular by John Langalibalele Dube, the founding president of the South African National Congress (ANC from 1923) and the founder of Ohlange Institute. The choir at this institute popularised the anthem (South African History Online). Addedly, choral music is also the main form of music introduced to learners in South African public schools through what is now the ABC Motsepe South African Schools Eisteddfod (SASCE). "The South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod was introduced in terms of the protocol for the organization, management, coordination, and monitoring of school music competitions and/or festivals for schools in South Africa published by the Minister of Education in Government Notice No. 21697 of 27 October 2000 and amended on 08 February 2010...[this] is one of the school enrichment programs coordinated by the Department of Basic Education to promote unity in diversity, national reconciliation, a new South African national identity, social transformation and social cohesion among school-going South African youth" (SASCE framework 2013).

Not only do freedom songs constitute legacies from the past, but they also indicate present dynamics and offer directives toward the future. Apart from Theriso Tsambo's *Halala Bahumahadi* (2004) which celebrates the 1956 Women's March, the majority of pieces prescribed for the SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and even solo music pieces are either composed about Mandela or Tambo, a trend that is also prevalent in adult competitions and festivals sponsored by the Department of Arts and Culture such as the Melting Pot Choir Festival. Compositions by Phelelani Mnomiya, Mohau Mogale, Ntuthuko Sibisi, Qinisela Sibisi, Lihle Biata, and Sibusiso Njeza have formed

part of the music prescribed for SASCE and in some instances commissioned to compose music on struggle heroes. Since the inception of SASCE in 2010, the music prescription committee has been prescribing one or two pieces dedicated to Mandela. In the fourteen years of the existence of SASCE only 2013, 2016, and 2017 saw prescriptions dedicated to the nation's collective struggle against apartheid, B.B. Myataza, *Mzi wase Afrika by* (2013); Q. A. Sibisi *Ngabekwenze Njani* (2016) and J.L. and N. Dube, *Wonk' Um'nt' Ontsendu* (2017). The following prescriptions were dedicated to Mandela and Tambo: S. Njeza Mandela (2011); N. Sibisi, *Mandela Liqhawe* (2012); Q. A. Sibisi *Mandela* (2013); S.B.P. Mnomiya, *InTambo* (2014), M. Mogale, *Mandela Mogale* (2015), M. Mogale, *Ramathathai* (2018); L. Biata, *Nelson Mandela*; L. Biata, *Kayamandi* (2022); S. B. P. Mnomiya, *Siyakuhalisela* (2023) L. Biata's *Ixesha Lokunduluka* (2024)⁸⁸. As seen from the list of music pieces, the ANC-led government has been making concerted efforts to propagate and advance the notion of male-led liberation struggle through music in schools.

TOPONYMS AS HERITAGE

Toponyms are regarded as a representation of one of the oldest aspects of human cultural heritage that has been passed down through oral memory from generation to generation usually at the place where it originated. Current debates on critical place naming examine the wider socio-political context of names as "symbols of memory or sociopolitical ideology" (Wanjiru & Matsubara 2017). These place names are tools of inscription and resistance between diverse groups within social and political structures and only have power when they are assigned value or exploited (Vena 2023: 2). Toponyms serve as a mode of exemplifying political power and legitimize political agenda, especially since naming, and naming process are a socio-cultural understanding of historical experiences (Guma 2001: 255). The study of place names is an established discipline in the South African academy. Scholars such as Peter Raper, who is an onomastician (or names expert), and Elwyn Jenkins, a linguist, have been engaged in a meticulous exercise of documenting toponyms. Their works provide insight into the origin, meaning, and orthography of South Africa's place names (Ndletyana 2012: 88).

⁸⁸ <https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/ABCMotsepeSchoolsEisteddfod.aspx>

Place names play a critical role in the preservation of the cultural heritage of a nation. They capture aspects of history in domestic, agricultural, military, political, industrial, scientific, and other spheres of society. Place names tend to honour heroes and leaders, and commemorate significant events and even fauna, flora, geology in which the people live. Place names also constitute an important aspect of the preservation of a people's language (Raper 2014). Over the years, many countries globally have recognised the significance of toponyms, geographical names, or place names, as a result, there has been an evolution. As early as the late nineteenth century, some countries established name boards to have procedures and standards and avoid confusion. The establishment of name boards to emphasise the importance of place names was followed by a multinational sphere in 1948 at a session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) where geographical names were identified as a subject to be placed on the multinational agenda at the United Nations. This was followed by the 1955 ECOSOC resolution 715A (XXVII) at the First Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific. The resolution requested the secretary-general to encourage nations to take part in the international standardisation and co-ordination of geographical names, to establish an organisation that could take responsibility for this, and to create a body of experts in supporting fields (Chauke and Mathebula 2023: 29).

Changes in place names can serve a unifying or dividing purpose, particularly in a society characterized by diverse political and cultural values such as South Africa. To this effect, toponyms may also be used as symbols to mobilise and develop a political and historical consciousness of common identity. At the end of the colonial period, African countries demonstrate this idea, for instance by replacing 'Southern Rhodesia' with the name 'Zimbabwe', which signifies the "historical greatness of the Shona homeland with particular reference to the kingdom of Monomotapa and the archaeological site of 'Great Zimbabwe'". Of recent, name changes of a country also took place from being known as Swaziland to Eswatini. Elsewhere, other postcolonial societies also changed names: Saigon to Ho Chi Minh City; Batavia to Jakarta; Leopoldville to Kinshasa, and Bombay to Mumbai (Mamvura 2020: 201).

Largely scholarship on toponyms is embedded within linguistics and not much has focused on the politico-historical dynamics that drive the process, particularly the post-apartheid era's account of the unevenness of renaming throughout South Africa. Ndletyana (2012: 89) describes toponyms as a "repository of the past, which communicate messages prescribed by the "political orientation of the state, whether colonial, junta or democratic. In colonies, toponyms served as a reflection of the cultural assumptions of the ruling settlers. Therefore, this makes toponymy inevitably fluid susceptible to persistent change, and characterized by power relations, depending on the political order. Toponyms tell us stories about identity, politico-cultural history, socio-political dominance, and changing power relations. Before 1994, expectedly, many places in South Africa were named after mainly white males who were associates or allies of, white minority governments. Many, although not all, of these, were white and male (Mkhize and Naidoo 2023). As is a norm globally, when there is a change in political power, whoever is ascending into power uses place name changes as a way of asserting their power and presence. Post-apartheid South Africa followed suit with the process of renaming initiated by the African National Congress. Despite ascending into political office after their victory in 1994, the ANC only accelerated the renaming process in 2002, eight years into their tenure as a ruling party saw numerous changes. The ruling party reconstructed the advisory committee, formerly called the "National Place Names Committee (NPNC), in 1998 into the South Africa Geographical Names Council (SAGNC) (Department of Arts and Culture 1998) and the issuing of new guidelines: Handbook on Geographical Names (Department of Arts and Culture 2002). The new guidelines aimed to eliminate duplication; rectify orthographic errors; accord official recognition to place names commonly used by residents; and to sensitise toponyms to South Africa's democratic values and diverse history" (2012: 89).

Street names as monuments

Street names can be regarded as being important in three respects: firstly "as locative devices, secondly as instilling a sense of belonging on a personal level in the form of the personal address, and thirdly as a form of commemorative marker that helps to shape a communal conversation on a town-, city- or country-wide scale (Swanepoel 81). In suburban areas street names echoed the history and the self-imagery of the settlers, while in communities indigenous-population street names were racial

markers, denoting a category of inhabitants within a particular residential area. For instance, "in an Arab residence, one would find Arab Street. The idea, according to the colonial administrators, was to 'prevent confusion and disputes' over where which racial group should live. Colonial toponyms intended to 'rupture the relationships between collective Indigenous history, culture, identity and location condensed in native-place names (Ndletyana 2012: 89).

In Pretoria/Tshwane, the renaming process saw twenty-four streets and an additional two that were named after white people transforming into street names after black people, and only four streets were named after whites. Thus, the renaming reflected a transformed racialised street name (Mkhize and Naidoo 2023). Conversely, the renaming process has not increased gender representation to the same extent. Hence, I employ a gendered analysis of street names in Pretoria/Tshwane, simultaneously recognising that class and race were equally critical social variables that conditioned the politics of domination and subordination in South Africa. Also, I use hegemonic masculinity as a conceptual framework in examining the gendered nature of the street-renaming system (Morrell 1998:607). In the main, street name changes are not met with the same contestations as other forms of memorials such as statues as they are not 'charged with the sacred' and 'appear mundane and meaningless. However, it is clear from the South African context that the participants in street name change disputes are fully aware of the ideological load that streetscapes carry (Swanepoel 2012). As seen in Pretoria, upon the renaming and signage, the AfriForum youth added 49 old names on street posts bearing new street names. The group also 'reinstated' the street name 'Kerk' Street and translated it to 'Church' and 'Kereke' in Sepedi, an act they would describe as a "Church Renaissance and reclamation of their heritage" (Nkosi: 2016).

Noteworthy in the renaming of Pretoria/Tshwane's streets is the removal of the three female names that existed before the name changes - Beatrix, Koningin Wilhelmina, and Leah Mangope. These name changes were met with contention both locally and internationally. In the case of the renaming of Koningin Wilhelmina Avenue where the Netherlands embassy is situated, to Florence Ribeiro, the condemnation came from De Partij Voor de Vryheid (the Party for Freedom). This Dutch right-wing political party purported that the "name Koningin Wilhelmina avenue was an ode to the young queen

who in 1900 dispatched a Dutch warship to fetch a beleaguered President Kruger". The removal of Leah Mangope's name from a main road on the outskirts of Pretoria, Ga-Rankuwa was also described as a reflection of party-political influence (Mkhize & Naidoo 2023).

Impalpably Accounting for the Unevenness

Women's vital role in the struggle against apartheid and its eventual demise has been sorely neglected in favour of a more monolithic representation of the liberation movement. In responding to eradicating a colonial and apartheid-saturated heritage scape, the state post-1994 made one attempt at a public memorial in the first ten years after apartheid: the Monument to the Women of South Africa located at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The erection of this monument was meant to represent the "only commemorative site dedicated entirely to women's apartheid-era political efforts". While this Monument to the Women of South Africa is important to the memory of women's role in the struggle there seems to be a tension that exists between the monument's presence as a feminist site, and its disappearance from public view (Coombes 2003: 107). The Union Buildings as a site of commemoration has essentially rendered the Monument invisible and partly inaccessible to the general public for most of its existence. Although the Union Buildings is a site where the 1956 Women's March converged and the installation of the monument might be largely attached to the historic occurrences on the site, it is still problematic in that the monument is just another of the few symbols that are meant to commemorate women's role yet, in reality, accentuating their marginalization. Sabine Marshall elaborates further on Coombes' (2003: 107) analysis and criticism of the Union Buildings accessibility impediments as follows:

The visual experience of the National Monument for the Women of South Africa is highly disappointing. In plain daylight the stone is nothing more than a simple, ordinary object...and hardly noticeable...worst of all, the site chosen for the monument precludes the monument from public accessibility since the introduction of new security measures shortly after its unveiling ...Unless security clearance is obtained before the visit, tourists, the general public and

even the very women whom this monument is dedicated to are effectively excluded from viewing it (Marschall 2010, 257–258).

Although I did not have the opportunity to experience the underwhelming experience Marschall (2010, 257–258) is alluding to, I concur with her on the tedious security measures that deepen inaccessibility to the monument. In my attempt to access the National Monument at the Union Buildings I was met with a hostile reception from the South African Police officer whose brief response was that: "the public is not allowed to view the monument" without providing advice on how to access the site. This resonated with Marschall's (2006) assertion, that the inaccessibility excludes even the women it's supposed to commemorate.

On 15 October 2013, Dali Tambo, the son of Oliver and Adelaide Tambo and at the time Chief Executive Officer of the National Heritage Project, presented the National Heritage Monument (NHM) project to the Parliamentary Committee responsible for Arts and Culture⁸⁹. Subsequently, the NHM was endorsed under the leadership of Paul Mashatile, the Minister of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC). Initially, Tambo put forth that the project involved "creating 400 to 500 life-sized bronze statues of leaders of the struggles who represented the soul of South Africa". In addition, the NHM "would also have great resonance among tourists, who so far were focused on the South African wine farms, beaches, natural reserves, and parks, but failed to capture the 'soul' and history of the South African people"⁹⁰. The aim was for this monument to capture and represent the history and heritage of those who participated in the South African struggle for emancipation and become one of the leading heritage sites in the country. In his presentation, Tambo said that:

...the NHM project was a dedicated effort and included all who had taken part in the struggle for South African democracy and freedom. The Monument would celebrate generations of leaders of South Africa, from the 1600s up to 1994. This project was particularly important given that in 1993, the then National Monument Council had put out a report that at that time, 99% of South African

⁸⁹ <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/16534/> Briefing by Dali Tambo on the National Heritage Monument (NHM) Project

⁹⁰ <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/ethekwini-municipality-forges-ahead-with-erecting-mandela-and-tambo-statues-at-cost-of-r22m-62aa65a1-f72a-445f-9a2a-ed70fd1fd399>

heritage was about white experiences, white stories, and white figures of history. Hence, there was a need for more balance in the way in which South African history was told and represented.

According to Tambo, the monument captured part of the world heritage and international struggle because of the support that the liberation struggle movement enjoyed. Also, the monument represented the 'national pride that would lead to social cohesion and nation building'. Like many of the monuments and heritage symbols installed by the ANC, the National Heritage Monument, which was first installed in Pretoria, then moved to Maropeng Cradle of Humankind, and currently in Cape Town is in no way representing a balanced narrative, particularly on gender. Of the now 101 bronze statues (since the inclusion of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 2023) of these, only 22 are of women.

Outlined in the resolutions under *Imperatives on Policy Perspectives* about heritage at its 55th National Conference held on 16-20 December 2022, the ANC noted that "Memorialisation and honouring of ALL liberation struggle heroes and heroines be prioritised to heal the nation as the Constitution Preamble says, "to honour those who fought for Justice and Freedom as part of the healing of the nation"⁹¹. From that time, we saw the unveiling of so many statues and memorials dedicated to the 'struggles' endured by men. Of immediate, was the unveiling of yet another statue of Nelson Mandela in 2013 at the Union Building following his death. This was, of course, one of the few Mandela statues erected in the country, only this time it was a gigantic nine-meter bronze by South African artists Andre Prinsloo and Ruhan Janse van Vuuren. President Jacob Zuma unveiled this Mandela Statue at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 16 December 2013. Dondolo (2021: 331-332) posits that "the Mandela mythology that framed this statue is an integral part of the nation building, reconciliation, and social cohesion project first promoted by Nelson Mandela while he was the president of the republic...The Mandela statue adds a new history, although this new history does not reflect the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings". The patriarchisation of memory and heritage about liberation struggle is influenced by the exclusionary

⁹¹ <https://www.anc1912.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ANC-55th-Conference-Resolutions-Arts-Culture-Heritage.pdf>

attitudes engrained in the ANC which can be traced as far back as during Charlotte Maxeke's time as leader of the Women's League in the 1930s (April 2012; Masola 2018). Unsurprisingly, even with the renaming of streets in the City of Tshwane, Maxeke, the founder of the Bantu Women's League in 1918 who subsequently moved up the ANC ranks has been placed in Pretoria West at the periphery of the inner city. Of interest is also how within the City of Tshwane, big streets named after men stretch for many blocks, while those named after women would cover a few blocks and adjoin to those named after men. For instance, a street named after Gertrude Shope, the first President of the ANC Women's League after its unbanning in 1990 is also seen on the outskirts of the inner city of Pretoria Mamelodi township.

Some parts of Gauteng have at times seen the propelling of gender representation. In 2015, the City of Johannesburg embarked on a project to rename several inner-city streets in honour of the women who led the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings. That very year, a new monument in Beyers Naude Square was unveiled to "pay tribute to women as drivers of social and political change" (City of Johannesburg 2018). However, the representation of women in street renaming within South Africa has only been occurring in pockets. Unremittingly, the African National Congress inaugurated these biographical male symbols even at the outcry of the public, a recent example being the 22 million Mandela and Oliver Tambo statues in Ethekewini Municipality which were reported in June 2023 to have been delivered from China⁹². In an article entitled *KwaZulu-Natal is to unveil three statues of female South African struggle stalwarts*,⁹³ It was reported that KZN Premier Senzo Mchunu announced the unveiling of statues of Margaret Mncadi in Ixopo in September, Victoria Mxenge in Umlazi in November 2015, and of Dorothy Nyembe in Durban in December. The announcement by Mchunu was made during his address at a more than 2,000 people women's celebration in Esikhaleni, outside Empangeni. Margaret Mncadi was a political activist and the first president of the African National Congress Women's League in KwaZulu-Natal. She was named in the 1956 Treason Trial, although never

⁹² <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/ethekwini-municipality-forges-ahead-with-erecting-mandela-and-tambo-statues-at-cost-of-r22m-62aa65a1-f72a-445f-9a2a-ed70fd1fd399>

⁹³ [sabcnews.com/sabcnews/city-of-tshwane-wants-control-over-the-womens-living-heritage-monument/](https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/city-of-tshwane-wants-control-over-the-womens-living-heritage-monument/). Lerato Matlala. 23 April 2021.

prosecuted. Victoria Mxenge was a lawyer, and she intervened in cases involving the ill-treatment of the youth while imprisoned. She was part of the defence team in the 1984 treason trial against leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court. Mxenge was also a member of the National Organisation of Women (NOW) and the Natal Treasurer of the UDF. She was attacked and murdered at her home in Durban in 1985. Dorothy Nyembe joined the ANC in 1952 and participated as a volunteer in the Defiance Campaign in Durban. She was instrumental in the setting up of the ANC Women's League in Cato Manor. In 1956 Nyembe was at the forefront and led Natal group of women that marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the introduction of passes. She passed away in December 1998 (Shope 2003; 2006).

On 13 January 2020, eight years after the Department of Arts and Culture pronounced that IDT has been mandated with overseeing the completion of the refurbishments and development of the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela House in Bedford into a museum, the *Daily Maverick* published an article entitled, *ANC celebrates history while Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's Brandfort home still languishes in obscurity*.⁹⁴ This article followed the ANC's 108th birthday celebration "a time for the party to commemorate its history and the freedom fighters it claims as its own". As per tradition, the ANC birthday celebrations are preceded by other events, and for the 108th, President Cyril Ramaphosa laid a wreath at the Kimberley gravesite of the ANC's first secretary-general, Sol Plaatje. "But just 90 minutes' drive away, the site which the Department of Arts and Culture has hailed as one of South Africa's "prized national assets" received no such acknowledgment". Number 902 Mothupi Street in Majwamasweu Township, Bredfort is the house where Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was banished by the apartheid government for almost a decade in 1977. *On 8 December 2019, the Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture expressed pleasure in announcing the completion of the construction of the Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Bedford House*

⁹⁴ Davis, R. (2020). [ANC celebrates history while Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's Brandfort home still languishes in obscurity](https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-01-13-anc-celebrates-history-while-winnie-madikizela-mandelas-brandfort-home-still-languishes-in-obscurity/) from *Daily Maverick*, 13 January 2020, online. Available at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-01-13-anc-celebrates-history-while-winnie-madikizela-mandelas-brandfort-home-still-languishes-in-obscurity/>. Accessed on 18 June 2024.

