

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF  
WINNIE-MADIKAZELA MANDELA'S POSITION  
IN THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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**ABSTRACT**

Winnie Mandela has endured so many scandals over the last ten years that she has acquired a reputation for being untouchable. It is therefore ironic that there are those who feel that "the ANC want to act against Winnie not because of her human rights record, but for her outspoken criticism of the government's inability to deliver houses, thwart crime and testing our feelings on the death penalty."<sup>1</sup> This assessment is instructive because in the "... turbulent years of the 1980s, she was a hero, a living martyr to the black liberation cause and despite the discomforts inflicted on her by her perpetrators, she revelled in the role" (Sparks, 1994:15). But Winnie Madikazela-Mandela, who was a Deputy Minister before being dismissed and who has had to appear before the TRC because of allegations that she was responsible for the death of teenage activist Stompie Seipei, has nevertheless been able to make a political comeback.

The thesis therefore sets out to examine the rationale behind the State President's (he did not hold this title then) decision to take a considerable risk in standing by Winnie Madikazela-Mandela (they were at the time married) during her trial on charges of kidnapping in 1991. Even after her conviction, Mandela wrote that "as far as I was concerned, verdict or no verdict, her innocence was not in

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<sup>1</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, November 28 to December 4, 1997:4. "ANC Chiefs can't stop Winnie" by Wally Mbhele.

doubt."<sup>2</sup> This unstinting loyalty was replicated elsewhere. Commenting on her acquittal on the assault charges, ANC Youth League President, Peter Mokaba, said: "What was taken away from her as a result of these false allegations must now be given back". He described the Appellate Division decision as "a political sentence" saying: "It has nothing to do with whether she was guilty or not."<sup>3</sup> The ANC has established a practice of accommodating dissidents within its structures and has survived complex challenges during its years in exile by doing so. But political commentators are now asking whether the political cost will prove to be too great.

## CONTEXT

Members of the ANC-dominated Government of "National Unity" (this claim has been "dampened" with the departure of the National Party), are reportedly alarmed at the organisation's style of leadership, talking of an "alleged" mismanagement of internal crises as reflected in its move towards greater centralisation and its growing intolerance of internal dissent.<sup>4</sup> As one writer put it so eloquently, many didn't agree "with what Holomisa did and were critical of him

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<sup>2</sup> *Weekly Mail*, June 4 to 10 1993:8. "Winnie: ANC sigh of relief".

<sup>3</sup> *Weekly Mail*, June 4 to 10 1993:4. "Winnie: ANC sigh of relief".

<sup>4</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, October 14 to 20 1996, pp.8-9: "Authoritarian leadership alarms ANC Politicians".

before. But, the way he was disciplined has left people with a sense that no one is safe anymore."<sup>5</sup> This is because in the Holomisa case, the ANC readily departed from the established practice of accommodating political disputes and ideological differences even though there didn't appear to be a prima facie basis for taking such strong disciplinary measures. It is therefore arguable that the political significance of Winnie Madikazela's position in the ANC, who like Bantu Holomisa is a "highly regarded" populist leader, goes to the heart of a core ANC dilemma. As an ANC MP has put it, "The issue is not black and white. People like Winnie Mandela are under pressure to articulate concerns of a section of the community and its important they're articulated within the ANC and not outside of it."<sup>6</sup>

The logic of this predisposition often encouraged by the ANC in recent times is that unity must be kept at all costs, so that to use an NEC member's words: "people like Winnie stop coming back to haunt us."<sup>7</sup> However, as with the controversial self-styled African-American leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, it would seem that the liberal media's views on how large Winnie Madikazela-Mandela looms as a leader of black people is distorted. Yet there is one side

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<sup>5</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, October 14 to 20 1996, pp.8-9: "Authoritarian leadership alarms ANC Politicians".

<sup>6</sup> *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, February 17 to 23 1995:55. "How will the ANC deal with its dissidents?"

<sup>7</sup> *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, February 17 to 23 1995:5. "How will the ANC deal with its dissidents?"

to Mr Farrakhan's popular appeal that others might do well to study if one is to appreciably grasp Ms Mandela's political significance. This has arisen because his followers "... have had the courage -to move into areas of black blight and try to clean them up, preaching clean living and self-sufficiency."<sup>8</sup> Winnie replicated this role in South Africa, by living in the township with ordinary people, while militating for a popular uprising against the apartheid state. A bulk of the ANC leaders at the time were either in exile or incarcerated.

#### **SUBJECT OF CRITICAL INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH**

It will be shown that the political significance of Winnie Madikazela-Mandela's position in the ANC is one of credibility, in which the ANC invents "... and reinvents the confidence of its supporters, thus strengthening or weakening their capacity for idealistic action and profitable sacrifice" (Collins, 1990:34). It necessitates an examination of how "... uncertainties and instabilities go hand in hand with a political transformation process" (Aardt, 1994). It will be argued that this transitory climate of political uncertainty and mutual mistrust created an avenue through which Ms Mandela could launch a political comeback. This is complemented by the very real fear that with the failure of the ANC to effect dramatic and real changes in the lives of ordinary

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<sup>8</sup> *The Economist*, 26th 1993:64. "Black in America; Bridges to other Worlds. *American Survey* Vol.328 No.7830.

black people Winnie Madikazela-Mandela, who enjoys significant "grassroots" support, is one populist the ruling ANC prefers within its structures.

The thesis therefore sets out to examine how the interrelationship of the private world "... of wife and mother and the public life of political activist created the powerful populist leader Winnie has become" (Meintjes, S. 1998:14). This will involve trying to understand how Winnie Madikazela-Mandela, who despite relentless criticism both within and outside the ANC, has remained a strong political force in South African politics. Not even her divorce from President Nelson Mandela seems to have affected her popularity and support. The thesis therefore sets out to explore the tension between the moral position Winnie enjoys as the wife of South Africa's most symbolic icon of the struggle and her political independence which has developed gradually in different contexts.

#### **METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF RESEARCH**

Initially it was hoped that extensive use of primary sources obtained from the Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture in South Africa would be made, which contains correspondence, minutes of meetings, statements, press releases and discussion papers as is collected by the ANC Women's Section and Secretary General's office between 1960 and 1991. But this quite evidently was not the case so attention was

also drawn to documentation collectively referred to as the Helen Joseph Papers, which comprises primary source material on Winnie Madikazela-Mandela and the ANC Women's League, containing as it does, personal letters exchanged between Helen Joseph and Winnie with whom she enjoyed an unusually close relationship. The abundance of computer networks at the university, and their accessibility was convenient because of the source material on proceedings such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the ANC, which are chronicled on computer data bases.

The bulk of the secondary source material that was used from journals like the *New Statesman*, *South African Law Journals*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Economist*, *Financial Mail* and newspaper articles covering the last ten years from the *British Times* and the *Weekly Mail and Guardian*. This was supplemented by an examination of books written on South Africa, like Allister Spark's *Mind of South Africa: The rise and fall of apartheid*; the "eye-witness" account given by Katiza Cebekhulu, a member of the notorious Mandela United Football Club, and autobiographical material on Winnie Madikazela-Mandela compiled by a whole host of writers like Anne Benjamin, Milton Meltzer, Nancy Harrison, James Haskins, Sharon Goulds and Fatima Meer. In the initial stages of the thesis preparation consultation was made with Mahmood Mamdani, a political scientist at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town. This was of course supplemented by the guidance that was received from Professor Roger

Southall<sup>9</sup>, who acted as my supervisor.

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<sup>9</sup> Professor Roger Southall was Head of the Political Studies Unit at Rhodes University, of which the International Studies Unit with which I registered for the MA in Interational Studies is a component.

CHAPTER 1WINNIE'S FORMATIVE YEARS

The thesis sets out to dispassionately scrutinise the enigma that has become Winnie Madikazela-Mandela. It attempts to provide a thorough examination of her political significance, by elaborately analysing her political activities as a prelude to a characterisation of her political significance in a post-apartheid South Africa. This is because Winnie Madikazela-Mandela is a political figure of tragic Shakesperean proportions. A courageous representative of liberation politics during the darkest days of apartheid, she has considerable gifts which are diminished by a mercurial personality which at times is a "stranger to democracy".<sup>1</sup> But it was as the wife of South Africa's most symbolic icon of the struggle against apartheid that Winnie Madikazela-Mandela, who has been characterised as an icon of black feminine suffering and "a symbol of strength and courage" (Meintjes 1998:14), was able to secure a special place in the political realm.

Winnie, who was born in 1936 in the confines of the mountainous Pondoland district to Columbine Madikazela, a history teacher in government service (Moritz (ed.) 1986:335), Winnie Nomzamo (meaning

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<sup>1</sup> *The Weekly Mail*, June 11 to 17 1993, p.15: "Defending Winnie to his best ability" by Dennis Davis.

"she who strives") Mandela has become a black nationalist leader in her own right.<sup>2</sup> She was the charismatic figure who articulated the grievances and frustrations of young people at a time when they were at the forefront of the struggle against apartheid following the Soweto uprising of 1976. According to Professor Tom Lodge of Witwatersrand University "... the three structures that could have prevent(ed) the radicalisation of young people - school, church and the family -(did) not do so".<sup>3</sup> In a strange tale of dramatic irony, Nelson Mandela reportedly proposed to her at a picnic on a white-owned farm along the Evaton Road, south-west of Johannesburg. At this rendezvous he reportedly told her that he was awaiting trial and could go to prison for a long time. He also intimated to her that he "... was being hounded continually by the police and no doubt she would be too, if she married him; and most important of all, he had dedicated his life to his people's fight against discrimination, injustice and apartheid, and that fight must take precedence over everything, even his personal feelings" (Harrison, 1995:58).

Winnie captivated by the charm of Nelson disregarded his concern that his preoccupation with party politics could impinge on his private life, content only to think of the role she could play in the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, Monday December 23 1985, p.4: "Life of Struggle for Winnie Mandela" by Michael Hornsby.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, Thursday April 22 1993, p.12: "Mandela's militancy fires black youth" by Michael Hamlyn.

struggle against apartheid, that she had listened to with youthful indignation earlier on in her adult life. So when her father warned her that "... she was marrying the struggle, not the man ... She was in no mood then, as often since, to heed authority and advice".<sup>4</sup> This steadfast belief in the strength of her own wisdom degenerated into a "self-serving" attitude that devolved into a tendency to propagate what her largely her own opinions when the struggle against apartheid in South Africa required considerable organisational discipline. Winnie was reputedly one of the few black women of her generation to conclude an ante-nuptial contract that gave her greater control of her possessions. It had always reportedly angered Winnie that black women were permanent minors in South African Law. "A black woman", she says, "faces a three-fold disability in this country: she has to overcome the disadvantage of being black, the disadvantage of being a woman and the disadvantage of her African cultural background in an essentially westernized environment" (Harrison, 1985:60).

By the time wedding vows had been promulgated Winnie had been introduced to Nelson's confidants and was reportedly taking a keen interest in the work of the African National Congress. Winnie herself has confessed that, "I was politically influenced by his friends ...

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<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, Tuesday March 28 1995, p.10: "Winnie Mandela faces new tribulations with dismissal from Government: Rise and Fall of woman who ignored all advice" by Ray Kennedy.

women like the late Lilian Ngoyi<sup>5</sup> ... And of course Helen Joseph" (Benjamin, 1985:66). Her political apprenticeship gained momentum when her husband encouraged her to join the ANC Women's League, the appropriate place for wives of prominent ANC leaders. The literature of this period characterised her as a loyal, obedient and dutiful wife. After Mandela's arrest and imprisonment, first for four years then in 1964 for life, Winnie was unwittingly cast into the political limelight. Within two months of her husband's conviction, Winnie, who started to play a pro-active role in the work of women's organisations, was serving her first banning order, for being a member of the national executive of the Women's Federation (Moritz (ed.) 1986:335).

