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What happended to Kliptown?

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Theoretical Introduction

Introduction: Writing about Development

My motivation for writing "What Happened to Kliptown?" was to find an interesting and engaging way to write about development issues in South Africa. For over fifteen years, I have worked with development projects focused on urban and rural development, public participation, legal rights issues, local government and women's development. I worked for a donor agency and had contact with non-governmental organisations as well as various government departments. Most writing about development tends to be in the form of reports and memos, case studies and programme plans. My experience is that this form of writing is only targeted at civil servants and other development practitioners who have a vested interest in reading through such reports, assessments, and their conclusions. Academics and development practitioners often assume that the correct way to write about social development issues is leaden and scientific in order for it to be influential. This form of writing does not generally find its way to a broader audience.

It is possible that questions about development in South Africa are of interest to a broader public. Does the impact of international aid ever reach the ground? Are government initiatives and taxpayers' rands benefiting people with few resources? What have been the frustrations, failures, and successes of development projects? These questions can form the basis for interesting stories that hold people's attention if written in a creative form, a form that reflects a human approach to the issues. It is possible to represent knowledge of development without the jargon.

> It is perhaps necessary for us to develop forms of writing that can engage with the economic and political realities and human struggles and challenges of development in ways that go beyond the conventional academic and policy forms of development writing, and much may be learnt in this regard from fictional form of representation. (Lewis, Rodgers and Woolcock: 2005) [i]

"What Happened to Kliptown?" engages with one development programme and attempts to bring it to life applying some of the techniques of creative nonfiction. I have chosen to write about Kliptown and the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA)'s

redevelopment programme there. Central to the JDA's programme was the construction of a large square including a market area, a multipurpose hall, a museum, a hotel and a monument to the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter was adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955. This historic document provided guiding principles for much of the liberation movement against apartheid and formed the basis for South Africa's democratic Constitution.

Before offering further explanation for my choice of topic, it is constructive to highlight some aspects of the genre of creative nonfiction and the concept of development. Following the discussion of development, this theoretical essay will briefly address a related issue of memorialisation and the issue of representing spectacle and the ordinary in writing. These thematic explorations will be followed by discussions of:

- my choice of topic,
- my choice of form and structure, and
- the process of writing and revising.

Creative nonfiction

Creative nonfiction is factual writing that employs a more literary frame. In an attempt to clarify a definition, Lee Gutkind, the founder and editor of the journal *Creative Nonfiction* writes on his website that creative nonfiction is,

> Dramatic, true stories using scenes, dialogue, close detailed descriptions and other techniques usually employed by poets and fiction writers about important subjects. Vignettes, episodes and slices of reality are the building blocks of creative nonfiction.[ii]

Philip Druker from the University of Idaho describes creative nonfiction as a hybrid between literature and nonfiction, combining the extensive research of facts with literary voice, scene setting and characterization.[iii] Instead of writing about the JDA's work in Kliptown in report form, I used my research to write 'vignettes' and 'slices of reality' to tell a story of Kliptown and how its residents are affected by the JDA's project.

Tom Wolfe describes four of the devices used in creative nonfiction as follows:

> **Scene by scene construction:** telling the story by moving from scene to scene and resorting as little as possible to sheer historical narrative;
>
> **Use of dialogue:** realistic dialogue involves the reader more completely than any single other device.
>
> **Point of view:** the technique of presenting every scene to the reader through the eyes of a particular character, giving the reader the feeling of experiencing the scene as the character experienced it.
>
> **Status life details:** This is the recording of everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of eating, etc. that might exist within a scene.[iv]

I attempt to use each of Wolfe's devices and am more successful with some than others. I use scene-by-scene construction throughout the piece, describing, for example, the scene where I explore the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication (the new name for Freedom Square) for the first time, sitting in a shebeen with Gene Duiker – the Director of the Kliptown Our Town Trust, and going on an Aids walk with a Kliptown youth organisation. I consistently use my own point of view in the journey to explore different aspects of the JDA's development project in Kliptown. Rather than a memo with a neutral, distant voice, this piece takes on an engaged, sometimes humorous point of view. Originally, I intended to use a great deal of dialogue. However, my research resulted in fewer group meetings and gatherings than I'd hoped and more one-on-one conversations. As a result, there is less free-flowing dialogue, and more quotes in response to my interview questions.

One of the forerunners of creative nonfiction was South Africa's *Drum* magazine. *Drum* writers like Todd Matshikiza, Nat Nakasa and Can Themba used these devices and reached a broad audience. For example, Can Themba tells one person's story as every person's story in his article, "Terror on the Trains:"

> Friday night, and the end of the month to boot. That's why, joining the hordes that flowed into Park Station, Johannesburg, Isaac Moeketsi of Dube – and thousands like him – was scared. He had, to a more intense degree, that sinking, uneasy feeling he always got when he had to board any of these location trains. More intense because he knew that robbers would be making that extra effort on this most special of nights. (October 1957)[v]

Drum writing serves as an inspiration in terms of drawing the reader in with a strong point of view, powers of description and immediacy. I undertook to describe a development programme from the perspective of some of the people who were directly affected, a perspective that is often ignored. I feel challenged to achieve the pace that I admire in much of the *Drum* writing.

More recently, South African authors such as Jonny Steinberg (*Midlands* and *The Number*), Anthony Altbeker (*The Dirty Work of Democracy*), Liz McGregor (*Khabzela*) and Allan Levine (*Aidsafari*) have used elements of creative nonfiction to tell stories about South Africa's prisons, the police service, and HIV/Aids. I believe the genre of creative nonfiction is well-suited to tell stories of development challenges in South Africa as well.

The Concept of Development

The concept of "development" has gained credence since the end of World War II, and often includes reference to health, education, food and nutrition, income and poverty and the environment. Yet different meanings of the word are greatly contested. Development is often presented as modernisation and economic growth and associated with capitalism. Other approaches focus more on people than growth. Some argue that the concept is obsolete and that development agencies are destructive. Even using a simple definition of development such as 'good change' is tenuous. As *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century* contests,

> What some see as a general improvement may have losers as well as winners, and if social change is all-encompassing and continuous then the implication is that previous ways of life may be swept away, with the loss of positive as well as negative features.[vi]

This is an issue that I attempt to illustrate in "What Happened to Kliptown?" While some may argue that the place has been 'cleaned up,' others say that they have no sense of connection to the new construction. Lindsay Bremner's series of essays, *Johannesburg: One City, Colliding Worlds,* address this problem head-on. She argues that life in

suburban South Africa, while considered by some as more developed than the townships, is far behind when it comes to social engagement and mutual support within a community. Using Kliptown as an example, she juxtaposes township life that is lived in the street with suburban life that is isolated and behind closed doors. The township's "way of life exemplifies the multilayered communal experience the majority of white South Africans have cut themselves off from." Writing in 2003, Bremner knew of the chosen architectural design for Freedom Square but construction was just beginning. She rightfully asked,

> Will all the little practices of 'making do' that Kliptown's residents have developed to survive and that are integral to their culture be respected and maintained? [vii]

It is important not to romanticise life in Kliptown and to recognize that residents do want change in terms of better services and opportunities. However, the change produced by the JDA provided something else entirely.

I illustrate this issue of contrasting definitions of development with contrasting scenes. When reading scenes set at the Soweto Kliptown Youth (SKY) and the Kliptown Community Centre, the reader observes development initiatives that address local community needs and involve local residents. In two scenes with JDA officials – Graeme Reid and Aubrey Manganye, the reader learns of their contrasting vision of development. They are both optimistic about the new Square's ability to become another Rosebank (an affluent part of Johannesburg with open-air cafes and shops) and a site for the Meat Company (an up-market restaurant). This view of development is in stark contrast to that held by many local Kliptown traders who have been wiped out by the new Square and by residents such as Gene Duiker and Eva Mokoka who would prefer refurbished housing, electricity and water-borne sewerage.

The Premise: What Kind of Development?

The major premise of "What Happened to Kliptown?" is that a development programme that is informed by the needs of local residents and local cultural practices has a much better chance of encouraging human flourishing.[viii] The corollary is that a development project, such as the JDA's, that is designed externally, without enough attention to local needs and patterns, and controlled by external consultants, has a much reduced chance of success and sustainability.

There are several ways in which "What Happened to Kliptown" illustrates this theme. Most notably, the JDA's new architectural design for the Square is inappropriate for its surroundings. This design was chosen with minimal, if any, input from the local community, or the formalised Greater Kliptown Development Forum. In contrast, Bob Nameng's work at the Soweto Kliptown Youth (SKY) serves the needs of many children and youth in the area. The developments there include a dining hall, a nursery school and a library that have a much higher rater of use than the new facilities on the Square. Another example is the Kliptown Our Town Trust's exhibit based at the community centre. The development of the exhibit was community-driven and the final product shows pride in the social and political history of Kliptown. Unfortunately, Ochre Media, the company that was subcontracted by the JDA to develop the museum, did not draw on this process, or the exhibit itself, missing an opportunity to build local support for the new museum. In addition, the JDA's plan for a market area did not appear to take local needs into account including proximity to existing customers on Union Road, storage space, and cover from the sun and rain.

This theme of organic development informed by local conditions being preferable to development imposed from above plays out in Kliptown's history as well, which is also highlighted in "What Happened to Kliptown?" For close to seventy years, Kliptown's development was shaped without the constraints of the Johannesburg municipality because it fell outside municipal boundaries. Its geography and the absence of administration allowed Kliptown to avoid apartheid planning and develop more

organically than other areas of the city. Kliptown welcomed Chinese, Indians, so-called coloureds and Africans, mixed couples, and those looking to skirt the apartheid system.

The drafting of the Freedom Charter is another example of how a creative, demand-driven process produced an inspiring result. The process of listening to the demands of South Africans across the country produced a vision of a democratic South Africa beyond apartheid. The Freedom Charter was not drafted in a closed room and imposed on the masses. As Rusty Bernstein explains, it was a radical departure for Congress politics. "It required that they listen to and learn from the people rather than exhort or instruct them."

An approach to development that dovetails with this premise is presented by Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom.* Sen's definition of development is expanding the freedom people enjoy, including political participation as well as basic education and health care. He asserts,

> Focusing on human freedoms contrasts with narrower views of development, such as identifying development with the growth of gross national product, or with the rise in personal incomes, or with industrialization, or with technological advance, or with social modernization. . . Viewing development in terms of expanding substantive freedoms directs attention to the ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that, inter alia, play a prominent part in the process.[ix]

This approach has resonance in the case of Kliptown, home of the Freedom Charter. This place is infused with the idea of promoting freedom for people who have had a lack of substantive freedoms. The Charter itself could be seen as an outline for a development programme that addresses each clause: land, housing, human rights, work and security, health, education, and the sharing of wealth. Development efforts in Kliptown would do well to build on that tradition. Sadly, the JDA did not.

The major portion of the JDA's Kliptown Development Project focused on construction – the buildings on the Square, the taxi rank, road works and new warehouses for the businesses relocated away from Union Road. Relatively little attention was given to how

the new facilities on the Square would be used, who would manage them, and whether the local community would embrace them. I draw on Njabulo Ndebele, who reminds us:

> If we define success, for example, according to the standards and formulations of the oppressor, if we build buildings like him, if we plan our cities like him . . . then we have, in a very fundamental manner, become the oppressor. . . In our attempts to call for freedom, we may, at the same time, be unconsciously prescribing our own containment.[x]

In post-apartheid South Africa, many questions exist about the best way to promote development in terms of the role of the state, the private sector and civil society. Development literature explores issues of governance, infrastructure, economic growth and investment, organizational development and capacity building. Given this approach, many development agencies and individuals within them focus so strongly on the set of objectives and indicators towards success, that they forget the human complexities involved. Often the concept of 'service delivery' trumps the need for human connection.

Memorialising Kliptown

Just as development practitioners have to be aware of their own motives and the impact of their actions, so do those promoting memorials to South Africa's heritage. In many cases in South Africa, heritage has become synonymous with promoting tourism, with an emphasis on bringing in money for a province or a city. In "Census, Map, Museum," Anderson argues that as Southeast Asia was being colonized in the nineteenth century, monuments were "increasingly linked to tourism." He writes,

> Reconstructed monuments often had smartly laid-out lawns around them, and always explanatory tablets. . . they were kept empty of people, except for perambulatory tourists. . . museumised this way, they were repositioned as regalia for a secular colonial state.

