

BONGI PART 111 January 27, 1991

- A: Eh! In May 1989, we , in the ANC, we had a working group on agricultural issues. It was still a scattered formation but at the same time inside the country there was also some formation under CDS; which was bringing people together around the rural question.
- Q: What precisely do you mean by scattered formation?
- A: By scattered I mean it was still interested individuals who had worked on agriculture or were concerned with agricultural issues and the land question in particular. They were people for example like hmm...one ANC student who is in Holland , who had looked in detail at nationalisation of land. It is people like that , people like Tessa Marcus who had started raising critical issues around the South African agricultural system which needed to be looked at. Inside the country CDS or the Centre for Development Studies, was trying to get hmm.. on the ground research, about people's feelings around the land question.
- Q: Inside which country?
- A: Inside South Africa. A lot of the debate was based on the Freedom Charter clause that the land shall be shared by those who work it. I think over years it has been accepted as being wonderful, easy to implement but with constitutional guidelines being formulated and the Legal Department of ANC looking more at the legal issues which would allow for "the land shall be shared" it was evident that it was not that easy. Many people felt , I think many people subconsciously thought that it will be very easy in the new South Africa; the state will expropriate the land and the State will give land to live out to people or the shall be state farms and that shall be no private property. Looking at the Zimbabwean experience, where that did'nt happen so easily, what has become evident in Namibia where the land question had'nt even been discussed and just was^{is} happening all over the world in many countries around land reform. Even in Zambia where it almost like in every five years they would change the land policy. It was clear that we have to give a lot more thought to it. So, in May 1989 for the first time I went to Harare in Zimbabwe.
- Q: For the first time?
- A: Yes. I say for the first time I went to Harare in Zimbabwe; I had been through Salisbury. There was a workshop which was organised there for South Africans from the ANC and MDM. We discussed the land question. It was a very interesting experience because though in terms of output as a workshop it did'nt have much but in terms of information sharing it was very very rich. We had people from places like Kwelega, Mooiplaas who were telling , who had very very vivid histories of forced removals and the community organisations involved and organised around land squatters. The workshop took a week and at that workshop as I said it

was my first time in Zimbabwe. So, I decided I am going to spend another week and just have a look at this "free" Zimbabwe you know one had such visions about it.

Q: What actually attracted you, or what exactly did you want to see?

A: Ehm...I wanted to see what happens to a country, what happens to the people in a country, who had been in a situation similar to ours in South Africa, where there had been racial oppression and there had been a war of liberation, and now people, the black people were in positions of power. The difference with Zambia is that the independence; so to use the phrase, came on a plate. There was no liberation struggle to say. So the Zambian people have never been able to relate a struggle and an attainment of independence to their present situation which I think also affects to a large extent to what level people actually make input to the nation as a whole or rather become very individualistic in their desire and want to get the best for themselves and refuse to recognise that there is more than just an individual interest in national development.

Q: Was it really your personal initiative to investigate in...

A: Yes it was because ehm..., it was because I haven't experienced oppression. The only way I experienced oppression was the impact it had on me; having to grow up outside South Africa. So now I was curious to find out you know, what is this thing that we are fighting for? How does it affect the people involved. So I went to Zimbabwe and I had a very interesting week in Harare and I met some very interesting people.

Q: Where did you stay?

A: I stayed with a friend of mine who I had known from...a comrade whom I have known from years back in Lusaka we had worked together at one point. We had also lived together in Tanzania. So I stayed with her and I also met some Zimbabwean people. I met interestingly enough some people; a girl I had been at school with in Bulgaria. That was really interesting, seeing her on the street and saying: "This looks like Skumbuzo", and she still had the same mannerisms.

Q: Did you stay in town?

A: Yes I stayed in town. I just made one trip outside of town to a small town called Chigutu, an hour and a half. A friend of mine was working on research in land issues had a field trip out there. So, my interest to see a lot of the country because I was 'nt able to organise a tour. I took off with him and his colleague and we drove down to Chigutu, did a couple of interviews and I saw there, what they were doing was they were doing an assessment of what happens to administration at a local level when it's actually administration which was working for a previous state, but because there is lack of new personnel, you keep that administrator structure in and you brought in ex-combatant or a political activist who had very strong

politically motivated for being in that position but didn't have technical expertise and they come into conflict with people who have technical expertise and the work experience in a position of authority. So, where you have the top person is a politician without the technical expertise and his next person is somebody with technical but with hangover from that old regime. There is a lot of conflict and very little actually get done, because of so much conflict within the office but the work on the ground does get taken on. It's a lesson for us in South Africa; to what extent do you carry over your legacy of apartheid in terms of administration and authority into your working structures, whether they are local or national.