The consequence of this increased political activity was that "... she found herself virtually unemployable. She was left to cope with extremely difficult circumstances on her own and she began to work clandestinely for the ANC. She participated in underground meetings and organized the printing and circulation of roneoed pamphlets" (Meintjes, 1998:15). Winnie intimated that her husband's incarceration was a time of political and personal desperation. She

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<sup>5</sup> Ms Lilian Ngoyi who Winnie characterised as "my hero at the time" (Stewart, 1993:43) was ANC Women's League President in 1954, and became the second woman ever on the ANC National Executive. In 1956 she became President of the Federation of South African Women, (FSAW) the women's organisation of the Congress Alliance. Her greatest triumph undoubtedly came on August 8 1956, when she led the largest demonstration in South African history to the steps of the Union building.

explained that in her culture the different sexes were prepared for different roles "... there is usually a huge gap between our husbands and ourselves ... the tendency was to rather educate the boys in our society and the woman belonged to the kitchen ... you were never prepared for a double role where you would be head of a family and a mother at the same time" (Goulds, 1988:34). The incarceration of the bulk of the ANC leadership who served as confidantes for Winnie created a void that she determined she would fill. She has said, "the difficult part was finding myself with a spotlight on me. I wasn't ready for that ... And I had to think so carefully what I said." But as Mandela's "self appointed" spokesperson, she reportedly asserted that she "... rediscovered the value of my soul in relation to my religious beliefs and most of all to the cause of my people I had ideas and views of my own. I had my own commitment and I wasn't just a political ornament" (Mortiz (ed.), 1986:337).

This assessment conveniently obscures the fact that protest politics organised as it was against the apartheid regime was faced with a dilemma in the 1960s. The two major groups "... the ANC and the PAC, were unable to mount an effective policy that was capable of challenging the National Party's control of the country. Their leaders were either in prison or in exile and their campaigns of armed struggle were ineffective" (Maguire, 1991:118). Black politics, in effect, went into recess through the 1960s. With the major black political organisations outlawed, "... it fell to white liberal

organisations to articulate black grievances and keep the politics of protest alive. Blacks joined some of these organisations, until another law called the Improper Interference Act prohibited that too" (Sparks, 1992:259). This period of white liberalism failed to act as an inspirational force for black people who propagated constructive change because it was deemed to conceal an unconscious attachment to the status quo.

As a result of this situation a new generation of black groups, collectively known as the Black Consciousness Movement, chanting the slogan "Black man you are on your own" (Gilbey, 1993:103), were established with Steve Biko and Barney Pitso Moseneke as its most prominent spokespersons. Winnie, almost alone amongst ANC leaders, endorsed this approach by militant students to protest politics, as "a source of real inspiration" (Gilbey, 1993:104), holding discussions with Steve Biko and other student leaders. It is not clear what Nelson would have thought of the Black Consciousness leaders, but Winnie who enthusiastically attended their meetings warned that black people were becoming increasingly impatient and hostile. As Winnie put it: "What is happening is, in fact, is a projection of black anger against the racist regime. This anger is directed at anything which is connected with the system and the government ... The burning of the offices belonging to the government administration ... It has nothing to do with vandalism ... it is black anger against white domination" (Liebenberg et al. 1993:482).

Winnie was not alone in this belief, because even Tutu who has always been characterised as a moderate in his political thinking, had also gone to considerable lengths to warn Vorster that African patience was now running out: "A people can take only so much and no more", he wrote. "The history of your own people [the Afrikaners] ... has demonstrated this, Vietnam has shown this, the struggle against Portugal has shown this. I am frightened ... that we may soon reach a point of no return, when events will generate a momentum of their own, when nothing will stop their reaching a bloody denouncement" (Karis et al. 1997:166). As things stood for nearly fifty years, black South Africans had waged the campaign for desegregation with consummate patience and understanding, going to Versailles and to the League of Nations to solicit support from the international community, but this patience was slowly running out. After a "brief" period of incarceration Winnie intimated that "... the white man had hit us for too long. Our patience had been tested and had endured for too long. I knew then that there had to be a political crisis in this country for us to reach the ultimate goal" (Gilbey, 1993:91).

This type of rhetoric became increasingly problematic because whenever she said something, it was picked up by the press as an official pronouncement: "Suddenly I wasn't speaking for myself any more, if I uttered a word it was "MANDELA'S WIFE SAYS", and it was not only Mandela's wife speaking but the 'POLICY OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS SEEMS TO HAVE SHIFTED FROM ...' - and I hadn't the

slightest idea what they were talking about" (Goulds, 1988:42). This reflected a weakness by Winnie to fail to make a clear distinction between her own personal experience and that of her colleagues. It also serves to illustrate the fact that Winnie tended to be drawn to making conclusions on the basis of particular experiences, at a particular point in time. I think this is what Steve Tshwete meant when he asserted that she was, "a liar", a "wayward charlatan" and an "armchair populist".<sup>6</sup> In this respect, her experience, mirrors that of the ANC. As one scholar has argued, the formation of the ANC was "... a reactive, attributable to disappointment and anger with the white government's failure to deal "responsibly" with its African subjects. Its mode was to react and object to unfavourable government acts using 'constititutional' channels" (McKinley, 1997:6). It therefore becomes important to establish the context within which her political preeminence and sustenance took place.

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<sup>6</sup> Winnie's quiet threat: "Madikazela Mandela talks of resigning from ANC national executive in letter lashing top members" by Craig Doonan. (<http://www.suntimes.co.za/suntimesarchive/1998/07/12/news/news01.htm>).

CHAPTER 2WINNIE, WOMEN AND PARTY POLITICS

Winnie had never belonged to any political organisation prior to her marriage to Nelson. But some of the glamour that was extended to Nelson, who was reportedly characterised as The Black Pimpernel (Gilbey, 1993:62) for his consummate skill at effecting disguises and evading capture by the government, was extended to his wife. On the opening day of the Treason trial it was Winnie who attracted media attention in a traditional Tembu Dress. The article about her on an inside page debated whether tribal costume such as she was wearing promoted tradition rather than tribalism. In her husband's absence, what Winnie did, what she wore and what she said, began to attract enormous attention, and praise. The upshot of this new found popularity was that Winnie assumed that the role of leadership was automatically hers: "I was ready to deputize for Nelson" she wrote (Benjamin, 1985:87). The basis for this belief is a little unclear, but leading as far as Winnie was concerned, meant telling "... other people what to do. It did not involve discussion, argument or the heeding of advice ... Winnie did not see the poorer, self-taught ANC members as her equals. They were the rank and file. She was well born and well educated. She was a chief" (Gilbey, 1993:68). This predisposition illuminated her independence, and the ambiguity of her position.

A research study conducted by the Institute of Black Research interviewed 988 women in industrial employment in the Durban Pinetown region in 1983, and established that 75 per cent of black women employed were between the ages of 29 and 44 and 45 per cent had lower secondary school education - standard 6 - 8.<sup>7</sup> They lived mainly in council housing where the right to receive visitors and the taking in of lodgers was formally controlled. Women in Winnie's generation spent, according to the findings of this research, 8-10 hours in factories working and about 5 hours going to and from work. But only 26 per cent thought workers should press for improved conditions, and 33 per cent thought that the exclusively white (predominantly male) management could be prevailed upon to institute reforms.<sup>8</sup> This is despite the fact that although women were often dependent on cash remittances from migrant workers in the cities, 12 per cent of women in sample surveys in 1973 received no such cash remittances.<sup>9</sup> But, only 32 per cent of black women during this period belonged to any community or women's organisation. While 52 per cent of women in industrial employment belonged to Trade Unions, only 13 per cent attended such meetings.<sup>10</sup> This makes the political significance of Winnie Mandela all the more remarkable because of her highly assertive character.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs/history/women>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs.history.women>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs.history.women>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/women>

In 1962 when Winnie was elected to the Executive Committee of the Federation of South African Women, she unsettled older members of the Federation with a militant speech urging young people to gird themselves for freedom (Joseph, 1986:210). She also began very early on in her political career, to exhibit a weakness for self-indulgence. She described her political involvement as follows: "I held the same positions in the Federation of South African Women as I had in the ANC Women's League. I was chairlady of our branch and I belonged to the provincial executive and national executive. That was really the scope and banner under which women could operate legally in this country. In 1958 we had been involved in organizing the anti-pass demonstrations under the leadership of Lilian Ngoyi. I was among thousands of women arrested throughout the country" (Benjamin, 1985:66-67). This characterisation of her political involvement also reflected a preoccupation of women's organisation with the introduction of pass laws which had been withdrawn in the face of stringent opposition in 1918. The first national joint protest organised between FSAW and the ANC Women's League in October 27, 1955, was established to reject legislation introduced by the then Minister of Native Affairs requiring women to carry passes. 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, to hand Dr Verwoerd a petition with 100 000 signatures.

In their Union march the women stood silent for 30 minutes, with hands in congress salute, then sang: "Wathint abafazi, Strijdom!

Wathint imbokodo uzo kufu! Now you have touched the women, Strijdom. You have struck a rock (You have dislodged a boulder!) You will be crushed.<sup>11</sup> Few of the men were prepared for the women's militancy. According to Mary Benson, Walter Sisulu, former Secretary General of the African National Congress witnessed the march of the 20 000 women on the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Afterwards he asked in jest "How could they dare?" (Schmidt, 1983). But in November 1956, the SA Congress of Trade Unions wrote to the Transvaal Provincial Congress of the Federation of South African Women, strongly supporting the women's actions. "It is the women of South Africa who have demonstrated to all progressive forces the true meaning of militancy and organisation and we in the trade union movement are determined to follow your courageous example" (Schmidt, 1983). As a result in 1959 at the Annual Conference of the ANC of December, the men reportedly made a special commemorative banner which read: "Makbongwe AmaKosikazi. We thank the ladies."<sup>12</sup> The last anti-pass demonstration took place in March 1960, prior to the banning of the ANC and the PAC on April 8 1960, under the terms of the Unlawful Organisations Act.<sup>13</sup>

Winnie was able to occupy the void created by the suppression of political activity by bolstering her own position in protest politics. In the wake of the Soweto student uprising, Winnie along

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs/history/women>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs/history/women>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za.ancdocs/history/women>

with a physician, Dr Nthatho Motana, started working with the Black Parent's Association, "... an organisation of concerned local professionals and church leaders who acted as a guiding hand and intermediary for the students" (Mandela, 1994:480). It was the first time she was given a leadership position in a political organisation solely in her own right. She was loved by a highly politicised Soweto youth for echoing their own positions, at a time when their exasperation with the excesses of the apartheid state, led them to take the law into their own hands. Winnie "was one of the very few people of standing prepared to give us any support" said Barney Pityana (Mufson, 1990:205). Her political fortunes were secured when on June 16 1976, when fighting broke out between police and students, Winnie reportedly ferried injured students to the hospital in her Volkswagen Beetle. "She was very much of a mother to us" recalled Seth Mazibuko, then a student (Mufson, 1990:205). Winnie was therefore also able to propagate the symbolic role of motherhood in the Black Parents Association, a role she might not "... have been to assume so easily had she not been the mother of the Mandela children" (Meintjes, 1998:16).

The primary task of the Black Parents Association was to organise the burial of the dead. It was however soon used as a basis from which to recruit militant young activists for guerilla training in camps in Angola, Tanzania and Zambia. By the end of 1976, more than 6 000 young activists had left the country, according to South African

Police records. Students who crossed the South African border independently would be recruited by the ANC outside South Africa when they requested political asylum (Gilbey, 1993:110). Many PAC recruits who left South Africa were stranded in Lesotho, unable to reach bases. The ANC by contrast, brought youths to bases in Zambia and Tanzania where top officials met them. "What enhanced its image was when the children of 1976 left in droves and wrote back", a high-ranking UDF member recalled. The youths reported that they met Tambo and were given honourable receptions. "It gave new confidence in the ANC" the UDF official said. But the strong-willed youths like their mentor Winnie taught the old exiles a few things too as well. The ANC exiles could not expect unyielding deference from them. "I was at Dar es Salaam when the first group arrived", recalled ANC executive committee member, Johnny Makatini, shaking his head in disbelief, ten years later. "It took me hours to sell them on the Freedom Charter. Even though I don't think they bought it ... Tambo gave a speech and the students said they didn't agree with some of the things he said" (Mufson, 1990:192). The transformation of the ANC, by the highly politicised generation of 1976, is significant if not only because with Nelson Mandela's departure from the leadership, they will be left with the mantle of power.

