

LMN/005/0003/15  
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
EXCHANGE FUND

telephone 29 17 88 • cables : unifund/geneva • telex 23 997

16/11/77  
postbox 348  
1211 geneva 11  
switzerland

ref: PC/sl

ANC (SA)  
49, Rathbone Street  
LONDON W1  
Grande Bretagne

16 November 1977

Dear Friends,

We have received a letter of recommendation, dated 9 September 1977, from a Mr. Marc MDLULI and signed by Dr. Frank SHONA MTABELE. Our suspicions were aroused by the name "Shona Mtabele" and, through our London office, we discovered that this man, Dr. Frank Shona Mtabele, if he exists, is not your representative in Milan.

Therefore, we have refused Marc Mdluli a scholarship and enclose a copy of the "letter of recommendation" for your information.

With best wishes.

Yours in the struggle,  
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE FUND

Piers Campbell  
Projects Officer

Encl: ment.





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Rif:Vostra lettera del 8;8;77  
■ PC/dc,Movimento Catto lico  
del'Africa Australe.

Fonds International d' Echanges  
Universitaires-Mr.Piers CAMPBELL  
Charge des Projets-GENEVE  
Svizzera.

I.U.E.F.	
RECEIVED	13 SEP 1977
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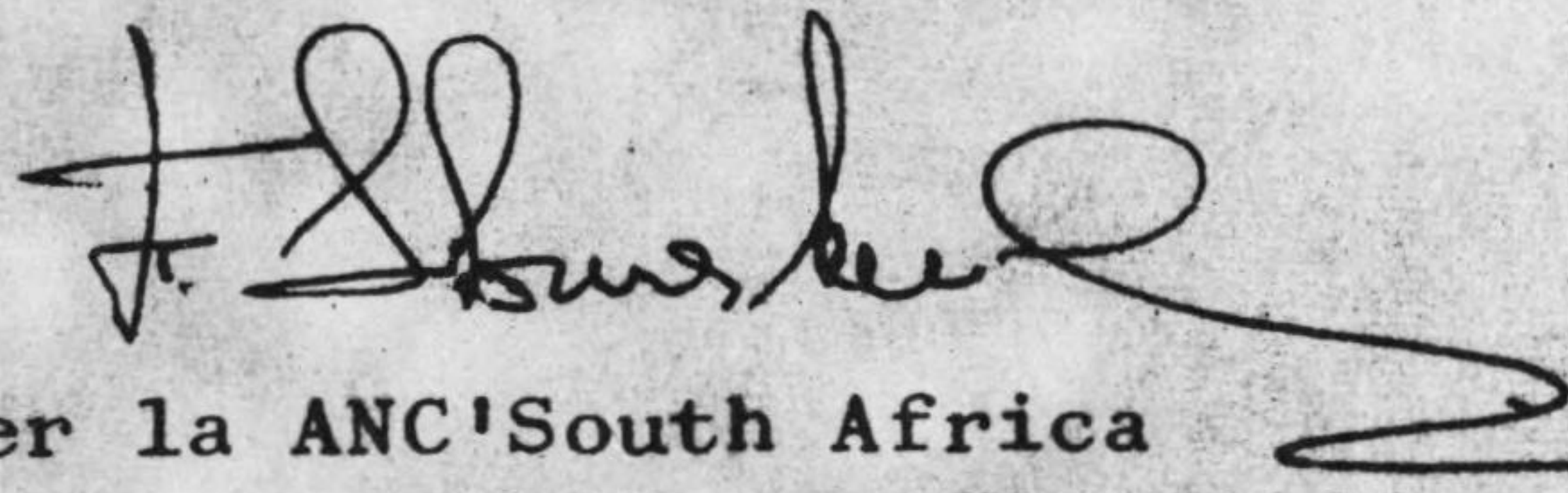
LETTERA DI RACCOMANDAZIONE

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La ANC'South Africa,Ufficio Nord Italia di Milano,Vi prega cortesemente  
di mettere a disposizione dello Studente Sudafricano MDLULI-Marc  
una Borsa di Studio di 2 anno accademici,affinchè egli possa studiare e fin  
ire i suoi studi di Ingegneria presso il Politecnico di Milano.

La ANC'South Africa Vi ringrazia cordialmente per l'aiuto che vorrete  
concedere a questo suo Membro per poter concludere felicemente i suoi studi  
in Italia.

Colgiamo l'occasione per porgere i più cordiali saluti.