After the Harare workshop, I went back to Lusaka and I continued working with the women's section preparing for this conference. I think about the second week of May, we got notification that we are now going to start this course in Harare. There were three of us from Lusaka, so I left with my two colleagues and we went up to Harare for this management development course sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat, who worked at the South African Educational Programme. We went through a course which involved financial management, human resource development and other specifics around just management principles, so on and so forth. So really it was a good experience because I was able to look at my own experience as a manager see where I went wrong, and I learned a lot about finance, which was a tricky field for me. My colleagues, many of them didn't have work experience. So, they found it pretty tedious and boring to be learning principles of management and how to read a statement, and how to look for flaws in a statement and to deal with cash flows and the importance of having a cash flow, worked out properly. We did an evaluation, and I think I was very critical of it. I remember I actually went for dinner with our course director and I cut the course apart in many ways. I think he appreciated it. But I think sometimes I ..., maybe I was very critical because I thought many of my colleagues were not critical enough. The course itself was good but it wasn't ..., the participants were not chosen well enough in accordance with the course. So there was a gap somewhere which ended up being wasteful. Another interesting thing about the course was that we got the astronomical sums of money which we were not used to handle. I mean maybe it wasn't so much but you could imagine having ..., we were living in the institute and some people were sharing rooms but most people had a single room, three full meals a day, five teas or coffees a day and there was a bar which had subsidised prices. So, whereas in town, a soft drink would be 150 Shillings at this place it was about 50 Shillings because it was subsidised by the government. So really we had money which..., and remember there is transport too, because

paid in Tanzania get 8 thousand shillings a month. We were getting this fifteen thousand shillings a week to spent. I thought it was too much but later on when I had this discussion with the course director, he actually admitted that part of it was testing out how does each one of us as an individual deal with having a lot of money as well thats one of the secrets of top management, if you pay them a lot then see how they handle the money.

We spent a weekend in Kenya. Which I think is quite significant because most of us were travelling on travel documents from Zambia or travel documents from Tanzania. Now, Kenya had a policy which almost mutually barred any South Afrixan particularly family people who were in exile; ANC members. So we had just had an ANC that had been established in Nairobi and the Chief Representative there managed to get visas for all fiftien of us. We were actually twenty on the course but fifteen of us went. So we drove through Arusha to Nairobi and spent a weekend there. We met my five people on the the way which was also very interesting ----- the development of the border area; because there were so many tourists who were flying from from the states of Europe and land in Nairobi out , but then drive to Arushaand Mt. Kilimanjaroin Tanzania because of the mountain. So at the border posts, the Masaai people had developed a "tourist" trade of posing for photographs. You cannot take a photograph without consulting or paying a fee at the border post between Tanzania and Kenya. They realised Ithink the Masaai people; they realised that what happens this tourists who come , even photographers come - professional photographers, take pictures of them and go and make lots of of money outside. So it is very interesting, I made friends with one woman; Maria. Maria says: " You want to take photo of me? 10 Dollars. Give 10Dollars I stand with you." Because they wear all this bead work and everything. So we said: "Oh Maria come look at us , we are not fl.... tourists, we are from struggling South Africa. We can't spent 10 Dollarsjust to take a photograph. We want to take it because we are friends. We managed to take a photograph with Maria but that was because of something else which happened . Some of the guys, the colleagues, a lawyer colleague in the bus , started talking to some of the men . There was a young man there and they were talking about a goat. So, One of our people, I remember there is a guy called Mji; Umjemane. So I think Mji wanted a goat. There were lotsof goats around the the busarea there. It is a very interesting border post. With all this people manning around, all the crafts there, these photographs taken with goats and sheep. People actually kept them during the heat of the tourist season. So they wanted a gaot and were asking: "How much is the goat?" and they gave some high price but, this guy they were talking to says: "But you give me a woman, let me marry a South African womanand you can have many goats." So they said:" Oh! which one do you want?" and this guy apparently points at me. They said : you can have her, as long as we have our goat. I think in trying to be friendly this guy sweet talks Maria now because I was complaining that Maria did'nt want to take a photograph with us. So we took a photograph with Mariawithout paying; but I only got to know the rea reason when we were already on our way . On the way back now when we asked for the goathe was ready to give us the goat but he actually bought some cold drinks, beers- "remember she is remaining here. That did'nt work out for them.

The Arusha course ended in the beginning of September. I went back to Lusakabut I spent a few days in Dares-salaam. Then I went to Mazimbu for two weeks. Mazimbu is the ANC schoolproject up in Morogoro

Q: School project for whom?