The mass burials organised by the Black Parent's Association also became a very strong rallying depot for angry young activists mourning the loss of their peers. The flamboyant and extensive

political exploitation of funerals became a new weapon of the liberation movement to popularise their cause. "Hamba Kahle Umkhonto", the crowd would sing with the lilt almost of a lullaby:

Go, go well, Umkhonto,  
Umkhonto, Umkhonto we Zizwe.  
Wem we the people of Umkhonto  
Are ready to kill the Boers (Sparks, 1992:342).

The comrades would carry the coffins on their shoulders, performing the aggressive "toyi-toyi" dance through the township streets, but because mass burials needed permits from the magistrate, the Minister of Justice, Kruger, would try to censure them on the basis that "... mass burial for those killed in the riots would be more an exercise in political agitation than an effort to assist the bereaved, with the laying to their dead" (Gilbey, 1993:109). That is why the apartheid state refused to allow mass burials to commemorate those who died during 16 June 1976, Sharpville Massacre. But the Black Parent's Association was able to overcome this obstacle by using the burial of a thirteen year-old schoolboy called Hector Peterson, who was the first to be buried as a symbolic figure of those who died during Sharpeville. But the Police continued to make arrests in connection with the riots and those they picked up were tortured to reveal what they knew. Those who were detained soon found out that the interrogation and torture of suspected agitators, continued along similar lines with rare departures in approach.

One former student leader later described the process: "The first thing that the police did was to try to suggest to us that all this had happened because of her (Winnie) ... She must surely have suggested these things. She must surely have been involved in getting us to know how to manufacture petrol bombs - which we denied, because it wasn't true of course" (Gilbey, 1993:112). The authorities seemed to think that Winnie was personally responsible for the unrest that led to Sharpville, maintaining that she was manipulating and directing the struggle of the children. The truth of the matter was of course that the Soweto Representative Council had organised the protest, to militant against the idea that Afrikaans should be taught in black secondary schools. When Winnie described what had happened years later, she as per usual exaggerated her role and the magnitude of the massacre: "... [Before the Soweto uprising] I was very involved in organising the people and conscientizing them about the extremely dangerous situation that was developing ... I met with a few leaders here and suggested we form the Black Parents Association to encompass the entire country ... I was present when it started. The children were congregated at the school just two blocks away from her. I saw it all ... The police shot indiscriminately, killing well over a thousand children" (Gilbey, 1993:173).

Winnie's political activities had some "unintentionally" negative consequences, as she herself has recalled: "Worse things have happened to people in the struggle, but for a sixteen-year-old girl

(her daughter), it was very hard to take. It was the hardest thing for me to take as a mother - that your commitment affects those who are very dear to me" (Goulds, 1988:52). The trauma this experience caused is recalled by Zindzi who wrote a collection of poems when she was sixteen entitled *Black as I am*, one of the most poignant of which read as follows:

A tree was chopped down  
and the fruit was scattered

I cried  
because I had lost a family  
the trunk, my father  
the branches, his support  
so much

the fruit, the wife and children  
who meant so much to him  
tasty  
loving as they should be  
all upon the ground  
some out of his reach  
in the ground  
the roots, happiness  
cut off from him

(Joseph, 1986:221)

In May 1977 Winnie was banished to Brandfort, a small Afrikaans town in the Orange Free State, where the black people did not even speak the same language as her.

But Winnie's profile began to rise dramatically as the ANC launched the "Release Mandela" Campaign, even though her symbolic and political roles were becoming increasingly problematic. Because of

her independence, "... the ANC had some reservations in choosing to draw Winnie in, but the movement felt that her symbolic role was important" (Meintjes, 1998:16). The ANC therefore, unwittingly, actively participated in the creation of myth of Winnie as the "Mother of the Nation" even as "her banishment to Brandfort reinforced the legendary status as national symbolic icon that gained her so much political status in the liberation movement" (Meintjes, 1998:16). As the international media began to focus on her, her political preeminence became a matter of course. When Mrs Coretta Scott King, the American Civil Rights figurehead, met Winnie, she would say that for "... me this has been one fo the greatest and most meaningful moments of my life," Mrs King declared. She described Winnie as "a great symbol of strength, courage and dedication for women and children and people everywhere."<sup>14</sup> Winnie's stature rose, as Nelson's status as a political prisoner gave him legendary status. The 1985 Third World Prize worth \$100,00 was awarded jointly to Nelson and Winnie Mandela, for their fight against apartheid.<sup>15</sup> In 1985 Winnie returned to Soweto in triumph, a celebrity among her own people and abroad. She declared herself "... a member of the ANC, at a time when nobody else in the country dared to do so. She wore ANC colors, though the courts had been known to jail a man for five years

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<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, Friday September 12 1986, p.8: "Embrace for the world's television cameras seals talks in Soweto: Mrs King recovers lost ground with Mandela, a meeting" by Michael Hornsby.

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, Saturday November 30 1985, p.4: "Third World Prize for Mandelas".

for drinking coffee out of an ANC mug" (Mallaby, 1992:226).

CHAPTER 3THE STATE OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS:THE ROLE OF WINNIE, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE MASS  
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE STALEMATE OF THE 1980'S

In the first half of 1984 President P W Botha, was riding a wave of success. He had toured Europe after the conclusion of the Nkomati Accord, in which both South Africa and Mozambique, agreed not "... to allow their territory to be used as springboard for hostile forces to attack the other. Mozambique agreed to expel the ANC from its territory, while South Africa agreed to ease support for the Mozambiquan guerilla organisation, RENAMO (1988:477). At home his success in the 1983 referendum enabled him to promulgate the introduction of a tricameral parliament for Whites, Indians and Coloureds. He also established new local authorities for blacks, who were supposed to handle the complex township administrations with neither a popular base or adequate funds. Instead of repressive domination, P.W. Botha was now offering "co-optive domination" (Moorcroft, 1990:301).

This is what prompted the revolt of 1984-1986, which was not only a children's revolt. Parents, teachers, unionists and churchmen were sucked into the maelstrom of rebellion, so that as the turmoil grew a cumulative, but definitive, objective emerged: the overthrow of the

apartheid regime. So while the ANC, underground and illegal, was pleased to claim the credit for what was going on, a more accurate analysis would seem to be that the war of the township was a spontaneous attempt to improve the living conditions of black South Africans.<sup>16</sup> The revolt rejected the South African government's ill-found conclusion that "Nothing is fated to happen in history, provided one knows how to intervene in time. One can struggle against the trend [of history]", ... the apartheid government thought that "one can create a new trend. It is simply a matter of will and of faith" (Cock et al., 1989:259). It was thought that if the worst excesses of apartheid were addressed, and communities reorganised under the guardianship of leaders sympathetic to the regime, then the hard political questions will disappear. The long-term objective was "to get a sufficient number of prominent people to participate so that eventually those who still lust after revolution will become as irrelevant in South Africa as they are in the US or Britain" (Cock et al., 1989:147).

In September 1984, "... a protest in Sharpeville against proposed rent increases culminated in riots which then spread to other townships in the Vaal triangle ... the centre of violence shifted to the East Rand and the Eastern Cape. As it eased there, it flared up in the Western Cape. Then Durban. Then East London. Then Pretoria.

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<sup>16</sup> *Financial Mail*, April 12 1985, p.59: "Black Unrest: Councils in Crisis".

What began as a spontaneous outburst over local grievances developed into a sustained attempt to destroy the whole black local authority system" (Blumenfeld ed. (1987:80-81). The emotive word "Sharpeville" was once again echoed rather ominously<sup>17</sup> and unrest followed, but there is a lack of unanimity, on who orchestrated it. It was at best an ill-defined attempt to destroy the structure of black local government.<sup>18</sup> The response of the government was to authorise the army to move into the township provoking intense opposition from black religious and political groups, trade unions and the community media. The United Women's Organisation, a UDF affiliate, summed up their feelings when it declared: "The United Women's Organisation calls on troops to leave our township ... We know the pain of troops taking young women, of raping and of fear of walking in our streets because of the troops. We call on young conscripts to refuse to go into our areas" (Cock et al., 1989:71).

It was during this period, that the call went out from the ANC in Lusaka to the black youths of South Africa to "make the townships ungovernable" (Leach, 1986:174). It's call for ungovernability was opportunism personified. It fitted in neatly with the growing militarism in the townships. The main target of "... the uprising was

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<sup>17</sup> *Financial Mail*, September 7 1984, p.45: "Black Unrest Violence is Spreading".

<sup>18</sup> *Financial Mail*, September 7 1984, p.45: "Black Unrest Violence is Spreading".

the black local councillors, police and informers, all seen as agents of apartheid. Twelve councillors were killed, the homes of more than 300 were and 240 resigned their posts ... Black policemen had to be housed in white areas ... The summary and horrible execution of suspected informers by firing a gasoline-doused tyre around their necks, soon shut down the police intelligence network into black politics" (O'Meara, 1996:326). But the issue of towards just whom violence should be directed seems to be one over which there is disagreement in the ANC. Reddy Mazimba, the ANC representative in Harare, was attributed with the injunction that "White parents would have to go to the graveyards when the ANC's offensive reached white areas and white schools", a threat which was swiftly repudiated by the ANC's Lusaka office (Frankel et al., 1988:246).

This sentiment was replicated elsewhere when Winnie told a huge crowd in the township of Kagiso near Krugersdorp that "the time for speeches and debate has come to an end". The year 1986, she said to enormous applause, would see the "liberation of the oppressed masses of this country. We work in the white man's kitchen. We bring up the white man's children. We would have killed them at any time we wanted to. Together, hand-in-hand with our sticks and our matches, with our necklaces, we shall liberate this country" (Saunders, 1989:480). Winnie had said this despite the fact that Oliver Tambo, the President of the African National Congress, had stated at the height of the uprising, that the ANC's main objective was not "a military

victory, but to force Pretoria to the negotiating table" (McKinley, 1997:78). The ambiguity of this position is echoed elsewhere because the ANC propagated the intensification of the struggle, saying "let us together, under the leadership and umbrella of the ANC, render apartheid South Africa even more ungovernable. Let every township and every community become a stronger organised fortress of our revolution" (Rantete, 1998:125).

It is estimated that as a result of this call for a spontaneous rejection of the brutal oppression of political dissent, the incidence of Umkhonto we Sizwe's attacks on government forces increased from four in 1976 to 895 by October 1988. These attacks not only kept the government forces in a state of agitation, but also demystified the notion of the invincibility of the apartheid state. When the SADF launched an attack on alleged ANC bases in Maputo, Mozambique in 1978 killing 13 people, MK responded with a bomb blast at the Koeberg nuclear power plant in December 1982. When the SADF launched another attack on an ANC outpost in Maseru, Lesotho, killing 42 people, MK responded with a car bomb attack in Pretoria in May 1983" (Rantete, 1998:126). These developments gave MK a cloak of heroism that inflated the effects of these attacks on the apartheid state, and made it easier to mobilise militant youth behind the movement's programme. But Chief Buthelezi belittled ANC efforts to launch guerilla attacks on military targets in South Africa. As one InKatha official commented, "The armed struggle has been going on for

twenty years now, and other than a few bombings, nothing has happened" (Leonard, 1983:51).

This attitude was replicated elsewhere. In a 1981 report in the New York Times, apparently reflecting some official South African sources, ANC sabotage successes were described as "a form of political graffiti" (Leonard, 1983:57), not causing any significant economic or military damage. In turn, the ANC mocked Buthulezi's integrity, accusing him of trying to hijack the revolution. "He left the nation and joined the tribe", asserted Dr Ntatho Mothlana, the highly respected Sowetan leader. This assessment becomes even more significant in view of Walter Felgate's submissions to the TRC behind closed doors that Buthulezi worked closely with Boss from the early 1970s.<sup>19</sup> But regardless of Buthulezi's assessment of the ability of Umkhonto We-Sizwe's ability to overthrow the apartheid regime through the armed struggle, triumphalism was quite clearly in the air.<sup>20</sup> Archbishop Desmond Tutu highlighted the strain of martyrdom which was running deep among the youth, saying "We've got a new breed of children. They believe they are going to die ... and the frightening thing is that they actually don't care" (Johnson, 1988:122). In fact

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<sup>19</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, November 27 to December 3 1988, p.1: Buthulezi "was Boss's man in Ulundi".

