

30.7.2002

Myrtle Berman wrote:

Dear Magnus, I am pleased that we are in touch. Thanks for your enquiry, I am fine. I keep myself

busy doing consulting work mostly for free. I also sit on several Boards. Cape Town is an easy city in

which to move around so it is a good place for me to be. I did not know about Adrian's article so thanks for that information. I will try to get a copy. I am not sure that I could forgive him but I am no

longer vicious about him. However, I would prefer not to meet up with him. You mention an email from

the Vignes, please send me Randolph's email address. If you have one for Raymond Eisenstein, I

would appreciate that too. I am not sure that that I can be of help to you with some of your queries.

My memory is is not what it was. For example, I know that Monty had something to do with Jewish

refugees but I can't recall any details. What you wrote has a familiar ring to it but that's it. As you

say it was peripheral. Monty did help someone to escape to Basutoland but I can't vouch for the name.

I remember that he was important and that he stayed with us. Monty somehow smuggled him in to

see KING KONG after the lights had gone out and got Hell for taking the risk. I am blank about what

happened to him subsequently. He was supposed to meet up with contacts and I think that he did

with some. My memory is better about the pylon. Monty was definitely in on the first hand sawn one *

and they did go back when it did not collapse after the first bout of sawing. When Monty said "we" he

meant implicitly the NCL but was probably referring to the team of himself, Alan and Mbuli.

Monty was in on all the NCL jobs around Johannesburg. I stayed at home waiting for Monty to come back

with the news and I was always anxious so I was directly involved. Re Sid Shall. He was spying for

the Party and joined Baruch's group for that purpose. We were still in a Party cell at that time but we

were also in touch with Baruch. I had always maintained contact with Baruch since University days

and during the time before our small underground group was subsumed by the Party. We had hoped ?

to broaden out the struggle and also, I in particular, was not happy with the Party line on Hungary

among other issues. From time to time, we were given various Party documents for info. and discussion purposes one of which which we passed on to Baruch and of course Sid saw it and rumbled us to his contact. We then had visits from Molly and Braam, Ruth and Joe, all confronting us on our disloyalty and trying to persuade us of the necessity of supporting the Soviet Union on the Hungary issue. Finally they kicked us out. I was delighted, Monty was more ambivalent. I have a feeling that Sid and Baruch maintained some contact when this was over. He may genuinely have been discontented about some things in the Party or he may have claimed discontent to get entry into Baruch's group. Either way, he was passing information back to the Party. When we were in prison, we were invited to rejoin the Party but decided against. I think my niece does keep in touch with Nana but there seems to be some secrecy about what he does and where he lives. I don't understand what it is about, but I would find it difficult to ask her on your behalf. Better if you wrote to her and explained why you want it. Certainly use my name as your contact. She and her husband do not have a fax let alone email so you would have to do it the old fashioned way! The name is Carol Schonauer at 103 Canfield Gardens, London NW6 3DY Do keep in touch on progress of the history. It is sorely needed. Love, Myrtle ----- Original Message -----

From: Magnus Gunther
To: Myrtle Berman
Sent: Saturday, July 27, 2002 5:51 PM
Subject: Re: Contact

Dear Myrtle,

Sorry for the delayed reply--have been away.

This address works fine. Hope the crash does not cause you too much agony. They can be a royal pain.

I hope too that you are well and that the pain of losing Monty has abated somewhat. I have been thinking a lot about you and Monty recently since I have recently gone thru the tapes I made of our discussions. In fact am just writing a section on you and Monty and the formation of the NCL. Part of this is for a piece i am doing for Vol 1 of what will be the official 5 vol?? history of the struggle. My piece on NCL will be for Vol 1--the 1960s.

Another snippet. Perhaps you saw that Leftwich did a piece for Granta on "his moral collapse". He actually discussed the draft with me and in the end I thought it was not a bad piece--given that it almost impossible to write about this kind of betrayal.

Eddie has of course forgiven him as has Albie. Other NCL members or assocaites

are furious--I got some steaming notes particularly one from Gillian Vigne who noted that A should have a . shut up and b. spent the rest of his life silently making restitution and penance. I think she has quite a point altho I noted to her that I thought she was being a bit too tough on this for me to agree with it.

I hope you dont mind but I do have a few more questions which popped up as I was listening to the tapes??

-Monty's contact with members of the Jewish Brigade during WW11 (a student once asked me when WW12 started!!) was that at a time they were smuggling arms to Israel? Another version of my notes says they may have been helping Jewish refugees to escape. Is either or both of these true? Monty I assume was v peripherally linked to all or any of this?? The details on this are just to clean up a paart of the tape which is v unclear.

-Is it possible that you and M might have involved in helping a well known ANCer called Ganyile to escape to Basutoland? in the mid to late 50s. I haave a vague memory of New Age giving him a lot of prominence and then something about a kidnapping to bring him back from Basuotland?? Even more vague are my notes which say that he was to meet some contacts (of yours ? CPers) in Natal and then something went wrong. I must apologies for this jumble mumble. Does any of it ring a bell.

-One matter I am very confused about. When I talked to Alan Liman last year he says he remembers doing the first--hand sawed pylon--as Monty said but he does not recall Monty being in on that job nor does he remember going back a couple of times-but does recall the pylon almost hitting him. When Monty in the interviews says "we" did the pylon does that mean NCL ie Lipman and I think Mbuli or does it mean he was on the job itself. If so what does one make of the two differeing accounts?

-Lastly, another small section of the tape I did with you in 98 deals with Monty's distrust of Baruch. The tape at this point is very unclear. But here is what i made of some very indisticnt tape. I gather Sid Shall indicated that he was discontented with the Party--why not clear. He approached Hirson. Why is not clear. Hirson then gave him a copy of something critical you and Monty had written about some aspect of CP policy. This then reached the party and led to v strained relations for a while. I may have completely messed this up. Could you staighen me out?

-You mentioned some time ago that you neice ??knew the address of Nana Mahomo in the UK--if its not too much bother could you ask her for this address?

I do hope this is not too much of a chore for you--the questions must seem endless but I promise these are very likely the last.

Keep well and all the very best

Magnus

Myrtle Berman wrote:

Hi Magnus, My computer crashed and with it some of my email addresses. Please confirm if this reaches you. All the best, Myrtle