Per la ANC'South Africa  
Ufficio di Milano-NORD-Italia.  
L' Incaricato  
Dr.Frank SHONA MTABELE

C.c.:  
Servizio Sociale del Politecnico di Milano  
ANC'S.A.-Nairobi  
Indirizzo:  
ANC'S.A.  
c/oDr.F.MTABELE  
Via.A.M.Ampere 58  
20131 MILANO-Italia





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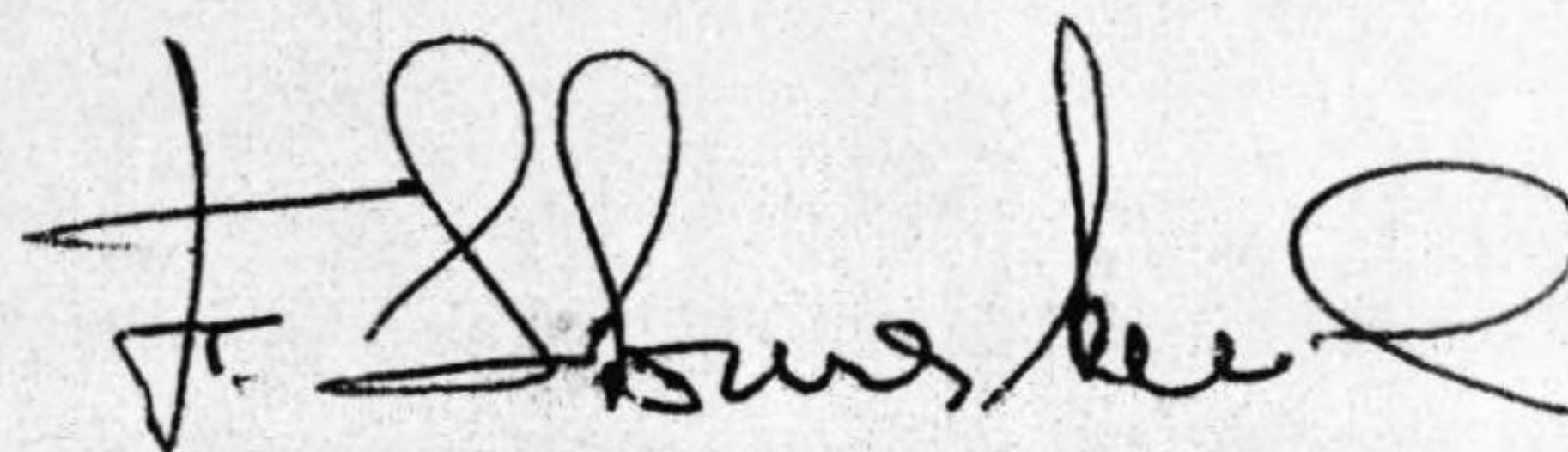
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Ufficio di Milano-NORD-Italia.  
L' Incaricato  
Dr.Frank SHONA MTABELE

C.c.:

Servizio Sociale del Politecnico di Milano  
ANC'S.A.-Nairobi

Indirizzo:

ANC'S.A.  
c/oDr.F.MTABELE  
Via.A.M.Ampere 58  
20131 MILANO-Italia





Anthony Mongalo,  
47, Via Capo D'Africa,  
00184,  
Rome,  
Italy.

22nd November, 1977.

Dear Comrade Antonio,

Find enclosed a letter of recommendation by an individual purporting to be our representative in Italy.

It appears that this sort of thing is happening all over Europe and it is important that we give this matter our full attention.

Can you please investigate this matter and it will be equally appreciated if you give us a full report on your findings.

Regards from all and we hope to hear from you soon.

Amandla,

Solly Smith  
ANC (SA).



13/12/77

My father (Donald Dobson) was British and my mother, Irene Windish(Dobson), Polish. They both went to Northern Rhodesia after World War II where they met. My mother left the University of Cape Town when they married to join my father in Johannesburg where he was working as a civil engineer. I was born on 18.8.53 shortly after they moved to Pretoria. I have an older sister, Carol Barnard ( married with three children in Pretoria) and a younger brother, Peter Dobson( studying by correspondence through the University of [redacted] South Africa and due for two years national service in January 1978). My father works for the National Building Research Institute of the CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research). He previously worked for the South African Bureau of Standards. My mother worked as a bookkeeper for a few years but has not worked since they moved to Durban recently. My father was a (very inactive) member of the Police Reserve but resigned when they moved to Durban.