<sup>20</sup> One "freedom song" ended with the words: "We're going to take over, take over, take our country in the Mugabe way, Run away run away, Botha, UmKhonto has arrived, We are the soldiers of Luthuli, led by Mandela, Even if it is bad we are going, move aside and give us way" (Johnson, 1988:121).

in October 1987, at the age of 13, Stompie Mokhetsi didn't think he would live much longer. He intimated that "They can come and get me at any time", he reportedly remarked to Peter Goodwin, a British journalist who had tracked him down to Tumahole township. "I'm likely to die in the struggle", he said. "But the struggle will go on".<sup>21</sup>

However, the coercive apparatus of the state remained a largely cohesive unit, unthreatened at the military level and insulated at the ideological level. It contained insurrectionary violence through the isolation of certain townships and the introduction of vigilante groups, catalysing a frenzy of internecine bloodletting that did little to improve the image of the ANC. As Friedman observed "... while some street committees appear to have enjoyed the support of residents, others seemed to have been imposed on them. While some "people's courts" seemed to enjoy a high degree of legitimacy, others were allegedly used to impose the will of small groups of unelected activists" (Marais, 1998, p.58). Even in the most militant townships this "dual" power situation reflected not the usurping of power but its dispersal. It was characterised by the lack of effective control on its participants by either the state or its challengers. It was a problem exacerbated by the role of militarised youth. As Hyslop wrote "... Students and youth formed the shock troops of the

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<sup>21</sup> *The Weekly Mail*, February 17 to February 23 1989, p.3: "The short, but extraordinary life of the little general" by Thandeka Gqubule and Shaun Johnson.

outbreak, mounting pickets, organising mass actions and engaging in street battles with the army and the police ... [During 1984-85] youth became the foot soldiers of a battle for control of the township streets" (Seekings, 1993:50).

In its worst manifestation, according to one leader, the youth movement had become "one big frustrated organism with a lot of energy at its disposal, but faced with a confused direction ... and finding the only option to be to face things head on. When you have huge numbers not properly politicised you often see mob responses and there are great dangers in that" (Johnson, 1988:123). Winnie's fiery temperament therefore had a particularly strong appeal to the disgruntled youth who saw themselves as fighting a just war. Addressing a rally at Bekkersdal, about 25 miles south-east of Johannesburg Winnie told them that "Any white person who comes here to interfere with us or who comes to preach peace - that person must not leave Bekkersdal alive. Their wives and mothers will have to fetch them as corpses".<sup>22</sup> The ANC has often created the impression that it created the organisational impetus that sustained these kind of activities, but it is doubtful that they were internal expressions of the ANC. Although, in some cases like the aforementioned, the use by individuals like Winnie of the symbols and rhetoric of the ANC helped discourage independent organizing initiative and contain

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<sup>22</sup> *The Times*, February 89 1991 Friday, p.11: Threat by Winnie Mandela by Ray Kennedy.

ideological heterogeneity.

The establishment of people's courts helped to institutionalize a culture of violence that was fuelled and not necessarily started by Winnie who presided over people's courts, thereby legitimizing an "imperfect" para-legal system that regularly sentenced alleged offenders to "whippings" by angry youth as the uprising of the 1980s gained momentum. In the worst manifestation of a people centred justice "... a group of rioting youths in Sharpeville pulled Sam Dhlamini, deputy mayor of the Community Council, out of his house, hacked him to pieces on his doorstep, threw his body in his car and set it on fire" (Sparks, 1992:266).<sup>23</sup> In Alexandria township "comrades" established a "people's court" to hear charges of collaboration and ominously hung two tyres on the wall in place of the scales of justice. A graffiti on a wall in Athlone township, captured the sombre mood of the time, when it proclaimed, "Kill a cop for Jesus" (Sparks, 1992:266).<sup>24</sup> As a result of these contradictions

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<sup>23</sup> The identification of collaborators could be decidedly more crude, and less perfect, as was the case in Duduza township, west of Johannesburg, when a mob necklaced "... a young factory worker, Maki Skosana, who was suspected of being the girlfriend of a man suspected of having issued booby-trapped grenades to three 'comrades', who blew themselves up when they tried to use them. No proof, just suspicions. They chased Maki across the veld at the funeral of the dead 'comrades', caught her, stoned her, tore her clothes off, and set her on fire, and while she burned someone rammed a broken bottle into her vagina" (Sparks, 1992:266).

<sup>24</sup> An elderly person complained that children are right to battle for freedom, but they must respect older people. People's courts are not the right way. Children can't discuss their father's

Zwelakhe Sisulu, in his keynote address to the national education conference in Durban in March 1986, distinguished between "disciplined, organised youth", who helped to set up accountable "organs of people's power", and the "bands of youth" who formed Kangaroo courts.

According to a "middle-aged man" from Sebokeng in the Vaal Triangle: "Sebokeng was sliding dangerously close to anarchy. We found bands of youths being a law unto themselves ... Everyone here is angry with the way our affairs are administered. Our rents are among the highest ... But I do not like the way the whole thing has taken over by our children ... Some of them did not know what the fighting was all about" (Seekings, 1993:80-81). Ideologically the UDF functioned as an interlocutor for the ANC/SACP but it failed to provide the internal resistance campaign with a coherent strategy to decapitate the apartheid regime. By its own account, it was forced to react to the "spontaneity of actions in the townships", and was "trail[ing] behind the masses, thus making it more difficult for disciplined mass action to take place (Marais, 1998:59). The concomitant result of this organisational lapse was that in late 1988, popular forces merged as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), to incorporate a multiplicity of organisations, to launch a campaign of mass disobedience. It resembled the kind of alliance propagated by the

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problems. These comrades, they need us too. We will pay if we misdirect them now" (Johnson, 1988:119).

ANC's Politico-Military strategy Commission in 1979, a front created to "... express the broadest possible working together of all organisations, groups, and individuals genuinely opposed to racist autocracy" (Marais, 1998:53). The Commission had been set up as part of the ANC's 1978-9 strategic review conference where unusually strong criticism of the ANC's performance was vented. The Mass Democratic Movement, which had the UDF and Cosatu at its "strategic core", was welded into a fighting alliance which comprised of some 600 community, student, church, professional and other affiliate organisations restricted under the State of Emergency.<sup>25</sup>

When the ANC finally assembled at Kabwe, Zambia for its second consultative conference on 16 June 1985, its decision on a people's war had been highly influenced by these developments. In opening the Kabwe Conference and arguing the case for MK to establish mass revolutionary bases among the masses, Oliver Tambo said that "... as a result of the strength and tenacity of the people's offensive many areas in our country are engaged in active struggle as a conscious revolutionary force and accept the ANC as their vanguard movement" (Rantete, 1998:123). According to the people's war plan, small bands of armed youth equipped with home-made weaponry were to be formed to lead township struggles. This situation led an elderly resident in the black township of Alexandria in April 1986 watching a group of

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<sup>25</sup> *Financial Mail*, August 4 1989, p.42: "Mass Democratic Movement. What's in a name?"

teenagers erect a roadblock of burning tyres at the end of his dirt road to assert that "This revolution", he said, "it is a child" (Johnson, 1988:94). In the same month a Johannesburg newspaper editor wrote that "[Black] South Africa had experienced a cultural revolution, a metamorphosis in values and conventions of the profoundest type ... Young people have experienced an unprecedented moral ascendancy. They are known universally as "the youth", the legion of black teenagers who for the last two years have provided the shock troops of a nationwide popular insurrection. This has been a children's war" (Johnson, 1988:94).

The need for a dramatic political restructuring had become manifest and the courage to proceed with it had been mustered. Implicit in this type of strategy was the recognition that "... [W]hen the problem-solving capacities of the rulers begin to fail, the hegemony enters a crisis; control will keep these social and political forces in power for a certain period, but they are already doomed" (Marais, 1998:77). It was during this period that Winnie founded the Mandela United Football Club, aiming, she said, to "remove the boys from the streets as part of a program to cut down on petty crime" (Mallaby, 1992:226). But it was not long before stories began to circulate of their misdeeds. It was said to have punished "... two teenage boys who had unwisely insulted a club member by dragging them off to Winnie's house, carving "VIVA ANC" and "M" into their flesh, and applying battery acid to their wounds. Then, on December 29, 1988,

the team kidnapped four boys from a Methodist mission house in Soweto" (Mallaby, 1992:226). The fact that the Mandela United Football Club was able to carry out these atrocities with impunity, is itself a reflection of the disintegration of extra-parliamentary politics. As far back as in May 1985, a UDF analysis had suggested that the establishment of the UDF had "... seen the flowering of organisations throughout the country. Yet in the same period we have seen relatively spontaneous mass mobilisation sweep the country like wildfire. The relationship between the processes of mobilisation and organisation is a very complex and dynamic one. One thing is clear however: the process of mobilization has far outstripped that of organisation" (Price, 1991:203).

The union movement which was bruised by the ongoing effects of the 1988-9 recession, was able to confirm its status as the most powerful component of the democratic movement. It had retained "... the capacity to challenge the ruling bloc through tactical engagements that included, but were not restricted to mass protests. With the UDF battered onto the sidelines, popular organisations regrouped around the union movement and church bodies, which assumed the mantle of political leadership of the MDM" (Marais, 1998:61). It would be pressure from left aligned members of the Mass Democratic Movement, led by working class hero Cyril Ramaphosa, that would later militate for Winnie's relegation from mainstream political life, for these misdemeanours. However, within a short space of time the unions,

SAYCO and several women's organizations "elected" to become incorporated into the structures of the ANC. SACP Deputy-General Secretary, Jeremy Cronin, characterised this as a "B-team mentality". He said "People abandoned their organizations and joined the main political organization. The real experience and worth of the popular movements was not understood; they were seen as a kind of "B-team", a substitute until the "A-team" [the ANC] could enter the playing field (Marais, 1998:73).

CHAPTER 4THE MORAL DILEMMA CREATED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE MANDELA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

The decision to confront Winnie came from below, when the Mandela house was burnt down by angry youth who had become disgruntled with the antics of the "alleged" football club. Mr George Nobela, a store worker, said: "Hearts are sore, as if we have lost someone who became mad. People used to respect Mrs Mandela,<sup>26</sup> but now with the football club, killing all these youngsters, people have doubts".<sup>27</sup> During this period political graffiti appeared in a Johannesburg suburb. It read: "Release Mandela, Hang Winnie." The slogan reportedly reflected the widespread hostility by township residents to the behaviour of her football team.<sup>28</sup> This assessment is instructive because Winnie was a heroine, a larger than life, almost mythical figure, who for whatever reason had been given enormous stature by a community which

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<sup>26</sup> Nomavenda Mathiane wrote an article in *Frontline*, describing the treatment of Winnie as hypocritical. She asserted that: "'headlines' like 'fallen idol' create the impression that blacks had revered the 'Mother of the Nation'. The fact is that this title is a mystery, and many black people have never known where it came from. The title was made popular in the eyes of the outside world, which shows that if a small group of people set out with a determination to create a lie they can succeed" (Gilbey, 1993:222).

<sup>27</sup> *The Times*, Saturday February 18 1989, p.7: "Fear reigns in house of outcast Mrs Mandela" by Gavin Bell.

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, September 19 1990, p.9: "Fallen idol Winnie Mandela receives little sympathy from angry blacks" by Gavin Bell.

was now forced to challenge her. It wasn't just that challenging Winnie in her own right was a task that individual members of the liberation movement felt unequal to. They also had to consider potential damage to the anti-apartheid movement as a whole.