Museum which included the clinic Madikizela-Mandela founded but was later bombed by the security police.

Some scholars dealing with toponyms have criticised the commemorative renaming of streets for being gender-biased as its focus is on males and thus "continue to tell a patriarchal political narrative informed by hegemonic masculinity". Other, scholars have argued that the naming of streets after women can itself support rather than disrupt patriarchal meanings. They argue that some women who are commemorated are "presented in a role that accentuates their relationship with an important man, such as wives or daughters". In 2012, the city of Tshwane council under the leadership of the ANC proposed that at least 28 streets in downtown Pretoria and other areas should be changed. A range of reasons motivating the renaming of the old streets included, "the need to 'create a new African capital reflecting a shared heritage, identity, and destiny' and that "given the history of the past and how some of the streets were named, it is imperative to change some offensive names which still reflect a colonial and apartheid past.' Dau, the speaker of the council at the time, highlighted that the new names would be those of individuals "who had contributed to the liberation struggle, the struggle for gender equality and cultural activists" (Swanepoel 2012:83). Currently the metropolitan area shows that out of some 31 old street names, 74% (23) had been named after men, about 10% (3) after women and 16% (5) were not named after people. (Mkhize & Naidoo 2023).

The 10% included four female leaders who were prominent anti-apartheid activists. For instance, Charlotte Maxeke founded the Bantu Women's League, which later became part of the ANC Women's League (Masola 2018). "Florence Barbara Ribeiro was a community worker, liberation movement supporter, and Mamelodi resident who in 1986 was assassinated by the apartheid police. Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, and Sophia Williams de Bruyn were three of the four women who led the historic Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings in protest of 'pass laws' imposed by the apartheid government. Joseph was a founding member of the South African Congress of Democrats (COD), which was a white ally of the ANC" (Mkhize and Naidoo 2023).

In Durban, the changes of over 100 street names included the names of only fifteen memorable women (Swanepoel 2012:91). In Gauteng, the graves of Rahima Moosa,

Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi, and Charlotte Maxeke have been declared as national heritage sites. In honouring the heroines of the struggle, the government has declared the site of the 1957 anti-pass women's march in Zeerust as a heritage site (Pocket book 223-224).

Could this be the consignment that Professor Shepherd (2022) alluded to? Since its unveiling in 2016 by then President Jacob Zuma, the Women's Living Heritage Monument on Lillian Ngoyi Square, Lillian Ngoyi Street Pretoria is indeterminate. The monument aimed to 'celebrate and preserve the history of women who played a role in the liberation struggle of South Africa'. Citing disputes between service providers and unsuitability for occupation are some of the reasons why the monument has been neglected after costing the Gauteng government almost 200 million. Presumably, installing the monument at the city center was to rectify the Union Buildings women's monument accessibility challenges that which (Marschall 2010 and Miller 2011) highlighted, I also experienced.

It, however, seems that the ANC-led government did not see anything wrong in repeating the same concept of memorialization instead of commemorating more women. As Khan (2016: 3) points out, black women's struggles in South Africa constitute a variety of sites, from writers of short fictional stories, drawings, and paintings to historical accounts in which they chronicled the harsh realities of colonialism and missionary teachings. Perhaps it was just another consigning exercise that Professor Nick Shepherd (2007) alludes to in the case of the Prestwich Street memorialisation. 'A getting over and done with and ticking a box exercise'? Why would the memorialisation of the same women be duplicated over and over again unless it is just another form of hegemonic patriarchy, only this time it takes place in the post-colony's heritage landscape where black men and white exist in tandem and enjoy domination over women of all races (Mamvura 2020: 198).

CONCLUSION

Overall, this chapter serves as a provocative highlight of the patriarchised liberation struggle memory and heritage. My examination of cultural expressions and memory symbols in this chapter herein participate in this project...in which re-presenting

Gertrude Shope and other women who contributed to the liberation struggle of South Africa within an African feminist imagination "has to be about making her and them speak or visible through drawing attention to history's silences and blanks" (Gqola 2006). I put forth that the intentional patriarchised liberation struggle memorialisation by the ANC is similar to gendered colonialism which can be described as "the process through which white masculinity was constituted through the exclusion of white womanhood ..." (Mamvura 2020: 198).

CHAPTER FIVE

Gertrude Shope's Life Through Oral Texts

It's always quite a venture to get something out of people, where there are layers of things that have developed and overgrowth over the things you want to bring out.... Exile is another country, is another world, but I really hope that the people of South Africa will fetch even over decades or whatever long time it takes, the history and the story that still sits there all over the place because we kind of closing it out.

____Baleka Mbete⁹⁵

Some authors have written from a position of 'knowing it all' or cynicism. Some deliberately, or by default, misrepresent, undermine, undervalue, devalue, and even try to erase the contributions of these women...Or perhaps they less understood the multiple, layered and intersecting fronts in which women had to struggle against national oppression and simultaneously transform patriarchal relations through and within the liberation struggle. To date, women in the liberation and armed struggle still have to fight not only to be recognised or celebrated, but just to be respected.

____Thenjiwe Mtintso⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Excerpt from a personal interview I conducted with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023.

⁹⁶ Foreword in Siphokazi Magadla's (2023) *Guerillas and Combative Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa*.

Introduction

In 1991 at age 52, *bopapa*⁹⁷ took early retirement and that meant I would get to spend more time with him. Now that *bomma*⁹⁸ was the only one working full time, which meant my father had a bit more time on his hands and my mother didn't as she was also studying towards her Bachelor of Education and later Bachelor of Education Honours through the University of South Africa (UNISA) while raising the eight of us. So, to spend quality time together, they had a 4 pm tea ritual on weekdays. While this was mainly their time to catch up on the day's events, I often would sit for this ritual and marvel at how beautifully they spoke the Northern Sotho/Sepedi language. It was here that I would learn new idioms, similes, hyperboles, etcetera. In this discussion, my mother would be referencing Sepedi authors, mainly Oliver Kgadime Matsepe, who was *bomma*'s all-time favourite, Shika Kgomedi Lekgothoane, Phorohlo Mamogobo, and others. The most important about spending time with my parents was *bomma* sharing her family (maternal and paternal) histories and those of *bopapa*'s. Undoubtedly, she knew the genealogy of my father's side even more than he did. I would inquire and probe the following names, and events that had come up in the conversations which my mother would later clarify or elaborate on.

Bopapa died on 28 June 2014. Four years later, in October 2018, *bomma* was diagnosed with dementia. My father's passing marked the end of my parents' 4 pm ritual. From the time mommy got diagnosed, the dementia raged like wildfire. I didn't have time anymore. I was racing against a species foreign to my family, eating away mommy's memories bit by bit. Our last recorded conversation in December 2018 was aimed at following up on my maternal genealogy *bomma* shared in earlier years. I could pick up the distortions creeping in and her struggle to remember, which frustrated her. It was not because of old age; *bomma* was just 68 years old. Two years after the diagnosis, the dementia metastasized to all spheres of her life, my mother had lost the memory of being my mother, she could not recall my name and that of my

⁹⁷ Bopapa is a Northern Sotho/ Sepedi word to refer to father or dad and that is what I would call my father.

⁹⁸ Bomma is a Northern Sotho/ Sepedi word to refer to mother and that is what I would call my mother.

seven siblings or even that my father ever existed. Her memories had been blotted out. As the dementia progressed, I was confronted with feelings of regret. I wished I had asked more questions or spent more time with my parents so I could grasp as much as I could before my father's passing and the loss of my mother's memory. I wish I had probed just a little bit more when *bomma* spoke about a meeting she and my father had at George and Joyce Mashamba's house in Turfloop where they attempted to recruit them into the underground of the ANC. I wish I had poked a bit more when she spoke about the women's clubs and organisations, she was part of. I should have inquired more when I saw the National Council of African Women (NCAW) dress in her wardrobe. How I dearly wish I had asked further about the secret meetings by *makhomo* at our house. I guess I couldn't have known that I would mourn our memories soon after mourning bopapa's death. Nevertheless, I'm grateful to have captured what I could when I could.

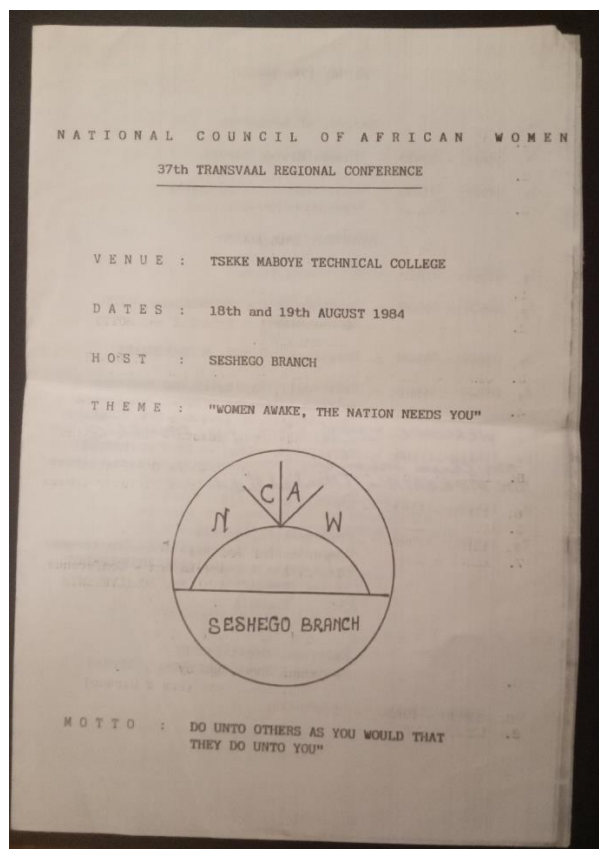


Figure 19. A 1986 NCAW Seshego Conference program (front) from my mother's archive

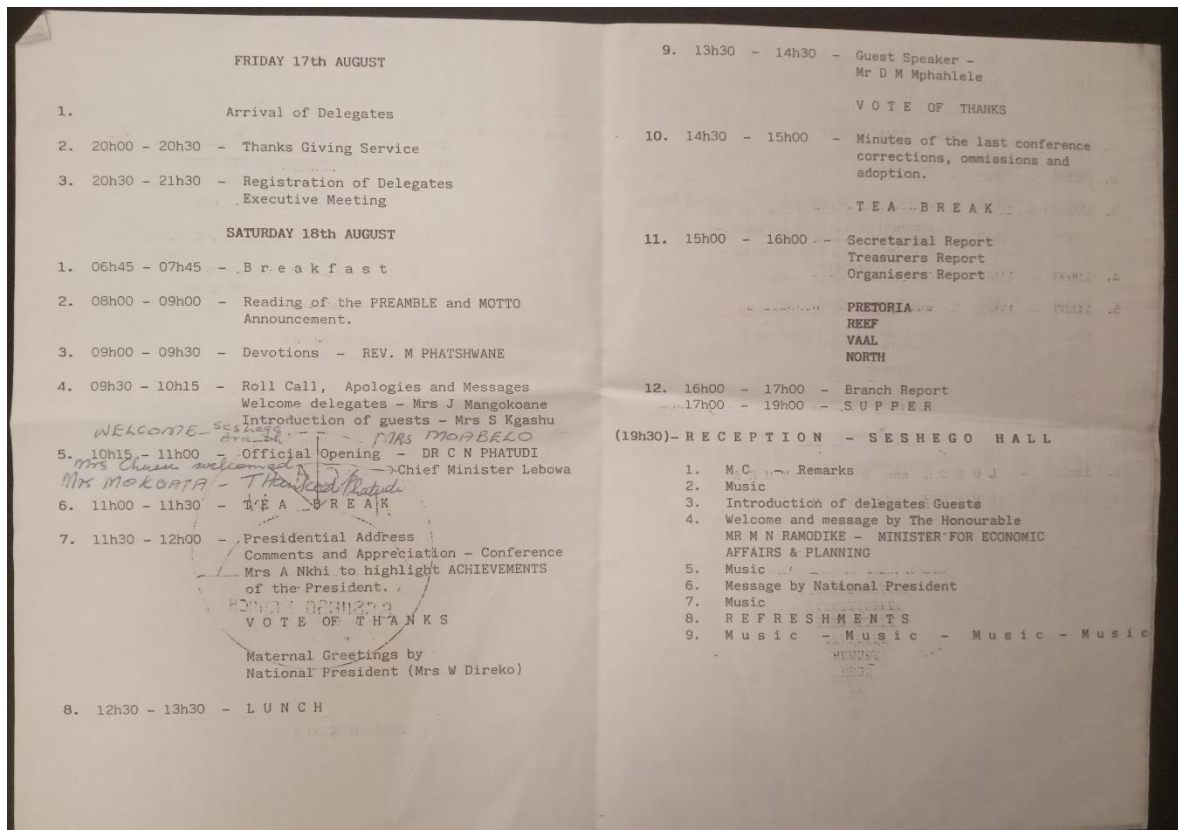


Figure 19. B 1986 NCAW Seshego Conference program (inside) from my mother's archive

Unlike forgetting, memory loss thrives on permanency. The inability to remember takes a knock at one's pride and confidence and can rob the next generation of history and part of its identity. Memory loss is the death of a life lived and experienced and automatically sends those around into a sustained period of mourning. Like death, the inability to remember is a transition no one can prepare for. After it became apparent that there was nothing more psychiatry or medicine, or could do, we then moved mommy to a memory care facility, ironically, there was no memory to care for any longer, no more histories and her stories to preserve and transmit. Still, I'm grateful to have captured what I could when I could.

Dr Noel Solani, my former Director at the Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History another amazing storyteller, as he normally would share stories, that afternoon he was talking about women in the liberation struggle and the MK. He shared snippets of Gertrude Shope's life in exile and pointed out that she received her military training with Miriam Makeba but was uncertain pertaining the years the two trained. When I found out that Gertrude Shope was still alive, a sense of urgency knocked my conscience. I felt compelled to write and rescue this knowledge at risk of loss and

extreme distortions, even if it is just a fraction because my mother's memory loss has shown me that memories can be permanently lost in life and death. Like many other women who have contributed to the liberation struggle of South Africa, Gertrude Shope had been ignored. I felt obliged to unearth Shope's story and pay homage to women like her while she is still alive by employing oral texts, mainly oral histories then speeches to gather stories that would make her story. Musiiwa (2012: 67) aptly articulates that, oral history is a basic tool to incorporate the previously overlooked lives, activities, and feelings of women into our understanding of the past and present. Professor Siphokazi Magadla also writes in her book *Guerillas and Combat Mothers: Women and the Armed Struggle in South Africa* (2023: 25), that, by “revisiting the period in the South African history and the lessons that these women’s contributions to the...struggle offer us in the ongoing fight for substantive gender equality”.

In this chapter, I will examine oral accounts from Gertrude Shope, her family, colleagues, and comrades who may have the insight to tell their stories of both her personal and political life. I will attempt to show that oral history can be used as a source to address the void and the debasing of the contribution of women in the historiography, memory, and heritage of the liberation struggle. Then, testimonial remembrance and oral accounts become "a way of witnessing the lives of women who have been erased and concealed from the public records" (Tagore 2009: 67). Addedly, in this chapter I will focus on how others frame her and if they see her contribution worthy of being celebrated and commemorated.

Through this chapter, I will also find corroborations between oral texts and other sources to ascertain the chronology of events. Despite history's attempt to obliterate stories and histories of women, the 20th century has seen a trend in recording life histories. As postulated by Baner (2009: 582) for one to understand a life may require a biographer to train in other forms of historical inquiry such as oral history. Conversely, a historian writing a biography may also be required to “move beyond his or her geographic period or field of specialisation”. It is at this junction that I continue this tradition by recording Gertrude Shope's life through oral histories from those she crossed paths with. I deem this chapter critical for the writing of Gertrude Shope's biography as it supplements both information found in the literature and the archives as outlined in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3.

Oral History as a Method

Interviews conducted on Gertrude Shope by journalists, media houses, and authors have focused largely on her political roles in the struggle rather than her life history in its entirety. In this study, I incorporate oral histories to explore Gertrude Shope's life and ascertain how those who had an opportunity to be close to her frame her. Oral narratives provide opportunities to trace experiences, recollect events, share and organise thoughts, and understand and reinforce beliefs and values. Oral history also supports cultural and intergenerational bonds and contributes to the stabilization of the culture and anchoring its youth. Listening and valuing oral history, especially with the elderly, give them a sense of support, involvement, and validation (Taft 2004: 38). During my first encounter with Gertrude Shope, she expressed her gratitude to have someone much younger than her being interested in her story thus acceding to the assertion of the elderly experiencing a form of feeling supported. As a narrative methodology, oral history can describe the contextual significance that underlies historical activity, and individual and group relationships, and unearths information that may not be available in records that are based on other communication platforms such as the archives and written text (Aoki 2012: 29-31).

Geiger (1990) posits that oral history “only becomes a method in the hands of those whose interest is to go beyond the immediate pleasure of hearing or learning about the history being told. It is the use of information derived from oral histories by scholars that transforms oral history into a method from which methodological questions arise.

Even though this concept of history was first introduced to southern Africa during the colonial era, it was also denied to precolonial societies to whom as a result their histories were written for them. Historians from ancient times relied upon eyewitness accounts of significant events, until the nineteenth-century development of an academic history discipline led to the primacy of archival research and documentary sources and the marginalisation of oral evidence. It is for this reason that I employ oral testimonies in this study to cross-check what is not recorded in the archives. Over time the validity of oral evidence was accepted, and its usefulness was recognised (Hamilton, Mbenga & Ross, 2010: 3; Thomson, 2007: 50-51).

In some instances, oral history has been described as alternative history or unofficial history. It is so, as oral history often assumes a chief position in offering oral evidence to various sources of information. More often than not, it is the life experiences of ordinary men and women that give a new dimension to the understanding of the past. Oral history has been practiced for a long time, in different cultures and countries, and in many disciplines such as academic historians, sociologists, and ethnographers to archivists, museum curators, and other public historians, to journalists and activists. Defining oral history is, therefore, not easy; nor is it necessarily desirable, because any definition will exclude certain practices and practitioners. In the 1970s, for example, the Canadian oral history movement was severely hindered by squabbles among academics, archivists, teachers, journalists, activists, and others about what constituted oral history (Llewellyn'; Freund and Reilly 2015: 4). Oral history has to a great extent democratized the study of the past by recording the experiences of people who have been rendered invisible from history (Counce 1994: ix).

Women Studies and the Feminist Perspective on Oral History

Popular history finds it easy to record the story of the main actor and dominant race in a racist society such as South Africa. Sadly, ignores the compelling stories of the ordinary. Thus, it becomes critical to ask pertinent questions about “how gender, race, and class, as structural and ideological relations, have shaped the construction of historical memory”. Feminists argue that we must incorporate gender as a defining category of analysis when exploring oral history, as women, compared to men, often remember the past in different ways. Some studies have found that there is an inclination for women's narratives to be characterised by the rare mention of personal accomplishments and disguised statements of personal power. Similarly, women are less likely than men to place themselves at the centre of public events instead they may downplay their activities and emphasise the role of other family members in their recollections. This may be so as a result of women's innateness in familial life which could also shape their worldview, and even their very consciousness of historical time (Sangster 1994: 7).

