

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL, 1997

I awoke early today knowing it was Friday and it was Sahnhan's (Sanna) birthday. Had he lived he would have been 36, and maybe made me a gift of a grandchild. Somewhere else I have written about his birth at McCord Hospital of beautiful nurses and a racist one. The last mentioned married a comrade - the assumption of such a marriage is that a comrade could not marry a racist. But we know better. That racist filth bedevilled Sanna's life until his assassination on the 15th April 1989 by an agent of the racists regime.

36 years later and the memory of Sanna's birth is as vivid as the day he arrived. I phoned his doctor and Solly remembered. Thank you Sol. I went to the Post Office in response to a slip telling me I had a parcel. Thinking it was the Hansard I was pleasantly surprised to find Antony Thomas's book RHODES - The race for Africa. A gift from the author whose inscription reads -

To Phyllis - who will always be remembered - with love and gratitude - Antony March 1997. What a wonderful gift on Sanna's birthday. Thank you Antony - hey I could have waited for a soft cover. Thank you. Did I tell you that my books (not papers/documents etc etc) is going to Cuba. Enclosed flyer tells why. This gift of yours probably will too.

Later I went to pick up my Weekly Mail and Guardian at Davenport Centre - after a week of daily drivel the M&G is most welcome. The florist, whose blooms I could normally enjoy without wanting to take home a bunch, greeted me with sunflowers. These were so much Sanna's blooms I could not resist. Somewhere else is the story of sunflowers, but let me repeat it for his birthday.

It was Lindiwe who visited me after Sanna's death who told this tale. Sanna was showing her the farm at Chongella in Lusaka where he worked as the manager. When she saw the sunflowers she asked why he grew flowers when it was food the ANC needed for its cadres. He plucked some seeds and took her to a newly purchased machine that had been unpacked. He pointed out the opening for the seeds saying if you put the seeds in here and turn on the machine the aperture on one side would throw out the chaff. This would be fed to their chickens. We would have healthy chickens rather than the rubbish that parades as chickens. The aperture on the opposite side will give us oil to cook with. We will then be able to thank Finland for their donation of cooking oil to the ANC, saying we are producing our own oil now.

Is this why they killed my boy ?

My comrade Bones and I had arranged to visit Rosa, my 'sister' who now lives in an old age facility in the harbour area. I dont know how to operate the buses - the taxi charges of R60.00 were impossible. We managed and arrived at Rosa's before lunch.

We took our Kebabs and roti for lunch and Rosa had Dhal, rice and dried fish chutney. A great spread.

Her room is small. Her bed takes 3/4 of the space. Her lounge has one easy chair. She has a straight chair to sit at her sewing machine, which when closed is the dining table. The washbasin, fridge and a cupboard is the kitchen which houses the microwave. Bones took to the bed and was soon snoring while we chatted. This is Rosa who with Dan her wonderful husband, whose photo adorns the wall above her bed, had 6 children Des, Derrick, Percy, Loo, Ralph (committed suicide) and the only girl Cookie. All have married and have homes of their own. Rosa lived with Cookie who packed up to Australia and since Rosa lives in this room. Thank goodness Rosa has firm religious belief in the existence of god which is a great source of comfort to her.

For me it was an awful visit. Her loneliness is painful. She took care of my children 3 but was more than a mother to Suks. My invitations to her to come live with me have not impressed her. If I were mobile we could for drives etc. Old Age is a drag. I left Bones to navigate the town to her convenience and I took two buses home.

I smelt my burning fish curry as I entered the building. I had forgotten the switch off the stove. It had burnt 1/2 inch thick and the pot with its contents had to be thrown out. Old age is a hazard as well.

Sanna's birthday ended off with a lovely film Isadora by Vanessa Redgrave and others.

So thats how I spent Sanna's 36th Birthday and you guys want me to write my autobiography

Can you be my friends? You know what a windbag I am.

Love you Phyl