It would not look good to the rest of the world if one of the most influential South African activists against oppression was known to be keeping young men hostage in her house. Especially when some of them bore marks of a recent assault, and one of them had completely disappeared" (Gilbey, 1993:194). The Mandela Crisis Committee that was established to raise issues of concern as mandated by a robust array of popular organisations collectively identified as the Mass Democratic Movement "... had to try and bottle up a woman who had become famous for her indomitability; they had to try and silence someone whose greatest skill was to keep talking when everyone else had been silenced".<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, for the Mandela Crisis Committee at a community hall meeting at Dobonsville, where every community organisation was represented, it became clear that Stompie, one of the youths allegedly abducted and assaulted by members of the Mandela Football Club, had been killed. When Katiza Cebekhulu, who was a member of the notorious football team, was asked outright if Stompie

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<sup>29</sup> *Weekly Mail*, February 17 to February 23 1989, p.2: "The higher the pedestal, the longer they fall" by Anton Harber.

was dead, he replied, "Yes".<sup>30</sup>

At about this time, a daily newspaper reported that the Mandela Crisis Committee had identified Katiza Cebekhulu as a police informer. "The crisis committee said it had established he had worked for the security police and had been rejected by two anti-government organisations, the UDF and Inkatha".<sup>31</sup> A lot of local residents also found it strange that Jerry Richardson, the Mandela Football Club Coach, who had not worked for ten years, was dropped off from work by "white people".<sup>32</sup> The Crisis Committee found itself dealing with a club which was not known for "... its soccer prowess but one which was being accused by Soweto residents of out-and-out thuggery and drunkenness and of molesting young girls".<sup>33</sup> According to a South African Youth Congress activist, the football team had refused to become accountable to representative youth structures in the progressive movement. He however then asserted that state repression

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<sup>30</sup> He also admitted to taking part in the beating of Mono, Mekingwe and Kgase, but when asked why he reportedly became confused Katiza claimed "They were just being beaten", he said. "And I felt like beating up" (Gilbey, 1993:198).

<sup>31</sup> *Weekly Mail*, February 24 to March 2 1989, p.2: "Did State Agents Infiltrate team?"

<sup>32</sup> *The Weekly Mail*, Friday March 3 1989 to Thursday March 9 1989, p.2: "The strange and suspicious history of Winnie's coach by Johnny Maseko and Thandeka Gqubule".

<sup>33</sup> *The Times*, Wednesday February 15 1989, p.8: "Growing pressure on Mrs Mandela from both sides in South Africa as prison fast protest spreads: Second death fuels 'football club' scandal" by Ray Kennedy.

had allowed this situation to develop.<sup>34</sup> As one community leader asserted in frustration: "During our attempts to secure their release, their captors excused their conduct on the grounds that they were protecting these young people from improper conduct by our minister. Investigations by community leaders indicate that these allegations are groundless and were intended to deflect community anger away from the violent treatment meted out to the young people by their abductors".

An additional twist to the tale was added when three youths "allegedly" abducted by Mrs Winnie Mandela's football team "claimed" that they were ordered to make allegations of sexual abuse against Orlando West Methodist Church Minister, Rev. Paul Verryn. Bishop Peter Storey, who conveyed this information to the media, said that the church had medical proof that three youths who were returned to his care on January 16 had been assaulted. He therefore suggested that it was necessary to ask

- \* Why, if these youths were being rescued from abuse, were they forcibly abducted, assaulted and held against their will?
- \* Why did community leaders, after questioning three of the youths, unanimously discount the allegations?
- \* Why did the youths released into his care volunteer that they

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<sup>34</sup> *Weekly Mail*, January 27 to February 2 1989, p.2: "Soweto anger at Winnie "team": Claims that four youths kidnapped; one still missing" by Thandeka Gqubule.

had been instructed to allege sexual misconduct?

- \* Why did the allegations against Rev Verryn come from two people who participated in the abduction or the assaults? These two people, according to Bishop Peter Storey, were Ms Xoliswa Falati, a woman who was given sanctuary at the Methodist mission and Kathiza Cebukhulu, who laid a charge of indecent assault against Rev Verryn.<sup>35</sup>

When Fink Haysom, a legal representative of the exiled ANC, travelled to Lusaka to brief Tambo on meetings between the Mandela Crisis Committee and Winnie on the abducted youths, Tambo reportedly threw up his hands and covered his face: "What must I do?" he exclaimed, "We can't control her. The ANC can't control her. We tried to control her, that's why we formed the Crisis Committee. You must tell the Crisis Committee that they must do more" (Gilbey, 1993:194). It was only two days after Stompie's post mortem that the Mass Democratic Movement issued a public statement distancing itself from Winnie and her soccer team.<sup>36</sup> After the press conference Winnie refused to speak to reporters but two years later, she maintained that "the statement

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<sup>35</sup> *The Star*, Thursday, February 2 1989, p.6: "Youths 'ordered' to claim sexual assault. Methodist minister framed, says bishop" by Adele Baleta.

<sup>36</sup> At a press conference, the public secretary, Murphy Morobe, flanked by UDF president Archie Gumede, and the trade union's president, Elijah Barayi, issued a statement intimating that Winnie had abused the trust and confidence which she had enjoyed over the years (Gilbey, 1993:218).

literally found us guilty of murder. I was tried by these so-called leaders and they called a press conference purporting to speak on behalf of the country. Most of the real leaders of the people were behind bars" (Gilbey, 1993:218). This assessment is is not altogether fair because in a statement released externally the ANC had said the following:

"In the light of reports about its activities in the recent past our organisation complementing the initiatives of leading personalities of the Mass Democratic Movement tried to use its influence to bring about the disbanding of the group. Unfortunately our counsel was not heeded by Comrade Winnie Mandela. The situation has been further complicated by the fact that she did not belong to any structures and therefore did not benefit from the discipline counselling and collectivity of the Mass Democratic Movement" (Gilbey, 1993:212-213).

It was Donahue who, virtually alone among journalists, asked Winnie about the Stompie affair.<sup>37</sup> He led up to the subject by playing an extract of an interview he had conducted with Mandela shortly after his release. The interview is recorded as follows:

Donahue: Mr Mandela, do you see the upcoming trial of the head of the Winnie Mandela soccer team following the death of the young adolescent as another government set up?

Nelson Mandela: Well, I have no doubt that it is. The way the South African police have conducted themselves in the investigation of the so-called offence has been totally disgraceful. And it is clear that their intention was not

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<sup>37</sup> Julia Belafonte, wife of the entertainer and activist Harry Belafonte, summed up the attitude of African-Americans when she said "We don't know what happened over there. And in any case its irrelevant in relation to the positive power she has displayed and the pressure she has been under. She's a wonderful role model for women" (Gilbey, 1993:238).

to investigate the commission of any crime, but it was partly to destroy the image of the family.

"Do you wish to add anything to that?" Donahue asked Winnie.

Unfortunately, in terms of the law in South Africa, the case is still going on and I cannot personally comment on it," she said. "But as you well know, it was never really a trial of Mr Richardson. The trial itself was conducted by the press, and it was the family that was on trial. If I had been part of that, the natural thing for the government would have been to charge us. I was not given that opportunity to be charged and to clear myself in a court of law."

You were not only not charged, you were not called as a witness," commented Donahue.

"I am not called as a witness, I still look forward to one of those. That's the only way I can explain myself to the public," replied Winnie.

"No-one remotely suggests that you supported or co-operated in this murder."

"The South African press did."

"Well all right. Okay they did," conceded Donahue. (Gilbey, 1993:239).

Winnie remained unavailable to reporters during this period, but then she gave an interview to NBC News, with a long and detailed account of what she said had really happened.

Winnie asserted that "The tragedy is that the Reverend Paul Verryin has a medical problem which needs to be addressed by responsible leaders. Its a psychological problem. I don't understand how a man of his standing continues to sodomise black children. He is continuing with these activities with the full knowledge of some of

the top members of the church. My responsibility as a mother is to draw attention to this problem (Gilbey, 1993:206). In an interview with Hennie Serfontein of Netherlands television, she said, "I feel a total betrayal by everyone who has engaged in this sordid affair. I regard it as sordid and I am hurt that localities could switch over at just the snap of a finger. I am astounded that political loyalties could not stand a simple test of this nature" (Gilbey, 1993:206). This was because the leadership of the MDM drafted the unprecedented statement condemning Winnie's "complicity" in the abduction and death of teenage activist Stompei Seipei. The Secretary General of the ANC, Alfred Nzo, asserted that "the trial in fact was in violation of the spirit of agreements negotiated between the government and the ANC ... He called for the suspension of the trial, ... he told us that we should all simply forget the whole thing" (Karon, T. 1991:29). But while the matter was on trial a Winnie Mandela Support Committee announced itself in sycophantic terms, expressing itself in sycophantic terms, expressing its "unqualified support for our comrade Mother" (Karon, T. 1991:2), and the ANC's allies in the International Defence and Aid Fund paid her legal funds.

CHAPTER 5WINNIE, THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AND THE  
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN A POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

"In a generation of swine", the famed American journalist, Hunter S. Thomson reportedly once wrote, "the one-eyed pig is King."<sup>38</sup> This is a very cynical remark, but it aptly captures the actions of an individual whose moral rectitude has often degenerated into the ultimate moral "babbelas". But in macabre rhetorical gymnastics, the ANC tried to present Winnie at the Stompie trial, as a victim of some obscure conspiracy to undermine the movement. Effectively and to the consternation and pain of many of its "truly" principled members, the ANC encouraged the predisposition that if you "love me, love my dog."<sup>39</sup> It is therefore ironic that just when the way had seemed clear, with the triumph of the ANC in the first non-racial elections Winnie was subpoenaed to appear before the Human Rights Violations Committee in terms of section 29 of the Act. This development arose as a result of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,<sup>40</sup> set up by President Mandela to investigate and account for a myriad of atrocities committed during the apartheid era.

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<sup>38</sup> *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, April/Mei 1991, p.26: "Dilemmas of public accountability: The Case of Winnie Mandela" by Tony Karon.

<sup>39</sup> Karon, T. 1991:26.

<sup>40</sup> Mamdani, M. *Reconciliation with Justice*, Issue 46. South African Review of Books. November/December 1996.

Winnie was linked to 18 crimes, with one report describing the subpoena given to her as reading like "a script for a horror movie" (Meredith, M. 1997:44). But the fate of Stompie was the least of Winnie's troubles. The number of murders for which she has been associated varies widely, but when she appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation the following were delineated as significant:

*Stompie Seipei: It is alleged that he was already dying after having been beaten at Madikazela-Mandela's house, and that she ordered and took part in the assault.*

*Dr Abu Asvat: It is alleged he was killed on Madikazela-Mandela's orders, after he had examined Stompei.*

*Finkie Msomi: A 13 year old girl shot dead in a revenge attack on a Soweto house, reportedly ordered by Madikazela-Mandela.*

*Kuki Zwane: Her murder near Orlando railway station on December 18 1988 was a mystery until Richardson claimed during a television interview, that he had killed her as she was a suspected police informer on Madikazela-Mandela's instructions.*

*Sicelo Dlomo: It was assumed he had been murdered by the security forces on January 23, 1988, but there were allegations to the effect that he had been killed on Madikazela-Mandela's orders, as a suspected informer.*

*Morgan Bambisa: His death is linked to Madikazela-Mandela in an amnesty application.*

*Susan Maripe: Her death is connected to Madikazela-Mandela, in a statement made to the Truth Commission.*

*Xola Makhaula: He was killed in a shebeen brawl in 1987, but his AK-47 was reportedly kept at Madikazela-Mandela's house.*

*Maxwell Madonda: A member of the mandela United Football Club, died while trying to kidnap another youth accused of being an "impi" on Madikazela-Mandela's orders.*

*Two MK guerillas, Maluleke and Mbenenge and a white police*

*officers, Sergeant Pretorius: All three were killed during a shoot-out at Richardson's house on November 9 1988. Madikazela-Mandela is alleged to have delivered the two guerillas to Richardson, who was a police spy - Lolo Sono and Siboniso Tshabalala: They disappeared in November 1988 after allegedly being questioned and assaulted at Madikazela-Mandela's house on suspicion of having "sold out" Maluleke and Mbenenge, to the police.*