This passage is reminiscent of the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication in Kliptown. Neat and clean and empty of people. The Square is regalia to celebrate South Africa's liberation history, but it is not embraced and used by local people. While Freedom Square was provisionally named a national monument in 1998, the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication is still in the process of being declared a National Heritage Site. The South

African Heritage Resources Agency claims the delay is as a result of capacity constraints in the agency.

According to Bremner, in "Reframing Township Space: the Kliptown Project," tourism was a primary motivation for the development of Kliptown.

> This reawakened interest in the neighborhood owed little to a sense of benevolence, responsibility or redistributive justice on the part of the provincial government but rather to a new conception of tourism's significance for economic development.[xi]

Journalist Xolela Mangcu addressed this economic-driven approach to heritage in the *Sunday Independent* in 2000. He asks, "[if] our cultural institutions are nothing more than saleable products for the consumption of international cultural elites, who shall provide us with the self-understandings, symbols and meanings that are the basis of modern nationhood?" Ironically, the Johannesburg City and the National Monuments Council protested the development of a shopping mall by Stocks and Stocks at Freedom Square in the 1990s. Yet, it was economics that drove the design for the Square with an emphasis on wanting to integrate Soweto into the broader economy of the Gauteng province.

Bremner's article describes several of the submissions to the architectural competition for Freedom Square. She applauds entries that did not win because they incorporate "spatial practices observed at the site," and allow "the micronarratives of everyday life in Kliptown to carry on undisturbed." By contrast, the winning design by StudioMAS saw Kliptown as impoverished and devoid of many aspects of a "developed" urban space. Bremner states:

> For StudioMAS, the commemoration of a founding myth of the new democracy, the Freedom Charter, enabled the investment of resources in monumental urban spaces as a stage for celebration and spectacle. Dramatic and exaggerated forms created the image of a possible new city, a new morphology for urban life. . . For, in a single gesture, all traces of the existing site and its peoples have been erased.[xii]

Pierre Swanepoel, the principal architect at StudioMAS confirms this approach. When asked if he thought the scale of the Square was inappropriate for the surroundings, he replied by showing contrasting photographs of Johannesburg as a mining camp in 1896 and as an urban metropolis in 1996. "Look at how much Johannesburg changed in a hundred years," says Swanepoel. "As that part of town grows [Kliptown and Soweto], the Square will fit in easily in fifty or sixty years."

I concur with Bremner's assessment that the scale of the new Square is inappropriate. In my view, Swanepoel's scenario will force all the current residents out of Kliptown to make way for a new, gentrified economic node. Hence, in "What Happened to Kliptown?" I write, "The Square has no relation to the life that surrounds it. The sites, sounds and smells of Kliptown have been removed to make way for this massive, sanitised space."

Annie Coombes, in her analysis of public memorials, writes that works of such a scale as the Square in Kliptown are often associated with totalitarian regimes.[xiii] She also states that "A number of commentators have reiterated the argument that the more monumental the scale of a public sculpture, the more likely it is to be ignored or forgotten over time."[xiv] She argues that such sites can be re-invigorated or re-animated. In the case of Kliptown, the scale of the new Square has not been well-received. Whether it is re-invigorated in the future will depend on the actions of future generations.

It was not only the construction of the Square, but its renaming that distanced the space from the local residents of Kliptown. No one from Kliptown was involved in the choice of name. It was a political decision taken by city and provincial leaders. In "What Happened to Kliptown?" I chose to highlight the nature of the name change by sharing an e-mail exchange.

Other examples of public memorials in the post-apartheid period include the Apartheid Museum, the Hector Pieterson Memorial Museum in Soweto, and the Constitution Hill project. The District Six museum in Cape Town holds some particularly interesting

parallels with the Kliptown experience. Firstly, the definition of "community" is relevant. In many post-apartheid projects such as the Robben Island museum, the Apartheid Museum and Constitution Hill, "community" is defined as national. In the case of District Six and Kliptown's Freedom Square, there are national and international ramifications of the events that took place at each site (forced removals and the destruction of a community in District Six, and the drafting of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown) but there is also a strong sense of "community" that is local. This sense of the local is important in memorialising both sites. In the case of the District Six Museum, there has been a major effort to record the voices, experiences and stories of individuals who lived there. This approach is similar to that of the exhibit developed by the Kliptown Our Town Trust, but not taken up by the official museum on the Square.

Issues of nostalgia are relevant in both cases as well. In the case of District Six, the museum memorializes memories of a place where people lived "not as 'coloureds,' 'whites,' 'Africans' or 'Indians' but as South Africans." While this nostalgia is at risk of creating memory that is idyllic and unrealistic, it can also serve the purpose of undermining "the bureaucratic language of sanitation and public hygiene deployed by the apartheid demolition teams" which serves an important purpose in South Africa's transformation.[xv] In the case of Kliptown, there is not only reminiscence but also reference to what exists. Kliptown was not demolished in total and still exists around the rebuilt Square. Yet Kliptown, like District Six, is proud of its history as a place that defied apartheid and embraces its status as a 'hybrid' community with people from differing backgrounds.

In "What Happened to Kliptown?" I sought to capture some of the history of Kliptown beyond the Square. In the scene describing my tour with Gene Duiker, the Director of the Kliptown Our Town Trust, I describe the house where Gerald Sekoto, the famous artist lived. I also mention Charlotte Maxeke, the first African woman in South Africa to attain a university degree, who lived and died in Kliptown. The piece captures the story of the Lollan family as another example of Kliptown's heritage. The Sekoto, Maxeke and Lollan homes still exist.

Covering the entire floor of the main room of the District Six Museum is a laminated map of the community, complete with street signs. The map memorialises a place that the apartheid government attempted to erase from local memory. The parallel with Kliptown is that while Kliptown continues to exist as a community of families, houses, with a post office, a police station, etc., it is not on the map. I include reference in "What Happened to Kliptown?" to the fact that I couldn't find Kliptown in a Gauteng map book published in 2006.

In "Census, Map and Museum," Benedict Anderson writes that colonial maps have been used, not to represent something that already exists, but to "anticipate spatial reality." He suggests that colonial maps were often a model *for* not a model *of* what exists, and therefore used in relation to future administration, property ownership, and military planning. Anderson contrasts this approach with pre-European mapping that was hand-made, not always organised horizontally and often without any concept of scale.[xvi]

I asked numerous people in Kliptown for a local street map that shows some of the Kliptown sites. While I found several technical maps that the Kliptown Our Town Trust and the South African Heritage Resource Agency used for surveys of the area, I did not find a user-friendly map. I was motivated to construct a simple map to highlight some of the sites in "What Happened to Kliptown?" I commissioned a local artist, Drew Lindsay, who published the "Underground Jozi" map, to draw a map of Kliptown based on a simple drawing I did of the area. The map is hand-drawn, without boundaries, and not a definitive representation of Kliptown. But it allows the reader to put Kliptown back on the map, not only by looking at the spectacle of the Square in context, but also by focusing on the ordinary neighborhoods and spaces around it.

The Spectacle and the Ordinary

Njabulo Ndebele's series of essays *Rediscovery of the Ordinary* addresses South Africa's tendency to focus on the spectacle (or the monument) as opposed to the ordinary (life on the periphery). While his essays were written in the 1980s, many of his observations on

South African literature and culture are relevant today and informed my thinking about "What Happened to Kliptown?" In his essay "Turkish Tales," he writes of the tendency for South African authors to write of characters as symbols of good and evil. He suggests that this trend also,

> . . . Tends to ossify complex social problems into symbols which are perceived as finished forms of good or evil, instead of leading us towards important necessary insights into the social processing leading to those finished forms.[xvii]

He goes on to say:

> What we have is a conflict between the aim of storytelling and that of imparting social information. It is at this point that a competition between creative writing and journalism ensues.[xviii]

My attempt with "What Happened to Kliptown?" was to impart information to the reader about a development process, but to do so with some nuance, and through the medium of telling a story. While I believe that the JDA made major mistakes in its approach to development in Kliptown, I did not want to create characters that are one dimensional, and stereotypical. For example, Gene Duiker, the Director of the Kliptown Our Town Trust is not a hard-done-by victim. He is well-known and well-liked in his community. He helped create a community organisation and an exhibit of social and political history and is currently engaged with the Sans Souci project. Graeme Reid, the CEO of the Johannesburg Development Agency is not a single-minded villain, but someone with good intentions who was part of making a poor design choice. Both Graeme Reid and Aubrey Manganye, the former Project Manager for the Kliptown Development Project, in my view, were driven by an institution that focused on construction at the expense of other forms of development that were needed in Kliptown.

In his essay, "Rediscovery of the Ordinary," Ndebele argues that the stereotypical and the spectacular overwhelm most South African writing. He writes,

> Everything in South Africa has been mind-bogglingly spectacular: the monstrous war machine. . . massive pass raids. . . mass shooting and killings. . . mass

> economic exploitation. . . the mining industry, the mass removals of people. . . the luxurious life-style of whites.[xix]

The situation in Kliptown does juxtapose *the spectacular* – the architectural design for the new Square, the 50th anniversary celebration of the Freedom Charter, and visions of a commercial and tourist node, with *the ordinary* – continued life patterns of people living on Station Road, and working with Soweto Kliptown Youth and the Kliptown Our Town Trust. I did not want to focus only on the spectacular. That which goes on behind and around the spectacular is also part of the story. That's why I chose to begin with local Kliptown residents. I did not begin the piece with Graeme Reid's story, but began instead with Bob Nameng, Eva Mokoka and Gene Duiker.

Why Kliptown and the Johannesburg Development Agency?

I happened upon an article in *The New Yorker* by Ian Frazier called "Utopia, the Bronx: Co-op City and its People." Although I had no previous knowledge of Co-op City, and no reason to be interested in Co-op City, the article was so well-written that I stayed engaged for over ten pages. The piece describes an apartment complex, the history of its geographic location and the stories of some of its 60,000 residents. This piece reminded me that focusing on a particular geographic location is one way to define a story, and could be an approach to writing about development in South Africa.

Several factors encouraged me to choose Kliptown as the geographic focus for my writing. Firstly, Kliptown is of historic importance because it was the site of the Congress of the People on 25-26 June 1955 and the drafting of the Freedom Charter. Given the fact that Kliptown is widely known, there is a possibility that readers would be interested in the impact of recent development efforts in the area.

Secondly, focusing on developments in Kliptown made sense because of the recent involvement of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) in the area. The JDA's work in Kliptown allowed for the context in which to ask questions that were raised earlier in this essay. What kind of development? Whose development? On its website, the JDA describes itself as an agency of the City of Johannesburg that "stimulates and

supports area-based economic development initiatives through the Johannesburg metropolitan area." Its objectives are,

> To promote economic growth through development or promotion of efficient business environments in different geographic areas; and
>
> To regenerate decaying areas of the city so as to enhance their ability to contribute to the economic development of the city and the quality of life of its residents.

The Kliptown Redevelopment Project, which ran from 2002-2005, was supported by the Gauteng provincial government and the City of Johannesburg. According to the JDA, the intent was to:

> Turn Kliptown into a heritage site and a premier tourist destination in the city, while improving the quality of life of the local community, and turning the area into a thriving residential and commercial node.

I was curious to explore how this development effort fared. Since the JDA presents the project as complete, I thought it would be possible to assess whether it "improved the quality of life of the local community" and whether the area is now a "thriving residential and commercial node."

A third reason that the focus on Kliptown made sense is that my husband's family lives very close to Kliptown in Eldorado Park. Given my previous exposure to Kliptown, my knowledge of several organizations there, and my family's link to the place, I had a high level of interest in the project. At the start of my research, I did not realise what a significant role this factor would play in shaping the final product.

I purposefully began my research by spending time in Kliptown, not by contacting the JDA. I sought to gather information "on the ground" before being influenced by further knowledge of the JDA and its programme. Had I started my research at the JDA, I may have been able to locate several individuals to profile as originally intended. However, my approach, starting with Kliptown organizations, led me to a different set of people.

Finding Form

"What Happened to Kliptown?" is written in the first person, present tense, from my point of view. Arriving at that approach was a long process. Originally, I planned to write a series of profiles about Kliptown residents who were affected by the JDA development plan. I envisioned locating a group of people who could illustrate each aspect of the JDA's work in the area: housing, economic development, traffic and transport, cleaning up the river, and heritage and tourism. As I began my research, I wanted to remain open to the possibility of new and unexpected directions, but I didn't realise how flexible I would have to be.

