

whom I was detained and mused about how emblematic it was of the struggle as a whole. In the post apartheid period, activists who'd been joined by their single goal were pulled apart as different concerns pulled them in different directions. Our group later found themselves in government, media, law enforcement, academia and NGOs. Balelani Ngruka found himself in a position in which he was required to prosecute former comrades. He fell foul of powerful vested interests and was ousted in what was very much a political manoeuvre. As a cartoonist, I have over the years had something of a similar experience - of having to play the role of watchdog, keeping an eye on the activities of people who'd been comrades in the struggle. Of those comrades who have moved into government, there are some who have held onto the principles and values of those early days. But, sadly, there are also many who have not.

I was held in solitary for five days and then put into a cell next to Willie Hofmeyr, whom I knew well, and who later became head of the National Assets Forfeiture Unit. Knowing that I was now in the same prison as Nelson Mandela, closer to him than I'd ever been, gave me a strange feeling. It also struck me that his birthday was in fact the very reason I'd been detained, even though my arrest had been the result of a mix up. It made me feel more bonded to him than ever. So I decided to make a birthday card for him, although I knew that the chances of actually getting it to him were very slim. I still had the little sketchbook that I'd smuggled in with me, and started making some sketches for the card. Of course at that time there were no photos of him, so it was hard to imagine what he looked like in reality. The sketches I came up with were based on early photos I'd seen of him as a young man. The best I could do was to try to remember those images and then to age him a bit. I played with the idea of a cake, which sort of evolved into the image of a multi-tiered South Africa, with Mandela in prison at the bottom, and various bits of machinery, symbolising apartheid and its institutions, above him. I portrayed tremors arising from the combination of his influence and the popular movement that he led. These tremors would shake the foundations of the whole edifice and eventually topple it, but of course Mandela's foundation would remain strong. It's quite fascinating to look back on that vision now in the light of everything that has happened since.

Willie Hofmeyr and I signed the finished card, and through a warden whom we took to be relatively sympathetic, we tried to get the card to Mandela. But it really didn't get very far. I think it was confiscated by the head of our section of the prison. Recently I made an attempt to locate the card, but it has truly disappeared. All I have left are the rough drawings in my prison sketchbook.

Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday was on the 18th July, 1988. We were released the following day. A couple of years later, after I'd returned from studying in the USA, I bumped into Jojo Shapiro at a party.

'I've got a hoo to pick with you', I said. 'You know the cops detained me because they thought I was you.'

'Really?' he replied. 'That's very strange, because while you were away they detained me because they thought I was you!'

'Okay', I said, 'we're quits!'



Top: Two pages from Zapiro's prison journal, 1988
Bottom: Cape Times news clipping, 1988

Nine city detainees freed after 11 days

By GUYAN DE VILLIERS

POLITICAL cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro and eight other African town detainees were released after 11 days of solitary confinement - the day after Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday.

Mr Shapiro said he would have been forced to write propaganda as a result of a year-long 24-hour solitary confinement but had found just another day.

The detainees only followed two days after the closing of an exhibition of the political cartoon 'Tanganyika in the Grip of the Beast'.

Michael Hutchins, head of the Centre for Contemporary Photography at the University of Cape Town, yesterday accused the government of using its security legislation to 'repress' South Africans into accepting its ruling policies.

Afrikans president also condemned the release of seven prisoners for Jonathan Shapero, United Democratic Front, Western Cape, president, and eight others, including Mr Shapero, Muzewu, UDF administrator Mrs Yon Yon Yon, secretary of Political Education, chair's workers Mrs Noko Mwenzi and Mr Shavane Ndlovu.



FREE... In Cape Jonathan (left), Mr Jonathan Shapiro and Mr Jonathan Shapero, after their release from detention yesterday. They are holding a poster advertising Mr Shapiro's recent exhibition of cartoons. Photo: MUMUKSHU



BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE CURTAIN © 1988 ZEPHYRUS



Autobiographical comic strip produced while studying at the School of Visual Arts in New York, 1988

MY DRAWINGS BEGAN TO BE SEEN IN THE TOWNSHIPS



I HELD A WELL-PUBLICISED EXHIBITION OF CARTOONS



IN PARLIAMENT, A CABINET MINISTER LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON 'RESISTANCE ART'



ONE NIGHT THE SECURITY POLICE CAME TO TAKE ME AWAY



THEY INTERROGATED ME, BUT DID NOT DISCOVER MY SECRET



MONSTERS ARE NOT IMMUNE TO EXORCISM.