*The kidnapping and torture of two brothers, Peter and Philip Makhanda in 1988, allegedly on Madikazela-Mandela's instructions and in her presence.*

*The attempted murder of Inkaneng Lerothodi in 1989. The youth allegedly accused by Madikazela-Mandela of having betrayed a comrade to the police, had his throat cut with garden shears by Richardson, but miraculously survived.*

*The circumstances leading to the death of Sizwe Sithole in police detention in 1991. He had been detained in connection with the possession of firearms and grenades. Cebekhulu has alleged that Winnie supplied the weapons to Sithole and then instructed him (Cebekhulu) to tip off the police.<sup>41</sup>*

A number of questions arose, which the *Mail and Guardian* addressed to National Commissioner George Fivaz's office, about the conduct of the police in relation to Madikazela-Mandela. There are, without doubt, some curious aspects about the police handling of Madikazela-Mandela - some so curious that the theory has been floated that she was herself in the pay of the security forces and was being protected as such. In November 1988, for example, two guerillas were killed in a shoot-out with police at Richardson's home. At the subsequent inquest, Richardson - who it is now known was a police agent -

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<sup>41</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, November 21 to 27 1997, p.7: "More corpses in Winnie's cupboard".

testified that Madikazela-Mandela brought them to his house. However, the police did not try to take a statement from her. Other issues which are articulated by the *Mail and Guardian*, are:

- \* *Why was no action taken after public admission by Falati and Morgan that they lied at the Stompie trial to provide Winnie with an alibi?*
- \* *Why was the original statement implicating Madikazela-Mandela by Nicholas Dlamini, one of the two men convicted of murdering Asvat, never presented in court?*
- \* *Why was Richardson paid R10 000 by the police while serving a sentence of life imprisonment for the murder of Stompie?*
- \* *Did Senior Superintendent (then captain) Fred Dempsey, the investigating officer in the Seipei case, hand key witness Cebekhulu over to Winnie when he captured him in January 1991 as Cebekhulu alleges in Fred Bridgland's book **Katiza's Journey**?<sup>42</sup>*

There is also the enigmatic case of Mabotha, alias Themba, who claimed to have overheard a conversation about Stompie's death between Madikazela-Mandela and Richardson after the teenager was killed and dumped in the veld. But the Security Police handed him over to De Kock, who disposed of him using the Buddha method.<sup>43</sup> Democratic Party leader Tony Leon, commenting in Parliament on these and related events, said they suggested "a deliberate under prosecution or laconic police work in all matters with which

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<sup>42</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, November 21 to 27 1997: "More Corpses in Winnie's Cupboard".

<sup>43</sup> *Financial Mail*, p.47: "Madikazela-Mandela: Probe of Vlakplaas link to Winnie's Club: The TRC is investigating the suspected role of security police in manipulating events around the erstwhile Mother of the Nation" by Patrick Laurence.

Madikazela-mandela's name was associated, save and except the murder of Stompie Seipei . . . which had become an issue of such notoriety that the State was forced to act."<sup>44</sup> At the TRC hearing a former dirty tricks operative, Paul Erasmus, confessed that there was a massive security police operation designed to tarnish the image of the African National Congress by discrediting Winnie Mandela. Erasmus said information on Mandela was gleaned from phone taps, postal intercepts and other means of spying. He said Stratcom dogma which was used to discredit Winnie was based on 70 per cent fact and 30 per cent fiction.

The apartheid operative claimed that "You create a perception. Even when some of it can be disproved, since some of it is true people think all of it is true."<sup>45</sup> The example provided is that of a story, which intimated that a statement was made by Ionias Phiri of Alexandra township, when it was in fact, written by Erasmus and his colleagues. It alleged that Winnie had "... a heavy sex drive (especially while under the influence of drink) and has had an ongoing relationship with a young black radical and former head of the Black Students' Society at Wits University named Mpofu."<sup>46</sup> But

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<sup>44</sup> *Financial Mail*, July 11 1997, pp.40-41: "Winnie Madikazela-Mandela: Truth probe in fallow fields".

<sup>45</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, June 30 to July 6 1995, p.6: "The dirty tricks campaign to trash Winnie" by Stefaans Brummer.

<sup>46</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, June 30 to July 6 1995, p.6: "The dirty tricks campaign to trash Winnie" by Stefaans Brummer.

the dirty tricks operative who appears to have had control over the alleged "spies" who made up the MUFC was guarded in his submissions to the TRC, so it is very difficult to determine the full import of what he had to say, save to suggest that he was being economical in his dissemination of the truth for what must be reasons of obvious self interest. Similarly, Ms Madikazela-Mandela's testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was characterised by a blanket denial of all allegations against her and of the attempts by the community leadership to defuse the situation as a result of the alleged abduction.

The commission however did not subscribe to this view feeling that Madikazela-Mandela was aware of assaults made on Lolo Sono. It was also held that the fate of Anthony Sibuiso Tshabalala was linked to that of Lolo Sono. They were both believed to be informers. This assessment was based on a submission made by Mr Nocodemus Sono who testified that Winnie had allegedly told him that "I am taking this dog away. The movement will see what to do to him".<sup>47</sup> The commission also subscribed to the view that Winnie was present at her home and not in Brandford as submitted in her trial and that she was present during the assaults, and initiated and participated in the assaults on stompie Seipei. If one recalls from the 1991 trial what was in dispute is whether Mrs Mandela knew of or ordered the kidnapping and

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/09/13/insight/in/2./2htm#top>

whether she was present at the abduction. Winnie Mandela was never charged or called as a witness, when Jerry Richardson, formerly the coach of her football team was charged with murdering Stompie. Xoliswa Falati, who went to jail for the kidnapping and assault of Stompie, had claimed at the time that Mrs Madikazela-Mandela was not present.

In her TRC submissions Xoliswa Falati intimated that she had lied. "That was our culture, to protect our leaders", she said. "I went to prison for her. She was so ungrateful ... she regards herself as a demi-god".<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, Winnie called her former associates ludicrous and ridiculous but reluctantly conceded that things had gone horribly wrong. Aside from her calculated and qualified nod to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's plea for an apology, Winnie insisted that incriminating evidence provided by eye witnesses to the effect that she was aware of the atrocities committed in her Soweto home by members of her football club were an elaborate quilt of lies to conceal her innocence.<sup>49</sup> But in its final report the TRC held that Madikatzela-Mandela had been negligent in that she failed to institute enquiries into the deaths of Mr Frans Tebogo Maluleka and Mr Sipho Mbenenge, who were accommodated at the house of MUFC coach

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<sup>48</sup> *The Economist*, November 29th 1997, p.46: "The Truth about Winnie Mandela. South Africa Winnie's Week."

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/09/13/insight/in/2./2htm#top>

Mr Jerry Richardson. The commission therefore found Ms Winnie Madikazela-Mandela politically and morally accountable for the gross violations of human rights committed by the MUFC.<sup>50</sup> But Winnie was not the only one "fingering" by the TRC report. The report damned the ANC for its tacit approval of the assassination of informers, state witnesses in political trials and askaris. "The Commission", it states, "does not condone the legitimisation of such individuals as military targets and finds that the extrajudicial killings of such individuals constituted gross violations of human rights."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> <http://222.suntimesarchive/1998/10/25/news/trc/2chapter6f.htm>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/suntimesarchive/1998/11/01/news/news02.htm>

CHAPTER 6THE PROBLEM OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: WINNIE, NELSON  
AND THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS IN THE  
NEW SOUTH AFRICA'S PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS

The British government which for a long time (during Tory rule) characterised the African National Congress as a terrorist organisation, was toying with the idea of knighting Nelson ahead of Queen Elizabeth's visit to South Africa, but were uncomfortable with the idea of Winnie becoming Lady Mandela. This problem was resolved by conferring on Nelson an even higher honour, the Order of Merit, which gives no title to the wife of the recipient and inviting him to pay a state visit to Britain in 1996 (Bridgland, 1997:255). It was also resolved not to invite Winnie to any of the British monarch's official engagements in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Soweto, Pretoria and Durban during her week long visit to South Africa. Winnie responded with a boycott of her own. When Elizabeth addressed the South African Parliament on Monday 20 March 1995 to witness what she described "as little short of a miracle, only one of the 400 MPs was absent". The notable absentee had a sign on her office door in the corridors of Parliament which ironically read as follows: "This office will be closed until Wednesday. The queen is out of town" (Bridgland, 1997:255-256).

On the penultimate day, 24 March 1995 of the Queen's visit, Winnie criticised Nelson's government for spending R2,5 million to entertain a British queen. After weeks of controversy and agonizing, President Nelson Mandela issued a statement on the 27 March 1995, in which he sacked his wife from the Government of National Unity. He said, "I hope this decision will help the former Deputy Minister to review her position and seek to improve on her own conduct in positions of responsibility so as to enable her to make the positive contribution to society her talents would enable her" (Bridgland, 1997:256). But as their growing estrangement became more defined, Winnie attacked Nelson in private letters she wrote to him and which were obtained by the *Johannesburg Star*. One of the *Star* letters referred to Nelson's twenty-seven-year imprisonment and went on:

"As you will know, when you were forcibly prevented from exercising your inalienable right to free speech, I and the children [Zindzi and Zenani Mandela], with others, spoke up for humanity.

Circumstances forced me into becoming a political activist. The children and I suffered for refusing to succumb to the oppression of the apartheid regime. We were banned and banished and were also jailed and physically manhandled (Bridgland, 1997:252-253).

Winnie was also particularly bitter about being allocated a seat amongst lesser dignitaries at the May 1994 Presidential inauguration.

Thabo Mbeki reportedly summoned Winnie from Soweto to Cape Town on 6 March 1995 to discuss her crisis ridden public life. She refused

to go issuing a statement containing the text of a letter she had posted to Mbeki saying she saw no reason why she had to meet him. The condescending tone of the letter informed the Deputy President that she was prepared to meet the organ grinder, not his monkey. "The issue under discussion has assumed the proportion of a national crisis which requires the intervention of the President", she said (Bridgland, 1997:253). Unable to avoid public scrutiny, Winnie Mandela was said to be at the centre of a struggle for control of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa). She was accused "... of storming the organisation's headquarters, changing the locks and leaving with the furniture and computers worth R170 000".<sup>52</sup> This was confirmed by Mandela's own ally, Holomisa, but he said it was not a unilateral action: "It was decided at last year's national conference in December that headquarters was not serving the interests of the regions and had to be downgraded".<sup>53</sup> It also transpired that Winnie had established a Section 21 company called the Co-ordinated Anti-Poverty Programmes (Capp), in 1992 with eight other directors, which was held together by nothing more than the magnetism of her personality. It was "... in financial trouble by 1993, amid allegations that directors were using the company for

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<sup>52</sup> *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, January 20 to 26 1995, p.8: "Winnie jumps into traditional leaders' row. Winnie Mandela stands accused of storming Contralesa's headquarters in a struggle for control of the organisation" by Mduduzi ka Harvey.

<sup>53</sup> *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, January 20 to 26 1995, p.8: "Winnie jumps into traditional leaders' row" by Mduduzi ka Harvey.

their personal gain."<sup>54</sup>

Winnie also aroused controversy for scheduling a trip that would involve meeting with four African heads of states, and 11 African minister of culture. She claimed that permission was sought for the trip, the exact purpose of which is unclear, from the office of the President on 15 February 1995. When authorization was given, final confirmation for the visits were made with the host governments, but approval was withdrawn on 20 February through the office of the Deputy President. She nevertheless departed on an international flight to West Africa on February 23, after detailing in a letter to the aforesaid's office, why the trip was important.<sup>55</sup> This misdemeanour is significant if only because in the North West, five of the most senior ANC Women's League members in the province were

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<sup>54</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, November 17 to 23 1995, p.8: "Winnie the prince, the priest and the president. A court case this week saw Winnie Mandela lose R100 000 following her failure to pay an air charter bill - and revealed, some bizarre facts about her co-ordinated Anti-Poverty Programmes" by Justin Pearce. It generated considerable controversy when it chartered a chartered flight to Luanda in June 1993, so that Ben du Preez, a prospective diamond buyer, could meet Angola's President Eduardo dos Santos. The meeting "... was to result in a diamond deal on which Mandela would take 10 per cent commission to benefit ..." But the Angola trip turned out "... to be an expensive fiasco. Dos Santos ended the meeting after five minutes saying that South Africans wishing to buy Angolan diamonds could do so, through an agent in Johannesburg."