A: For South African Students who had to leave the country. SOMAFCO- Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. This is where I had worked in 1984. So, I went back to see the project and there had been a development and there had been what is now called Dakawa. Dakawa is Swahili name for the area but it's another development project which involves more than just a school. It has a vocational training centre, it has factories, it has a larger farm and the ranching area. My father was working there at the that I passed through. He was working in the vocational trainingcentre. He was getting -----instructing and setting up an administration there. So, I went to see the vocationaltraining centre, to see my father and just to see the whole project. When I arrived there my father had gone to LUsaka to see his wife. So, I put up in his place and I spent two weeks there in Dakawa; just going around. The first week was taken up mainly by the 10 year celebration of the Mazimbu- the SOMAFCO formation. It was ten years since SOMAFCO had been operating. There was quite a big rally and a whole lot of activity for about three days. Including Trevor Huddleson was there, Peter Mokaba had come from South Africa. There was I think Cyril Ramaphosa.. I can't remember- there was a delegation from South Africa. There were international delegates. Olive Palmer the Swedish, no, Norwegian prime minister who had been shot; his wife was there. She has been a great supporter of children's programmes both within the ANC and internationally. So she was there as well as the whole range of other people. So, that took about three days, so I realized that I wouldn't see anything if I left after three days; I stayed for two weeks in; went back to Lusaka.

Q: Whilst there did you contribute?

A: In terms of work?

Q: Yes?

A: Emmm!No. Not. I can't say I started working any harder in '85, but I went around the project and of course in discussion; I suppose that's also a contribution. I found some old people who were still there from 1984 but I found also a lot of new people and they were changes in some of the structural arrangements. Now it's a bit imposing of you sort of, I thought it would be imposing if I come in and say: " I used to work here I think ..., this is what I thinkabout this, this, this. So it was much more tactical to stay out of it and just be a guest. I was very willingly taken around the farmand everything. It was interesting. I went back to Lusakain Septemberand went back to the Women's Section and continued preparing for the Conference.

Q: What precisely were you doing in preparing for the Conference?

A: We set up the programme. The objective of the Conference had been identified by the Women National Secretariate. So, we set out a programme which accomodated those objectives. We coordinated with the

anti apartheid Movement in Holland who were doing substantial amount of fundraising. We fundraised as well for tickets for delegates to go to the conference. We worked out how many delegates could go. We identified where those delegates could come from. We liaised with the South African internal structure which was also liaising with delegates from different regions. We dealt with identifying papers and who would do the papers. We did a lot of running after people to get people to carry out their little tasks. So, towards the end of the year it reached the point where Malibongwe- the conference was almost a banned conversation in the house it would bring conflict between my mother and I. I would blow up with all my daily frustrations.

Q: Where were they?

A: Emmm! my mother was in the national secretariate. So, it was like she was one of the bosses, right. Whereas I was an implementer. But at home we were very clear that we were mother and daughter but all the same time when you talk about your day you now bring up that. Anyway, we managed to get through it. We had a secretariate; it wasn't easy because on one hand the women's Secretariate themselves were very busy, and felt they should much more involved. So that on the other hand it's just communication from Lusaka; so difficult from the international world to South Africa and then inside the country the whole question of the underground: who do you talk to, how do you consult on issues when you try to use the telephone which is most likely tapped and you do'nt want to put names on the telephone; the whole range of things. So it was quite an experience.

Q: Did you have some contact with people inside?

A: Yes we did. I was 'nt communicating directly but we did have contacts. So at the end of December we were more or less all set to go. On the 4 January the Lusaka delegation actually left, for Holland. We flew via Frankfurt. Some people flew via London and we landed on Holland on the 5 January in the morning 1990. We are now in the wonderful 1990. So on the 5 January we landed in Holland. It was my first time in Holland.

Q: Where?

A: In Amsterdam. What was funny or what was unexpected is ; we had slept in the plane and spent about an hour at Frankfurt. So it must have been about 10 o' clock in the morning when we actually arrived in Holland. My suitcase; because we split up at different points with the group, a colleague who had checked into my suitcase earlier on in the flight via Zimbabwe, he checked it on his ticket whereas when we got to Frankfurt he went on an earlier flight than I did. So when I got to Amsterdam I was very worried about the fact that my suitcase has come. So we went through immediately and I found out that it was 'nt on the luggage rag. So I went to check in the lost and found and luckily I saw it. So whilst the rest of the group was still picking up their bags and trying to get

suitcases together and everything, I already went through the immigration and custom control. I remember just hearing someone saying: "There they come." And all of a sudden cameras----- so, since there was only one person, they switched them off. What had happened was there was a whole crew - TV crew waiting to meet the delegation coming from Lusaka as well as some of the women who had already arrived from inside the country. At that conference we had about two hundred women representing the different regions of South Africa, representing ANC women who are all over the world. We had a student from Hungary from GDR there was supposed to be somebody from Moscow.