My original intent was to look at development projects from the point of view of several local residents. I liked the idea, as Adam Hochschild, the author of *King Leopold's Ghost*, suggests, that instead of telling about a certain event, it is best to show it as a revelation through someone else's eyes.[xx]

Initially, I avoided the use of the first person. I was adamant that I would adopt another point of view. This was not *my* story. As I began to gather information and set the scene, I envisioned a collection of numerous vignettes. I thought that these vignettes would grow into several distinct profiles – one of Eva Mokoka, the nurse who moved to Kliptown in 1954, one of Gene Duiker of the Kliptown Our Town Trust, and so on. However, as I continued to write these bits and pieces, they carried me in new directions and didn't seem to relate to one another. I had to look for another structure that would pull them all together.

One approach that was working was the attempt to employ different registers and different kinds of writing in one project. I thought that I might link together numerous sections, finding the structure of *Portrait with Keys* by Ivan Vladislavic as inspiration. I continued to gather stories, quotes, interviews, e-mails, and public relations material. I discovered many interesting people, places, points of history and aspects of life in Kliptown, past and present. Then, I realized that there were so many different stories to tell that the writing could get pulled in a myriad of different directions. I had to pull

myself back to the unifying theme of the JDA's work in Kliptown. I made a further decision not to dig more deeply into the issue of housing in Kliptown as this seemed to be a complex, lengthy story on its own. Although I was interested in the housing morass, a more thorough investigation would have to wait for another time.

Despite my renewed focus, I still had a problem of structure. I had pages of scenes and snippets, but no way to hold them together. I spent weeks trying to decide which scene was most interesting and where to start the story. I started writing in the first person, just to see if that technique would help the writing to flow and lead me to a solution. This approach did get me writing again but I still resisted the use of the first person throughout. I kept attending events and going to interviews hoping that someone would say something brilliant or that a metaphor would suggest itself that would draw everything together.

The reason that I avoided the first person is that I didn't envisage this project as a story about me. I read Liz Mcgregor's *Khabzela* and wanted to shy away from using the first person to tell someone else's story. In this case, I was reminded too often of the author's presence. For example, McGregor often refers to her relationship with her driver: "He was an irrepressible flirt." My reaction is do I need to know that? Does that shed light on the story or Khabzela's personality?

There are other examples of the use of the first person in nonfiction that I think work, but I did not look to them as models for the Kliptown piece. For example, William Dalrymple uses the first person successfully in *City of Djinns: a Year in Delhi.* This is a story of a city, told through the eyes of a young, English man visiting for a year. Antony Altbeker, in *The Dirty Work of Democracy: a Year on the streets with the SAPS* uses the same form – telling the story of the South African Police Service through his own eyes and recounting his own experience. Yet I feel that Altbeker's commentary relates directly to his topic. He uses phrases such as "watching them, I reflected that . . .," "all of this struck me as . . . ," and "in retrospect, I think there was another lesson here."

I had been inspired as well by the Frazier article in *The New Yorker* mentioned earlier. Frazier begins his piece in the third person and maintains that form for much of the piece, resorting to the first person rarely in order to highlight a particular interaction. When writing the story of the Algonquian tribe that once occupied the site, or the United Housing Foundation strike of the 1970s, he stays out of the way. The infrequent glimpses of the author seem relevant such as,

> When the sun comes up (as I know from satellite photos my son finds on the Internet), it throws dramatic, film-noir shadows of the buildings far across the Bronx.

I thought I could do the same, keeping my own point of view in the background unless it is necessary to illustrate a relevant point or conversation.

Finally, after another few weeks of difficulty, I decided that I would attempt a new draft that would structure the piece as a journey or a quest – *my* journey to find out more about the new Square. Once I tried using the first person in the present tense, I knew I had found the structure I was looking for. Somehow, writing the piece from my perspective brought the project together, allowed the writing to flow, and offered the reader a guide through the various events, interviews and observations. This approach also provided me with a vehicle to convey how passionately I felt about the project and the place, something that I found was less easy to convey with the third person or another person's point of view. Also, as my writing can tend toward the stodgy, I found that some of the personal anecdotes provided me with a way to show some humour.

Writing and Revising

Once I had found a workable structure, or spine, I hooked all the odd bones onto it. I put together a draft that moved forward chronologically. This seemed to work, but there were several issues and challenges remaining.

While I had successfully put all my material into the first person, the writing was laden with "I know," I wonder," "I thought," and "I look to the West." I went through the

entire text and deleted as many references to myself as possible. I didn't want to keep reminding the reader of my presence, so I deleted sentences like "I bring my attention back to the road." I replaced, "I ask Petunia when the museum will open and she says she doesn't know" with "Petunia shrugs and says she doesn't know when the museum will open."

Also, as a result of my choice of the first person, I had to make sure that the personal anecdotes and references carried forward throughout the text. It wouldn't make much sense if I opened the piece with a vignette of Uncle Bill and me in Kliptown, and don't refer to him again. I had a new challenge to weave personal information throughout that was relevant to the story.

Another challenge was to adjust the pace, which initially was monotone. In my early drafts, much of the text was in the present and emphasized my immediate reactions to events. I had to work on infusing the text with sections that reflected on history and offered more meditative observations and analysis. For example, I added the section on Rusty Bernstein's *Memory and Forgetting* as well as the sections about Kliptown's origins, and the problem of it having been split into multiple wards and regions of Johannesburg.

A related difficulty that I faced was working my conclusions into the text, rather than saving them for the end as a series of bullet points, as would be the case in a report or a memo. For example, I wanted to convey the fact that the JDA didn't give much attention to long-term sustainability, budgeting and management. This is an issue that I mention in an early discussion with Gene Duiker as well as a discussion with Aubrey Manganye and again with Ali Hlongwane near the end of the piece. I wanted the reader to see that Kliptown, over time, has been ignored by authorities, firstly by falling outside the Johannesburg metropolitan boundary, then by the maliciousness of the apartheid government, and most recently by the Johannesburg administration in terms of services and support. But instead of one grand concluding statement, I wanted the reader to pick

this up over time as a result of reading about Kliptown's history and reading about my struggles to find Kliptown on the map.

I had to make choices about which scenes to include and which to cut from the text. For example, at the start of my research, I met two women named Auntie Sylvie. The first had lived in Kliptown for many years and was interested in going back to the semi where she used to live. While there was a personal connection with this woman, I never followed through on the plan to revisit her old home, so I decided I had to cut the scene.

I spent quite a bit of time thinking about the opening and closing of the piece and I'm still not completely satisfied with the opening. One option I considered was to compare the Congress of the People in 1955 with the 50th anniversary celebrations in 2005 and try to get a quote from someone who was at both. That didn't work out so I kept the opening as an introduction to my first visit to Kliptown in 1985.

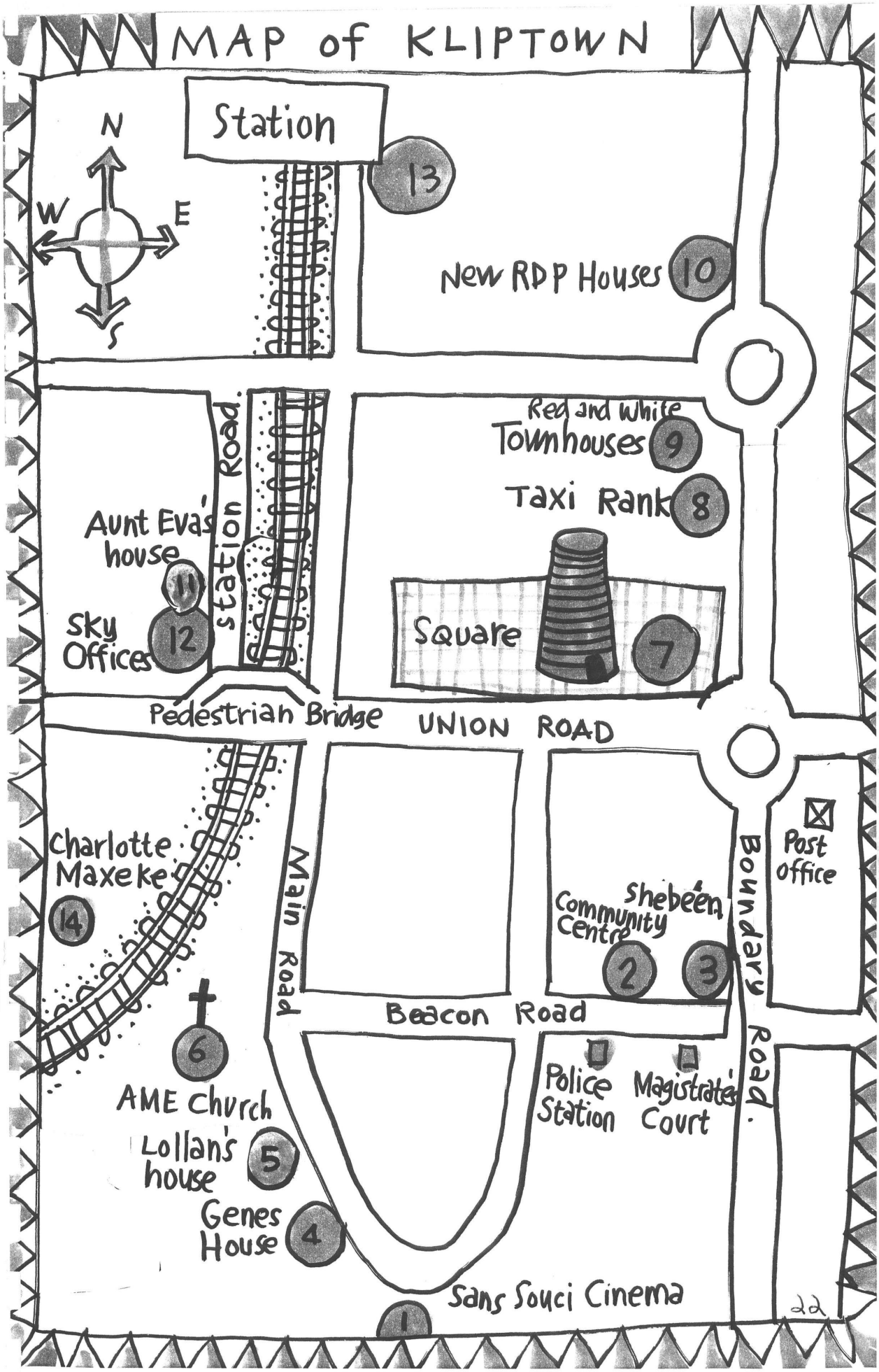
There were times when I wanted to express my anger about the local conditions in Kliptown and make clear my frustrations about the JDA's choices and absence of forward planning. I wanted to revert to the grand conclusions of a memo or the bullet points of a report. While there are times in the piece when I state my reaction, for the most part I refrain and choose to let the voices of other people remain in the forefront. Rather than stating that I am maddened by the JDA spending more money building an underground parking garage at the Square and leaving Aunt Eva without a proper toilet, I set out the facts and let the reader decide what he or she thinks.

Another issue that confronted me was keeping the reader engaged. Why would they want to keep reading for thirty pages? I found inspiration from fiction, from *The Kite Runner.* Since reading it, I've always wanted to write something that at the end of each section, or chapter, leaves the reader gasping to know what happens next. While I don't claim to have achieved this to the same extent in "What Happened to Kliptown," I did strive to have each section end in a way that leaves the reader thinking or pondering enough to want to carry on reading.

Conclusion

"What Happened to Kliptown?" is a story of development in South Africa and its impact on local residents. The piece raises questions about what kinds of development are most appropriate in under-resourced communities and explores the challenges of designing memorials to South Africa's history in ways that can be embraced by local people, as opposed to catering only for international visitors. The piece approaches development predominantly from the perspective of Kliptown residents, and only later explores the views of people working at the JDA.

Adam Hochschild teaches that the craft of telling a good story is helping "your reader care about something that you care about that they may not have cared about before." In his case, he realised that writing a Human Rights Watch report about millions of deaths in the Congo at the turn of the 20th century was not going to gather a broad audience. He saw that focusing on characters and scenes would help bring the story to life, which is what he did when he wrote *King Leopold's Ghost.* Even if readers don't care much about Kliptown and the latest developments there, I hope that reading "What Happened to Kliptown" will result in their caring some more.