Honig (1997) notes that oral history plays a critical role in retrieving and recording the lives of people whose lives are seldom recorded in historical documents. Some of the

notable oral historians, Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai highlighted that the early 1970s saw an increase in unearthing women's histories and in-turn making accessible the voices of women who had been silenced and ignored. Subsequently, women's oral history came under scrutiny and "no longer treated just as straightforward recorded lives of women. Feminist scholars began to problematise the relationship between the historian and the interviewee" and held that the narration could just be a performance (1991: 139-157).

In attempts to expand women's history, women historians faced the daunting task of trying to choose alternative methods and concepts different from traditional history. Diaries and journals as historical sources were not easily accessible due to the introduction of telephones. Oral history seemed like the most apt method in the absence of documented lives of women they were researching. There was an undeniable recognition that there were women who had been important figures in public life despite having not been in the public eye. While a few women got recognition for leading the struggle for the rights of women, those who participated remained unrecognised. It became critical to research the lives of all these women and record their stories because only then can we see the whole picture of the lives of these women and how they affected ours. In doing so, we are harking back to an oral tradition much older than that developed by white males in the United States in the 1940s. We are part of a tradition in which the life and experiences of every woman and man were worthy of being told (Gluck and Patai 1977).

For over four decades, feminist historians have played a crucial role in stimulating debates around how oral history as a historical method embraced and integrated the often-neglected lives of women into historical scholarship. As a methodology, oral history not only shifts our gaze to topics that are often disregarded. Furthermore, oral history speaks to the interdisciplinary feminist debates about research questions, objectives, and how oral interviews are to be used. To contextualize oral histories, we also need to survey the dominant ideologies shaping women's worlds, listening to words in turn will help us see how women understood, negotiated, and sometimes challenged these dominant ideals. "In using oral history as a means of exploring memory construction, careful attention to the process of class and gender construction is needed, as is an understanding of ideological context shaping women's actions. To

understand the formation of women's consciousness, we must also acknowledge our influence on the shape of the interview" (Gluck and Patai 1977: 5-11). Since the late 1980s, some of the scholars of African women's history depended on life histories to recapture women's voices because they were in the main recorded in an overwhelmingly androcentric manner. Such documentation ignores women unless they cause trouble or constitute a problem. As a result, women's life histories have constituted an important source of information (Musiiwa 2012: 67). To that effect, oral history as a method for narrative research is apt for this study to allow Shope and those who know her intimately to speak for themselves.

Women's history and oral history grew up together. Each developed from a commitment to reveal and reverse, to challenge and to contest what were perceived to be dominant discourses framed by gender and class. The 1960s saw the influence of feminist approaches on women's histories to research and representation given due consideration and acknowledgment (Bornat and Diamond 2007). Therefore, oral history cannot be treated as a source of narrative truth but rather as one of many possible versions of an individual's past" (1997: 139-157).

THE COLLOQUIES

Gertrude Shope speaks



Figure 20. Gertrude Shope

After discovering that Gertrude Shope was alive and that there was a great potential of not only capturing her story from those who knew her, but from her in her own words, I quested to meet and immerse in her story once an opportunity arose. Indeed, hereupon contacting Mama Lyndall I was informed that Koko Gertrude Shope would have a conversation with me. Upon arriving at their home. As I was making my way in, I saw Koko Gertrude sitting on the cream chair, quite poised and exquisitely draped in a black and brick red cape. I greeted her and expressed how much of an honour it was to finally meet and have a conversation with her after reading and watching her through videos. She said:

I am not prepared; you should have sent questions so that I can better ready myself. But we can talk because you are here and I am happy that you are even interested in me “*o batla go bua le nna* (you want to speak

to me), but you must know that there are stories of a whole lot of other women that fought for the liberation of this country’.

When I met Gertrude Shope for the first time⁹⁹ in Pretoria, South Africa, I began our conversation by asking her to introduce herself, where she was born and grew up, her schooling, where she worked, about her marriage, children and religion.

I was born on 15 August 1925 in Johannesburg. We then relocated to Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia. I can’t remember how old I was. I attended school at Epworth Mission Station then left for Waddilove [Secondary]. It is too long ago; I can’t remember who my teachers or friends were. After getting my teacher’s qualification, I went to Natal to do my domestic science. I left immediately having completed my teacher’s domestic science to St Hildas. I was at St Hildas, I can’t remember the year, but it must have been 1940s. After that I worked at Indaleni High School. I got sick while in Natal. I moved to Soweto, Johannesburg, *ka be ke ruta ko*¹⁰⁰ Pimville High School. We got married with my husband think in 1958 and signed. It was not a fancy occasion. Maybe we took one or two pictures. I no longer have the pictures. We moved a lot, so they got lost. I was unhappy with *maburu*¹⁰¹ and Bantu Education, so I left teaching and worked at Coronation Hospital where I was doing therapy... From there I worked for City Council. I joined the ANC maybe in 1960...because of the conditions black people lived under. I worked with MaSisulu, Albertina Sisulu in the Federation of South African Women. The Boers constantly harassed us, these things happened a long time ago, I can’t remember most of the dates.

On our second encounter on 10 February 2022, we rehashed most of the things we talked about during our first meeting, I found Koko Getrude Shope outside in the garden and one of her assistants was reading her a book authored by Olivia Forsyth (2015), titled *Agent 407: A South African Spy Breaks her Silence*. She said:

⁹⁹ 27 October 2021

¹⁰⁰ I taught at Pimville High School, translated from Setswana

¹⁰¹ Boers

*ga ke sana mathlo*¹⁰², so I get my family to buy me books because I still want to be kept updated with what is being written on politics and history. This book is interesting to me because of the female spy who worked with the State Security and ended some of our comrades' lives.

Olivia Forsyth was a state security spy, aka, Helen Bronson (ANC code name), prisoner Thandeka alias Christine Smith who infiltrated the student organisations particularly when she enrolled at Rhodes University, a highly radical university. Through directive from Craig Williamson, her unit head, she gathered information from the activists and then feed it back to her handlers. As reward, Forsyth was promoted to Lieutenant. Once completed with her studies, she sought another 'adventure', the ANC exile. Little did she know that she would be thrown at the notorious internment camp in Angola.

During the third meeting with Koko in Botswana, we mainly spoke about her time in exile:

Being in exile was very strange. I first went to Czechoslovakia then to Zambia...From Zambia I went to many places. In fact, we passed by Zambia before Czechoslovakia. We stayed in Tanzania; we came back and then we stayed in Zambia. We were moving together; I can put it that way. At times we moved together, at times he [her husband] left us [Gertrude Shope and their children]. Sometimes we left him. I went to many places...like Cuba, Czechoslovakia, I mean many places, Bulgaria, many...In exile I was teaching women. Of course, others were specifically there for training in the MK. I moved from one camp to another, different camps...of course I was trained. I couldn't have been teaching in the MK while not trained. When I left [South Africa] I already had trained in the MK.¹⁰³

Although there was evident forgetfulness in particular, dates and people's names, generally Koko Gertrude could remember the different countries she moved to and different roles she occupied and her responsibilities. As Vansina (1985) holds,

¹⁰² Directly translated in Setswana as 'I no longer have eyes' implying that her eyesight has deteriorated.

¹⁰³ In-person interview with Gertrude Shope on 15 August 2022.

because of the manner of transmission, oral histories are prone to inconsistencies and gaps.

Our last conversation on 18 August 2022 too we rehashed most of what was discussed on 14 August to try and fill gaps. I attempted to talk to her to expand about the times she spent in exile as we already had covered the greater parts when I visited her in October 2021 and February 2022. Evident in this meeting was that she faintly could remember further details of her exile years, except when she had just left South Africa in 1966 and stayed in Botswana. When asked about her time in exile she said:

It was around 1967, I left South Africa to Botswana. Exile was tough...I worked with Florence Mophosho, Lillian Ngoyi and Albertina Sisulu...Those were our leaders. The Boers banned me. I can no longer go back to South Africa¹⁰⁴.

Well, I was born on the 15th August 1925 in Johannesburg-it's quite some time back. I grew up in a family of four girls, because we only had one brother who died-so we grew up as a family of daughters only. My father was an ordinary labourer, and my mother was a domestic servant. But we carried on very well until we came to this country-my father was working with her [in Zimbabwe]. And later we went back again to South Africa and settled in Mafeking-that's where father eventually died. So, I went to school first in-I studies for a very short time here. But I went to school in Johannesburg and later went to Natal and did my teacher's course and teacher's domestic science. I went back to the Transvaal and worked at Pimville High School in Johannesburg.

And later I was employed by the City Council in Johannesburg, as a welfare worker. It's a job I held until I left the country on the 12th of February 1966 due to political reasons.

[In Johannesburg I was born in] Pimville.

That was before Soweto and even Sophiatown.

¹⁰⁴ In-person interview on 14 August 2022.

Ja, very long before Sophiatown, when Sophiatown moved, I was in fact already working in a hospital. I was working as an assistant in the occupational therapy department.

Funny enough you know, my parents were not so political, they were just understanding...the problems that were faced by African people, and they knew the poverty, the lack of giving of accommodation to the Africans and lack of health facilities and so forth

And in fact, later when I had my own children, I transferred that to my children as well, so much so that when we left the country and settled in Botswana in 1967, we came across children of other people who were refugees, and some of them, because of different reason...¹⁰⁵

Being in exile was very different. You had to be there, whether you like it or not. You had to adjust to meeting new people, different people, different environment. I looked at it as something I chose to do but above everything, was to adjust to language and all. [Finding balance between being a mom, wife, freedom fighter, holding important roles within the ANC and holding the position of Chief Representative] Of course their father was not there, so I had to play both mother and father both discipline wise, looking after their health and all of that and still keep to the work of my choice and that was to be in a political organisation. I wouldn't have said no [to typing speeches] I knew it was for a cause, he [Mark Shope] I knew he didn't have a choice; he was obliged by to do it. We knew about other countries. We knew about how they suffered, and some were still suffering at that time. And we knew that if you want something good in this world, you have to work for it. It won't come in a tray, we used to say. So, whenever he asked me to help him, I knew that perhaps he wanted to send the message over to people who may not understand his language...

Let me start with Oliver [Tambo], because he is really the one, I was attached to, because I was his secretary towards the end. I was representing the women, and he was above us all. He was like a father.

¹⁰⁵ Gertrude Shope in an interview with Julia Frederikse in 1987, SAHA Collection.

He was very kind by nature. He would take trouble to find out about this person who is not happy, who is not well and what can be done, and he did quite a lot of things to improve the organisation because we were very far away from home. I was in a group of women that worked with women to see what is needed, what are the advantages and the disadvantages. We used to try by whatever means, to do what he asked, as I said he was like a father, so whenever he guides us to do a certain something, we used to feel that it would be unfair to disappoint him when he is trying by every means to go all out for us, when his children were not even there. So, when he says please.¹⁰⁶

Once you go to these countries, you have to learn in their languages, so, they did their [the Shope children] education in Czeck. From Czeck they went to Tanzania and learnt the language. So, I had to make sure that they know that one day when we go home, they should be able to communicate with the people at home. So, every day after school I made it a point that I teach them English. And the other thing is that because my husband was a trade unionist, when he goes to London and other English-speaking countries, he would bring us books. So, I used those books to teach them. So, they caught up very well. They knew that they were South Africans, and they didn't even need any one to tell them, they knew themselves. I think at some point they even wanted to know what they eat in Africa and things that they did that we didn't do...We wanted all our children back home to free children of their age and the other youth, so that we can get the South Africa that we were all striving for. So, I wouldn't have said marry a Cuban...I wouldn't have said that. So, I would have encouraged them to get to know our youth because there wasn't anything bad about them. I wouldn't have made choices

¹⁰⁶ ENCA *Women in the Liberation Struggle: The Story of Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole* documentary Part 1. The interview was conducted by Uveka Rangappa with Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole on 11 August 2019.

for them but would keep my eye on them and advise them as if they were my own son.¹⁰⁷

We women of the world, under Women's International Democratic Federation, which was first in Germany, we used to say and still say, women as people who bring life to this world have got a duty to see to it that this life is preserved and protected. I'm trying to say, even when we speak at our women conferences, we speak for everybody and not only to the women who are in the ANC for instance...The other thing I thought I would also add is the fact that I went to an Anglican school, a Catholic school, a Methodist school, and so on and all of them were fighting for education. It doesn't matter which colour of skirt another is wearing. They can wear a blue one and I wear a black one. There's nothing wrong with the ANC, there is something wrong with individuals. That is what we must try to concentrate on¹⁰⁸...

¹⁰⁷ ENCA *Women in the Liberation Struggle: The Story of Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole* documentary Part 2. The interview was conducted by Uveka Rangappa with Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole on 11 August 2019.

¹⁰⁸ ENCA *Women in the Liberation Struggle: The Story of Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole* documentary, Part 3. The interview was conducted by Uveka Rangappa with Gertrude Shope and Lyndall Shope-Mafole on 11 August 2019.



Figure 21. A & B. Getrude Shope after casting special vote in Botswana on 28 May 2024

The key questions explored broadly in this section with knowledge holders are: who Getrude Shope is? How did they meet her? What kind of a leader was she? Do those who know her feel that she is being celebrated? How has she impacted their lives?

Mom Gerty: 'A Cadre of Peace'

There was a time in Angola where it was very difficult, there were certain parts of Angola where our camps were. It was very difficult, even some soldiers or some leaders didn't go to those camps because it was dangerous. This lady, Mme MaShope got there and the moral in the camps was boosted because of her presence (Jackie Sedibe).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Retired Major General of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the first woman to occupy this position in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).



Figure 22. Jackie Sedibe

In 1984, Gertrude Shope, together with eight other male ANC leaders visited the notorious Quatro camp following reports of tortures, murders and sexual abuse, particularly of four women who subsequent to repeated abuses went ‘insane’ then eventually were executed. Gertrude Shope went to the camp along with Joe Modise, Mzwai Piliso, Andrew Masondo, Moses Mabhida, Chris Hani, Thomas Nkobi, Alfred Nzo, and Ronnie Kasrils to call for peace, (Lodge 1992; Scoltz and Scoltz 2009).

Nosiviwe represented the Women’s Section in Angola specifically. She was our main go to person to the needs of the women in the camps. But to issues that needed actual intervention and MaShope would have been the person¹¹⁰.

On 7 May 1991, the *Daily News* reported that, following the attack of residents of Meadowlands by Dube hostel dwellers, the ANCWL visited their homes and Gertrude

¹¹⁰ Baleka Mbete during in-person interview on 03 May 2023.

Shope said that there was still a lot that women of South Africa needed to do to ensure peace and prosperity. Shope further posited that:

First and foremost is the question of violence that has erupted in the Reef and in other parts of the country. We as women need to do all in our power to stop our sons from killing each other. As women, we brought life into this world, and I don't see how we cannot do something to protect it. We are meeting soon as the ANCWL to adopt urgent strategies on how we can save the lives of our countrymen. If there was ever a time for us to come together, this is it. We've lost our brothers, sisters, husbands and something urgent must be done about it. It is a shame to live in a country where there is senseless bloodshed.

“Memory and symbolism are powerful foreign policy sources and resources that reflect a state's identity, values and interests. Although non-material in nature, memory and symbolism recall past realities to address current realities and challenges. Memory and symbolism can be mobilised to compensate for the lack of material resources, justify a particular foreign policy position and indicate intention and direction”. Gertrude Shope and Charlotte Maxeke are regarded as demonstrative of this. Thus, in response to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) which affirms the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has in 2015 under the leadership of Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane put to practice the resolution through the memorialisation of ANC struggle stalwart Gertrude Shope. Subsequently, the Gertrude Shope Women's Mediation Network and the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum were established.¹¹¹

I think she is celebrated. My mother is celebrated through the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue. It attracts younger women interested in politics. My mother has never liked too much limelight.¹¹²

¹¹¹ https://www.dirco.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/sa_national_action_plan_women_peace_security_2020-2025.pdf

¹¹² Thaninga Shope-Soumah, during an in-person interview in August 2023.

Year on year DIRCO hosts the Gertrude Shope Women's Mediation Network training in August (Women's Month in South Africa and Shope's birthday month). The training is then followed by the "Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum where women peacebuilders and mediators from Africa share their experiences and best practices in peace and security efforts". By August 2021 350 African women mediators had been trained since 2015. Due to her interventions as negotiator and mediator, Shope has thus come to epitomise South Africa's peace diplomacy, and a practical response to UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000).¹¹³

I got a scholarship from UNDP (United Nations Development Program) sponsored by the Norwegians and the placement was at the University of Zambia, and that's where I met Gertrude Shope. At Turfloop I studied Social Work then in Zambia I studied Political Science and Developmental Studies. For example, students will assist with work at Radio Freedom, the building of the structures of the ANC, and that's when I interacted with Gertrude Shope who was in the Women Section. There was no official meeting as such [with Gertrude Shope], we met in meetings. At that time, she was not the head of Women Section, it was Florence Maphosho. So, we met in meetings as comrades with everybody who was trying to make our contribution in the liberation struggle through the Women Section. When I finished my degree, then I joined the Women's Section full time, that's when I worked very closely with Gertrude Shope (Mavivi Manzini).

I was working in the area of publication and information. We had a program for Radio Freedom which was broadcasted to the women home and we also had Voice of Women the publication of women, which we smuggled inside the country and also sent internationally. We were working in units at that time. So, there would be people who are based in countries which were based next to South Africa, like Botswana, Swaziland, etc. So, we would find people from those areas, and they would find a way to smuggle them. First let me say in 1981 we had a

¹¹³ https://www.dirco.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/sa_national_action_plan_women_peace_security_2020-2025.pdf

conference of the Women Section for the first time in exile and that's where comrade Gertrude Shope emerged as the head of the Women Section, and we had another conference later on which worked on these projects including the year of the women. So, it was declared by the movement after realising the work done by women in mobilising the women inside the country.¹¹⁴

A Revolutionary Mother, An Activist for Women Emancipation

I've never had time to attend to personal commitments. I have not had time to visit my relatives, most of whom I last saw many years ago. Soon after my arrival, I had to work round the clock towards re-establishing the ANCWL. I worked against time because we wanted to formally revive the structure on August 9-a very important day in the history of South African women¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ In-person interview with Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka on 29 November 2023. She is currently the Ambassador to Malawi.

¹¹⁵ The Daily Mail, 7 May 1991.



Figure 23. Baleka Mbete

Similar to Charlotte Maxeke, Mme Gerty was a leader of women and not a woman leader. She was a South African who cared. Mme Gerty brought us home. She's the one who led our delegation, coming back to South Africa which then was still in the last stages of fighting the liberation struggle. In a particular stage that where at that point at least agreement had been reached that as the protagonists in the liberation

struggle that had taken decades, centuries actually, that now that it was time to talk. She had led us internationally; she had looked after her part of whatever task the organisation gave her. She played that role excellently. She was one of the leaders that actually even physically represented the best of what our leadership preferred. If I may quote OR Tambo, O R Tambo did not want anyone dressed shabbily or dirty, unpresentable. He would always raise the point of “do you understand who you are representing? You represent the ANC”. So, it was one of the things you attended to consciously.

