

## **THE TESTIMONY OF MARION SPARG**

Marion Sparg`s testimony is in the form of a letter she wrote to her mother. Marion never had time to post it, and when arrested the letter was found on her.

Sentenced to 25 years` imprisonment on charges of treason, arson and attempted arson, Marion had joined MK after the Maseru massacre, where 32 ANC members and 19 Lesotho civilians were killed by the South African Defence Force.

Her letter is eloquent and moving, explaining her involvement in the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

## **THE TESTIMONY OF MARION SPARG**

Dear Mom,

It is not an easy task for me to explain myself in a letter like this, but I am going to try; so just bear with me as I stumble along ... I can understand that in a way you have cause to resent me, for bringing more pain and problems to a family that has already had more than its fair share of trouble. I know also that I have to work out how to survive on my own without depending on anyone. And I believe I am doing all I can at the moment ...

Yes, I do feel sad at not being able to be with you and the family. But I do not regret giving up my previous life. I do not regret the commitment I have made. The struggle to get this country free now is my life. If I did not truly believe in what I am doing I would have succumbed to a nervous breakdown or some form of insanity a long time ago. I don`t really expect you or Dad to agree fully with my actions. But I did have an idea that you understood a little. I value the past four or five years more than you could know. The people I have met, the experiences I have gone through, I believe have made me a more complete person. My life has meaning now. I know where I am going and I know we will reach there – even if I don`t personally make it. I have never been more fulfilled. This is probably sounding very trite, but I hope it conveys something of the depth and understanding I`ve gained over the past few years.

Daily happenings only serve to increase my determination, and I am afraid harden me a little each day. In Alexandra last week more than 80 people were shot dead. Most were simply teenagers with nothing more than stones in their hands. But I can understand the fear of the white policemen and soldiers as they faced those children. I can understand their fear as they failed to understand how children with stones were prepared to take on armoured cars and submachine guns. But anyway, I`m not

going to give you a lecture on that. I do get very bitter and angry still, but what these past years have given me is confidence and hope – the knowledge that we will win. The government knows it too. . They are only prolonging the agony for all – black and white. It is the people who give me hope – not only those kids in Alexandra and elsewhere. But especially the individuals I`ve met – black and white. I`ve been able to discover what real friendship, love and trust are all about. I know our future is safe in their hands.

I think it is natural for a child to want to make its parents proud. And although it is hard for you to understand, let alone feel proud, I hope one day, if time is kind, you will be able to understand and feel proud. I know it.

If you could meet the people and know the people I am close to, you would understand. Do you remember the young white guy who was killed in the SADF raid on Gaborone? Well, his parents said afterwards they never understood until they went to his funeral and met all his friends and those who worked with him.

They said only then they realised how much he meant to others, and that his life was good and worthwhile, even if they still couldn`t accept all his actions completely. I only hope it doesn`t have to take death to bring you to that understanding. And in any way I have made enemies of my family and some previous friends. For if they are to defend apartheid then I am their enemy for life. It is painful but true. But it is not all that surprising, for South Africa is in a state of war. And war turns brother against brother, and father against son. You see there is really no going back for me. Neither can I stand still. We can only move forward now.

If it means my life I am quite prepared. In fact IT be proud to be counted amongst those who fought and died for this country and people.

This is probably sounding very romantic and reckless, but then it is very difficult to put down in words the simple yet profound principles of one`s life. If I were to live like a `mole`, that is part of the price that must be paid. And it is a very small price compared to what others have gone through, and are still going through.

I suppose the one thing I really need to talk to you about is wanting to have another child. I`ve met and loved other men – and especially one now whose child I would be proud to have. But I know there is no time. I want to be able to be with my child all the time. And now there is so much else to do. I had virtually made up my mind that I was going to have a child no matter what. And then there was the SADF raid on

Lesotho in December last year, where amongst others a young white woman and her coloured husband were killed. They were shot dead in bed.

Their one-year-old daughter lay screaming next to their bodies until neighbours came to fetch her. Then I thought, God!

I don't want my baby to have to go through that. And yet the baby will have cause to be proud one day. So who knows, maybe I will be lucky enough to have a child.

I don't know if I have gone any way towards trying to explain myself. I hope some makes sense to you. In the end you'll see, it will be for the good of all. This war has to be fought to the bitter end. And it is going to be bitter. I have no illusions about that. But in the end there will be a happier life for all of us – black and white. And I quite honestly believe that this is going to happen in our lifetime, not that of our children or grandchildren.

Just know that I do love you even if you feel exasperated, betrayed or hurt.

Yours, Marion