MAP of KLIPTOWN
N
W
E
S
Station
13
New RDP Houses
10
Red and White
Townhouses
9
Taxi Rank
8
Square
7
Station Road
Aunt Eva's house
11
Sky Offices
12
Pedestrian Bridge
UNION ROAD
Charlotte Maxeke
14
Main Road
Shebeen
Community Centre
2
3
Boundary Road
Post Office
Beacon Road
6
AME Church
Lollan's house
5
Genes House
4
Police Station
Magistrate's Court
Sans Souci Cinema
1
22

What Happened to Kliptown?

I first visit Kliptown with Uncle Bill in 1985. He often goes there to buy fruit and vegetables and sometimes I go with him. The place is always crowded and noisy with cars and trucks hooting and edging around people in the streets, competing for space. Shops on Union Road sell everything from hardware to curtains to sheep head. Roadside stalls offer clothes, shoes, vegetables, hats, car parts and live chickens. Despite the dust, shoppers come from all over Soweto, Eldorado Park and beyond to get the best prices. The place has a different feel from the barren layout of the adjacent townships; there is a buzz that you don't find at a spaza shop or a corner café. Uncle Bill, a community activist and sports leader working with the United Democratic Front, gives me history lessons. "Mandela used to hide here when he was running from the police," he tells me as he hands me a box of tomatoes.

**

Twenty-one years later, in August 2006, I am driving some friends on a tour of Soweto and we are on our way to Eldorado Park to visit my mother-in-law for lunch. We have been to see Regina Mundi Church and the Hector Pieterson Museum, two sites important in commemorating the 1976 student uprising, and are about to drive through Kliptown. Although I have lived in Johannesburg for the past fourteen years, I haven't been to Kliptown for a while and I am keen to take a look at the new monument that the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) has built at Freedom Square.

We drive out of Pimville towards Kliptown and I'm shocked by what I see. The crowded, dusty road through Kliptown has been transformed into a broad boulevard with large shiny warehouses to the left and smart, red and white townhouses on the right. Several blocks ahead, at the intersection with Union Road, is a traffic circle with numerous ten metre high concrete columns, clearly indicating a redeveloped Kliptown. Beyond the townhouses is a vast expanse of white concrete framed by imposing, grey, three-story buildings on either side. Is that the monument? Is this what the JDA has

done in Kliptown? We can't keep my mother-in-law's legendary chicken curry waiting, so there's no time to stop and ask questions.

**

Before returning to the monument, I visit the JDA website. Perhaps there may be a clue there to suggest why so much of the old Kliptown I remember was obliterated to make way for the new development. The section of the JDA site that focuses on Kliptown states that it was established in 1903 and is one of the oldest urban settlements in Johannesburg. "It's a sprawling, colourful collection of settlements with a thriving informal business sector. But this historical area has not developed its rightful status." Ten-metre concrete bollards don't strike me as giving Kliptown its rightful status. And it looks as if the thriving informal business sector just got the boot.

The JDA says "but this is all about to change. R436 million has been allocated for the regeneration of Kliptown with the re-development being managed by the JDA." Half a billion in one community? Can that be right? Funding came from the Gauteng provincial government and the City of Johannesburg. Clearly, the JDA website hasn't been updated for several years. It states that the first phase of the development will be completed by the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Freedom Charter in June 2005 and will "turn Kliptown into a heritage site and a premier tourist destination in the city, while improving the quality of life of the local community and turning the area into a thriving residential commercial node." Premier tourist destination? It looks empty.

**

In October 2006, I finally return to take a longer look at the Square. What draws me there is not only Kliptown's proximity to where my husband's family lives in Eldorado Park, nor those early visits with Uncle Bill, but also a desire to understand what has happened to this historic site. Kliptown is famous for having been the site of the Congress of the People on 25-26 June 1955. Those two days witnessed the discussion

and adoption of the Freedom Charter, a document that has inspired much of the liberation movement in South Africa ever since and provided input to the new Constitution. The Congress of the People was the culmination of more than two years of work, gathering the views of people from across the country – in factories, in townships, villages and suburbs – to find out what they wanted in a free, democratic South Africa. Three thousand delegates at Kliptown reviewed and adopted the clauses of the Freedom Charter. The preamble reads, "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white." In the mid-1980s, my sister-in-law made a needlepoint of the entire Charter in black, green and gold, the colours of the African National Congress. It still hangs in her house today.

In June 2002, the JDA renamed Freedom Square the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication. In one moment, what had represented the demands of thousands of people became focused on one person. Ironically, Sisulu was banned at the time of the drafting of the Freedom Charter and wasn't able to attend the Congress of the People. He watched the proceedings from the roof of Jada's hardware store on Union Road.

The Square occupies over 20,000 square metres – a concrete space bigger than two international regulation-size soccer fields. The vast area is checkered with short thorn trees planted next to brick platforms, less than half a metre high, that if viewed from above look like large Xs. The Xs are meant to commemorate voting and are an expression of liberation. Would anyone walking around the Square (not hovering above it in a helicopter) notice? Along the southern side of the Square is a long three-story high building that runs along Union Road. At one end, there is a Joburg City tourism office. At the other, the shell of an unfinished hotel. In between, forming the bulk of the structure, a forest of concrete columns grow amid a large market area with numerous, small stalls. Inside, surrounded by the colonnade and the stalls, is a large conical tower made of corrugated iron. Its purpose is unclear. The market is closed off from the Square by metal panelled doors but you can see in through openings in the panels. Another set of panelled doors serve as a barrier between the market and Union Road. This represents freedom? Prison bars come to mind. On the other side of the empty

market, the street is teeming with hawkers, crates of fruit and vegetables and pens of live chickens.

A security guard sits on a concrete bench in the Square reading *The Brethren* by John Grisham. Mandla, who lives in Hillbrow, has worked on this site for the past three years. "Since they've finished construction," he says, "I've had plenty of time to read."

Past the market stalls and the portion of the building intended for a hotel, near the corner of Union Road and the railway line, there is a relatively small brick building. It is dwarfed by the size of the main building, and almost completely hidden from view, but its more colourful panels display larger than life-size photographs of unnamed faces and figures. Around the building, the phrase, "Let Us Together Speak of Freedom" is repeated again and again. However, there are no windows and there's no way to see inside. There's no notice board or sign at the door. Wasn't this Jada's hardware store? This is where my brother-in-law bought supplies to build Grandma Anne's shower a few years ago. The JDA must have converted it into a museum. But something's not right. President Thabo Mbeki opened the new Square at a launch with thousands of guests in June 2005. It's close to eighteen months later and the museum is closed. The hotel isn't complete. The market stalls are empty and the Square is deserted.

In the centre of the Square, there is another large, conical structure resembling Great Zimbabwe. It is meant to house an eternal flame and panels with the text of the Freedom Charter. But the four metal doors on each side of the cone are padlocked so it's impossible to see inside. From the structure, you can look west across the railway line to the dusty roads of Kliptown, the informal settlement and the rooftops of Soweto houses beyond.

The three-story building on the northern side of the Square mirrors the one to the south. It houses a row of shops on the first floor and what appears to be office space upstairs. Stairs lead up to a grand door of an auditorium/multipurpose hall but there's no signboard

and no activity. There are no other shoppers browsing at J. B. Curio and Gift Shop or Penny's Home of Fashion.

The Square seems another planet from the life that surrounds it. The sites, sounds, and smells of Kliptown have been removed to make way for this massive, sanitised space. If the JDA's anticipated tourists venture beyond the Square, they might see the remainder of Kliptown that exists at the periphery. But they will probably only see the Square. They'll see non-Kliptown.

The development practitioner in me – the one who spent fifteen years working with South African community organisations and development projects – pulls out a notebook and writes: *What was the process to choose the monument design? How were Kliptown residents involved? Who is responsible for current management of the Square?*

The door to the Joburg Tourism office (fit for a castle) is half open. A woman wearing a green jersey and big matching earrings sits at her computer behind a long counter. She looks up with disinterested eyes. "The place was dead," says Petunia who lives in Newtown, over twenty kilometers away in downtown Johannesburg. "This project is all about revival – new housing, cleaning the river, the museum." I ask her a host of questions, but like an LP that's stuck, she keeps saying, "Ask the JDA." A flyer announces that the museum will open on September 30, 2005, but it's now October 2006. Petunia shrugs and says she doesn't know what the problem is. I'll need to track down someone at the JDA who knows, but first I need to talk to someone who lives in Kliptown.

**

My first stop is Soweto Kliptown Youth (SKY). Bob Nameng is its founder. His mother, Eva Mokoka, has lived in Kliptown as a nurse and community leader since 1954. Nameng started SKY in 1987 and has worked with young people in Kliptown ever since. His cell phone voice mail tells me, "Greetings in the name of the most high, Jah. It's

such a blessing to have you calling me. Unfortunately, I'm not around at the present moment. Man, keep your little light shining at all times."

Bob Nameng reminds me of his namesake, Bob Marley, with his long dreadlocks and calm manner. Despite his uplifting voice mail message, he looks tired - tired of fighting the problems that plague Kliptown and its young residents: alcohol and drugs, unemployment, and lack of opportunity. Nameng focuses on the positive, using theatre, dance, and sport as well as life skills programmes to attract young people. On the day I visit, he is working through red tape, trying to issue passports to children who don't have birth certificates. SKY has planned an exchange with another youth organisation in the US. "Lots of Kliptown people came from somewhere without documents. It's a generational problem, and to this day, lots of kids don't have birth certificates," says Nameng. In the 1980s, I remember hearing about children from Kliptown who weren't registered because their parents had different racial classifications under apartheid. They were called twilight children.

SKY's main office is on Station Road, behind Eva Mokoka's house. Mokoka moved here in 1954 as a young nurse and midwife. She remembers leaving work early so that she could attend the Congress of the People. Nurse Eva, as she was known then, has been a community leader, serving the people of Kliptown ever since. Since her arrival in Kliptown, she has lived in the same house, with a verandah overlooking Station Road.

Today, Station Road, which runs from the Kliptown train station along the railway line, is still unpaved. There is no water-borne sewage in the area so the dirt road has gullies of water running along each side. Two dumpsters on the street burst with bags of rubbish. Numerous bright blue and green portable toilets line the road, but Aunt Eva says that most people don't use them. "When they thought they were improving things, they made it worse" says Aunt Eva. "When we only had the bucket system, they used to clear the buckets on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Now, with the Easy-Loo's, with those forty-four gallon drums, they only drain them fortnightly. By the time they come and drain them, they have such big worms – maggots. I decided I'm keeping my bucket."

Many of the houses along Station Road have pitched, corrugated iron roofs, verandas with columns, wooden doors and window frames. One of Aunt Eva's neighbours has two bay windows on either side of the front door. I recognise these houses. Structurally, they resemble houses in Yeoville, Bertrams and Alexandra. But these houses, Kliptown's history, are in disrepair. Along side them, stand mkhukhus (shacks) and clothes lines. Tufts of grass grow up a wire fence. Men gamble next to the railway line. A woman throws soapy water out of a blue plastic bowl from her front door onto the street. Children walk in groups along the road. All of the houses on Station Road have a view of a grey, concrete fence that separates the road from the railway line. On the other side are the new Square and red and white town houses.

Aunt Eva often sits outside her kitchen door. She is wearing blue seshoeshoe, and her yellow-grey hair peeks out from under a woolen green cap. Her large frame sits heavily on a metal chair with an added cushion for comfort. She looks proudly across at a set of new buildings that house SKY's offices, a crèche for eighty children, a library, and a dining hall that serves 300 children breakfast, lunch and dinner five days a week.

The buildings and Aunt Eva's house create an open courtyard across which people flow all day long, greeting Aunt Eva and stopping for a chat. Much of the current activity at Aunt Eva's is Bob Nameng's work. SKY raised funds for these building projects from the National Basketball Association (NBA) and other donors. Aunt Eva is proud of her son, whom she adopted, when his mother - her older sister - passed away in the early seventies. "If I should pass, I know Bob will keep things going," she says. "It makes me happy. But sometimes I worry that he's overworking himself."

Bob Nameng and Aunt Eva aren't impressed with the new Square. For years, the area where the Freedom Charter was adopted was called Freedom Square. The new name – the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication - hasn't caught on with some of the local residents. "That Sisulu business, it's not ours," says Aunt Eva. "They built that white elephant on the road so that tourists can step on and off the bus without seeing Kliptown," says Bob, "but we've still got our dignity and our pride."