MaShope was just always prim and proper and presentable, and she was just beautiful. And you always proudly pointed to her as a leader. Even in looks, you unhesitatingly in claiming her pointed to her as a leader, even as a mother. She was able to correct you, lead you and showed you how to be... The two of us met in the Women Section. I think the role that Mme Gerty played is the role best understood in a progression of her life from when she left, a family role, a political role, a family woman that raised children to be conscious.

The things of struggle are not separate from family. So here is a woman who we find example, we find meaning, it’s not actually discussed. When we were in exile we were far away from home and when she talks, her clarification, unfolding things made sense. Maybe you are struggling with things personally, she had the language to express. MaShope played a critical role that we have not quite critically unpacked and understood. Raymond Suttner wrote about culture, I’m curious to know what he wrote, because it was those tangibles of everyday life, like the need to clothe children, and you are far from home, you don’t have your own mother, and you have to bring up your own children whereas you would normally have family to help you. So, you look at MaShope who was doing that and her political role. It was the everyday things that one had to learn, you. (Baleka Mbete).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ In-person interview on 03 May 2023.

Mme MaShope, my mother, my sister, my colleague and my leader. She brought me up in exile, not only Thaninga, Lyndall and the late Lenin. I will come to that. There was also an incident in Angola, when the Angolan government asked our leaders to at least give them a chance to grow, because South Africa was destabilising Angola because our camps were in Angola and they said please relieve Angola and Sesi Gerty was in the first plane with those cadres, and that plane was almost kidnapped by an agent to South Africa. But our soldiers asked one of the pilots to open the door, and they got that agent tied up with his grenade with his hand and our cadres were saved. Mme Gerty was there. *Le seke la mmona yanong a dutse on a wheelchair. O ne a tlola mojako* (She may be on a wheelchair now, but she used to be very active and strong). She was our example, which we also had to follow. She is also the first woman representative of the ANC in Lusaka.

When she was appointed the chief rep there, she went to our residents to ask us to go to the liberation centre where there were other liberation movements. Where it started, nobody worked there then, there was only Ntate TT Nkomo who was there. So, we started organising and eventually, everybody including our president worked from the liberation centre, that was her work. Mme Gertrude Shope, got the highest honour in our movement, seaparankwe, it was well deserved. *Ne e se gore ne e le mistake, o ne a leader bomme ba* (It wasn't by mistake, she led the women of) the African National Congress. The ANC Women's League in those days was very active. They would challenge decisions made in the NEC. So, as I said, *e ne e se mme wa bo Thaninga fela*, (she wasn't just a mother to Thaninga and her siblings). I

grew up with Thaninga, Lyndall and Lenin. I'm talking about this lady, Mme Gertrude Shope, my mother (Jackie Sedibe).¹¹⁷



Figure 24. Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka

In exile we had to struggle with the fact that we were not home, our parents were not there. But boGertrude Shope, Mme Ruth Mompoti, Florence Mophosho, the elderly women, they also served as our parents, advising us on so many things, including children, because we got married in exile, our parents were not there, so the challenge was firstly thinking about home and contacting your people to let them know that at least you are alive, you are well (Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Retired Major General of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the first woman to occupy this position in the SANDF.

¹¹⁸ In-person interview on 29 November 2023. She is currently the South African Ambassador to Malawi.

Contrary to Wells (1998) argument that motherism should not be confused with feminism is somewhat found wanting in the case of women like Gertrude Shope whose motherism approach to politics provided a safety net to many young people, particularly in exile which Baleka Mbete describes as a hostile environment. Magadla (2023: 12) sustains this counter argument in that a number of women, be it in the African National Congress (ANC), Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the Pan Africanist Congress or Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) have had to take the motherly role, especially to new recruits as in the case of Nomvo Booi and Gertrude Shope when the 1976 cohort arrived in exile.

I feel sorry for those who worked with mama, because she's very strict but as a leader, her leadership style is that of a mother, *banaka*¹¹⁹ type of a thing and I guess that's why bo Sis Baleka refer to her as *umama* (our mother) and not like boMaSisulu or Winnie Mandela. Even today, mommy is beyond political party. I told her that...she should operate within the confines of political lines. She would also refer to the fact that she went to different schools etc. Some of the things are a bit utopian and don't exist in the real world. There would-be different kind of situations...for example the enemy infiltration. The comrades will deal very harshly with them, but Mommy was still a mother. I must say quite a number of people, like sell outs, they have positive things to say about her, in spite of having betrayed the movement.¹²⁰

A similar scenario to that of Shope being more forgiving even to people who have committed gruesome crimes as Lyndall mentioned was shared by Madeline Fullard and said that:

Gertrude Shope was at the exhumation of Phemelo Ntehelang who was killed at Vlakplaas and buried on a private farm outside Zeerust. She and other Northwest ANC members came to give moral support to the process of excavations during November. She came to the farm while

¹¹⁹ Setswana word for my children.

¹²⁰ In -person interview with Lyndall Shope-Qubeka, the eldest daughter of Gertrude Shope in February 2023.

we were doing the exhumation in November and December 2014. Eugene de Kock who was then still a prisoner, was assisting with pointing out the site. So, she coincidentally met him at the Zeerust farm excavation site while we were digging. They discussed and he told her about the plan to bomb and kill her in Lusaka.¹²¹

I left the country in 1983 and came back in 1992. Koko Gertrude Shope I met her in 1984 in Lusaka [Zambia]. I actually stayed in the same house as her. We were still young girls at that time. When I arrived in Zambia from my military training, I was told that I will be staying at the Shope house. We didn't choose for ourselves. I didn't even know who or what the family was. She welcomed me with very warm hands and heart. I was treated like one of her daughters because she had two daughters, Lyndall and Thaninga. So, I was the third daughter of Gertrude Shope and the late husband Ntate Mark Shope. It was six months in the military training. With me, after my military training I was called back to Lusaka and then I was in Cuba 1986/7 and upon my return, I stayed with her again until 1989. Remember when I left, I was staying with her, so some of my things were still in the house. So automatically it was home for me, so when I would say I'm going home, I was referring to the Shope family. Yoh! Mam' Shope, Mam' Gertrude Shope is a very warm person. She's a typical South African *mme*¹²², with the love for her children and at the same time very strict on the children just to make sure that they don't go astray. So, we were brought up under her. She's a disciplinarian by nature and she wants everything to be done by the program. She's a perfectionist if I can sum it up. So, in a way she brought us up to be perfectionists. I tell my children that much as I had parents, because I left at 16 years, Mam Gerty played that role (Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba).¹²³

¹²¹ In-person and telephonic communication with Madeline Fullard, Head of the National Prosecution Authority's (NPA) Missing Person's Unit in June 2023.

¹²² Sesotho, Tswana and Sepedi word for Mother.

¹²³ Current Ambassador to Turkey interviewed telephonically on 18 July 2024.

“It is very sobering to now sit with the debt owed to those who gave their youth to the struggle for the end of apartheid. It is extraordinary to feel and grasp in their own words – the formation of the will to fight, to undo great wrongs at such a young age. It is astounding to realise that apartheid made instant adults of them” (Garman 2023:138).



Figure 25. Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba

As we were growing up, we were feminists in a way and she will tell us that... women’s emancipation is not about fighting men, she was able to clarify and make us understand. Because of her background as a teacher, she was able to unpack. When one was experiencing menstruation, it will be difficult for one to confide in the commanders about their status, but she was there. But all those conditions in the camps, made them resilient and to focus and be women who fight for the rights of everybody and not just women or children. She used to tell us how hard it was, how difficult it was to mobilise women, to make them understand that the struggle of everyone is interlinked with the struggle of women and children. She will tell you that when they were supposed to mobilise, they met obstacles, even from other women who were

not willing to sacrifice their own lives, so they had a hard time educating about the freedom of the country and the freedom of women and children. She used to like a quote by Samora Machel which says:” The women struggle of women is part of the entire struggles of any human being in any situation”. She used to say, we cannot sit back as women, we need to be part and parcel of the struggle to liberate the country. Mom Shope had to shape me to be who I am today...I tell my children that I was brought up by a very tough woman, very strong woman, but at the same time soft as a mother. As a leader, she’s one of the outstanding leaders of our movement, Mom Getty, we used to call her Mom Gerty. She dedicated her life in fighting against injustices. She dedicated her life in fighting for the rights of women and children. Her commitment to women empowerment and women emancipation you could see as she was a reader. A person who would go through a lot of documents and even not sleeping to ensure that women’s struggles are being put forward (Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba).

On 07 May 1991, the *Daily News* published an article entitled, *Champion of Women’s Rights: It’s work and more work for Gertrude Shope, the new president of the ANC Women’s League*. Here Gertrude Shope is described as having relentlessly fought for the rights of women in exile, thus it was no surprise that she led the ANC women to the 1987 Women’s Conference in Angola. Upon her return to the country and reviving the ANCWL, she also forced the leadership of the organisation to take a stand on women’s emancipation. Gertrude Shope said that:

We succeeded because the ANC subsequently produced a document, the Women’s Charter, which made clear what our rights are.¹²⁴

She is a fighter, especially on issues that affect women and children in exile and here at home. BoMam’ Getty would be in the fore front to make sure that young girls get the

¹²⁴ See the *Daily News*, 07 May 1991, titled *Champion of Women’s Rights: It’s work and more work for Gertrude Shope, the new president of the ANC Women’s League*.

facilities required by any young woman. They will go all out to mobilise all over the world for things like cosmetics to make sure that all the children of the ANC are well looked after. She never tired in bringing us together, not only us who were staying with her but any other young woman in Lusaka in our situation and her heart was focusing on women's struggles. It was at the heart of her program. boMom Gerty would go all over the world to make people aware of the triple oppression experienced by women in South Africa. They would leave their families, bo Ntate Shope and us to make people aware of the triple oppression. So, the women's struggle has been at the centre of their lives in exile.

And what we see today on women in leadership representation is because of boMme Gerty and the struggles they fought during those days. They laid a solid foundation to make sure that women are not left behind in terms of development, in terms of empowerment, decision making positions and so on. We owe it to them as women of South Africa, and the coming generation because were it not because of their efforts, also to sensitise the women in the ANC about women's plight. In a way she played a role in shaping me politically, including the husband, because the husband was, we used to call him commissar, commissar in our language, are people who teaches politics of the world. So, the two of them have shaped me to be who I am today, so I'm so grateful that I had the opportunity to share my youthful life, even my mid-life with these two giants, Mom Gerty and her husband. After dinner, we would sit around the table and she would be lecturing us about women's struggles, about women's

issues around patriarchy and maternal issues so to enable us to understand deeper (Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba)¹²⁵.

When we came to the Front Line, this place where we were it was a bush. We need to appreciate the work that Mme MaShope did here, because I think there was an instruction from the highest level in Botswana, '*ge le ba bona ba were dithunya, ga la ba bona*,¹²⁶if you see ANCs with guns, you didn't see them'. So, Hershfield was a police commissioner who used to mark roadblocks there by Lobatse, when they see us, *le bo mang, ey, tsamayang tsamayang*¹²⁷...thank you for the pioneering work, those who came before we arrived, and preparing the struggle ground. Mme MaShope¹²⁸.

I met Mom Gertrude in exile. She succeeded as leader of the Women's Section, the late Florence Mophosho when she passed. I had been a leader in one of the so-called regions you know in a country the ANC community, even if it's different towns in a country it's called a region...so I was a regional secretary reporting to MaShope in Zambia. I left the country in 1976. Remember I stayed and taught for some months in Swaziland, Zambia, then proceeded to Tanzania. 1978 I started being actively involved in the structures of the ANC, based in Tanzania, reporting to Mma Gerty at head office in Zambia. MaShope led and also enabled the women in the ANC pull together, pull their resources, human resources, their everything and their ability to speak to other women across the globe to ensure that even in those countries the women in individual

¹²⁵ Current Ambassador to Turkey interviewed telephonically on 18 July 2024.

¹²⁶ Translated from Setswana to mean 'If you see them, holding guns, you didn't see them'.

¹²⁷ Who are you? Go! Go! Go!

¹²⁸ Speech by Jerry Matjia during Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday celebration On 17 August 2024.

countries are very finely tuned to understand very clearly how they could lend their support to the women inside of South Africa. There was a time when MaShope was a leader in an aircraft that passed us through, there was a moment where there was an attempt to divert the aircraft to South Africa. You must go check with Mama Nosiviwe. That was a very dangerous thing because it meant the Boers would have caught them and imprisoned them obviously.

In 1984 I was in Botswana, and because of being in Botswana at the time, we would have had to also be the conveyer belt between women coming directly from inside with specific tasks that would have been conveyed up and down. Remember the front-line states would be those kinds of persons, who the ANC relied on at specific centres at specific times. MaShope at some point represented us in Nigeria, Mme Ruth in London, Lindiwe Mabuza for nine years in Scandinavian countries, in Sweden specifically. So, '84 was that time because '85 was when the South African Defence Force (SADF) saw it fit to come and attack us in Botswana and therefore flushed us out of there and that led to the next phase that being the Kabwe Conference in 1985 and MaShope would have been part of the leadership that was there. I didn't go to Kabwe (Baleka Mbete).

She [Gertrude Shope] left when many people were consciously being taken out of the country around the same time as the story of the twenty nurses (Baleka Mbete).

A group of 20 (21?) nurses were recruited by the ANC in December 1961, before the proclamation on the armed struggle and the establishment of the Umkhonto we Sizwe. These nurses were recruited from the Cape, Natal and Transvaal provinces: Edith

Ncwana, Finess Luke, Sinah Jali, Edith Thunyiswa, Kholeka Thunyiswa, Edna Mgabaza, Mary Mwandla, Celia Khuzwayo, Nicolene, Georginah Masusu, Gertrude Nzimande, Mavis Motha, Mary Jane Socenywa, Natalie Msimang, Hilda Bonqo, Victoria Magodla, Moni de Swardze, Nosipho Mshumpela, Neo Raditladi, and Edna Miya (Ndlovu 2007: 89-90).

After being implicated as conspirator in the 1963-1964 Rivonia Trial, Gertrude Shope had been taken in for questioning on numerous times resulting in her movements being monitored intently. Upon the realisation of her safety being compromised, Bram Fisher facilitated Shope's leaving the country in February 1966 five years after the nurses' recruitment.¹²⁹

A particular route through Botswana, I know that the Shopes went through. In fact, there's this family that lived in Lobatse that hosted them for ten months, I think. They hosted them as family. The family went that route from Botswana (Baleka Mbetse).

"After the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in April 1960 many South Africans went into exile. Most were under the threat of arrest. A large number were young would-be freedom fighters aiming to receive military training in exile...These refugees were to provide an important link for post-banning cadres of the ANC going into exile. The refugees settled in Bechuanaland – mainly in the villages of Lobatse and Ramoutswa – without the permission of the British colonial authorities" (Ndlovu :480-483).

¹²⁹ South African Historical Archives (SAHA), AL2640 Julie Frederikse Collection. A19.09. Shope G, T. S. Interview with Gertrude Shope, Undated. University of Witwatersrand. Pg 8.



Figure 26. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka¹³⁰

Mom Gerty was my father's teacher. After many years, he just gave her one look and said that's miss Moeketsi and I was like no she is Gertrude Shope, and he said she was Miss Moeketsi before she was Mrs Shope. It was interesting because when Mme Gerty looked at my father she was like, this is Michael, and of course they started talking about back in the day when she was his teacher. But Mom Gerty has been a true leader to all of us. Not just women. It has been Mom Gerty who has helped the ANC and the ANC Women's League to claim its space in the politics of South Africa. I mean it has not always been the best space that the ANC Women's League has occupied, but by and large it has played its role and still has a big role to play in the future of South Africa. So, we salute

¹³⁰Image copied from <https://i1.sndcdn.com/artworks-000602366347-o4bxhf-t500x500.jpg>

her for the role she played. For having nurtured the younger women to become ministers, lawyers and many other women as we know them today. It was because of people like Mom Gerty who encouraged them to be who they are (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka).¹³¹



Figure 27. Naledi Pandor¹³²

I always recall how MaShope and other heroines like herself would look at us, the younger generation in parliament, and would

¹³¹ During an interview with SABC News on the celebration of Shope's 99th birthday. Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka served as deputy president of South Africa from 2005 to 2008.

¹³² Image taken from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/South_African_Foreign_Minister_Naledi_Pandor_at_the_State_Department_in_Washington%2C_D.C._on_September_26%2C_2023_%28cropped%29.jpg

have a beaming pride in their eyes as they seem to say ‘girls, we’ve done the job for you. We are happy to see you here, continue the tradition. The name of Gertrude Shope belongs to a rare breed of women whose impact on the political progress of our country is yet to be fully written and appreciated. This is a leader who has pursued the vision of freedom set out by her political movement, the African National Congress and her country South Africa with great distinction to such a degree that when you hear her narrative, it’s almost like a myth. Her political activism within the historical urgency of the African National Congress emanated from shared values and objectives with her political formations, not just about what was wrong in the society into which she was born but also her certainty to correct such wrongs through re-envisioning, a united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and just society. Imagine, that it is women coming out of the harshest conditions, who would as MaShope did, articulate such amazingly modern and high ideals. MaShope truly deserves the honour we present to her today.

We know her as a humble, yet firm leader, who has been fearless, in pursuit of the vulnerable and for equality for women and girls. She has a self-effacing modesty, which marks resolute spirit to get things done. She looks very gentle, but you know that if she gives you that look, then you know you are in trouble. She has a spirit that has defied the odds, that has sustained her fight for liberation and animated to the blossoming freedom and democracy that has flourished after April 1994. We call her a warrior against gender oppression, a warrior against racial oppression. You might think that those who fought the racist government of apartheid would be racist themselves. OH! No, they upheld non-racialism and believe in it even today. She’s also a warrior against the oppression of workers. She has lived her life in the service of war, one which believes in the rights for all to enjoy humanity and justice.

During all her life she has not been a lazy person. She has executed all these roles with exemplary fortitude and really quiet a rare commitment. You know it's easy today to become a leader but, in the times, where MaShope and others like her began and their role in the struggle, it was not easy. You could not have just gone to the front of the line and be considered a leader. You had to have amazing commitment and fortitude. She has a very perceptive mind. She developed a sharp mind for the multidimensional nature of oppression, and I think was astute at dissecting the underlying link between racial, gender and class oppression that has shaped South Africa's history, that has defined our notion of being human and that has bequeathed to us a legacy that continues to harm even our legacy post-apartheid political imaginary. What she has given to us is what could be the ideal...MaShope has always within her struggle refused to concede ground when one needed to stand upright...She has continued to be an avid exponent of the gender agenda and of workers' right. During her work in exile, which she lived all over the world...Her impulses for all women has taken her all over the world, including the Nairobi Conference where she led the ANC delegation.