The main influence on my political development in my early life was my mother who was very religious and had suffered much under the Nazi occupation of Poland. She brought us up to be aware of the 'evils' of apartheid but equally to oppose 'terrorism' and 'communism', and to limit our actions against the system to welfare work and helping the Progressive Party. Because I was very close to my mother it took a long time to free myself of these liberal ideas, particularly as I never met a single person with more radical ideas until I left Pretoria for Pietermaritzburg at the age of 17. Throughout my schooling (Waterkloof Primary and Pretoria Girls' High School) my mother's beliefs were reinforced, not only at school but in church and Progressive Party circles.

I received a scholarship from the CSIR to study chemistry and started at Natal University (Pietermaritzburg) in 1971. Here for the first time I met people who were involved in confronting the system, albeit in a very mild way - student protests, mass meetings, etc. But I had been warned that I would lose my scholarship if I became involved in student politics so at first I limited my participation to attending meetings and joining the South African Voluntary Service, a group of white students who build schools and clinics in black areas. Besides, white student politics seemed ineffectual. But it was through social contact in these situations that I became increasingly aware of the need to participate more fully whatever the limitations and hazards.

During the June 1972 white student demonstrations (sparked off by the police attack on UCT students demonstrating in solidarity with black students) I joined the picket line outside our university and stopped going to lectures for about two weeks. It was my most radicalising experience yet, especially when we defied a police order to disperse after gatherings had been banned under the Riotous Assemblies Act and were eventually broken up by police with dogs. I learnt an important lesson - that the police could be defied and the law broken.

From then on I became more and more involved in student politics. In July 72 I attended a NUSAS conference and was elected to the NUSAS local committee at PMB. My job as chairman of NUSWEL (Welfare and Social Action) and my participation in the Wages Commission not only exposed me to the realities of apartheid from which I had been shielded, but brought me increasingly into confrontation with the Security Branch as well as teaching me the limitations of white student politics.



An important factor in deepening my involvement was the increasing confidence we gained in defying the authorities in the process of our activities and often getting away with it. For instance, in the Wages Commission we were constantly intimidated by security police trying to prevent us handing out 'Isisibenzi', a workers' newspaper, or interviewing workers on farms to collect information about conditions. We worked out ways of avoiding the police, using false identities to gain access to farms, etc. - the beginnings of semi-clandestine organisation which the white students today have developed further. After the banning of eight NUSAS and eight SASO leaders in early 1973 we handed out copies of quotes from one of the banned NUSAS leaders to be read out at a protest meeting in deliberate defiance of the law. The police tried to intimidate us by investigating the incident but eventually dropped it.

Another factor which helped me to shed my liberal ideas about change was the widespread apathy and growing hostility amongst our fellow students towards NUSAS activities and members. We realised that no amount of persuasion could move the vast majority of students and yet they were the most progressive sector of whites. But the ideas of my Pretoria upbringing, particularly non-violence and anti-communism, hampered my development. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that other ideas were not freely discussed for obvious reasons. One morning we awoke to find copies of Mandela's speech from the dock (1962 trial) pinned to trees on the campus. This made a big impact on me but was never followed up by further written propaganda or in discussion.

In 1973 when I was in the final year of my B.Sc. degree I met my husband, Jeremy Brickhill, a Zimbabwean who had come to study at the university. We were both very active in NUSAS and Wages Commission, and on top of a third year course plus other pressures this contributed to my having to leave university in mid-year because of a 'nervous breakdown'. I went back to my parents' home in Pretoria in July and in September started working as a laboratory assistant at the CSIR. I was unsuitable for laboratory work, had lost all interest in pursuing my career in chemistry and was in any case forbidden by the doctors to resume my studies until 1975. So at the beginning of 1974 I joined Jeremy in Durban where he was going to study.

Like other radical young whites, the struggle had become the centre of my life but how to assist in it was still unclear. African trade unions seemed to be the most effective area in which to work but my application to the Bolton Hall trade unions was turned down as there were no vacancies at that stage. I worked for the Progressive Party for six weeks - not because I believed in their policies any longer but because it seemed a slightly more useful way to earn a living than a 'non-political' job. The same applied to my decision to become a reporter for the 'Daily News'. (Most radical whites tried when they left university to get jobs with NUSAS, the Institute of Race Relations, Christian Institute or a newspaper, or as a last resort with the Progressive Party, for the same reason.)

My work at the newspaper quickly brought me into contact with people and situations who deepened my political understanding. I developed a fairly close relationship with some of the SASO office bearers in Durban, especially Muntu Myeza (President 73-74 and Secretary-General 74-75) and the permanent organiser, Mosioua Lekota. They invited me to report on the 6th General Students' Council in July 74, and although I was the only white there most of the delegates treated me with trust and friendship. We had frank conversations about the inevitability of violence.



