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REFERRE

Marjatta Lahti

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Finland

Dear Mohammed, 25 July 1994

As you must know, the weather in Finland at its worst can be as hot as in Tanzania. Today is one of those days, and as we never believe that such a heat is possible, we have not been prepared with fans and air conditioning. However, this brings back the memories from Mazimbu, and also reminds me to answer your postcard of May. Thank you very much for it!

I hope that the good feelings and excitement created by the fine election victory is still prevailing in SA. The press is very quick to report about difficulties, but hopefully those are just minor ones. I have been so happy to read the letters of the comrades since all of them seem to have been overjoyed about the present situation. You all deserve to be praised for your excellent achievement, and I hope that the future will hold a lot of good things for you. We all know that there will still be difficulties ahead, but at least you ought to perhaps allow yourself some kind of a rest now and enjoy the fruits of the independence!

In this connection I must tell you about an incident that occurred in Cape Town during my visit there last September. A taxidriver asked me where I came from. "Finland? A-ha. By the way, where is Finland, we don't hear anything about your country here in SA?" I told him that Finland is such a peaceful country that no one cares to write about it. He gave a deep sigh and exclaimed: "It must be a wonderful country!" I, therefore, hope that also your country has now become the wonderful country that it deserves to be and that no one will care to write about it any more.

As I told you, here in Helsinki we organized a concert to celebrate your victory. Because of the programme of the main performer, Julian Bahula Band, the concert had to be organized in the middle of the week right after the 1st of May, and you can imagine that the timing was not the best possible. I was therefore quite surprised that a whole of 400 people came together, which is quite good for any event here nowadays. Quite a number of Finnish bands had also come to perform free of charge, and in every possible way the occasion was very successful. The South African Embassy personnel was also invited, but as far as I understand, they didn't appear. However, a bit later the Embassy organized its own occasion where some lo-

cal VLPs were invited, but notably none of the activists - Helena and others - that had been involved for years with the anti-apartheid movement here.

Mohammed, thank you very much for the news from Fort Hare. As Ike, the lazybone, never writes, it is good to hear from you that the work is going on. I wonder whether they are in any way cooperating with the Mayibuye Centre? I would certainly be more than interested in any details about this project.

Thank you also for the clarification concerning the UWC studies. The comrades are still struggling with their exams there, and, to an extent, with the funding, too. I am trying to do what I can to help, but as usual, it is difficult to tell which is a harder partner to deal with, Finnida or UWC. It is equally difficult to extract sensible information from either of them, but so far we have managed to keep things somehow going. Last September I gave you a list of the library science students, but since there were some small omissions, I am enclosing with this letter a full list of them.

Of those few who already gained some certificates, it is sad to notice that Gloria Duduzile Nzuza (Peggy Deyi), who obtained a Diploma in Tanzania, has still not managed to get any job in SA. This is particularly disturbing since she did a good job at Mazimbu during the difficult last period there. One would hope that life would finally start smiling at her and her very clever daughter, too.

Steve is still struggling in Finland. The funding is not any more as big a problem as passing the exams. However, he will come back with some kind of a degree.

I am wishing you the very best now and in the future, whatever your plans will be. Please, give my warm greetings to all the Iazybones who don't write!

WM

02/08/94

Dear Marjatta,

Yes, we have a major new struggle ahead of us after the sweet victory in April. Already, huge problems face us, for example, the reorganisation of the civil service to enable the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Also, the ANC's grassroots is unhappy about the large salaries MP's and Ministers have been awarded. You see, bringing about even semi-revolutionary changes prove extremely difficult when you negotiate for a new political dispensation. However, we'll hope for the best and resolve to work harder.

Thank you for the list of library students. We owe you much appreciation for your efforts and Vision towards this programme. I'll contact Peggy Deyi to see if she can be helped to get work. I'm going to Fort Hare next month and will write thereafter and send you a copy of my report.

With regards.