[...] Today we know that even as she is in retirement, she exudes energy of majesty and dignity, as a sage of age belonging to a galaxy of revolutionaries that would include Dr Charlotte Maxeke, Ruth First, Fatina Meer, Helen Joseph, Sophy De Bryn, Ruth Mompati, Lillian Ngoyi and hundreds more. And again, in those names you see that mix of understanding that gender equality is not an ethnic or racial phenomenon, it includes all of us. As I conclude this tribute, let me say to you MaShope thank you for all that you have been, that you have done and that you have said for the oppressed people of the world. Be they workers, be they black people, be they rural people, be they women. In this women's month, we thank you for insisting on our visibility on the

agenda of history. I believe every celebration of women's month is a celebration of you and your splendid generation. I believe when the definitive history of the nobility of the struggle against the oppression of humanity by another is finally placed on paper, your name, Gertrude Ntiti Shope will enjoy pride of place in that narrative and all my colleagues will agree as we say, Long Live the name of Gertrude Shope Long Live! (Naledi Pandor).¹³³



Figure 28. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

[...] When the [CODESA] negotiations started in Kempton Park, there was no single woman negotiator. Men were negotiating alone. *Sebekhohliwe*¹³⁴ who brought them to this world. They were negotiating alone, alone. So, Mme Gerty, boBaleka and others, we decided, we are not going to allow this, it has to stop.

¹³³ A speech delivered at the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum on 27 August 2020. Naledi Pandor was at the time Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

¹³⁴ They had forgotten, translated from isiZulu.

We tried to speak to our organisation [ANC] they said yes but, but. We continued to say that to them, and they said okay, they will speak to other parties. The other parties said no, they don't have women. What do these women want here? What do they know about negotiations? And Mme Gerty and other leaders as I said, led us.

We decided when the negotiations stopped because of the Boipatong Massacre, we said they are not going to start again without us. Mme Gerty was leading us...It was tough. Mme Gerty mobilised women like they did for the Union Building 1956 march. They mobilised women all over the country and said we must go there and camp at Kempton Park until women become part of the negotiators. And indeed, once we were camping there, the men realised that *kushubile*, it's difficult, they must now back down, and they did. Bocomrade Baleka and others became part of the negotiating. Last one I want to talk about. When now we were going to parliament, we said to the ANC, women must be part of this. It was tough. That time it was tough; we were just crying for 30%. And they let us, and we said to the ANC, we are not going to campaign. What are we going to say to the women? That men are going to parliament, and you are not as women? So, in the end the ANC agreed...then we became ministers and members of parliament. Mme Gerty was leading us...Mme Gerty, thank you. I even became a minister because of her and lots of things because of her (Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma).¹³⁵

Even when she retired, Shope pushed for women to become leaders in government and in the ANC. Nomvula Mokonyane, First Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC says women such as Shope set good examples as leaders at a time when the country is facing many challenges:

¹³⁵ Speech at Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday celebration on 17 August 2024. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma held various ministerial positions and became the first woman to be chairperson of the African Union from 2012-2017.

Turning 99 is not a minor issue. It is something that MaShope, who has been fondly known as MaShope for all the years, an ex-combatant of the uMkhonto weSizwe of the African National Congress, it's something that's worth celebrating. Celebrating by imparting who this Gertrude Shope is, one of the recipients of Isithwalandwe, the highest honour that the ANC bestows upon its members. Something that makes some of us to reflect on how we built within the women's movement in this country.

We make sure that the Women's League becomes relevant in the structures of the ANC and that women in the ANC continue to fight patriarchy and work together with our men folk within the ANC towards the total emancipation of women. And recommitting, all of us and say, she can't be living in a country where GBV and femicide has now been put as another pandemic and where poverty and inequality have a face of a woman. A lot has been achieved, and we are grateful that we are standing on the shoulders of abo Mom Gertrude Shope who led us in the times of legality and illegality so it's quite important that in her lifetime, she must see the ANC rebranding itself, repurposing itself towards the ANC that is committed towards emancipation of women.



Figure 29. Thabo Mbeki

Aunt Gerty is a very important leader of our movement. In addition to what she's done in terms of our struggle, and I think what we shouldn't miss about her is actually as an important leader of the Women's International Movement. She played an important role in the International Women Democratic Federation (WDF) as well as Pan Africans Women's Organisation. So, she's a very prominent person in terms of the progressive international women's movement and indeed as part of our pride as the ANC and as South Africans that we could have a South African that would occupy such a prominent place globally, concerning her convictions, where she stood and particularly about the emancipation of women. So, she [...] belongs to a particular generation

with the people that were present during the adoption of the Freedom Charter and right through until liberation and so on. She's one of that group. The Mandelas, the Sisulus, the Mbekis, the Lillian Ngoyis and all of those. When she celebrates 99 years it's a happy day, it's happy moment for us that we have such a leader of our struggle. Mindful that maybe she's one of the last of that particular generation. And so, her presence among us until now, I think it's really a message to us, to be loyal to the message that generation communicates to us about what it did. To be loyal to the ANC as they led it. The slogan of the MK for instance was always to say, "We serve the people of South Africa". And that's the ANC of that we need to be loyal to, that serves the people of South Africa. And that's the ANC she led, Women's League of the ANC itself, Women's Section. The ANC which knew what its story was and lived up to that expectation.

I think a person like Aunt Gerty, Gertrude Shope as a political leader communicates a message that, one needs humility. Humility in a sense that you need humility to earn the respect of the people. You don't earn the respect of the people by riding high horses and things like that. Humility and attachment to principle and activism, to act and bring about change that you want to see. You will not hear a lot of people shouting about her. She was not a media person; she was not a seeker of I love light. But she was a great doer and principled person in terms of what needed to be done to change conditions of our people but particularly of women.

Again, many people won't know this history of hers for instance as I was mentioning her role internationally but even within the movement and the roles that she has played. She left for example with her husband Mark Shope to Nigeria, they were our representatives after I left. And so, the people who came late like John Nene the late, inherited very good progress that the Shopes had made in Nigeria in terms of winning the support of the people of Nigeria etcetera. I think it is like that, people won't know. But I'm saying she should communicate to everybody that

this attachment to principle, attachment to this vision of advancement and empowerment of women that needs engagement with that challenge and not just talking about it but doing something about it. It's because of what she did that we had progress here at home. And I think while she is alive, as a movement we need to communicate a message to her that we are responding to the negative messages that came out of the last elections. And the only way to respond to that is to respond to what the people are complaining about in an honest way, in a serious way and I think that is what she would expect, Aunt Gerty. Your expectations about what had gone wrong, we will not disappoint that expectation (Thabo Mbeki).¹³⁶

Being a child of a Freedom Fighter

My name is Thaninga Shope-Soumah, I'm currently the High Commissioner of South Africa to Botswana. I started here in October of 2022. Gertude Shope is a freedom fighter, activist, mother, wife, daughter, grandmother and great-grandmother. She is a very politically involved woman and even if you ask her about past politics today, she will share as she's still very sharp on that. She's one of the people that were involved in the women's march [1956] together with boMa Lillian Ngoyi. She's always been very politically involved, particularly after getting married to my dad. I was born in Central Western Jabavu in 1960, 23rd of August and I was born at home and not in hospital. She was already involved [in politics] but not that involved, because I remember my mom telling me that when she was expecting me, there used to be times when people used to look for her to kill her because of politics and the police looking for her. So, people felt pity for her and would hide her in their outside toilets.

¹³⁶ Thabo Mbeki is former president of South Africa from 14 June 1999 to 24 September 2008. Here he was in an interview with Sophy Mokoena of the South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) on 15 August 2024 which is Gertrude Shope's birthday discussing her contribution to South African liberation struggle and issues of women emancipation.



Figure 30. Thaninga Shope-Soumah

We left South Africa in 1966 but my dad left earlier, because he was one of the people that got arrested *le bo* Mandela during the Treason Trial so when he was out on bail, he skipped the country. We left through Lobatse like many people did, from Mafikeng. My dad had been sent to Yugoslavia to work at the World Federation Union. We went together to join my dad. I was seven when we left. During our exile, she was chosen Head of Women's Section at the Angola Conference in 1987 and then when we came home, she was chosen leader of the ANC Women's

League. There was a point where my mom was chief representative of the ANC in Lusaka Zambia. We left for Cuba in 1976. At the time she was working very closely with the late President OR Tambo. But logically there were also other women working together with her bo Aunt Florence Mophosho and Mama Ruth Mompoti, Thejiwe Mtintswa and Nosiviwe Maphisa Nqakula worked very close with my mom.

During her time as Secretary of FEDSAW we were living with our grandparents in Mafikeng, her parents. So that time we never really experienced her activism, she was very busy and would come sometimes. We only got to experience her in exile. We left when I was six and my brother was four. My sister had been living with my aunt. You know children adapt very quick. The one thing about us is we moved a lot. We left South Africa in 1966 and went to Czechoslovakia in 1971, then Tanzania until 1973, went to Zambia until 1976, went to Cuba in 1976 to 1986 then went back to Zambia then England and went back home in 1991.

The advantage was you learnt languages. It was a whole community, so we adapted. We left for Czechoslovakia. I went back home in 1991. The advantage is learning the languages at a very young age. I can speak, Spanish and French. Initially in Zambia we stayed in Morogoro. We left for Zambia in 1971. I was teaching maths. When I went back to Zambia, I stayed in SOMAFCO, an ANC community. It was a very self-sustaining community. We had volunteers from Nigeria. We used to listen to radio freedom when we were very young. We were made politically aware from a very young age (Thaninga Shope-Soumah).

The year 1960 saw the banning of political parties by the apartheid government led by the National Party. Subsequently the ANC set up and operated Radio Freedom within the country, together with its allies, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of Democrats. Radio Freedom sought to broadcast news from the ANC

perspective and propagating its ideology (Lekgoathi 2013: 111). “This station shaped the consciousness and style of struggle of a whole generation of militant youth in the 1970s and 1980s, influencing their political activities” (Lekgoathi 2010: 141).

While much is known and has been written about the youth that fled South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s into exile and joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), less is known about the youth that left a country in order to receive better education. The latter group is also that of freedom fighters. The weapons that which the latter group armed themselves with was of a better education to a racist Bantu Education in South Africa. Of course, others did both. They left to join the MK and also furthered their studies. They settled in Mazimbu and Dakawa near Morogoro in Tanzania, to be part of a self-reliant community set up by the African National Congress. This group of youngsters left South Africa to prepare themselves for the struggle and for reconstruction and development in a free nation. Although the ANC had aspirations to establish a school in exile, it was the 1976 uprising and intensified suppression that followed which precipitated the installation of the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in 1978 (Morrow, Maaba and Pulumani 2004:3).

MaShope’s role and her own deployment became part and parcel of what happened to the family. The children’s arrangement to go and study when in their teenage years in Cuba and everything. So MaShope was always worked out in that context. Moving together was not the norm and even in the Shope case (Baleka Mbete).

...they were very strict on the issue of education. In our family the issue of education was none negotiable...they would say that make sure that you study so that when we go home you can contribute positively to the society (Thaninga Shope-Soumah).



Figure 31. Lyndall Shope-Qubeka

Part of the problem of being a child of people who have been in the liberation struggle is that you end up knowing very little about them because they try to protect you. So, when you say you don't know, you really don't know. They try to protect you. She says where they lived is where the train ended. She says she used to say to her father "papa, one day I will get on that train and go to Johannesburg." Usually, we used to tease Mama and say she came from an aristocratic type of a family and my dad came from a rural home and he was a mine worker

and grew up in workers movements. We used to tease her on how the two classes came together. My mom would say her father would order things in from London...

My grandfather was John Moeketsi, and my grandmother was Mary Moeketsi. From paternal side my grandfather was William Jackson, this was also my father's names. Apparently, he died in a war in Europe. My father had to leave Nwamitwa. He worked in the laundry worker's union and the catering union, so he had to start work early because his father died early. Mommy was born in Fort Victoria. My parents were involved in political activities. They sent Thaninga and my younger brother Lenin to Mafikeng. I was sent to Zimbabwe to Aunt Iris Makola. Aunt Pat was a nurse in Mpilo Hospital and Aunt Iris was a teacher. We have lots of relatives in Mafikeng and Botswana. We were three, me (Lyndall), Thaninga and our younger brother Lenin who passed away.

I must mention that daddy was married before mommy, our big sister, Shiela Shope- Sithole, she lives in Limpopo, Ntombi-Shope Kubayi who is late and our brother George Kubayi who is also late. My parents got married in 1957...They have no photos of their wedding, nothing. You know the thing about exile. We only have one photo of mommy when she was young. They got married in Johannesburg. I'm not so sure as to when mommy started her activism, but I think mid-1950s. She could not attend the 1956 march but was organising in the background with boMaSisulu. She was working for the city council she also worked at Coronation Hospital. I think that's when she left the hospital, I think it is now Rahima Moosa.

I became aware of her activism; I must have been nine. Mommy sent me to Zimbabwe to stay with Aunt Iris. Sis Ruth (Pinkie), she's the one who brought me up, she was like my big sister. Abuti Boikie taught me how to ride a bicycle. It's very interesting, I called Aunt Iris Mommy, but I always knew I had a mother in Johannesburg. I remember that when I now had to join boMommy in Botswana, I was put on a train with I think

it was Auntie Perepere's mother. I remember Abuti Oupa saying "wena you are stupid, *go tla mosadimogolo fela o sa mo tsebang wena o tsamaya le yena*¹³⁷ to your mother. Now you are living your mother here because you like things and just want to get into the train with a woman you don't even know". I remember when the conductor came in, he had a friendly fat face. She said she was my granny, at some point I wanted to tell the man that I didn't know her, I'm leaving my mom behind. That's how I went to Botswana to meet boMama.

When we were in Botswana, there were strange things happening in Botswana. I'm sure you have met the Keitseng family, they played a big role in the struggle. When we were in their yard, I started noticing the Boers would come to collect people and boMama would be crying and saying they are going to jail and so on. But these were one or two I kind of knew. It was more when we left for Prague when I was about nine or ten, they started in 1967/8. We went to Prague at the end of 1967. That's when I started being aware of their activism, daddy would be going to conferences and mommy typing speeches at night. I used to feel sorry for my mother.

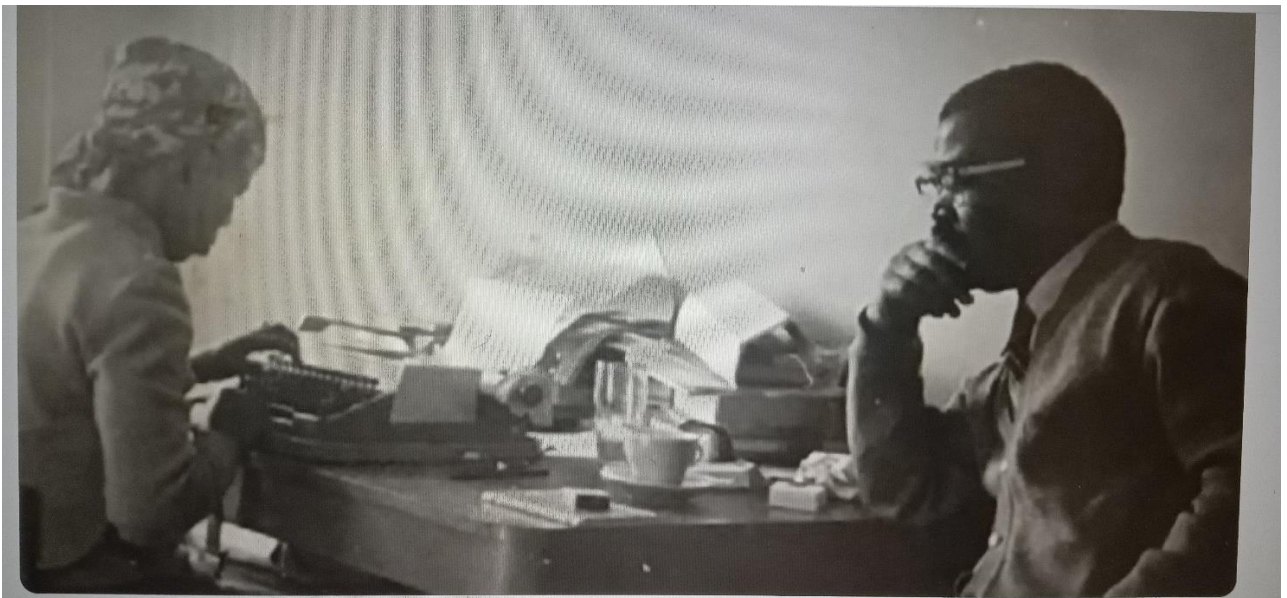


Figure 32. Gertude Shope (left) and Mark Shope (right)

¹³⁷ An old woman you don't even know comes and you just leave with her, translated from Setswana.

Daddy would give us long speeches about struggle. He had pictures of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. So, when we went to study in Cuba, these old men tormented us. I went to Cuba in 1976. In solidarity with the 1976 Soweto uprising, the Cuban government gave out ten scholarships. But at the time there were not many kids to go. My parents agreed that we go, the three of us, Lyndall Shope, Thaninga Shope and Lenin Shope (late). There were other children, the Ndaba children: Ntombi Ndaba (late), Ntathu Ndaba [and Dr Khanyisile Ndaba]. So that made the six of us. Others came from home directly from South Africa to make us ten: [Dr Thabo Mnisi (late), Gregory Thagoe (late), Isaac Lebea (late) and Jeffrey Marishane]. At that time, then lots of countries started giving scholarships. Some went to Russia, Romania, Ukraine (Lyndall Shope-Qubeka).