<sup>55</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, March 31 to April 6 1995, p.8: "You've downed a democrat, Mr President" by Alan Reynolds.

suspended from the party for political infighting.<sup>56</sup> This is complemented by the fact that the ANC national executive committee has now given its President the power to choose the provincial premiers.<sup>57</sup> But Winnie is not the only ANC parliamentarian who has been shielded by the party.

Judge Willem Heath has consistently and repeatedly accused Health Minister Nkosazana Zuma of being "reckless" and "negligent", in ordering the development of the R14 million Sarafina 2 AIDS play, saying her actions led to the loss of R10,5 million which she should pay back. Heath's allegations have led to tension between his unit and the government, with Deputy President Thabo Mbeki intimating that the government would fight the charges against Zuma.<sup>58</sup> But, there are undoubtedly some sinister aspects to the treatment of Madikazela-Mandela, chief amongst which is that intruders have broken into Winnie's Soweto home three times, rifling through the bedroom, but taking nothing. The police have described the break-ins as the work of highly trained intruders.<sup>59</sup> This observation is not intended to deflect from criticisms of Winnie Madikazela-Mandela. Winnie, it must be recalled, failed to hand over to the Women's League a cheque for

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/suntimesarchive/1998/11/08/news/news06.htm>

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.suntimes.co.za/suntimes/archive/1998/08/23/news/news\\_14/htm#top](http://www.suntimes.co.za/suntimes/archive/1998/08/23/news/news_14/htm#top)

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/11/15/news/news03.htm>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/10/04/news/news01.htm>

500 000 rand (\$140 000) presented to her by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Benazi Bhutto.

In the Bhutto debacle Winnie claimed that the money was given to her to use at her own discretion, so she lodged it in the account of the anti-poverty programme of which she is chief executive.<sup>60</sup> This laissez faire attitude when dealing with public expenditure is commonplace in the African National Congress. The Minister for Safety and Security in Mpumalanga, Steve Mabona, admitted to lavish public expenditure on luxury hotels and travel costs, saying it was just what he deserved: "Of course I did ... People want to meet you. They want to have dinner and stuff. So I'd book myself into a hotel [in Johannesburg, near where he lives] to do this, then stay overnight. It's part of the job".<sup>61</sup> But this kind of conduct has landed Dr Allan Boesak, a prominent anti-apartheid activist, in court on serious allegations of fraud and financial mismanagement. In Boesak's case in a similarly type of situation the Justice Minister, Dullar Omar, made flippant public references to "struggle book-keeping".<sup>62</sup> Omar revealed that the state through the Legal Aid Board, anticipated expending some R650 000 on the defence of the former ANC Western Cape

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<sup>60</sup> *The Economist*, February 18 1995, p.50: "South Africa: Turbulent Lady".

<sup>61</sup> Good, K. et al. p.553.

<sup>62</sup> Good, K. "Accountable to Themselves: Predominance in Southern Africa", *Journal of Modern African Studies* Volume 35. December 1997, No.4, pp.553.

leader. This situation led the historian, Tom Lodge, to acknowledge that the ANC leadership is not in fact very bothered about corruption.

The office for Serious Economic Offences (OSEO) is the main state agency for combating corruption, but its director, Jan Swanepoel, reported to Parliament, in the same month that the OSEO was unable to fulfil its investigatory functions because of a lack of staff and funding.<sup>63</sup> It is indeed very ironic that two years after the ANC vehemently denied that it had received a donation from Sol Kerzner for its 1994 election campaign, Mandela declared in 1996, soon after Bantu Holomisa's allegations of corruption within the ANC, that he personally had accepted R2 million from the hotel magnate on conditions of strict confidentiality.<sup>64</sup> But a senior women's league official, who asked not to be named, asserted that Winnie was picking a fight with the ANC, and that her dispute had little to do with issues of policy. In the words of one observer:

"She's trying to create the impression that the ANC has made it unbearable for her to stay any longer. But this is just not the case. The ANC has bent over backwards for her. I think she is looking for an excuse to leave the ANC. She needs a fight so she can take whatever imagined support she has with her".<sup>65</sup>

It is also a matter of considerable interest that Winnie was named

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<sup>63</sup> Good, K. et al 1997.

<sup>64</sup> Good, K. *ibid*.

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/07/12/news/news01.htm>

on Robert McBride's provisional charge sheet as the mastermind of an alleged plot to overthrow the South African government.<sup>66</sup> Winnie has asserted that "The fight against those who are perceived to be pillars of ANC mass support has now become obvious and transparent", she said. "In defence of the aspirations of my people, I am left with no choice but to take the challenge head on."<sup>67</sup> She is not alone in this view because a leading SACP official, Jeremy Cronin, also made an unprecedented public criticism of the ANC saying the biggest threat to democracy in South Africa came from within the ruling party, which was in danger of abandoning the constituency that voted it into power. Winnie's remarks came as a Markinor poll showed ANC support at 54 per cent, down from 62 per cent in the 1994 elections.<sup>68</sup> The corps of new entrepreneurial consultants that have been unleashed with the promulgation of doctrines like black empowerment, as was the case with Eugene Nyati, accumulate astronomical amounts of money at public expense. Even as far back as 1994 "The Mandelas and the Mbekis and the Meyers," said Breyten Breytenbach, "already live[d] hand-in-pocket with the Oppenheimers and the Gordimers and the Motanas."<sup>69</sup> But critics complain that most blacks control businesses are merely holding companies that don't

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1998/10/04/news/news01.htm>

<sup>67</sup> *The Times*, Saturday March 4 1995, p.13: "Mrs Mandela rallies the poor" by Michael Hamlyn.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.co.za/suntimesarchive/1998/05/24/news/news01.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Good, K. et al. 1997.

make anything and therefore don't improve the lives of average blacks. "At the end of the day, the power lies elsewhere", says Tom Lodge.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Political Studies professor at the University of the Witwatersrand.

CHAPTER 7CONCLUSION

In a public statement Winnie Madikazela-Mandela propagated the advent of a second revolution, that would lead to the demise of "the racist white liberal", not at a physical level, but rather "at the deeper levels of our psyche."<sup>71</sup> Winnie has argued that the new South Africa we all glibly talk about will only be experienced by "our great-great grandchildren."<sup>72</sup> This "revolutionary" rhetoric is characteristic of most revolutionary movements, once they have captured the "holy grail", but there is a very real fear, that the ANC's growing intolerance of internal dissent under its designated crown prince could lead to a realignment of political forces.<sup>73</sup> This is complemented by the fact that the Deputy-President's "brainchild"

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<sup>71</sup> *Finance Week*, February 19-25 1998, p.40: "Transformation Globalisation Promise" by Paul Pereira.

<sup>72</sup> *Finance Week*, February 19-25 1998, p.40: "Transformation Globalisation Promise" by Paul Pereira.

<sup>73</sup> *Financial Mail*, April 5 1996, p.35: "Enigma of Jordan's axing". Pallo Jordan, an aloof intellectual who often appears arrogant and uncommunicative in "public" was fired from Cabinet for expressing his independence and intellectual courage. He took issue with Thabo Mbeki's suggestion that airtime be allocated primarily to promote government aims Thabo Mbeki was reportedly behind the firing but Mandela said in Athlone at the time that the decision was his alone. *Mail and Guardian* was able to confirm that no consultation had taken place with senior party officials before the decision to get rid of Jordan was announced. ANC Deputy Secretary General, Cheryl Carolus, heard about it on radio and Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa was told a few minutes before Jordan's expulsion.

GEAR, one of the two cornerstones of his projected policy framework (the other being, the so-called African Renaissance) has caused divisions so deep in the tripartite alliance, that it is inevitable that it will continue to instigate acrimonious furores on public forums.<sup>74</sup> Even outside of the Tripartite Alliance there are growing, beguiling calls to abandon fiscal orthodoxy, drop privatisation and opt out of globalisation - in short, to drop GEAR, A climb down which the Deputy-President would find MOST embarrassing and "humiliating".<sup>75</sup>

This is ever more apparent because Thabo Mbeki's contention that ANC parliamentarians will suffer no loss of income if they fail to make the party's electoral lists is the most positive evidence of the way in which he wants to decrease the separation between party and state. It is consistent with the sentiment echoed by Mbeki's crony, Sports Minister Steve Tshwete, who has proclaimed that "there is going to be interference by Government in every sphere of life in South African life."<sup>76</sup> The resulting diminution of checks and balances on

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<sup>74</sup> *Financial Mail*, June 19 1998, p.34: "Current Affairs: ANC/SACP/Cosatu Failing to get into top Gear. Never in its history has the tripartite alliance been so unhappy" by Justice Malala.

<sup>75</sup> *Financial Mail*, June 19 1998, p.33: "Current Affairs: Job Summit. The Great Divide: Raising expectations so close to an election could be dangerous" by Armanath Singh.

<sup>76</sup> This announcement arose out of an attempt to calm colleagues, after an ANC decision to allow only 25% of its candidates lists to come from internal party elections. The other three quarters will be decided on by the party's national executive committee, which will purportedly pay attention to things like representation of women and tripartite alliance partners. But it is highly probable that the list will be determined primarily by a perceived loyalty to party policies

legislative authority, will be little cause for celebration because we will have swapped one form of tyranny for another. This is significant if only because one of the central tenets of the ANC-Cosatu-SACP alliance is the concept of "democratic centralism". The natural consequence of this political philosophy is that decisions taken by the leadership, no matter how controversial, are binding on all members.<sup>77</sup> Such disregard for political dissent is worrying because the propagation of consensus candidates in a post-apartheid South Africa has given the upper echelons of the ANC more discretion in dispensing patronage than previously.

The elevation of "comrades" within the party is now primarily determined, not on the basis of competence or public accountability, but arbitrarily determined on ill-conceived and subjectively defined notions of loyalty and comaradie. For example, Bantu Holomisa incurred the wrath of the ANC for testifying before the TRC that Public Enterprises Minister, Stella Sigcau, when Prime Minister of Transkei, took at R50 000 cut of a R2 million bribe. This standoff between Holomisa and the ANC, which led to his expulsion from the party, was shadowed by a more significant political row. It was

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and to party leadership. *Finance Week*, November 20-26 1998, p.9: "ANC redeployment comes at a cost: Investors feel less at risk in liberal democracy".

<sup>77</sup> *Financial Mail*, July 24 1998, p.38: "Current Affairs: Gauteng Premier: The People's Pyrrhic Victory: ANC has removed all Motshekga's decision-making powers" by Justice Malala.

occasioned by Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki's assertion that ANC members should consult party leaders before submitting evidence before the commission.<sup>78</sup> But Holomisa has left no one in any doubt that he blames Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki for his expulsion from the ANC, which he described as "extremely harsh".<sup>79</sup>

Holomisa's populist rhetoric is not all he shares in common with Winnie Madikazela-Mandela. Both are victims of a centralist cabal which floats around Mandela's "crown prince" Thabo Mbeki in the ANC, who have used the ANC's internal code of conduct to new extremes to marginalise Winnie.<sup>80</sup> This is significant because if Winnie Madikazela-Mandela and her football club can be characterised as a bunch of "vigilantes" or for want of a better epithet "hoodlums", who

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<sup>78</sup> *Mail and Guardian*, June 14-20 1996, p.6: "Holomisa sparks ANC truth row. As the row over Bantu Holomisa's statements escalates questions are being asked about the ANC's approach to the truth commission" by Gaye Davis.