"Those JDA people made so many promises that didn't materialise" says Aunt Eva. "They asked me to be part of their forum. I said I would, but I told them I don't have transport. 'Transport is no problem,' they said. 'We'll come and pick you up.' They didn't do it even once."

In October 2006, SKY holds a survey asking people: "Ngabe iFreedom Square ngeyami na? Is Freedom Square for Me?" The question, in both languages, is painted in yellow and black on the library wall in the courtyard across from Aunt Eva's house. Unfortunately, the process of adding commentary to each vote, which is supposed to happen via the internet in SKY's computer room, is hindered because of a cabling problem. Repeated calls to Telkom have little result and the internet is down for six weeks. Zanele (12), Smangele (13) and Simphiwe (14) comment: ". . . many people eat money instead of building for us houses. We are concerned and we are really disappointed about what they are doing as government." Another youth leader at SKY, Ntokozo Dube, says "The people who are working there [at the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication] they are not from Kliptown. They are sucking our blood. Even the colour of the new Square, it's cement. It doesn't welcome us. . . The more I see it, the more I'm negative," says Ntokozo. "The [number of] people you see there are two or one. It doesn't fit in."

In contrast, a flyer printed by the JDA and the City of Joburg, reads: "What does freedom mean to you?" Surrounding the question are pictures of smiling Kliptown residents – two Indian men in front of their shop, three young "coloured" men with a guitar, and three African school girls. It is important to reflect Kliptown's racial mix, but these photo choices seem stereotypical. The small print reads: "Today we celebrate the place where our dreams were given voice. . . We invite you to come and visit us – and discover how in Kliptown, you are free to be yourself."

**

Ntokozo Dube, a young man inspired by Bob Nameng, says that the young people of Kliptown go to several different schools. He tells me that some seSotho seTswana, sePedi, seVenda and seTsonga speakers go to Progress High School in Pimville, Zone four where Bob Nameng went to school. Some isiXhosa and isiZulu speakers got to Ibhongo High School in Dlamini I where Ntokozo did his matric. Most Afrikaans and English speakers go to Kliptown High, which was built in what is now Eldorado Park Extension nine.

In 1986, my husband Roger taught at Kliptown High School. I was living in Washington, D.C. at the time. We had no money for phone calls, so in the era before e-mail, we relied on letters to keep in touch. Roger wrote of the political conflicts and gang activity at the school, and I feared for his life. "Today, two gangs brought their warfare into the schoolyard," Roger wrote. "They had homemade pangas and bushknives. My students were screaming."

He wrote of being encouraged by his students as well, telling stories of how most of them lived in cramped houses with no electricity, but tried their best to finish homework. "Many things depress me in this place," he wrote, "but the 'human-ness' and warmth of individuals console me."

More than twenty years later Ntokozo speaks of similar feelings about Kliptown. "We are proud of this place. There's ubuntu here; if you need salt, you ask your neighbor. Not like in the CBD where your pride gets in the way."

**

I track down Gene Duiker, the Director of the Kliptown Our Town Trust (KOTT), of which Bob Nameng and Eva Mokoka are trustees. In early November 2006, we agree to meet at the Kliptown Community Centre on Beacon Road, on the other side of the railway line from SKY. The centre is housed in a former municipal storage depot that was converted into meeting rooms, a restaurant, a crèche and an exhibition space. The

Trust, which was founded in 2001, uses the space to house a community museum. The exhibit, which opened in 2002, shows photographs and artifacts that celebrate Kliptown's political and social history. Across the parking lot from the exhibit hall are a group of large shipping containers. Formerly used as offices, they now sit empty. The sign reads: JDA Site office.

This community centre, simple, accessible, bustling with people, and suited to its context, once served as the site from which the JDA embarked on the project at the Square.

Gene Duiker and I sit on chairs in the exhibition space. We are surrounded by large pieces of laminated cardboard with history text and photos of Kliptown hanging on fishing line from the ceiling. There are piles of framed photographs on the floor. Born in Kliptown, in the same year as the Freedom Charter – 1955, Duiker has lived his life here. He's had many opportunities to move elsewhere, but doesn't want to leave. "I feel at home here. I know the environment and the one hundred and one problems, or challenges, we are facing." Duiker proudly shows me portions of the exhibit.

"It was in 2002 that Graeme [Reid, the CEO of the Johannesburg Development Agency] rocked up. That's when I learned of this new agency, the JDA." "They agreed to help us with this place" says Duiker. "Aubrey Manganye of the JDA wanted to concrete over the yard but I said 'no' this is not Mary Fitzgerald Square [another JDA inspired Square in Newtown, downtown Johannesburg]. This is Kliptown. We kept the grass."

Duiker walks me to the back of the exhibit hall to show me the boards with the winning design for the monument. "StudioMAS won," says Duiker. "They came to speak to the people with their big fancy words – 'empowerment,' 'permeable flow.' What does that mean?" asks Duiker. "A lot of people here know about development the way a cat knows about international banking."

A man in blue overalls sweeps the hall. "Should I put these boxes over here, Uncle Gene?" he asks Duiker. I follow his form of greeting and address Duiker as Uncle Gene. "Oh you don't have to be formal with me" he says with a chuckle. "That guy's my

nephew." "I used to call my father-in-law Uncle Bill." I say. "Your father-in-law was Uncle Bill?" Duiker asks looking at me as if I just told him I was the Rain Queen – surprised, but pleased. "Yes, I'm married to his youngest son."

Duiker has a curved spine that causes his shoulders to hunch, and makes him look older than his 51 years. His eyes sparkle mischievously and his voice sounds half his age. "I hope you don't mind," he says, "I do all the bad things. I smoke. I drink." As he chuckles, his entire frame shakes. "Experts were brought in from outside," he says, lighting up a cigarette. "We are sitting with a monstrosity over there. This was supposed to be for the benefit of Kliptown people but I can't see how we are benefiting."

I ask him if he knows what the plans are for the area where Aunt Eva's house is on the other side of the railway line. Duiker makes a circle with his thumb and forefinger to hold his cigarette. The smoke swirls towards his face as he answers: "We did a survey of what houses we think could be restored and others that are falling apart. This is not going to be a classic case of District Six or East End or Sophiatown. We won't only sit with memories and photographs. We want actual tangible things – buildings and spaces as part of our heritage and our legacy."

"And now that the Square is finished, what role is the JDA playing?" I ask him.

"JDA has come to an end. To me, this was more about politics than it was about development. It would appear that very little thought was put into what happens beyond completing the Square."

Duiker and I make a plan to get together again the following week. As I bid him farewell, he lets me know that he hasn't given up. "The last thing I want to do is die," he says. Pleased with his joke, he laughs his gleeful laugh that shakes his torso up and down, and says again: "That's the *last* thing I want to do."

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One of those hanging laminated pages in the Kliptown Our Town Trust exhibit reports that Kliptown was originally built on two farms on the Kliprivier. Klipriviersoog Estate was established in 1903 and the farming area became peri-urban as housing development continued through to the 1950s. The right of Africans to own land in the area was confirmed in 1905 when Mr. Tsewu bought land and sought a court order to pass the transfer. In 1904, the outbreak of bubonic plague, and the desire of the Johannesburg Municipality to clear an area downtown, resulted in the forced removal of "Indians, Cape Malays and Africans from Coolie location" [now Newtown]. Over 3000 people were relocated to Klipspruit Location outside the Johannesburg municipal boundary, paving the way for the later development of Soweto. Many of these people remained in the area. Successive generations of Black intellectuals were drawn to Kliptown. The 1913 Land Act and the 1923 Urban Areas Act restricted Blacks from owning land, and limited who could live in townships. But Kliptown was not a township, it was a town and a freehold area like Sophiatown and Alexandra. It fell outside the boundaries of the Johannesburg Municipality until 1970.

In 1999 and 2000, KOTT conducted oral histories, recording people's memories on tape:

"Kliptown gave refuge to a lot of criminals on the run, freedom fighters and homeless people because Kliptown was not in the Jo'burg Municipality."

"We saw Kliptown as a town, maybe because of its name. We felt quite autonomous although we didn't have a council to go to."

"Kliptown is fading away because the people who are planning for Kliptown are not from Kliptown."

**

After meeting with the Kliptown Our Town Trust, my next stop is at the offices of the Eric Itzkin, the Deputy Director for Immovable Heritage for the City of Johannesburg.

Itzkin kindly shares with me his file of memos and reports about Kliptown. One e-mail exchange catches my eye:

> To: JDA Project Administrator
> From: Eric Itzkin, City of Johannesburg
> Subject: Renaming of Freedom Square
> Date: March 2003
>
> . . . I would like to raise an issue though, concerning the naming of the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication. This choice of name is widely felt to be inappropriate and odd, even a travesty. This view is not only taken by scholars, but also by many in the local community and even some of Sisulu's staunchest admirers. To my knowledge, there was little if any public consultation around the renaming. . .
>
> Needless to say, the chief significance of the Square has everything to do with the Freedom Charter, and little to do with Walter Sisulu as an individual whose personal connection with the place seems slight. So why not just call the place something like Freedom Charter Square? This would be historically accurate and mark the site as unique.
>
> It would be very sad if the naming of the Square should inadvertently bring ridicule to a site of such significance, or to a giant of the struggle like Sisulu.
>
> I hope the JDA will give this the serious consideration it deserves and would appreciate a response on this issue.
>
> Regards,
> Eric

> To: Eric Itzkin
> From: JDA Project Administrator
> Cc: Graeme Reid
> Subject: Renaming of Freedom Square
> Date: March 2003
>
> Eric this was not a JDA decision, it was an 'overnight' political decision made at provincial level. As you know we are a government owned entity and some of these decisions are made for us, sometimes without being consulted. The decision was made based on the fact that a Freedom Park already exists in Pretoria, and the thinking was this would cause confusion from a tourist perspective.

> I personally share your sentiments and I think we could have at least stuck with Charter Square to avoid confusion.

Well, that partially explains the name change. Perhaps, fifty years from now, no one will remember that the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication is where the Freedom Charter was adopted. They may think it was at Freedom Park in Pretoria.

**

Uncle Bill is buried next to Walter Sisulu. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say that Walter Sisulu is buried next to Uncle Bill. Bill was buried in 1998 in a section of the Croesus Cemetery between Bosmont and Industria that you can see from the road. After Walter Sisulu's death in 2003, when the Sisulu family was looking for a grave site, they chose the site next to Bill. Both of them broke the old apartheid group areas, by being laid to rest in the Chinese section.

**

When the working committee planning the Congress of the People began looking for a venue in 1955, it wasn't easy to find a location for a public, non-racial assembly. They chose Kliptown because of the large open space available, accessibility to a train station, and the absence of municipal administration.

**

In Rusty Bernstein's *Memory Against Forgetting*, he writes that the Congress Alliance was accustomed to making calls for government to change laws. Describing the process that led to the drafting of the Freedom Charter he says that it was a major departure in political style. "Now, for the first time, they [Congress members] were being asked to get the ordinary people themselves to state *their own* demands and to take *their own* initiative to realise them." The approach was no longer telling people: 'this is what you

should stand for,' but instead asking them what they want. This approach required political activists to "listen to and learn from the people." As Bernstein acknowledges, in today's development jargon, the effort was to "empower people."

Imagine if the JDA had taken this approach instead of calling for an architectural competition and then sharing a series of development plans with the community. What if they had spent a fraction of the money available on a process that asked the people of Kliptown what kind of development they would like to see in their community? What were their ideas on how best to create a memorial? The JDA could have spent time gathering handwritten "demands" on slips of paper and the backs of envelopes just as was the case with the Freedom Charter. The call for the Congress of the People was *Let us Speak of Freedom*. The JDA could have started by listening and learning. Their slogan: *Let us Speak of Development.*

**

The ten clauses of the Freedom Charter read:

The people shall govern;

All national groups shall have equal rights;

The people shall share in the country's wealth;

The land shall be shared among those who work it;

All shall be equal before the law;

All shall enjoy equal human rights;

There shall be work and security;

The doors of learning and of culture shall be opened;

There shall be houses, security and comfort; and

There shall be peace and friendship.