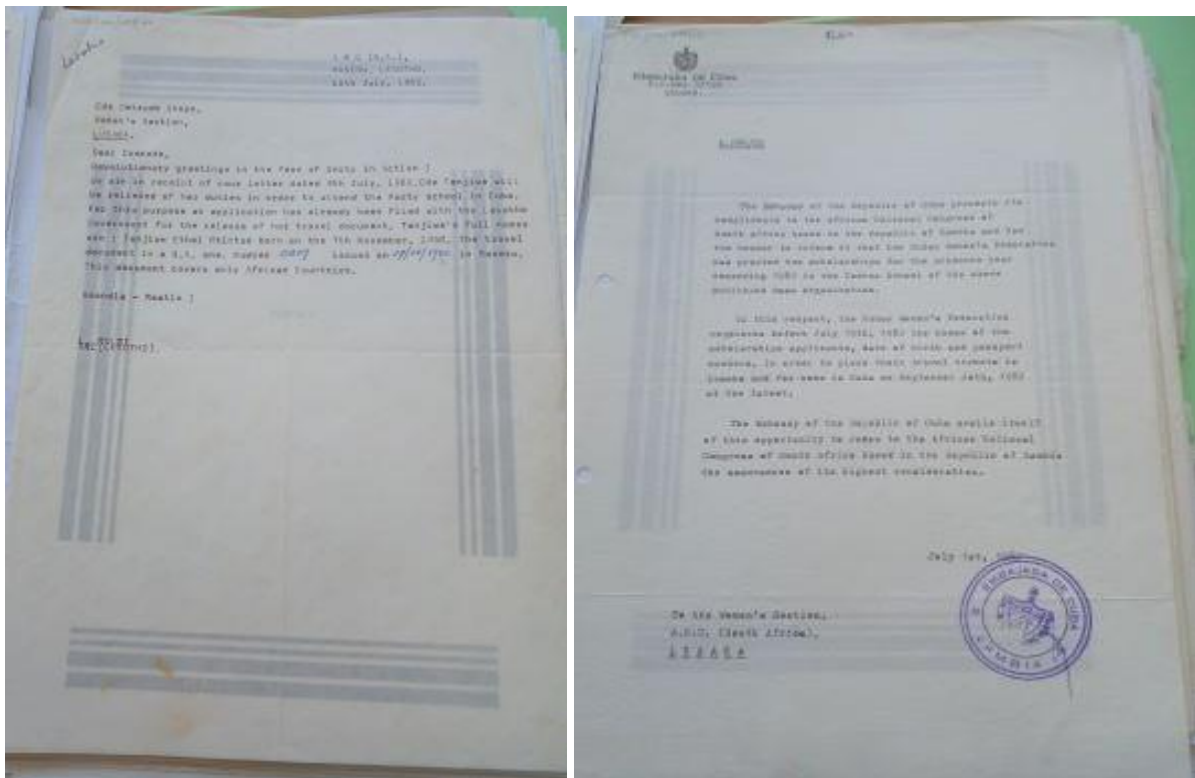


Figure 33. Cuban scholarship offers and response

I was born in Gauteng from a family of five siblings and grew up in South Africa and Zambia in the main. I also joined Umkhonto we Sizwe, wing of the ANC. After completing my military training in the ANC camps in Angola. I was then taken to a political school;

we normally call it a party school in Cuba where I did my political science. The Cuban government through its embassy offered and awarded several scholarships to young men and women to enable them to pursue their studies¹³⁸. After coming back, I was deployed to the head office in Lusaka section of communications, I used to write articles about women emancipation and radio freedom (Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba).



Figure 34. Jerry Matjila

I was led by women, Dr Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma was my boss, Maite-Nkoana Mashabane was my boss. Aunt Sophy DeBryn She [Gertrude Shope] was my boss in the army. I came to your house in 1978. You were preparing me, then I had to organise the youth to go to Cuba. Two things Mme MaShope, we were wild, we were thousands of us coming out of Soweto in 1976. Really, really wild, with huge ambitions. But you Mme MaShope, the late Mme Florence Mophosho and Mme Motshabi said to us ‘some of you are young, so go and study,

¹³⁸ Lyndall Shope and NAHECS archives

because in future, we will need your skills. And I think some...listened to the advice (Jerry Matjila).¹³⁹



Figure 35. Sheila Shope-Sithole

On December 1961 I left my biological mother's home in Tzaneen Nwamitwa to come to Soweto and stay with my other mother Gertrude Shope. We stayed at House no 600 Central Jabavu Soweto. My mother Grace was the first to be married to my father Mark Shope. I came to Johannesburg in 1961 as I was preparing for my matric year in 1962. Patrick Mkhondo was my teacher at Isaac Morrison. In the Shope household, we were all children, there were no Grace or Gertrude's children. When people got stranded, they sought refuge at my parents 'house. There were also meetings held at the house, that's where I met people like

¹³⁹ Speech at Gertrude Shope's 99th birthday on 17 August 2024. Matjila is the permanent representative of South Africa to the United Nations (UN).

Mama Sisulu. Mama [Gertrude] would cook among other things, mala mogodu and soup. Mama is a perfectionist, and she loves flowers, in particular Rose and Chamaeleon. My father left for exile in 1963, and we were left with Mama [Gertrude Shope]. I remember Mama taking us to Hickok near Isaac Morris to take pictures, she had organised a photographer, this was in 1966. A few days after, Mama disappeared (Sheila Shope-Sithole).¹⁴⁰

The students' protest march in Soweto has been widely documented as it marked one of the major turning points of South African history and the ultimate fast-tracking of the emancipation of the oppressed black majority. Addedly, the uprising served as inspiration to a sizeable number of historical novels by writers such as Miriam Tlali, Mbulelo Mzamane, Sipho Sepamla, Wally Serote and Letepe Maisela. It also became the subject of works by poets, musicians, visual artists and dramatists alike. Various films and documentaries and theatre productions such as Dukuza ka Macu's *Night of the Long wake* and Jerry Raletsebe's *The Eve* were also produced. "The uprising is an integral part of the intersection of memory and history and is underpinned by the unfolding struggle for national liberation in South Africa" (Hlongwane and Ndlovu 2019: 155-156).

I did telecommunications engineering. When I came back home, I was director-general of telecommunications. We left Prague in 1971. I think a child's mind is interesting. We acclimatised to Prague quickly. We made friends and spoke Czech. You had to learn quickly and properly. I think I was already politically aware. I noticed that when the Czech flag flew, it did so with the Soviet Union. Czech children also had to study Russian as a second language. But there were also discriminatory attitudes, so when the two countries separated. With us we were probably the first black children, so we were a curiosity everywhere. There were older people from countries such as Mozambique and they would say there is your father, and our kinky hair was also a curiosity. I didn't deduce any racism. From Prague we went to Tanzania, so

¹⁴⁰ Mark and Gertrude Shope's eldest daughter from Mark Shope's first marriage.

we had to learn kiSwahili, then went to Cuba, and guess what, we had to learn Spanish because classes were in Spanish. When we were in Tanzania, in particular that's when we were really politicised. Starting in Czeck, 1971 we were in Zambia and 1972 Tanzania and 1976 we did our high school, on our way to Cuba. When we were in Zambia, the headquarters of the ANC, there used to be a lot of meetings at home. I was making tea and baking and cooking, even when you are tired and say you want to go do your homework, daddy used to say, "come here and listen, we are talking about your country". Now I'm grateful, but at that time it was exhausting. We understood that we couldn't leave with our parents. There were other children, but their parents were not ready to let them go. So, daddy said we want you to go to Cuba, it's a young revolution and there will be challenges, but we want you to grow with the revolution. We were not at the same place. My brother was in primary at the Youth Island. Thaninga and I were at the same school then I went to university in 1976 to 1983 (Lyndall Shope-Qubeka).

My name is Mikatekiso Kubayi, I'm a researcher at the Global Dialogue, associated with UNISA, I'm also a PhD candidate at the University of Johannesburg. Granny, she's, my grandparent. My grandfather Mark Shope Married twice. He first married Grace Mhlohlonyi Shope. They parted [with Grace] in his work as a political and liberation worker. In those years they met with Granny Gertrude in the structures. My aunt is Sheila Shope-Sithole. My mother is Ntombi Regan Shope. I stayed with her [Granny] very briefly when I was in Zambia because I moved to SOMAFCO¹⁴¹. I was in boarding schools throughout. I've not had an opportunity to leave with her. I was about six years when I stayed with her, about forty years ago. She's a person with a rich

¹⁴¹ Acronym for Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. Also see Morrow, S. Maaba, B. Pulumani, L. *Education in Exile: SOMAFCO: The African National School in Tanzania, 1978-1992*. HRCS Press. South Africa.

history in the liberation struggle but to me she was granny. She's a health fanatic. In fact, my late mother will tell me the same thing, I'm not a fan of fruit. She would always throw a fruit my way. It's really amazing that at her age she is still sharp and remembers stuff (Mikatekiso Kubayi).

I must have been eight years when I realised her contribution [to the liberation struggle]. She would visit us at SOMAFSCO, and it would be us *Masupatsela a Sisulu*¹⁴² to welcome our leaders. I've never known her to be anything other than associated her with the struggle...I think they [Mark and Gertrude Shope] stayed in Berea or Hilbrow, they also lived in Bedfordview for a while. They were quite senior when they returned and wouldn't leave by themselves for a long time. They were among the early group to return. I was not born in exile, I was in Limpopo then shipped out, all four of us via Botswana then to Zambia to stay with grand dad, Mark Shope and Granny, Gabaza, Shiela, Victor and myself. She's definitely celebrated, she's Isithwalandwe, her contribution is memorialised (Mikatekiso Kubayi).

I'm 80 years old¹⁴³, I've been a member the African National Congress since I was about 20 years. I've been active in the political, cultural, military and underground sectors. Initially I was based in Botswana. When I left South Africa, I went to the United States of America to do a Master of Fine Arts. Before I left for America, I was already in the underground of the ANC. I was recruited by a lady called Joyce Sikhakhane and we were all arrested, all 300 of us were arrested in 1969. I was very impatient in America, because I wanted to come back and be part of the struggle. So, from America I went to Botswana, I received my military training in Botswana, followed by Angola then followed by

¹⁴²Directly translated 'Direction pointers or those who show the way'. Also were referred to as Trailblazers, a youth movement within the ANC. <https://www.polity.org.za/article/letter-from-masupatsela-a-walter-sisulu-to-the-anc-nec-2016-04-08>

¹⁴³ Mongane Wally Serote

the military training in the Soviet Union. In Botswana the most important training is combat, military and underground work, how to deface yourself. Only that person and that person know you, and because they knew you, they will assist you in many things, to get things inside the country. In Angola we were strengthening military combat work. In the Soviet Union it was even strong combat which had strong shorting etcetera. In Angola there were women.

There was a very important principle we used and that was women should determine the pace of what we were doing. Where women were the best was in shooting. When a woman takes a gun and says I'm shooting, even if she says she will hit on the forehead, she will hit you. Mme Ruth was very good with that. I think it comes from the natural care that women have...from the natural skill of making sure that when things happen, they do according to principle. Women care for life. I can't exactly remember when I met [Aunty Gerty].

I can't remember if it was in Lusaka or Botswana. I met her in both countries underground. She was an underground worker too. For example, when they were in Zambia, they worked openly but in Botswana they had to go underground because it was very close to South Africa. I do not know when she received her military training, but it must be in the 1960s with boMme Ruth [Mompoti]. She operated in countries such as Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland and you needed to have military training and underground work. They used to go to what was called the Front Areas, countries which share immediate borders with South Africa. I was very active in the military; political and cultural sector and it is in that context that I met Mme Ruth Mompoti and Anty Gerty.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ In-person interview with Mongane Wally Serote on 02 August 2024.

‘A sniper of note, A sharpshooter’



Figure 36. From left: Gertrude Shope, Charles Nqakula, Joe Modise and Nosiviwe Maphisa Nqakula

Within post-structural gender theories gender is seen as being socially constructed and not biologically determined thus implying that gender can be changed and open to reproduction, reconstruction, alteration, challenge and resistance. The military is not a gender-neutral institution. The military environment celebrates and privileges maleness and when women enter the military and break down some of the barriers of the male-dominated institution, it might be interpreted as a spread of the norm of equality (Holmgren 4-5). Receiving military training in the 1960s made Gertrude Shope part of a handful of women who broke down barricades associated with the institution. Shope demonstrated that she was capable of deploying the same tasks assigned to men with the same meticulousness and even exceed expectations, for she was a soldier and not merely a woman soldier. Mongane Wally Serote shares an instance in February 1987 while staying at Gertrude Shope’s house in Zambia Lusaka:

When we were underground and had to take turns in guarding against being attacked by soldiers, Aunt Getty would always demand to take the two hours turn with me and say that she is also a soldier. In February 1987 I stayed in Zambia for six months. I was mainly based in Botswana but each time I went to Zambia,

at the headquarters, I would stay at the Shope house. I call her aunt Gerty, and she called me 'her son'.



Figure 37. Mongane Wally Serote

She was a sharpshooter *ne ba mo tshepile thata*¹⁴⁵. While in Lusaka we had what was called 'The guard'. This was undertaken each time there was a suspicion of the Boers attacking. One evening I went out for my two-hour guard and when I came back, she said she will go to guard. I was uneasy to be guarded by a woman. However, under her guard I slept comfortably, and I got used to her guarding while I rest for my next shift. Particularly in Angola, they knew how to detect aircrafts coming from far, Aunt Gerty was trained in operating the anti-aircraft gun (Mongane Wally Serote).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Translated from Setswana as 'they trusted her a lot', Serote was implying that Gertrude Shope was trusted for her shooting skills, she just didn't miss.

¹⁴⁶ In-person conversation with Mongane Wally Serote on 31 October 2023 and an interview on 02 August 2024.



SEARCH SITE... GO

Gertrude Shope



Synopsis:

Teacher, member of the ANC, chairperson of the Central Western Jabavu Branch of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW).

First Name:

Gertrude

Last Name:

Shope

Date of Birth:

15-August-1925

Location of Birth:

Johannesburg, South Africa



Figure 38. Screenshot of Gertrude Shope in military uniform

I understood Mme Gertrude as someone who was trained in bringing down the aeroplanes with a gun. For instance, when you are in Angola, they had a way of detecting when an aeroplane was coming, and they would warn everyone in the camp, and we take cover. It's only those who were trained that would then take positions to protect the camp and Mme Gerty was trained in that. Mme Gerty had a very motherly

approach. For example, she called me ‘my son’, so I was based in Botswana, but every time I went to Lusaka, I would first see her and tell her that I am here to do one two three, I’ll come stay with you. I’ve always stayed with her. We always expected that apartheid military would come. So, whenever we were in Botswana or Zambia, we would always go on guard duty. And I would always say to Mme Gerty, I would double up for you and she would say no, go to sleep. So, I’m sleeping, and Mme Gerty is sleeping. She would say I’m a soldier so I will guard. So that when your turn comes you are fresh (Mongane Wally Serote).



Figure 39. Gertrude Shope (right) and Joyce Keemenao Keitseng (left)

Ke buwa ka seganka gare ga basadi, seganka se se segolo, seganka sa ditotsa South Africa. Maburu ba re tsentse tsebetsebe. Ke buwa ka Mma Shope. O ne a sa tshabe leburu gonna mabelebele ka dibetsa. O ne a feta hela, ngwanyana o mo sehlana, a gata a gatoga. Ke gopola le

motsamawo wa gagwe, motho wo ke a mo tshaba. Santse eke mo rolela motsei le now (Joyce Keemenao Keitseng).¹⁴⁷

Translation

I speak of a fierce warrior among women, a great warrior, a warrior from South Africa. The Boers had us under pressure. Their mastery of weapons never fazed her. She would just pass through; a light skinned girl with a spring in her step, I have great respect for her. I still take my hat off to her even today.

I never served in MK, but I do know that she has a deep relationship with the MK and quite respected. Actually, I know that she rescued some of the carders in Quadro, Angola. She is quite revered for her service and her impartiality (Mikatekiso Kubayi: 2024).¹⁴⁸

In the Netflix documentary, *Greatest Events of WWII in Colour* (2019) episode five titled "Siege of Stalingrad", the Soviet Unions are seen retaliating and resisting the Nazis' occupation following the destruction of most of the backside of Stalingrad, a most cherished area named after Joseph Stalin who was a Soviet politician and communist revolutionary leader at the time until 1953. Both men and women were dedicated to the opposition of Hitler's troops and in 1939 for the first time in world war, women volunteered as soldiers. As the invasion progressed, around a million Soviet women trained, half of them serving in active combat roles. Some were in 'tank crews, others were snipers and gunners. Even as nurses and medics, they were expected to go to the battlefield to assist wounded and many nurses died on the battlefield'. These women were armed and trained on how to use their weapons, despite being in supportive roles. Women were an addition the 'Nazis would never dream of deploying'. So, they were exalted with being confronted with the sight of women whom in Germany were only regarded as mothers and homemakers but never soldiers.

At this point, the Germans realised that women's participation in this war was "proof of the denatured essence that is Soviet communism". Also, this was a demonstration

¹⁴⁷ MaKeitseng, as fondly known, accommodated Gertrude Shope and her three children upon going to exile in 1966. The Shope family stayed with the Keitseng from February 1966 to November 1966. The Keitseng family remained an alliance of the ANC ever since.

¹⁴⁸ Telephonic interview on 07 June 2024.

that the aim was not just to conquer the Nazis army but a whole people. As the war was waging further, women were at the forefront as snipers. 'Women were good shots, because what it takes to be a good sniper requires patience and precision, and women were trained to be snipers, particularly for those general enate characteristics.

As the ANC was preparing to return to South Africa after the unbanning in 1990, they underwent a retraining and rearming process and Baleka Mbete narrates how Gertrude Shope was at the helm as follows:

You must speak to Makhosazana also, because in there you will get a picture of MaShope leading us in a shooting range in Angola. UMaShope! Ha! In a shooting range, *angithi* it's ahead of our coming, there had to be that training. Whether you previously been trained or not, but you had to go through, because we were coming now to a very unpredictable, in many different ways environment. So, the whole group went to Angola for that specific task. Hayi uyadubula uMaShope, ubani? This was when we were about to come home. We are being prepared to come back to South Africa, because in South Africa the environment is hay way, you don't know what's going to happen, what are you going to come across at which point as you are deployed all over the country. It's unpredictable, so, you've got to be appropriately prepared for being plunged back into this environment. It was very volatile as you know. So, uMaShope, sniper of note! That's my last word to you (Baleka Mbete 2023).¹⁴⁹

The Homecoming

...she brought us home and we are happy that she is the one that led us home. It was in June 1990. At that time, only a few people had preceded that date. Only those whose names have specifically been talked about between the old order and our leaders that they were going to come in because they had to be part of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). People like Chris Hani came before us. Remember that legally we were not allowed to come back. When we came in June

¹⁴⁹ In-person interview with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023.

1991, there were about plus minus twenty of us. Sis Barbara [Masekela] was there, Nosiviwe Maphisa Nqakula, I think Mavivi [Myakayaka-Manzini] was one of us. We were a delegation from the leadership of the Women's Section from the outside, we were coming led by MaShope. At that time, I was leading Secretariat Administration. Mme Ruth Mompati was one of the first delegation to arrive in South Africa, just double check I'm sure, my memory is no longer reliable (Baleka Mbete).¹⁵⁰

Before negotiations we formed what was called, Women Coalition, which involved more than 100 women organisations in the country. With the Women's League playing a leading role. This is where we got our mandate. We had what was called the Women's Charter, and it was like our bible. Initially the women played a side role, and we demanded for the women's voice to be heard and myself and Baleka Mbete. The idea was to involve all women from churches and youth organisations... Definitely, definitely Gertrude Shope should be honoured, the woman took part in the struggle because the memorialisation would not be for the sake of memory but to teach the coming generation what we went through, because each time someone speaks about the struggle it's names of men that comes through (Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka).¹⁵¹

...we only came back in 1992 when everybody was already in the country. It was a dream come true, in fact there were mixed feelings. We didn't know what was going to happen to us as a country and negotiations were still going on, so you go in a situation that was volatile. So, it was mixed feelings. I would assume it would have been even much harder for her [Gertrude Shope], though she was previously involved in the underground structures before she left the country. So, coming back in that capacity and she was elected as the president of the Women's League, she had more responsibility and a broader scope for her to do. Women structures existed in the country, but they were not as solid because of the conditions in the country. So, boMom Gerty revived and strengthened and went to form structures where they did not exist. So,

¹⁵⁰ In-person interview with Baleka Mbete on 03 May 2023.