<sup>79</sup> *Financial Mail*, October 4 1996, p.41: "Current Affairs: Holomisa Expulsion Surviving the Wilderness". This animosity towards the Deputy-President is also reportedly shared by former Gauteng Premier, Tokyo Sexwale (although the two do not enjoy cordial relations), who was upset about the Mbeki's purported request for an intelligence report into allegations that he was involved in drug trafficking, leading to his redeployment to the private sector.

<sup>80</sup> *Finance Week*, December 11 1997, p.16: "When Winnie Goes. If Winnie Mandela leaves the ANC, she may join Bantu Holomisa, on the populist left. Policy will then be the victim of opportunism" by David Christianson. It was apparently suggested to Mpumalanga Premier and Vice-President, nominee Matthews Phosa, that he withdraw his candidacy at the annual 50th ANC conference in conference, and pledge his support for the hierarchy's favoured candidate, Kwa-Zulu Natal's Jacob Zuma. This tactic was quite clearly designed to isolate Madikazela-Mandela. But Phosa reportedly refused to be part to this type of political "treachery".

used unrestrained thuggery to prevent infiltration of its ranks by elements of state apparatus, then the same role can be ascribed to the ANC detention camps and the feared Mbokodo (the stone-that-crushes). This logic was lost to Azhar Cachalia in his statement to the TRC, when he made an emotional appeal to the Commission to recommend that anyone convicted of a crime "which amounts to a gross violation of human rights, should not be regarded as fit to hold public office."<sup>81</sup> The unstated target of this appeal was undoubtedly Winnie Madikazela-Mandela, whose 1991 conviction for kidnapping was upheld by the Appeal Court.<sup>82</sup>

As it turned out, the "controversial" granting of amnesty to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chairman, Desmond Tutu's son Trevor Tutu, was unwittingly used as a smokescreen to obscure the simultaneous blanket amnesty provided to senior government ANC officials. This paradox demands greater scrutiny because crammed among the names of those benefitting from this blanket amnesty are

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<sup>81</sup> *Finance Week*, December 11 1997, p.16: "When Winnie Goes. Winnie Mandela leaves the ANC, she may join Bantu Holomisa, on the populist left. Policy will then be the victim of opportunism" by David Christianson.

<sup>82</sup> This exhortation echoes a similar sentiment expressed by the Skweyiya Commission, appointed by the ANC in 1992 to investigate allegations that cadres were tortured in its camps. The assessment is significant if only because the events surrounding Madikazela-Mandela and the Mandela United Football Club and those which occurred in ANC detention camps in Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and above all, Angola, provide similar accounts of infiltration by police agents, of rampant paranoia and of summary justice.

South Africa's heir apparent, Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki, Alfred Nzo, Joe Modise, Pallo Jordan, Dullah Omar, Matthews Phosa and Jacob Zuma. Although the offenses for which they claim "amnesty" are unspecified, they talk heroically of accepting "collective responsibility" for things that took place in the name of the ANC when that organisation was banned.<sup>83</sup> It is not clear why these transgressions did not include the misdemeanours of Winnie Madikazela-Mandela and the Mandela United Football Club. There was no full disclosure, so it is difficult to understand why the TRC prescribed that they should receive forgiveness. As DP leader Tony Leon pointed out "What's objectionable ... is the blatant bias shown by Ntsebesa, who's not demanding the same treatment for those names ... for human rights abuses in ANC detention camps."<sup>84</sup>

The fact that the ANC has been able to subsume the TRC, on matters for which convenience arguments are paramount, is shadowed by the realisation that it is consolidating a behind the scenes hegemony that is daunting and scary.<sup>85</sup> This is made all the more significant with the realisation that the squabbles between the ANC and the IFP

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<sup>83</sup> *Finance Week*, December 4-10 1997, p.44: "Truth Commission: What did you do Thabo" by Paul Perereia.

<sup>84</sup> *Financial Mail*, July 5 1996, p.48: "Current Affairs truth commission Deflecting Doubts".

<sup>85</sup> *Financial Mail*, November 14 1997, p.46: Parliamentary Session. "Ennui and hysteria in the house that Thabo bought. This year's parliament was characterised by disharmony and a shrivelling of independent thought" by Peter Wilhelm.

have receded into the background. The ANC has tactfully gone the Nkomo "route", so that if it does not subsume the IFP, then at least it can afford to develop a working relationship with it, effectively denying it a chance to align itself unequivocally with other political parties. Sources close to Mbeki say that he has held wide ranging talks with IFP leader and Minister of Home Affairs, Mongosutho Buthulezi, about closer co-operation between the two parties. The evidence therefore suggests that the two may collude with one another to secure support and power.<sup>86</sup> In anticipation of this Tom Lodge, says that, "It would be a pity if the ANC corrupted its own principles in order to merge with the IFP. It would become a corrupt, careerist, bourgeois and reactionary party."<sup>87</sup> The substance of this assessment is that the ANC seems to be reverting to the more "Leninist" structure of the centrally controlled exiled ANC.

This is despite the fact that it will cause discomfort to many of the old UDF activists who will have been used to a more democratic style

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<sup>86</sup> *Financial Mail*, April 17 1998, p.35: "Inkatha Freedom Party Hints of a Handshake. Election Pact with old foe." by Justice Malala.

<sup>87</sup> *Financial Mail*, January 16 1998, p.35: "ANC-IFP Merger Talk Just Whispered Sweet Nothings. Ndlovu says talks are no more than kite-flying: Mzimela faces reprimand." The logic for this epistemological predisposition is the ANC admission that there was an attempt by its guerilla units to assassinate Inkatha leader, Mangosutho Buthulezi predicated by the explanation offered by the Deputy-President, Thabo Mbeki, in the ANC submission to the TRC, is that the assassination bid was unauthorised and the ANC leadership aborted it as soon as they learnt about it.

of internal organisation than the ANC is currently allowing.<sup>88</sup> But the rise of the exiles and the imposition of party discipline has generated considerable discontent among former eighties grass-roots activists, who believe that they struggle as they waged it has been sold out.<sup>89</sup> The ANC's allegiance to the Freedom Charter - with its socialistically inclined mentality - has become frayed and questionable, except in the minds of the populists who, with some justice say they speak for the people. So there has been a marked erosion of the ANC's claim, to being the sole custodians of the struggle.<sup>90</sup>

This underscores the challenge facing Winnie who is on the populist left. She has to organise to deliver votes. But populism is, almost by its nature, not given to electoral organisation.<sup>91</sup> Winnie Madikazela-Mandela's call for a referendum on the death penalty - which she wants restored - was the latest signal of discontent with

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<sup>88</sup> *Finance Week*, August 21-27 1997: "The ANC: Democracy by Consensus" by James Myburgh.

<sup>89</sup> *Finance Week*, December 11-17 1997, p.16: "When Winnie Goes. If Winnie Mandela leaves the ANC, she may join Bantu Holomisa, on the populist left. Policy will then be the victim of opportunism" by David Christianson.

<sup>90</sup> *Financial Mail*, October 24 197, p.38: "Current Affairs: ANC and the 'Populists'. The broad church strains ahead of the party's congress, the strategy is to keep populists in place while moving to neutralise" by Peter Wilhelm.

<sup>91</sup> *Finance Week*, December 11-17 1997, p.16: "When Winnie Goes. If Winnie Mandela leaves the ANC, she may join Bantu Holomisa, on the populist left. Policy will then be the victim of opportunism" by David Christianson.

the ANC's leadership's assumption that it is in full control of the levers of power. Her accusations serve to define populism itself. She scorns affirmative action "based on nepotism" is pro-Cosatu on the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy; laments the slowness of delivery and wants a constituency based electoral system.<sup>92</sup> But given her potential to draw off support from the ANC Winnie is one populist who is best preferred in the tent prior to the elections, but it is doubtful that this "harmonious" relationship will exist into the new millennium. There was a hint of divisive anger when Mbeki chastised unnamed comrades for reportedly dismissing Mandela's defence of GEAR as the "rantings of an old man".<sup>93</sup> But the ANC appears to have been compelled to have made a tactical retreat in the face of pressure from its leftist allies to abandon its macro-economic Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy.

In its meeting with the SACP and the Congress of SA Trade Unions, the ANC agreed to bring its economic outlook in line with its allies.<sup>94</sup> This is important because the government is way behind its Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme, announced in 1996,

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<sup>92</sup> *Financial Mail*, October 24 1997: "Current Affairs ANC and the Populists. The Broad Church strains. Ahead of the party's congress the strategy is to keep populists in place while moving to neutralise" by Peter Wilhelm.

<sup>93</sup> *Financial Mail*, July 10 1998, p.39: "SACP-ANX nexus. The long walk to Discord Unresolved dispute resurfaces" by Patrick Laurence.

<sup>94</sup> *Financial Mail*, October 3 1998, p.35: "Current Affairs: tripartite Allies: Perils of the ANC's Retreat: the glue may come unstuck when reality hits after 1999."

which projected a GDP growth of 3.8% in 1998 and the creation of 246 000 new jobs. There is little hope that it will make sufficient progress, in time to meet the targeted 4.2% annual average creation of 270 000 new jobs by the end of the five year period in 2000.<sup>95</sup> This analysis is useful if not only because the confrontation between the ANC, SACP and COSATU is essentially one for the "soul of the ANC".<sup>96</sup> This debate is significant because there has been a growing feeling that Mbeki, who was ushered into office by a powerful group of the old guard, has not shaped up to the job because he is regarded as being too defeatist and is thought to lack creative economic thinking. As one ANC MP put it "Now Thabo seems almost unassailable. There's a general public understanding that Mbeki is next in line. But within the parliamentary caucus and the national executive committee dissent is growing."<sup>97</sup>

That is the reason why the name of a populist like Winnie Madikazela-Mandela is often talked about with sensationalist awe and wonder. A member of the ANC's national working committee or "inner cabinet"

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<sup>95</sup> *Financial Mail*, January 8 1999, p.28: *Economy and Business Election. Economics*: "Don't fudge the facts in 1999 politicians and voters have no choice but to face up to realities" by Ethel Hazelhurst.

<sup>96</sup> The Deputy Environmental Affairs Minister, Peter Mokaba, has been attributed with the injunction that the ANC has always been unashamedly capitalist, while those on the left led by the SACP's Jeremy Cronin, believe the ANC to be left leaning.

<sup>97</sup> *Financial Mail*, November 17 1995, p.25: "Mandela Succession: Passing the bat on Mbeki by a head unless he stumbles."

speaks of Madikazela-Mandela's finely honed lobbying skills: "She can be very charismatic".<sup>98</sup> Even her most bitter enemies concede that she works tirelessly to present herself as the champion of the poor and wretched. Winnie was the first prominent ANC leader to visit and offer sympathy to Joyce Malebane, whose 7-year old child, Mamokethi Malebane, was raped and murdered on the East Rand in March.<sup>99</sup> These gestures of solidarity do more to build her image as a leader who cares about common folk: they translate into votes at ANC conferences from delegates sent there by rank-and-file ANC members.<sup>100</sup> Winnie Madikazela-Mandela has proven resilience. The media has buried her several times politically, only to see her recover, and so it is therefore arguable that Winnie Madikazela-Mandela could act as a catalyst for the "second revolution" she vociferously eulogises about which could rear its "ugly" head sooner rather than later, and therein lies her political significance.

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<sup>98</sup> *Financial Mail*, September 19 1997, p.38: Current Affairs. Madikazela-Mandela. Aspirant Comrade Deputy President Growing suspicions about her murky past may not prevent her from scoring a major triumph at the ANC's December conference" by Patrick Laurence.

<sup>99</sup> *Financial Mail*, September 19 1997, p.38: "Current Affairs. Madikazela-Mandela. Aspirant Comrade Deputy President Growing suspicions about her murky past may not prevent her from scoring a major triumph at the ANC's December conference" by Patrick Laurence.

<sup>100</sup> *Financial Mail*, September 19 1997, p.38: "Current Affairs. Madikazela-Mandela. Aspirant Comrade Deputy President Growing suspicions about her murky past may not prevent her from scoring a major triumph at the ANC's December conference" by Patrick Laurence.

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