**

KOTT estimates that Kliptown has a population of about 8,000 households totaling a population of about 45,000, about 85% of which live in informal settlements. Ironically, Kliptown's status as no-man's land (and every-man's land) didn't change dramatically after the 1994 democratic elections in the post-apartheid era. Its geographic location on the boundary of Soweto and Eldorado Park and on both sides of the railway line resulted in it being divided into several wards, rather than being unified with one ward councilor. Kliptown was also divided between Region 6 and Region 10 under the Johannesburg Municipality. Gene says that the area south of Union Road may become part of Region 11. If the entire area were in one ward and one region, it would be possible for community members to advocate differently and for the municipality to be held more accountable for the provision of services in the area.

Twenty years ago, Kliptown was larger than it is now. In the 1980s, the government built extensions nine and ten to Eldorado Park. Areas such as Dikatole, Varkejaard, and Paddavlei were demolished under the Slums Act. Varkejaard got its name from a family that used to own pigs. Just south of Old Potch Road in Pimville is Chris Hani which used to be called Blikkiesdorp. Blikkies means cans and the people built houses from corrugated iron. Other areas of Kliptown are called Angola, Mandela Square, Swaziland, Race Course, Charter Square, First Gate, Chicken Farm, and Tamatievlei.

**

Under K in the *Gauteng Street Atlas (2006)*, there is a listing for Klipfontein, Kliprivier, Klipspruit and Klipspruit West. There's no Kliptown. This map book was not produced in 1903 or 1955. It was published twelve years after South Africa's first democratic election, after the JDA spent close to half a billion rand in the area. Yet on the map, Kliptown is still invisible.

I turn to page 176 that shows the space between Pimville, Soweto and Eldorado Park. There's the intersection between Union and Boundary Road where the Kliptown Post Office stands. Oddly absent is any mention of Kliptown. Every street of Pimville – Mzokolo, Kwena and Morekuru is carefully recorded. Each road of Eldorado Park – Beril, Silika and Jaspies – is set out in detail. But there's no reference to Kliptown. Where's the Kliptown police station? The Kliptown Magistrate's Court? It's as if all the people – Bob, Gene, and Aunt Eva - the houses and the history have vapourised.

I call GeoGraphic Maps cc, the twelve year old company that publishes the book and Jody Morrison, the Director is very receptive to my call. When I point out to him that there is a significant area that his map has missed, he welcomes the correction. He says they get their information from the Johannesburg City Council. "But some of these areas have never been updated," he says. Even though Kliptown has been part of the Johannesburg Municipality since 1970, it seems the Council has never fully embraced it. "I'll send my researcher there to take a look," says Morrison. "We did have a guy who drove Soweto, but he must have missed it. Safety-wise, how is that area?" he asks.

**

If you head out of Kliptown on Union Road for about two kilometres, you'll get to my mother-in-law's house. Grandma Anne, as we call her, phones me every day to find out if I'm going to be in the neighbourhood. She suggests that I have meetings at her house. "Sylvie Lupton grew up in Kliptown. Why don't you meet her at my house for tea?" she says.

So one morning in November I meet with Sylvie, and Grandma Anne's cousin Ivy at Grandma Anne's. They both grew up in Kliptown. We sit at the small round dining room table adjacent to the kitchen. The white, lace curtains match the table cloth and the side board is filled with framed pictures of grandchildren (my two daughters among them). Grandma Anne has made scones – some with butter and jam and others with cheese.

Auntie Sylvie was born in 1930 and moved to Kliptown from Sophiatown when she was eight. She went to school in an old church hall. In the thirties and forties, Kliptown was farmland with semis and single family homes and willow trees along the river.
"Everyone used to come to Kliptown to picnic," says Auntie Sylvie.

Above her shoulder on the wall is a gold-framed painting of barren trees looking much dourer than the scene she just described. Eli Weinberg, known for his photographs of South African social history including Kliptown, was the photographer at Bill and Anne's wedding in 1957. He gave them this painting as a wedding present.

While we're talking, the phone rings and Grandma Anne answers in the other room. "It's for you" she tells me. "It's Auntie Chrissy (Grandma Anne's sister).
"Are you still working on that Kliptown project of yours?" she asks.
"Yes, Auntie Chrissie."
"Good, well, you should phone my daughter-in-law, Lee-Anne's, grandfather. Arthur Lollan. He used to hide Nelson Mandela when he was on the run."
I realise that the word is out and my family, as always, is on the case.

**

Stanley Lollan was one of the 156 accused in the Treason Trial from 1956-1961, the court case that resulted from the police having raided the second day of the Congress of the People. The court proceedings show that the Freedom Charter was read out in isiZulu, seSotho and English. Lollan read the English version. In the same transcript,

Lollan is asked why he moved from Ophirton to Kliptown in 1947 and he answers, "There was a serious shortage of houses for coloured people in Johannesburg" and coloured people could own property in Kliptown." He also said that since 1951 in Kliptown, people were not prepared to improve their buildings, despite overcrowding, because of concerns about the area being declared a group area.

Like Bob Nameng, Lollan was concerned about youth in Kliptown and established a Youth Club. "Parents left very early in the morning, and only arrived home late at night, which meant that most of the time the children were on their own, and there was very limited school accommodation." After the trial, Lollan went into exile in Swaziland.

Forty years later, Stanley Lollan's brother Arthur Lollan testified before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). He tells a story of when Stanley and Nelson Mandela were "disguised in Putco overalls and caps." Arthur alerted them that thirty police had surrounded the house so they were able to use a back road to evade them. "I think I saved their lives that day" says Arthur. Many members of the Lollan family were activists. In his submission, Arthur Lollan tells that his sister Mavis "was detained on several occasions, tortured, assaulted and later died of a brain hemorrhage." Stanley was also repeatedly attacked by the security police, not only in South Africa, but also in Swaziland and London. Arthur Lollan brought his ill brother home to die in South Africa in the 1980s.

**

Across the street from the Kliptown magistrate's court and the police station on Beacon Road, there is a well-maintained brick house. The owner runs a shebeen in the back where Gene Duiker and I sit on the afternoon after I visit Grandma Anne for tea. In the garage stands a snooker table with a game in full swing. A big green and white mirror on the back wall advertises Autumn Harvest Crackling. It's one o'clock and the place is filling up. Behind the house and next to the garage, there is a concrete courtyard with two tables, several towers of empty, grey beer crates and a couple of back rooms. Duiker

sits across from me on a brown plastic chair at a table with a red umbrella to block the midday sun. "I like to speak to the people here" he says. "I've met Jacques Chirac, but I prefer to sit with the manne." Gene pours himself another glass from what looks to be a beer bottle but it's actually filled with red wine and Coke. "I drink Coke," says Gene. "I just mix it with some red wine to sterilise the glass."

Before stopping for our refreshment at the shebeen, we go on a tour of Gene Duiker's Kliptown – the section that is south of the Square. Gene lives next door to the Lollans. The JDA put up a yellow sign as part of their effort to create an "open air museum." The sign reads: "The Lollans came to Kliptown after they were forcibly removed from Ophirton in 1947. . . Bra Stanley was passionate about the upliftment of his community. His home hosted many political meetings of the Congress Alliance leaders. . . Stanley was amongst the 156 charged in the Treason Trial of 1956. . ."

Beyond the Lollans house are several more blocks of houses, including the one where Gerald Sekoto, the renowned South African artist, lived in the 1940s before he went into exile. In late 2005, pillars holding up the verandah broke down in a heavy storm. Ironically, the current owner has been unable to fix them because of restrictions on renovating houses that are earmarked to become a heritage site. Outside the house is another JDA open air museum sign. Further down the road is Mandela Square, a densely packed informal settlement that borders the Klipspruit River. There's a yellow JDA sign there as well.

"That's Sans Souci bioscope," says Gene pointing to a concrete shell on the hill. "We all used to come here in the 1970s and 80s to watch films." The building operated for close to fifty years before it was destroyed and reduced to ruins in the mid-1990s, first by fire and then by vandals. "The Kliptown Our Town Trust is planning to do some open air screenings to revive the place." says Duiker.

We drive past the AME church that was built by Charlotte Maxeke. In 1901, Maxeke was the first African woman from South Africa to receive her bachelor's degree,

graduating from the Wilberforce University in Ohio in the U.S. She became a leader of the South African Native Congress, a forerunner to the African National Congress, and fought against the extension of pass laws to women. She died in 1939 and was buried in Kliptown.

Gene and I drive by the police station, the magistrate's court and stop at the shebeen. A delivery truck comes into the driveway, and the driver unloads crate after crate of what looks like cartons of milk, but it's "mother's milk" – sorghum beer. The favoured brand is "Joburg beer" in red and white cartons with a red Joburg skyline printed on the side. "This driver was one of the lucky ones," says Gene. "He got a contract during the JDA construction and was able to buy a new truck and hire another young guy to help him out. It's one of the few concrete examples of how one of these contracts actually helped someone out."

Before I leave, I arrange to see Gene again the following Wednesday at his office. Same time. Same place.

**

It's time to speak to someone from the JDA. I track down Aubrey Manganye, who was the Project Director for Kliptown from 2002 until September 2005. He left the JDA to take a job with the City of Cape Town working on preparations for the 2010 World Cup – the Greenpoint Stadium project and housing construction along the N2 highway. The voice message on his direct line says "you've reached the office of Aubrey Manganye" and suggests I leave a message or call his personal assistant. I do both. A week later, I haven't heard a thing, so I leave another set of messages. On the third try, I get through to a human being who tells me that Manganye left the City of Cape Town in March 2006. "Do you know where he's gone?" I ask. "Some national housing organisation," she says. "I can't remember the name."

**

When I get to Gene Duiker's office the next week as scheduled, he's not there, and there's no answer on his cell phone.

"Have you seen Gene?" I ask Raven, one of the women who works at the crèche at the community centre.

"His phone was stolen," she says. "He hasn't been here in days."

"Is he okay?" I ask.

"Yeh, he's fine."

So, I leave a note under his door.

As I'm leaving, I stop by what used to be the reception area, but is now used for meetings. A new organisation called Women Rise and Shine is having a meeting there to work out plans to support women in Kliptown who are dealing with violence and domestic abuse. I ask Rose, one of the founders of the organisation, if she's ever considered using the new multi-purpose hall at Freedom Square. She replies, "I don't know why they built that thing. They send you from pillar to post when you try to use it."

**

Outside the room where Women Rise and Shine is meeting is an announcement on the wall dated 2004. It's dirty and curled at the edges. A portion of it reads,

The City of Joburg Property Company (PTY)
Hereby invites interested parties to submit proposals to lease
Various premises in the Northern Structure of the Walter Sisulu Square
Of Dedication in Kliptown, Soweto.

The premises on offer are:

- **Restaurant** to cater for the domestic and international tourists
- **14 Shops**
- **2 Premises** on the first floor considered suitable for banks

Proposal documents are available at the Information Desk of the offices of the City of Joburg Property Company (pty) Ltd. 9th (Ninth) Floor, Braamfontein Centre, 23 Jorissen Street, Johannesburg. **A non-refundable deposit of R300.00 per document is payable.**

Please note the following:

a. No late proposals will be considered:
b. The City of Joburg Property Company (Pty) Ltd reserves the right not to accept any proposal;
c. The City of Joburg Property Company (Pty) Ltd reserves the right to withdraw any proposed proposal at its own discretion; and
d. The results will be announced at a later date.

**

In 1996, the private developer, Stocks and Stocks, proposed to build a shopping centre on the site of Freedom Square. The plan included shops, restaurants, a flea market and a "Freedom Square Amphitheatre." The National Monuments Council and the City squelched the effort because of concerns that the initiative would not preserve the heritage of the Freedom Charter. At about the same time, the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council developed a Greater Kliptown Development Framework. It took another five years – until 2001 and the establishment of the JDA - before the political will, institutional capacity and funding came together to revisit Kliptown and initiate another plan.

**

In contrast to last week when Union Road was filled with traders, Union Road looks empty. The hawkers are gone. Two or three traders have moved off the street to the under-cover market space along one side of the Square. "Where is everyone?" I ask. "On Friday, Metro Police took our stock," says Marta, who lives on Station Road and has been selling fruit and vegetables on Union Road for years. Metro Police told everyone that they couldn't sell on the street anymore and that they had to register to move inside, or leave the area. "I'm suffering. I'm paying R120 per month for two stalls," she says as she points to the bananas, tomatoes, and potatoes spilling over the small, metal grey cupboards. For months, the stalls inside stood empty because everyone preferred to sell

on the street near their customers, but today Marta and I can barely fit between them. Marta says she registered for the stalls at the JDA and points towards the second floor of the taxi rank. It's time to pay them a visit.