¹⁵¹ In-person with Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka on 28 November 2022.

the scope was much wider and complex because the terrain was very different from Lusaka because in Lusaka, we were very few but though she was including the mobilisation of all women all over the world but for her to come back home, she was tasked with the responsibility to rebuild the women structures, I think it was difficult.

They succeeded, because the Women's League of today was through their efforts because they laid the foundation when they came back into the country...She likes to cook, just normal food, your pap; morogo, and meat and at times when you say you want to cook rice, she'll be saying "no!no!no! we want pap, we want pap'. So, she was such a warm-hearted mom for me in exile. I don't think she is being celebrated and recognised for her contribution, and it is not only her, but other women like your Ruth Mompoti, Mme MaNjobe, she's late, Doreen Motshabi, Florence Mophosho. They were also very strong women who are not celebrated as they should be.

To be honest with you, they really raised the flag of women all over the world and when we came back home, they made sure that the struggles of women are on top of the agenda. If you meet a young girl in the street, whether in Limpopo, Soweto or wherever, and you ask them, who is Gertrude Shope they would not even know. But if you say, who is Chris Hani or Nelson Mandela or Nzo [Alfred], they would know these people. But when it comes to women who really fought in the struggle against apartheid and the emancipation of women, very little is being done about them. And I am happy now because I hear that you want to write a book or di history on her life. So, we need to do more.¹⁵²

She [Gertude Shope] wasn't the obvious choice as such during the 1991 conference because there were lots of contestations. We work in a collective and none of us was elected both from inside and exile. So, a woman like Winnie Mandela too, who played an important role, who actually contested for the position of the ANC Women's League president but lost to Gertrude Shope. Women like MaSisulu contested,

¹⁵² Telephonic interview with Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba on 13 July 2024.

but later withdrew to support Gertrude Shope, so Gertude Shope emerged, meaning she was the best at that time in 1991 and I think it's because of the work she did, in bringing the women together, from exile and from inside the country, and her leadership skills she was very respected even within the ANC itself. We came back in June 1990; the ANC was unbanned in February 1990.

I was one of the first ten women who formed what was called the Task Team. The Task Team was nominated in Lusaka through a conference with women who came from inside the country who said now that the ANC is unbanned, what do we do. Five were elected from the Women Section and five from inside the country. And as we went back into the country, we involved more people in the Women's League. From exile it was comrade Gertrude, Baleka Mbete, Nosiviwe Maphisa, myself [Mavivi] and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Inside the country it was Albertina Sisulu, Sister Barnard Ncube, Dorothy Nyembe, Feroza Adams and Winnie Mandela. I was in the same flight as Gertrude Shope coming back. It was exciting but it was scary at the same time because at that time I had a baby and had to come back with those babies. And we were the first biggest group to arrive at the then Jan Smuts Airport. I remember when my son used to watch South African documentaries like Bopha, so when we were told that we are arriving in Johannesburg he said 'Johannesburg Bopha'? So, we didn't know what would happen. So, we didn't know whether we would be welcomed, or whether the harassment by the police will continue, or if it was a trap to get all the ANC people inside the country then deal with them. So, we had to go back and be part and parcel of the ANC.

On 7 May 1991, *The Daily News* reported that it was no surprise that after she arrived in the country and after successfully reviving the ANCWL she forced the national executive committee of the organisation to take a stand on women's emancipation.

When she had retired from active participation, when I went to visit her at the residence where she lived with Lyndall... she was preoccupied with recording the stories of women, the stories and the names of women and

recording their stories and trying to find a way that she ensured that women's role is not forgotten. When I saw her now on her 97th birthday in Gaborone, she was still very determined that she is still working, and I know that what she is still working on is this issue of recording the names and the stories of women (Baleka Mbete).

I think [Gertrude Shope] was one of our firm leaders as you know, women participated at the national level and she happened to be one the only two women in the National Executive Committee, her and Rith Mompoti. She also replaced another powerful woman, Florence Mophosho. So I would say within the Women Section she opened the way, and when we had this conference, Gertrude Shope was elected, based of course of her participation in the liberation struggle. The year of women was declared by the African National Congress, and not just the Women Section. I wouldn't say I was the only one who was in the forefront in fighting for women's rights. It was the policy of the Women Section that we mobilise women and they play an import role, and that role is recognised by the ANC. We learnt that without the participation of women, our struggle would be more difficult, and so, we considered the importance of developing women and promoting them to rightful place of priority, that was our role. Perhaps because some of use articulate it through writing in Voice of Women.¹⁵³

As an illustration of her incessant commitment to recording women's stories, in 2002 and 2006, Gertrude Shope compiled a publication entitled *Malibongwe: Celebrating our Unsung Heroines*, encapsulating short biographies of two hundred women, a hundred in each. These books featured women who have played different roles in the liberation of South Africa (Shope 2002; 2006).

She [Gertude Shope] was the obvious choice [as president of the ANCWL] and I unhesitatingly say yes, I always have this image of her holding our hand, and us being young, much younger than her, coming home, coming from out there where we had been deployed and now, we are coming home. So, that kind of put her ahead of everybody else in

¹⁵³ In-person interview with Mavivi Manzini-Myakayaka on 28 November 2023.

terms of the broad exposure she would have had from the external missions, the understanding of the actual terrain of working with the international world but also having stayed in touch. Because this is the thing about external missions. Our leaders were not preoccupied with their personal lives, within the context of the countries of the world. Remember we came back and relaunched, under comrade Walter Sisulu, part of the campaign then and with us under MaShope, the Women's League structures on the ground. So back then, the women structures of the ANC were divided into 14 regions. So, we arrived back, and the first thing was to divide us and deploy us to specific regions all over the country in the 14 regions. So, it would be MaShope and MaSisulu in front leading an interim effort to reorganise, remobilise, restructure and relaunch Women's League on the ground all over hence the fourteen regions, then when we were ready, we went to the first conference in Kimberly. MaShope *waba upresident wethu*.¹⁵⁴ So, she retired at the end of that...and handed over to uMama Winnie [Madikizela Mandela] ...uMaShope was ready to handover and in terms of the ripeness of time, the time was correct for uMama Winnie to come into that space (Baleka Mbete).

In my case I'm lucky that it was half of the 30 years in exile boMaShope had been there for a very long time. Exile is another country, is another world, but I really hope that the people of South Africa will fetch even over decades or whatever long time it takes, the history and the story that still sits there all over the place because we kind of closing it out. It's that time you were out there, *thina* we were fighting here, yes you were fighting but that was part of that fight. I hope sis Barbara is doing well in putting her story out there, we came with her that day with MaShope. And she was so angry (whispering), on the flight from Lusaka, because she was just reflecting on how long it took for South Africans, being out there, fighting for their freedom and finally it's like okay, come back. So, in a way it's infuriating indeed and Sis Barbara being one to fly off in anger was just expressing that on the flight to Lusaka, I will never forget

¹⁵⁴ Xhosa or Zulu phrase translated 'MaShope became our president' in English.

that. I didn't know what was going through my mind. The fear that I was coming back into a country where my mother was born. Thank you for your interest in hearing my voice on this, I'm grateful to be able to talk about *umama wam* (my mother).

In his paper entitled *Culture(s) of the African National Congress of South Africa: Imprint of Exile Experiences*, Raymond Suttner (2010: 182-183) articulates on the intricacies of exile and its characterisation of varied experiences. In these experiences, long-lasting bonds marked by shared times of hardship which Baleka Mbete and Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba allude to were formed. Those who were outside the country often portrayed a sense of 'veteranism' as compared to activists who remained in South Africa who in some cases were considered to "not having the same discipline provided in the military organised exiled movement'. Mbete stated that they were all South Africans fighting apartheid in different locations of the world, however, she stresses that the site of extensive resistance against apartheid was within South Africa.

Mme Gertrude Shope was very strict as chairperson of the first board of Freedom Park, making us aware that we were dealing with a very important project of the struggle, so she wanted to know every detail we were executing. That's the first thing. The second thing was the monies, that we must understand that this is the government's money we are using. The third of course which is expected, is that we obey the question of non-sexism in executing the work. In those things, she was extremely strict and I'm happy I worked under her in that way because it gives you a very deep consciousness about the issues.¹⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

This chapter has displayed and counters the notion that oral histories are merely anecdotal tales but rather fundamental frameworks that can be deployed to analyse women's social and cultural constructs. Narrators in this chapter have also demonstrated the power of orality as a pragmatic philosophical approach to survival and self-representation (Minor and Pitts 2009: 4). During the interview process with

¹⁵⁵ In-person interview with Mongane Wally Serote on 05 August 2024.

narrators, names of other women who have in their different ways contributed to the liberation struggle, both directly and indirectly have been unearthed. Mongane Wally Serote, the now South African Laurette Poet, a cultural activist and member of the MK who used poetry in the 1970s and 1980s to mobilise support in America and England on the plight faced by black people in South Africa, pointed out that, he was in 1967 recruited into the ANC by Joyce Sikhakhane, a journalist who was the first black woman to join *Rand Daily Mail* and a media house. Sikhakhane is revered for challenging the effects of apartheid on the general black population.¹⁵⁶

In preserving the narratives, I have presented them in a way that maintains the oral text and still does not disturb their originality. Notes and comments by amanuensis remain, as does punctuation that demonstrates dynamism. In this way, each narrator's voices remain undisturbed (Minor and Pitts 2009: 5). Due to the nature of oral history, it became clear particularly at my last conversation with Gertrude Shope in Botswana 2022, that she struggled to recall memories from the later part of her years. As Gluck and Patai posit, oral history is regarded as a reflection of one's memory of the past, thus prone to inaccuracies and contradictions. In that case "indicative of women's consciousness rather than experience". The role of memory is to meaningfully connect what happened in the past to what is happening in the present. Therefore, oral history cannot be treated as a source of narrative truth but rather as one of many possible versions of an individual's past" (1977: 139-157). It is for those reasons that Chapter One and Chapter Two of this thesis are important in corroborating some of the oral text in this chapter. Equally, this chapter is significant as it brings forth experiences and information missing in other sources as I seek to write Gertrude Shope's biography.

Although at this stage I could not ascertain precisely when Gertrude Shope received her military training, during one of our interviews she confirmed that she already had trained in the underground of the MK before leaving South Africa in 1966 and I suppose that it would have been shortly after leaving the country and arriving in Botswana in 1966 and 1967 as per norm that she received the combat training and later in Angola and possibly the Soviet Union. This supposition was substantiated by

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/biography-joyce-sikhakhane-rankin-victoria-sedeno>.

Mongane Serote who was trained in operating underground and at different levels of combat military in Botswana, Angola, and the Soviet Union. Serote also mentioned that Gertrude Shope was often deployed to Botswana which is regarded as a Front Line as it shares a border with South Africa. Furthermore, he mentioned that only people trained in underground operations could be deployed to these areas as they knew how to deface. A point that has protruded indicating that Gertrude Shope underwent military training is that 'she was respected within the MK' as alluded by Mikatekiso Shope and there was also an endemic appreciation of her poise with being great with the gun as observed by Baleka Mbete who referred to her as 'a sniper of note' while Wally Mongane Serote called her 'a sharpshooter'. I am in accord with Gqola's (2006) assertion that the "project of representation and herstoricisation does not offer wholeness or closure" but seeks to allow space for women's stories to incessantly proliferate every space of society.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Towards a Biography: Not just Getrude Shope's Story but a Story of Women

Biography is a form of history concerned with capturing stories of individuals and their actions whether tragic or heroic, and the impact of their ideas (Wolpert 2010: 399). Through this study, I have attempted to weave the story of Gertrude Shope by locating her in different positionalities. This is to say that this is not a conclusion but a broader telling of Shope's story. As highlighted earlier, Shope's story isn't just hers but intertwined with those who crossed paths with her and also touches broadly on the marginalisation of women in the different spheres of South African society and beyond. Through this PhD journey, I felt compelled to bring to the fore stories of women I met physically or through other modes at this juncture reminding me that the story of Shope isn't just hers. By revealing glimpses of her life in this study, some of these women have simultaneously unearthed theirs, be it sad or good. Stories such as loss, grief, longing for home, and finding comfort in mere survival. As illustrated by Mbeti in chapter five who posited that being in exile also meant giving up your life to the movement and surrendering to the course while sacrificing what should and could be normal. Mbeti shared a story of the 1985 attack in Botswana while she was still pregnant, a time when she had hoped her mother would locate her and come and help take care of her baby. Despite her being heavily pregnant, she had to fearlessly go through an engulfing night so to survive the attack by the apartheid mercenaries and protect her baby.

Wally Serote too candidly pointed out how Ruth Mompati a very close associate of Gertrude Shope had to sacrifice raising her children when she left South Africa in 1962 and only reunited with them six years later. Her sacrifice was towards the quest to liberate the black people in South Africa. Gertrude Shope too had experienced a scatter of her family as a result of the apartheid regime which resulted in her husband Mark Shope being forced into exile in 1962 and having to send one child to Zimbabwe and the others to Mafikeng before she too fled to exile. When narrating stories of exile where she met Gertrude Shope, Mbeti accentuates these feelings of longing, loss, and hopefulness which simultaneously demand to restrain oneself 'not to hope too much', in that "...it's a difficult existence in an exile environment because if you leave

in that environment, you dare not sabotage yourself by hoping too much. You dare not preoccupy yourself too immediately and too intensely with the hope of going home". In fact, going home is sacred soil in the soul". She pointed out that she could not even begin to imagine how the likes of Gertrude Shope who went into exile in 1966, ten years prior felt like. Baleka Mbete then Baleka Kgositsile, puts to bare this array of at times opposing feelings in her poem titled *Exile Blues*:¹⁵⁷

let them roll
let the blues roll out but "this load is heavy it requires men
"has nothing to do with baritone or beard
it is a word of warning wisdom
when the uncontrollable miles
between you and home
the beautiful land
you vowed to liberate
become unbearable
and you ask yourself
if it was worth your leaving the loved ones
as if you left home
a victim of a stupor
when having been rejected
like vomit from a stomach
you try to examine
if it is the food that is stale
or the stomach that is sick

¹⁵⁷ In *Malibongwe: Poems from the struggle by ANC women* (2020: 137), 'which after being banned in South Africa, occupies its rightful intellectual and creative space for the first time in four decades'. The anthology was edited by Lindiwe Mabuza, a.k.a. Sono Molefe, and was first published in 1981. The new version has a preface by Uhuru Phalafala and Makhosazana Xaba wrote the introduction.

*when you are threatened by paralysis
in the midst of so much to be done
when the pettiness has played so many games with you
that like an addict
you do not remember when you did not crave
just another piece of gossip
when the demon trinity
inferiority complex
self-assertion
sadism
have become your masters
that you put the stamp
on your own death certificate
as you try to destroy
when you drink yourself insensible
into the gaping dark void
that is ready like the vicious jaws
of a shark to receive you
when some other comrades have fallen victim
to mental breakdown
and you shudder wondering
if you won't be next to be ambushed
when you make a habit of exchanging blows
that should be kept for the enemy
when you feel trapped
suffocating cornered
at a cul-de-sac*

*and your tears roll down uncontrollably
as memories invade you daily
maybe let them roll
let them blues roll out let them roll out the blues
till oblivion sneaks to your rescue
when later you feel lighter
retrieve the zeal that made you leave home
lest you go down the drain
with the stinking rot of history
when the song goes “this load is heavy it requires men”
that has nothing to do with baritone or
beard
it is a word of wisdom and warning that our history is so
reddened
with the blood of the best of our land
even the enemy gets more vicious by the second
because the enemy also knows “victory is certain!” is not
an empty slogan*

Refusal to be Marginalised

Shope's story refuses to focus solely on her, for it draws on the unrecorded history of a people. Thus, in telling her story Shope speaks for, and with, the women among whom she worked and lived (Khuzwayo: 2018). Indeed, in locating Shope I drew and was drawn to histories of women whose stories were unrecorded or have been silenced and ignored. The stories of the midwives that Tamia Botes (2021) captured in her influential book, *Where Have the Midwives Gone: Everyday Histories of Voetvroue in Johannesburg*. “In this discursive work, Botes interrogates the role of “a black autonomous midwife who looks after the health of and nurtures new life in her community. She mentors others in these practices and in this way, shares her knowledge across communal lines. But who is the Voetvrou? What is her history? What constitutes being a Voetvrou? How does one come to be a Voetvrou?”

Similarly, Professors, Siona O'Connell and Loretta Feris from the University of Pretoria have used film to capture stories of these traditional midwives in the Northern Cape (2024). Not only is storytelling through film accessible but is also a relevant creative way of capturing women's stories. Creative ways like that of Noria Mabasa who through her artistic protest as a sculptor disrupted the terrain that was known to be reserved for men. She broke down patriarchal walls and boundaries through her art while simultaneously narrating women's stories through sculptor and pottery as she did with her gigantic three-meter-high sculpture depicting the 1956 Women's march.



Figure 40. Sculpture by Noria Mabasa to commemorate the 1956 women's march

Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu, Professor of History also has shown in his study of the twenty-one nurses who went to exile in 1961 following stringent and gruesome health laws against black health professionals such as those I pointed out in chapter one.

Legislation targeting black people saw thousands fleeing from South Africa into exile. The gifting of two copies of *Malibongwe* (2002 and 2006) by Gertrude Shope at our first meeting in October 2021 was received with the utmost honour and I was overwhelmed by the gesture. In journeying through this PhD, I have come to realize that Shope bequeathed me with a task to not cease telling stories of women who contributed to the liberation struggle of South Africa and other spaces. As such this study is an attempt to do my bit in paying homage and capturing Shope's story towards contributing to this lacuna.

On 6 June 2024, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) handed over a list of final list of members of parliament at a Ceremony held at the Constitutional Hill. Mosotho Moepya, chairperson of the IEC highlighted the fact that the 174 women representation against the 264 men "is worth celebrating as it is an achievement". The Secretary of Parliament countered Maepya's assertion and mentioned that it is unpleasing to see a decline in women's representation from 45% in 2019 to 43% in 2024. Addedly, the secretary emphasised that they are still committed to "gender parity and equality". This moment reminded me of a conference in 2022 on Arts and Heritage that I attended in East London. Of the eight panels consisting of three to five panelists, only two were women, those being Baleka Mbete and Nomsa Mazwai. At the end of that day, I posed the question and asked why that was. During a closing dinner that night while chatting to Dr Somadoda Fikeni, he mentioned that what I raised was pertinent and went on to cite that "we men have normalized gender inequality. This conference convening was "non-partisan" consisting of members of the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and others like us who are heritage practitioners and creatives.

Mongane Wally Serote's play, *Sikhahlel'u Tambo*, an adaptation of his book published in 2021 was shown at the South African State Theatre in April 2023. The play captured the story of Oliver Tambo in a succinct and utterly high level of creativity and at the same time subtly showed snippets of Serote's journey and relationship with Tambo in the ANC. A few days after the show I had an opportunity to sit with Ntate Serote to give feedback about the show, which I did. What chiefly poked my interest in the show was the story of Phila, a young woman who was arrested and killed in detention after long periods of torture. I asked Ntate Serote about Phila and he briefly shared her story and how she was killed in detention. I am haunted by the need to tell Phila's

story, her story, and that of other young women who were murdered in detention and reported to have committed suicides.