By this time I had accepted that non-violence meant surrender, but I could not work out my role in the struggle. My SASO friends, and SASO as a whole, rejected the participation of whites. In any event I could not accept their method of struggle - simply to teach blacks to hate whites and kill them. One of my closest friends in SASO even told me they would have to kill me too because I was white. They did not have an ideology or strategy with which I could identify nor an organisation in which I could be accepted as an equal comrade.

We were at this stage subject to a number of different ideological influences, including (unknown to us) covert ANC propaganda. Harld Nxasana spoke at the university as part of the NUSAS political prisoners' campaign which taught us something of the history of the movement, and we had contact with black trade unionists in Durban and PMB (where we had worked closely with some of the black university staff in Wages Commission and Benefit Society activities and in setting up a black staff association.) Although we were unaware at the time that some of those comrades must have been in the ANC underground or former ANC members, their attitude towards us helped to counteract the negative effect of SASO's rejection of white participation. But, for obvious reasons, the ANC comrades never revealed themselves to us.

The ANC would have been the logical movement for me to be involved in at this stage, but I had no contact. In fact, although I was searching for some way to participate more fully in the liberation struggle I did not even realise that the ANC was what I should be trying to find. This was the period before the trials of Suttner, Rabkin etc. showed the way for white radicals of today. I was aware of the involvement of whites in sabotage in the past but I had only been ten at the time of Rivonia. Moreover my closest contact with someone who had been involved with the movement was Rowley Ahrenstein, a lawyer who had spent a few years in jail in Pretoria, and he always spoke of the past as if it were dead (and had failed) without guiding us into action in the present. It was only when we left the country that we discovered that Rowley had always been against armed struggle and had been misguiding us and others. He and people like Rick Turner were seen as the revolutionaries to whom most young white radicals turned for leadership; and, perhaps more important, he was the only person who actually pursued us, made a concerted effort to influence our political direction. One good point about his influence was to instil some kind of socialist perspective in me, although a very confused one.

I am convinced that either a personal contact or even ANC written propaganda would have been invaluable at this stage in my development - and there were (and still are) a number of people going through a similar process of searching for the correct role.

In September 1974 SASO and BPC organised Frelimo solidarity rallies which were banned. I attended the Durban rally which was broken up by police with batons and dogs. The security police arrested my SASO friends and other SASO/BPC activists. About two days later the Security Branch questioned me about SASO's rôle in the rally and indicated that I would have to give evidence for the state against some of those arrested. They offered me a trade-off - no charges against myself if I cooperated. On the advice of Rowley and suspecting that the charges would be more serious than just the rally, my husband and I left the country at the first opportunity.



We went to Mozambique a few days after FRELIMO's transitional government took over (September 74). We had contacts through NUSAS with FRELIMO youth at the university in Lourenco Marques. They made a great impact on our thinking - their disciplined life style and method of working as well as their ideology. We saw that our confused mixture of political beliefs was untenable in the practical situation of the Mozambican revolution. Although we only spent three weeks in Mozambique it steered our thinking along revolutionary lines leading us naturally to turn towards FRELIMO's sister movement, the ANC.

We had intended to stay in Mozambique but given the chaos and the fact that we spoke no Portuguese nor had any skills to offer the country, we decided to go to London which was known as the centre of the exile anti-apartheid world. We immediately contacted the Anti-Apartheid Movement and began working for them in our spare time. Through the AAM we met ANC people and slowly got to know more about the movement and they got to know us. Aziz Pahad as Youth Secretary played a major role in educating us and integrating us gradually into the ANC Youth Section and later the London Branch.

My husband took odd jobs while I did freelance journalistic work (mainly for the Times Higher Education Supplement, Africa magazine and a pamphlet for Defence and Aid). In October 76 I began working full-time for Africa magazine, first as an editorial assistant and later as assistant editor. My husband joined the staff of Defence and Aid about a year after we came to London.

At last we had found our political 'home' in the ANC - we now knew what we were fighting for as well as what we were fighting against, and doing so as part of a disciplined national movement. We had not resigned ourselves to being 'exiles', but when we asked to be given an alternative role inside South Africa we were told we were too exposed.

Gradually I became increasingly involved in ANC work in London (eg youth section, political prisoners committee and general solidarity work.) This year I was offered an ANC place at the GDR Solidarity School for a six-months' course in journalism. Later I was asked to join the ANC Information and Publicity Department after completing my course. I resigned from 'Africa' and stopped working there at the end of November.