The queue to register at the Metropolitan Trading Company [subcontracted by the JDA] is long and runs alongside the far wall of the new Kliptown taxi rank. There's a grey shutter that pulls down like a garage door when they are closed. But now, at mid-day, a guard leads people, one by one, inside the glass door. Everyone in the queue is wearing sturdy, flat shoes but the several women working for Metro Trading walk in and out in high heels.

Francina Mazibuko lives in Meadowlands but has been selling clothes in Kliptown for years. "This place is going to sink" she says. "Those people who built the monument, they told us we could choose the design for the area for traders. But then they told us the woman who said that left. Then they told us the contractors built it wrong. There's no covering. How can you stay in the sun?" Another man in the queue turns to Mazibuko and says, "Kliptown used to be known for shopping, but they've killed it." "Where are we going to put our stock in storage?" asks Mazibuko. "If you put potatoes in one of those stalls, they'll mold because they cook in there."

**

On 1 December, World Aids Day, the Aids walk, a fundraiser for SKY's HIV support group, starts at the SKY offices at nine in the morning. It's a sunny, hot day so everyone is wearing white SKY T-shirts to keep cool. Everyone, that is, except me. I'm wearing a black T-shirt, especially designed to soak up the sun.

The plan is for the 150 people, mostly children, to walk seven kilometres through Kliptown, Eldorado Park and Klipspruit, ending up at the Square. The organisers announce that the Prime Minister of France, Dominique De Villepin, might visit SKY after the walk is over.

Walking up Union Road, the kids merge into the crowd of Friday morning shoppers. Adults count "two-four-six-eight-ten, to make sure they haven't lost their assigned group of children. At the traffic circle with the concrete columns, the group stops before crossing the road. A little boy named Sipho looks up at me, holding a straight pin in one hand and his red Aids ribbon in another. "Can you help me," he says. I pin the ribbon back on his T-shirt. He looks satisfied, takes my hand and we cross the road.

As the group nears the end of the walk, one woman points to the abandoned Sans Souci cinema. "We used to go there for bioscope," she says. "It kept us out of trouble."

We finish the seven kilometers, enter the Square and sit down in the shade of the multi-purpose hall. There is a cluster of photographers standing near us in the Square, along with several official-looking men and women in suits. Are they interested in the Aids walk? Why don't they take pictures of the SKY children on the Square?

Then a commotion draws everyone's attention. All eyes shift to the photographers as they run towards some attraction like bees to honey. The video cameras, large boom microphones and suits buzz towards the other end of the Square and out of site. They are running after the French Prime Minister. He isn't able to visit SKY as planned. Like the majority of tourists to Kliptown, he only has time for the Square.

Back across the railway line, at SKY's dining hall, Bob Nameng congratulates the crowd: "Life is a long walk," he says. "You can't go from step four to step seven. You have to take it step by step. Be prepared because some steps are difficult. But you can do it." As he turns around to sit down, the back of his shirt reveals a Bob Marley quote: "My home is in my head."

**

Graeme Reid, the former CEO of the JDA is now working with a group of development consultants called Urban Sky-Walkers. Sounds like *Stars Wars,* with Luke and C3PO. In its company profile, Urban Sky-Walkers describes itself as an urban development

company that structures innovative property developments. They bring "commercial, retail, residential and other property uses together with sustainable public places to create greater value to investors in selected areas." They've recently moved into new offices on Jan Smuts Avenue just south of Rosebank. Graeme and I sit in a small, bare meeting room at a round table. He's wearing a button-down shirt and khaki pants.

Before we start, his partner, Matthew Nell knocks on the door. He holds up an A4 piece of paper with a quote in large print. It reads: "The definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome."
"I had to show this to you," says Matthew, looking mischievous. "I found it in the move."
"I hope that's not directed at me," says Graeme.

Graeme starts to draw. Looking through his black-rimmed glasses, he concentrates on drawing a rectangle with black pen on the page of a notebook. Then he draws a thick dark line vertically through the rectangle. In the section to the left of the line he draws a big H. "Housing was a complicated and difficult area" he says. "It was one aspect of the Kliptown plan, so when the plan was devised it had, I think, seven components, one of which was housing."

To the right of the dark line, he draws several more vertical lines, in effect cutting the rectangle into several more sections. "To structure a relationship where all the other teams – dealing with heritage, economic and social development, the environment, roads – could work together in an integrated way was extremely difficult. So by the time the Square was launched, they hadn't built any houses."

Below the rectangle, Reid draws a map of the Square and the various sections of housing construction around it. "Effectively, the deal started to pan out that housing [the Gauteng provincial housing department] would deal with this section to the north. JOSHCO [Johannesburg Social Housing Company] would deal with this area of town houses, and the JDA would come up with a plan for how to rehabilitate and regenerate the area

around Station Road. But that was never properly resolved, so I don't think there is a plan."

At this point, the lines connecting the different sections of Kliptown and the project rectangle covers most of the page. It looks like an undecipherable maze, akin to what he is describing.

Graeme says he's an optimist about the new Square. "I'm one of the people who love the space. I think it's fantastic. We have to hold onto the vision that people's economic condition is going to improve quite substantially and that a platform for investment has been laid in Kliptown. It will be one of the premiere nodes of Soweto. And Joburg is poly-nodal anyway, so it has the potential to be sort of like a Rosebank."

Are we on the same planet? May the force be with you.

**

I get an SMS letting me know that Gene Duiker has a new phone number: *New no 4 Gene*. I phone the number and someone else answers, but when I say I'm calling for Gene, they put me through and he's happy to reconnect. "Someone lifted my phone," he says. "It really upset me. I've been gloomy for the past month." Duiker begins a new sentence, but we get cut off. I call back and don't get through. The voice mail says, "The subscriber you have dialed is unavailable. Please leave a message" - so I do, and Gene slips back into the ether.

On the bright side, Graeme Reid gives me Aubrey Manganye's new phone number. His new place of employment is Thubelisha in Killarney. We make an arrangement to meet in Kliptown at 9:00 on Saturday morning, 23 December.

**

It's 8am and my reflection in the mirror doesn't look good. My left eye-lid appears to have several pillows under it, giving me a just-punched appearance. Unfortunately, the festive season has begun and all those friends and family that I was so happy to see last night didn't leave until 3am. There's been a string of late nights/early mornings lately, and it's all caught up with me. I have been looking forward to this meeting for weeks. I'll have to make the best of it.

Aubrey Manganye looks a little heavier than his 2003 pictures and he's sporting a moustache. He's already been up and out buying tiles this morning. Manganye reminisces about when he started with the Kliptown project in 2002. The Municipality didn't see the JDA as a partner, and the Housing Department wasn't happy with the JDA taking the lead.

We walk over towards the faux-Great Zimbabwe cone, and stand near it for a while. From there, we have a good view of the museum, which is closed, the market area, which is largely empty, and the hotel, which isn't complete. Manganye has a BsC in Building Science and lots of experience managing contractors and building projects. He is at his most animated when he's talking about a water main or a sewage line, and apparently is quite skilled at managing people as well. A man walks by and recognises Manganye. "You've got to come back and help us. Things aren't going well. You know – politics," he says. The man was one of the members of the Greater Kliptown Development Forum (GKDF). I ask Manganye about how things had gone with the GKDF. "By and large, they served their function," he says.

I ask about what the JDA's plans were for ongoing management of the Square. "I don't think there is a project champion anymore," says Manganye. He's right on that score; no one knows who's in charge. "The Johannesburg Property Company has oversight here," says Manganye, "but they need to have someone hold more events on the Square. It needs to be marketed properly." I'm not sure that marketing is the problem. It's not clear that the JDA had any plans once the Monument, the taxi rank and the new road were built, and the June 2005 celebrations were over. Adjusting his yellow cap,

Manganye suggests, "Continuity *is* needed. Perhaps the JDA should continue to drive it now, to get it to functionality." The JDA's goal was to complete the construction and hold a big party, but nobody thought about who would hold onto the key and keep things running after the party was over.

We walk up towards the northern side of the Square, next to the formal shops. Manganye holds both hands in the air in front of him, and then spreads them wider to each side. "This area was meant to house a restaurant," he says. There's space for seven-hundred customers. I remember we had interest from the Meat Company."

I try to imagine hundreds of people eating steak and drinking wine, *á la* Melrose Arch. The image doesn't work for me.

**

In a follow up e-mail with Graeme Reid, I ask, "Do you know what the long term plan was in terms of budgeting for follow-up maintenance and management?" Reid's response is "I can't really answer the issues you raised, as I don't know how they're planning to address that – perhaps Ursula at the JDA would be able to."

**

In June 2002, seven judges reviewed thirty-five submissions to the Freedom Square architectural competition. The judges included two government representatives - Mayor Amos Masondo and Gauteng MEC Jabu Moleketi, four architects including Zola Kgaka, Mira Fassler-Kamstra, Khotso Moleko and Stanley Saitowitz, as well as social historian Luli Callinicos and JDA CEO Graeme Reid. The judges' report dated June 2002 includes several reservations about the winning design by StudioMAS including concern that it is "out of scale, formalistic and inappropriate in the context." The judges recommend that "the scale of the buildings around the Square be reduced" and that serious consideration be given to their height.

Does that mean that the plan was originally larger, more grand? Is that possible? Reports and memos tend to gather dust on the shelf. Perhaps no one ever followed up on the recommendations. I asked Herbert Prins, the administrator for the design competition about this. He said, "I think the JDA kind of forgot the things in the report. Not in any malicious way. These things just get forgotten."

In May 2002, the month before the architectural design was chosen and the new name for the Square was announced, the JDA sent out invitations to the launch of the Greater Kliptown Development Forum. The timing suggests that the Forum did not offer input to the judges of the design of the new Square, nor to the choice of name change. "It will serve as a conduit between the project team and the community" read the invitation. Unfortunately, the Forum's existence was driven by the JDA project, not because of any pre-existing set of ongoing local issues. A project-based community forum may serve development planners, but it is not ideal for serving the needs of a community and often becomes a point of information sharing rather than decision-making. The seeds of an enduring community structure are better sown if they address multiple issues over time. Once the JDA withdrew from Kliptown, the Greater Kliptown Development Forum lost its reason for being.

**

One of the architects from StudioMAS who designed the Square, Pierre Swanepoel, says, "As that part of town grows [Kliptown and Soweto], the Square will fit in – easily in fifty or sixty years. If the French can get used to the Eiffel Tower, then Johannesburg can get used to the Square."

**

As far as I can tell, there's no one in charge at the Square. The Johannesburg Property Company will help you if you want to open a restaurant or lease a shop. You need to go

to the Metropolitan Trading Company if you want to register for a market stall. If you want to go to the museum, you are going to have to wait because the JDA didn't budget for operating costs.

Ali Hlongwane, the Chief Curator for the Hector Pietersen museum in Soweto, tells me he's working on this budget problem. We meet at Café Dulce in Senate House at Wits. Hlongwane has been named the curator of the Kliptown museum as well. After receiving some initial start up funds for Kliptown this year, he has submitted a request to the City for an operating budget for the financial year beginning July 2007. Hlongwane says that they need to fix things up and get the electricity connected before they can open, perhaps in June.

I ask him whether the museum builds on the exhibit put together by the Kliptown Our Town Trust (KOTT) at the community centre. "The conceptions of Ochre Media [the company subcontracted by the JDA to design the museum] and KOTT were radically different," he says. "The KOTT exhibit is about ordinary people. What Ochre Media created with the museum is a master narrative, the story of political leadership. We'll have to find other ways to bring in ordinary voices." "What about the open air component of the museum and the signs at the Lollan's house and Gerald Sekoto's house?" I ask him. He says that once the museum is open and running, they will consider employing tour guides, but based on his experience at Hector Pieterson, "you don't usually get tourists who want to take a walk."