The Struggle Continues...

It is important to mention that while a part of this study provides a critique on the representation of women in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle, particularly the ANC-led government and their prioritising men in the national memorialisation projects, this is not to say what has been done thus far in an attempt to redress the past through new heritage sites is in vain. At the same time, it still does not negate the reality that a balanced gender transformation of the heritage landscape needs to happen. My perusal of biographical representations and memory genres in this study has also unearthed the unflinching efforts by women who have taken the baton from the likes of Shope, who through art are unapologetically confronting the ANC government for their dubious leadership at the same time continuing to celebrate women who contributed to the liberation struggle of South Africa. On 10 May 2024, the much-awaited album *Sankofa* by Thandiswa Mazwai was released, making it her sixth instalment, following the likes of *Ibhokwe*, *Zabalaza*, and *Belede*, she yet again paid homage to Miriam Makeba, through a song called *With Love to Makeba*. From the interviews I had, particularly with Baleka Mbete and Serote, it became apparent that this generation is willing and eager to share these important stories of our past. Therefore, we need to tell these stories over and over again so that there isn't a single generation spared from understanding and remembering its history. I agree with Nadia Kamies' assertion that "it is through telling our stories in a multiplicity of voices that we can hope to transcend the racist boxes" (Kamies 2020) and the monolithic marginalisation of women's stories. The 16 June 1976 commemoration is an apt example of the value of telling stories in their multiplicity in the memory and heritage of the liberation struggle of South Africa. A period that saw the fleeing of several school children into exile, most of which Gertrude Shope played a motherly role during their exile.

On the 48th anniversary of the fateful 16 June 1976, while watching a news channel that featured some of the former students, such as Peter Moloto, Seth Khumalo, and Louise Peterson, I was reminded of a conversation I had with Lyndall Shope in

February 2023. I posed a question to Lyndall regarding the celebration and representation of her mother Gertrude Shope, and she responded that "people remember and celebrate who they know". The June 16 commemoration has been entrenched in our psyche and the accompanying screening of *Sarafina* (1992), the musical by Mbongeni Ngema has created not only a tradition but remembering seems to be winning against forgetting. As Professor of archaeology Nick Shepherd¹⁵⁸ posits, a constant struggle that humans grapple with when attempting to memorialise is the battle between forgetting and remembering.

Between 2009 and 2011 during the writing of a paper entitled *Fundamental Integrations and Divergences: Mamabolo Histories and Praise Poems* (Seabela 2011), I read Krige and Krige's (1943), *The Realm of a Rain Queen: The Study of the Pattern of Lovedu Society*, probably the most comprehensive anthropological work through a colonial lens on the Balobedu people of Modjadji. From February 2024 we saw a build-up of the drama series called *Queen Modjadji* which was to start airing in July 2024. Generally met with utter excitement, I felt represented as the Mamabolo people of Limpopo, my hometown is a breakaway group from the Lobedu of Modjadji, the Rain Queen. What is significant about the airing of *Queen Modjadji* is the fact that the telling of women's stories portraying their strengths and not as weaker subjects that constantly need saving is deservedly gaining traction in South African television.

This followed *Shaka iLembe* (2023) which illustrated the power that Nandi, Shaka's mother portrayed. The series showed how despite the hardships of being banished by her family and later her husband Senzangakhona, Nandi remained resolute, guided, and supported Shaka to his victories. Mkabayi too whose history diminished her significance in the royal Zulu kingdom and its success, this series demonstrated her power, influence, and prowess. It is not just about telling stories but telling them and filling this lacuna that exists as a result of colonization, apartheid, and patriarchy. Noni Jabavu (1963) writes in *The Ochre People: Scenes from a South African Life* about her Big Ma (her grandmother) whom she reveres for being the first black woman to write for a newspaper. It would seem that Jabavu accentuates this fact to bring forth her grandmother's struggle and resilience. Also, to make us aware that it is also the

¹⁵⁸ May 2024 postgraduate lecture organised by the School of Arts' Interdisciplinary and Museums Studies at the University of Pretoria.

'ordinary' women who are capable of achieving the extraordinary and being impactful. Despite the atrocious colonisation, apartheid and patriarchy, women like Noni Jabavu's Big Ma forged on.

The world changes, and revolutionaries die.

And the children forget.

The ghetto is our first love.

And our dreams are drenched in gold.

We don't even cry,

We don't even cry

About it no more.

Are the beautiful ones really dead?

Nizilibel'uba nizalwa ngobani

You don't know who you were born to

(Oh nizalwa ngobani)

(Oh who are you born from)

Nizilibel'uba nizalwa ngobani na

No matter who you are born to

Oh nizalwa ngobani

Oh who are you born from

*Intlungu zonina belilel'intsuku zobomi
babo*

*Their mother's grief was for the days of
their lives*

Intlungu zobawo, zobawo, zobawo
Befel'ilizwe lakho...

My father's, my father's, my father's pain
Befel'i your country.

Uzigqibil'izindaba.
Ntlungu zonina, ntlungu zobawo
Belil'iintsuku zobomi benu.
Ntlungu zobawo belwel'inguquko
Ntlungu zonina belilela wena
Int'oyaziyo kuzigqib'iindab'eGoli

You finish the stories
Mother's pain, father's pain
These are the days of your life.
My father's pain is that of repentance
The pain of their mother is crying for
you

The sorrows of the father of repentance
Ntlungu zonina belilela wena

What you know is the latest news in
Johannesburg.

Ntlungu zobawo befel'inguquko
The pain of their mother is crying for
you

What you know is the latest news in
Johannesburg.

Madikizela
Qhawe
Nawe Sobukwe
Qhawe
Nawe Mandela
Qhawe lamaQhawe
Madikizela
Qhawe
Nawe Biko
Qhawe
Nawe Sisulu
Qhawe lamaQhawe
Madikizela
Qhawe
Belede
Qhawe

Madikizela
Hero
You too Sobukwe
Hero
You too, Mandela
Hero of Heroes
Madikizela
Hero
You too Biko
Hero
You too Sisulu
Hero of Heroes
Madikizela
Hero
Belede
Hero

<i>Kwame Nkrumah</i>	<i>Kwame Nkrumah</i>
<i>Qhawe lamaQhawe</i>	<i>Hero of Heroes</i>
<i>Madikizela</i>	<i>Madikizela</i>
<i>Qhawe</i>	<i>Hero</i>
<i>Madikizela</i>	<i>Madikizela</i>
<i>Qhawe</i>	<i>Hero</i>
<i>Madikizela</i>	<i>Madikizela</i>
<i>Qhawe lamaQhawe</i>	<i>Hero of Heroes</i>

The lyrics above are from *Nizalwa ngobani* (who birthed you), a song by Thandiswa Mazwai's *Zabalaza* album (2006), and reflect on the issues of memory and memorialization. Mazwai cautions the present generation not to forget the people who came before it and their contribution to South Africa's attainment of freedom. In the chorus, Mazwai sings about some of the leaders who contributed significantly to the liberation struggle of South Africa, such as Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe and Mandela. In the outro, Mazwai intently emphasizes Madikizela, referring to Winnie Madikizela Mandela. It is as though she consciously is stressing Winnie Madikizela-Mandela's role in the collective memory of South Africa that consistently chooses to sideline women. This resonates with a recent lecture organised by the University of Pretoria's Interdisciplinary and Museums Studies in which Nick Shepherd, Professor of Archaeology and Heritage Studies articulated and called us to be more imaginative in memorialisation. In particular, he challenged us and highlighted the issue of the tendency to consign in commemorative and memory expressions. Consigning according to Shepherd (2007), an act that is largely practiced by archaeologists, was employed in the memorialization of Prestwich Street in Cape Town.

Shepherd wetted and provoked my appetite for thinking about how then the remembering of Shope along with other women who contributed to the liberation struggle could also be just an act of consigning, of just ticking a box and 'getting it over and done with. But also, it made me think of the constant question that lingers in my mind about how Shope if represented broadly, would look like. During my interviews with some of the knowledge holders, for instance, Lyndall Shope said "People

remember who they know". I however contend that people remember and get to know who they are being reminded of hence, I deem my chapters one, two, and three that introduce Shope and remembering her contributions to the liberation struggle critical. When I posed the same question to Baleka Mbete, she adamantly highlighted that more can be done to celebrate Shope. For Thaninga Shope and Mikatekiso John Kubayi though was different in that she thought her mother is adequately celebrated and further highlighted the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue, an initiative by the then minister of children and women, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane as one of the efforts that have been put forward to ensure that her legacy lives on. Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba said:

I don't think she is being celebrated and recognised for her contribution, and it is not only her but other women like Ruth Mompati, Mme MaNjobe, she's late, Doreen Motshabi, and Florence Mophosho. They were also very strong women who were not celebrated as they should be. To be honest with you, they raised the flag of women all over the world and when we came back home, they made sure that the struggles of women were on top of the agenda. If you meet a young girl in the street, whether in Limpopo, Soweto, or wherever, and you ask them, who is Gertrude Shope they would not even know. But if you say, who is Chris Hani or Nelson Mandela or Nzo [Alfred], they will know these people. But when it comes to women who fought in the struggle against apartheid and the emancipation of women, very little is being done about them.

In this thesis, I argued that choral music, particularly in schools through the South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod (SASCE) was used by the ANC-led government to subtly mobilise for the memorialisation of men as leaders of the liberation struggle. While the prescripts of the South African National Geographical Names Council, under 'Names that should be avoided' detail that 'Names of individuals who are living should generally be avoided' (Raper 2014). Perhaps Shope's name has been steered away from during the process of naming and renaming because of this caution, however, it has been revealed in chapter four of this thesis that whether dead or alive, women are still marginalised in place and street naming.

I'm concluding my writing of this thesis at a watershed moment for South Africa which resonates with what Manetsi (2017: 135) put forth regarding the emergence of the liberation heritage project at the time and the shift in policy attitudes influenced by the

current and possibly future political dynamics in South Africa. It shall be seen how the schisms brought about the multipartyism impacts on the heritage management policies and in particular those associated with or denoting liberation struggle. The last week of July 2024 has been characterised by a sense of hope as we saw the first black woman in South Africa, Kgothatso Montjane, a tennis player hailing from Limpopo Province winning at Wimbledon women's doubles. Her victory was followed by yet another moment of history-making in the appointment of Deputy Justice Mandisa Maya to ascend to the position of Chief Justice of the South African Republic, making her the first woman to ever hold that position in this country.

While a few women got recognition for leading the struggle for the rights of women, those who participated remain unrecognised. Thus, it is critical to research the lives of all these women and record their stories because only then can we see the whole picture of the lives of these women and how they affected ours. It is at this juncture that I advance for the unearthing of the many women whose stories sit on the brink of historical genocide. Through this study, I hope to provoke further research by those who might be interested in the different spheres and periods of women in the liberation struggle of South Africa. Gertrude Shope might be the core of this study, however my attempt in researching this topic is also to pay homage to the many women whose stories remain untold.

Koko Gertrude bequeathed to me two books she compiled, Mama Baleka Mbetse challenged me and said that "every generation should find its way of writing and packaging history". My attempt in writing Shope's story is to do my bit for the generation that will come after me. As I continue weaving facets of Shope's story, I hope to capture it in more creative and accessible ways. Here I also pay homage to the majority of women whose contribution is yet to be documented. I should declare that the women whose names are inscribed below do not represent an exhausted list of 'deserving' women, but rather the aim is to provide a shortened glossary as compiled by Gertrude Shope and poking the need to keep unearthing women whose stories need to be told. Gertrude Shope (2002 and 2006) provided a basis through a compilation of biographies of women who fought for the liberation of South Africa. As Thandi Lujabe-Rankoe¹⁵⁹ posits, "as you talk about women like Gertrude Shope, you

¹⁵⁹ This was said at Gertrude Shope's 99th Birthday Celebration on 17 August 2024.

must keep writing, because once these stories are written they can never be erased"¹⁶⁰.



Figure 41. Thandi Lujabe-Rankoe

Aleta Mthenjane	Helen Joseph	Mitta Norawuzana
Alice Sisulu	Hettie September	Mrs Bauman
Ann Silinga	Hilda Tshaka	Nana Tlhapane
Anna Manku Legoale	Ida Mntwana	Nellie Jibiza
Beauty Makgothi	Irene Ramakaba	Nohobile Mini
Bertha Mkhize	Jeanette Schoon	Nomava Shangase
Betty Malatsi	Josie Mpama	Nomsa Olive Ndlovu
Cecilia Masondo	June Mlangeni	Nomsi Lilian Seroke
Charlotte Maxeke	Kate Molale	Nonyaniso Mayoli
Cissie Gool	Lillian Ngoyi	Ntombana Mbambiso Tsomo
Dora Tamane	Lindiwe Phahla	Phyllis Altman
Doreen Motshabi	Lorraine Losabe	Rahab Moeketsi

¹⁶⁰ Speech at Gertrude Shope's 99th Birthday Celebration on 17 August 2024.

Doris Mcbride	Lucy Lebenya	Rahima Moosa
Dorothy Sihlangu	Lulu Gwala	Rebecca Keshebang
Duda Mate	Lydia Lekwene	Rose Mbele
Dorothy Nyembe	Mabel Balfour	Rose Motsepe
Dudu Mate Mfusi	Machere Stephina Sibeko	Ruth First
Dulcie September	Madie Hall Xuma	Ruth Pululu
Edith Nomanecwaba Mbulu	Madinoge Kgoloko	Selina Molefe
Eleanor Gabaake	Magdelene Adams	Sonia Bunting
Eleanor Maseko	Mama Beshenga	Thenjiwe Tyhaliti
Elisa Maletswa	Manonmoni Pillay Naidoo	Treaty Mopedi
Elizabeth Mafikeng	Margareth Baloi	Tryphina Jokweni
Elsina Klaas	Maria Lekhwi	Vera Poonen
Emily Orope Nokwe	Maria Rantho	Victoria Mxenge
Esther Maleka	Maris Stella Mabitje	Violet Weinberg
Feroza Adams	Martha Matebesi	Virginia Mngoma
Fezeka Makonisa	Mary Moodley	Winifred Siqwana
Florence Matomela	Mary Ngalo	Zora Mehlomakhulu
Florence Mkhize	Mary Ranta	Mothers Union
Florence Mophosho	Mary Thipe	Mieta Boikanyo
Frances Baard	Frieda Radebe	Miranda Ngculu
Gaby Shapiro	Miriam Ramaube	Gladys Manzi
Miriam Tlale	Adelaide Tambo	Albertina Luthuli
Albertina Sisulu	Alicia Hashe	Amina Cachalia
Amy Biehl	Baleka Mbete	Barbara Castle
Nonkumbi Gxowa	Dorothy Shanley	Ela Gandhi
Elizabeth Motsweni	Ellen Kuzwayo	Emma Peege
Esther Barsel	Esther Levitan	Esther Mahlatji
Ethel Nxele	Eunice Komane	Florence Khumalo (Auntie)
Freda Mogale	Gertrude Sirember (Trudi)	Gretta Ncaphayi
Hilda Bernstein	Hilda Ndude	Hilda Ramollo
Jackie Sedibe	Jane Dumasi	Yasmin Jessie Duarte
Joyce Kgoadi	Happy Joyce Mashamba	Joyce Seroke
Judy Chalmers	Kesaveloo Naidoo	Makhosazana Msimang (Khosi)
Lenah Mathebula	Lindiwe Maseko	Lizzy Abrahams
Lorna Motsoahae	Maggie Resha	Maite Emily Nkoana-Mashabane
Makhosazana Njobe	Malangwane Mosito	Manana Mabuza
Mmapula Sebidi	Margaret Mncadi	Martha Mabe
Martha Mazwi	Martha Motswenyane	Mary Liphoko
Mary Ngalo	Mary Phatsoane	Masenyeki Mokone
Mieta Keshabang	Mildred Lesia	Mina Molefe
Mitta Seperepere	Molly Fischer	Monica Mokoro
Navi Pillay	Sister Nekkieszellie Ncube	Nina Hassim

Gogo Luthuli	Nongazi Msindo	Nontsokometse Joyi
Ntombi Shope	Patricia Mphisa	Philima Mrwashu
Phyllis Naidoo	Pixie Benjamin	Poomanie Moodley
Rachel Simons (Ray)	Rebecca Koloane	Regina Nzo
Rica Hodgeson	Rita Ndzanga	Ruth Kgosieng
Sankie Mahanyele	Shanthi Naidoo	Sheila Sithole
Sheila Weinberg	Shirley Mabusela	Tandie Rankoe
Thutukile Skweyiya	Valliamma Mudaliar	Velephi Nxumalo
Winfred Nkobi	Yetta Barenblatt	Yolisa Modise
Yvette Manzini (Mavivi)	Sophie De Bryn	Storey Morutua
Ma Nxayiya	Thayanayagie Pillay	Nomngengqo Duna-Poyo
Mercy Mntambo	Nomvula Cynthia Kunene	

Table 1. List of women in two volumes of *Malibongwe! Celebrating our Unsung Heroines* (Shope 2002; 2006)

As I pause and forge towards the writing of Gertrude Shope's biography, *Thank You Mama* sung by Miriam Makeba and Leleti Khumalo who played the roles of mother and daughter in the *Sarafina* (Ngema 1992) musical aptly captures my gratitude, and those I have spoken to towards the women who in their small and big ways like Gertrude Shope whom through their sacrifices we attained several freedoms:

Leading the struggle with nothing in your hands

Can bring confusion in the family

I miss those days of jubilation

We mama yeah (conviviality)

Leading the struggle with nothing in your hands (Nothing in your hands)

Can bring confusion in the family (Family)

I miss those days of jubilation

We mama yeah (conviviality)

Days of happiness (Days of happiness)

When families sat round the fire

Those were the days of stability

We mama yeah (conviviality)

I wanna thank you mama (Thank you)

Thank you baby

Thank you mama for everything that you have done for me

It was my responsibility

Since I was a little girl

When I was laying on your back

Taking me to church

We mama I wanna thank you

Mama mama mama mama mama

Thank you thank you

Thank you baby

Iyoouooooo iyeleleeeeeee babo

It was my responsibility

Thank you, thank you, mama

Iyelele mama

Thank you, thank you, mama

Thank you baby

Thank you, thank you, mama

It was my responsibility

Thank you, thank you, mama, mama iyelele

Mama aah

Mama, sithi, we mama yoh

*Aah sibongile siyabonga weh mam
Mama, sithi, we mama yoh
Iye iyeh sibongile thina
Mama, sithi, we mama yoh
Iyelele iyelele iyelele*



Figure 42. Sophy De Bryn

You have inspired generations in and outside our country and beyond oceans. You paved the way for a more equal and just society, we thank you from the depth of our hearts. Thank you for sharing so generously your life. Malibongwe! (Sophy De Bryn).¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ At the 99th birthday celebration of Gertrude Shope on 17 August 2024. The remaining surviving leader of the 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria against pass laws. She was only eighteen years old when she led the 20,000 march.



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