Q: What is GDR?

A: The German Democratic Republic, East Germany which is no longer there. Anyway East Germany which is no longer there. Anyway East Germany was still there. There was somebody from the States, from Canada, from you know different parts of Africa, you know, Senegal. As it is it was powerful in the sense that it brought these women together for this two two and half week. The first week was spent; because there was a high demand by the International supporters to meet with women from South Africa. The first week spent a lot on open dialogue, bilateral and going out within Holland to meet different women and different projects.

I went on three such visits one of them was to a steel factory. One of them was to the University of Wageningen, the other one was to emmm! my third visit - - I can't remember it right now. But anyway at the Wageningen in University they broke together women who were working in the Agricultural Department and all that, and women who were interested in agriculture. Many of them were doing sociological research around agricultural issues. Their main emphasis was environmental issues. So, they found it quite interesting to listen to----- I was talking there with a woman from inside the country who has worked on rural... who has worked with rural communities in the Transvaal; mmm! Mum Lydia Kompe. So she talked about off the ground experience and I talked about an overall view of the land question and concern; and in that crowd there was a young girl; she must have been about in her early /mid teens and her mother. Her mother is South African and her mother left South Africa years ago and came to settle in Holland and grew up in Holland but now her daughter still feels that she is South African you know. So there is that whole revival like " look, we tried to come out of South Africa because we didn't like it but is the daughter taking an interest in South African issues. The others were very very interesting and in fact before we knew it we were almost late, in fact we missed our first train we had to go back on the second one. Emmmmm! Then we had a week of what we called the closed session; closed ANC participants only- and even then only specific delegates because some of the

ANC participants ; some of the ANC members who were around at that time would'nt come into the closed session. It was because it was particularly a delegate type conference where there had been prior discussion on the topic. We had it like that. I think in itself it was quite powerful, the sessions there were very long and went long until late. There was a whole difference in the way of living. Where the Dutch used to have a light sandwich and maybe a soup and then a cooked meal for supper. South Africans are not used to that. They want their pap and meat, ncusa and rice and potatoes and vegetables and all that ; stew, gravy; you know, all that stuff. So, it became quite strange to some people because they had to adapt to that and they also had to with work. We then wanted to have a lot of cultural events; videos , you know in the evening, videos , shows all that. So we could'nt allow for that, we only allowed that I think for two evenings. We had quite a quarrel about that with the Dutch women because we were saying : " look we came here to discuss politics, thank you for the venue but we came here to discuss politics". We really wanted to get out of the coming together for women. All the same we went quite a number of their places and got exposed to quite a bit of the Dutch "culture". There is a place which they cal the Redlight District , which is quite devastating in terms of the impact it had on you. I had to go there three times before I could actually say what I think about the place. The first time I was in absolute shock. The second time I tried to take it as a joke. The third time I sort of looked more realistically. It's an area in Amsterdam- where ... you know that prostitution is legal in Holland- where the legal prostitutes operate. So, it's actually hundreds of little brothels; or shall I say prostitutes rooms , with big windows and prostitutes stand on windows and look like little mannekin. All the clients pass in the street and they take their pick, and they go in and pay the charge and curtains are closed while they go in and when they've finished the curtains are opened and , I mean ... the first time it's a shock, you don't know what's happening. The first time we talked with a girl from Nicaragua, we asked her, you know, "What's happening?" Infact the first time you come out of it you say no,no,no...that's not it. Second time you go, you say ha,ha,ha... this is funny. The second time actually we went to a gay club and , then the third time it's actually quite a depressing--- because we talked to a girl from Nigeria. Who said she had come there , she met this guy in Nigeria and he bought her a ticket and brought her over to Holland. She left everything in Nigeria. When she came to Holland somewhat the relationship did'nt work. So, she found herself trying to make money to live, infact she went into prostitution; very depressing. I mean it's one thing to sort of go there and refuse, because it's such a shock, and refuse to deal with it.

That's I think why I went there three times. Some people refused to go without ever having seen it, but it's something I prefer to say it's worth it. You go and see it. I mean you go and see the beauty and particulars of any area so that you can understand the area. So we went to the Redlight District. We met...

Q: Is that what it is called?

A: Ja it's called the Redlight District. There is the whole of red and pink lights. Oh! then they had live sex shows and who...le lot of things there. It's a funny dynamic because it's relatively safe. Three women went there, I mean we went there as women three of us, it's relatively safe. You do'nt actually accosted on the road because there are so many of these prostitutes around. So if you were on the streets they know that you are not a prostitute because what are you doing fully clothed and la.la.lala. ... and jersey and when everybody else is wearing little bikinis and showing off their wears. And... then we came back from Holland and I came back via London