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For months, I try to speak to someone currently on staff at the JDA responsible for Kliptown. E-mail exchanges with Ursula Ntsubane end as she departs from the JDA to work for Ekurhuleni in December 2006. Follow up e-mails and phone calls to Zandile Sowata fizzle out with no results as do requests to Fundi Ndaba, the head of marketing. Finally, in late February 2007, I decide to contact the new CEO, Lael Bethlehem. In March, we have a phone conversation (rather than a meeting because Bethlehem is at

home in bed with the mumps). She joined the JDA in August 2005, two months after the 50th Anniversary celebrations that opened the Square. Refreshing for her frankness, Bethlehem raises some of the numerous challenges about the Square before I have a chance to ask her about them. "There's the launch," she says, "but then there's reality." She says that one of the most "sobering" lessons of Kliptown is the challenge of "long term sustainability." She acknowledges her disappointment that the museum isn't open yet and that the hotel isn't complete. In terms of the lack of covering over the market area inside the Square, she says there are efforts under way to build retractable, canvas covers. When I say that many residents of Kliptown feel that the Square isn't for them, she responds, "There are two issues there, the design and management." Bethlehem believes that better management of the site will turn things around. "Hopefully, over time, the Square will help kick start economic development. I say that cautiously, but the Square does bring honour to a place where before, there was just squalor."

"It looks like there's no one in charge at the Square," I say "and residents don't know who to turn to with questions." Bethlehem responds that the JDA handed over to the Johannesburg Property Company and that they have subcontracted to Dijalo Properties to manage the site.

Did the JDA engage in long term planning for the Square?" I ask "in terms of management and operating budgets?" She responds, "I'm sure Graeme [Reid] must have thought about it, but it wasn't concluded. The JDA's role is to develop things and hand them over. We build" she says, "We don't manage."

"I saw that the ground floor conference room at the new JDA offices is named 'Kliptown.' Can you tell me about that?" I ask. "Each of our new conference rooms are named after JDA development projects – Constitution Hill, Drill Hall, Kliptown," she says. "Notwithstanding all the difficulties, we are proud of Kliptown."

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In February 2007, Bob Nameng goes to the Square to find out who's in charge. "We live in Kliptown, but we don't know what's going on" he says. He walks into the Tourism Information Centre on the Square to find out and is surprised to see photographs of Vilikazi Street Soweto and the Hector Pieterson Museum. "This is Kliptown" he says. "We've got our own history and our own heroes. Where are they?" He asks about the multipurpose hall and Petunia tells him to talk to Thulani Zide of Dijalo Properties.

Nameng walks across the Square into an unmarked office on the ground floor next to Penny's Home of Fashion. The window blinds are closed and no one is sitting at the front desk. On the wall is a framed drawing of the New York skyline. He walks past the front desk and looks around the corner into an office to see a man sitting behind a desk in a suit and tie.

Nameng tells Zide about SKY and its work with children and teens. "We've got a theatre group and we'd like to use the multipurpose hall." "You must pay," says Zide and Nameng knows that it's unlikely they'll be able to cover the fee. "Could we use the Square as a practice space?" asks Nameng. Zide shakes his head and says "That's prohibited."

"Do you know Kliptown?" asks Nameng. "Yeh, I know Kliptown" answers Zide. "No, I mean do you know the people?" asks Nameng. "I invite you to visit SKY and get to know people." As he leaves, Nameng tells Zide, "your job should be our job. You're not here to help the people of Kliptown. You're here to make money."

Back at the SKY offices, Nameng says "What a boring guy. We're involved with tourism – hosting visitors at SKY. He's involved with tourism. We should be able to work together. Sometimes we are too quiet," he says. "We are too reserved. We've lost ownership of our own place; I'm so bitter about what's happened to Kliptown."

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According to Lael Bethlehem, National Treasury has made money available to build an underground parking garage under the Square. This is the last project the JDA will be involved with in Kliptown. The garage will serve the multipurpose hall as well as the soon-to-be-finished hotel in the building on the south side of the Square.

The Zatic group, a majority black-owned hotel group, will spearhead the forty-eight room four-star hotel. Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo, the former General Manager of the InterContinental Sandton Towers Hotel leads Zatic and is excited about the new hotel. "Culture has always been a huge tourist attraction and now, more than ever, local and international visitors want to experience the true South African cultural thing." In the *Business Day*, she goes on to describe the new hotel. "The architecture is 1950s township, while rooms will be decorated in African style, with warm colours complemented by local arts and crafts. Tables will be oil drums reminiscent of coal braziers and the chairs will be covered in black leatherette."

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Six little girls practice their "high buck" (uppity) show on the concrete ruins of Sans Souci cinema. The building exists only as a graffitied, concrete wall on one end and a double-story concrete shell on the other. In between, broken glass and overgrown grass cover what used to be the flooring. In front of the ruin, the girls dance and pretend to be Beyoncé and Alicia Keyes. Their grand finale is singing *Ipi Ntombi*. They play here every day, but tonight there will be a special, open-air movie screening on the site.

Sikho Malinga from Vuyani Dance Theatre looks on as well. "How does it feel to see the cinema in ruins like this?" I ask him, knowing that he used to attend the popular movie-house in its heyday before it fell into disrepair in the early 1990s. "It's nostalgically painful," he says.

Malinga, and the Kliptown Our Town Trust have plans to revive Sans Souci and use it as a community resource. The first step is to hold the film screenings on Friday evenings. I

ask Malinga if he and Gene Duiker ever thought about using any of the venues at the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication. "That's an elite structure," he says. "Even the hawkers turn their backs on the monument as if it weren't there. When ABSA has an event there," says Malinga, "people come from Rivonia. It's not for us."

The kids are excited, getting a front row seat on the ground in front of the screen – a wall painted white on the side of a house next to Sans Souci. The first film is *Waiting for Valdez*, written by Teddy Mattera, directed by Dumisani Phakathi and partially filmed on location in Kliptown. The light from the screen reflects on the viewers, surrounded by the darkness of night. In the distance, across the veld, beyond several blocks of houses, on the other side of Union Road, you can see the shadow of the Square.

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[i] Lewis, David, Dennis Rodgers and Michael Woolcock, *The Fiction of Development: Knowledge, Authority and Representation,* September 2005, p.11.
[ii] From "What is Creative Nonfiction?" by Lee Gutkind at www.creativenonfiction.org
[iii] From "What is Creative Nonfiction?" at www.class.uidaho.edu/druker/nonfic.html
[iv] The description of these four devices is taken from Wolfe, T., "Seizing the Power," in Wolfe, T. and Johnson, E.W. (Eds.) *The New Journalism,* 1973, p. 46-47.
[v] Themba, Can, "Terror in the Trains" (1957) in Nicoll, M. (ed) *A Good Looking Corpse,* London: Secker and Warburg, p. 355.
[vi] Thomas, Alan, "Meanings and Views of Development," *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century,* Allen and Thomas, p. 24.
[vii] Bremner, Lindsay, *Johannesburg: One City, Colliding Worlds,* STE Publishers, Johannesburg, 2004, p. 104.
[viii] I borrow the term 'human flourishing' from Edgar Pieterse's article "Sketches of Development Praxis against a Horizon of Complexity," *Voices of the Transition,* p. 350.
[ix] Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom,* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 3.
[x] Ndebele, Njabulo, "Actors and Interpreters," *Rediscovery of the Ordinary,* p. 76.
[xi] Bremner, Lindsay, "Reframing Township Space: The Kliptown Project," *Public Culture,* p. 524.
[xii] *Ibid,* p. 528.
[xiii] Coombes, Annie, *History After Apartheid,* p. 22.
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[xvii] Ndebele, Njabulo, "Turkish Tales," *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture,* p. 15.
[xviii] *Ibid,* p. 16.
[xix] Ndebele, Njabulo, "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa," *Rediscovery of the Ordinary,* p. 31,
[xx] From Adam Hochschild's remarks at the Second Annual Narrative Journalism Conference held in Johannesburg, co-sponsored by the Nieman Foundation and the Wits University Department of Journalism, March 2006.



Freedom Charter Monument on the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication.



Bench on the Square with brick X platform and southern structure in the background

61



Portion of northern structure on Square meant for "The Meat Company"



Ten concrete bollards representing ten clause of Freedom Charter

62



Concrete bollards at the traffic circle on Union Road with traders. . .

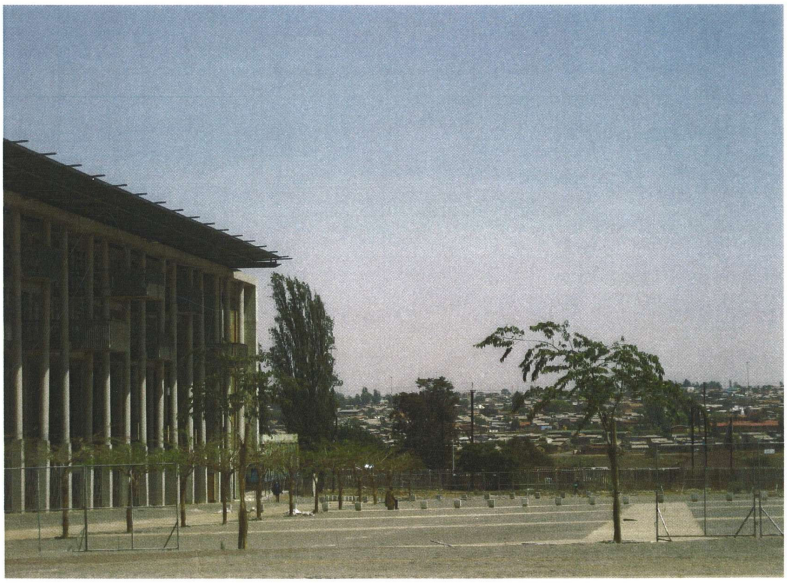


. . . and without.

63



Museum on the Square: Let us Speak Together of Freedom



Portion of southern structure meant for hotel. Note museum at end.

64



Market stalls

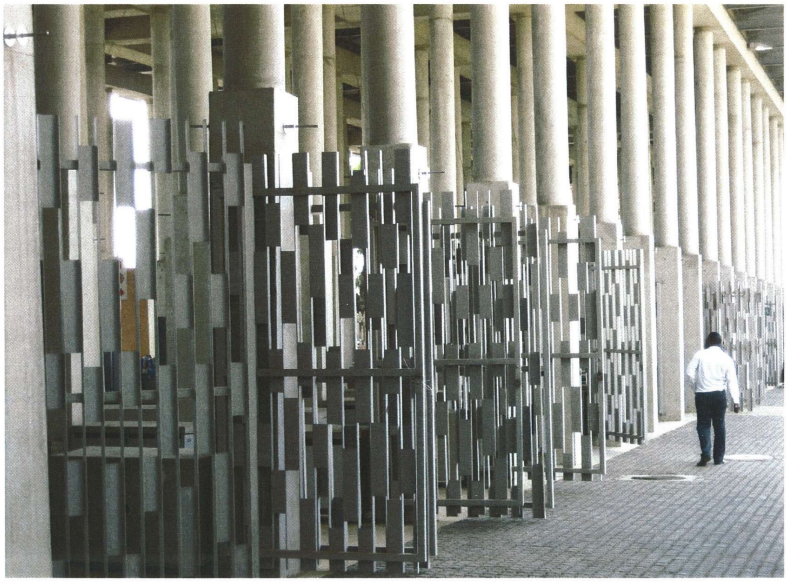


Looking through market gate to traders on Union Road.

65



Shoes and boots for sale on the Square



Gates to the market in the southern structure on the Square

66



Looking across Square to the southern structureff

67



SKY offices: "Is Freedom Square for Me?"



Aunt Eva Mokoka's House

68



Portable toilet just off Station Road: "Let the Poor Survive."



House on Station Road

69



View from pedestrian bridge. Intersection of Union and Station Roads.



SKY HIV/Aids walk. Station Road.

70



Walking back to SKY offices. HIV/Aids walk. Station Road.



Relaxing at SKY offices after HIV/Aids walk.

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Kliptown community centre on Beacon Road



Kliptown community centre

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Abandoned JDA site office

73



Gerald Sekoto's house



The Lollan's house, with JDA sign on the left

74



Children playing next to Sans Souci



Sans Souci ruin at sunset

75

Freedom Charter

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

- ✓ That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people:
- ✓ That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peach by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;
- ✓ That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;
- ✓ That only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of color, race, sex or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together – equals, countrymen and brothers – adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The People Shall Govern!

Every man and women shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall have equal rights to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

The preaching and practice of national, race or color discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid and practices shall be set aside.

All National Groups shall Have Equal Rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national Groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own language, and to develop their own folk culture And customs;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;
The preaching practice of national, race or color discrimination and contempt shall be punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

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The People Shall Share In The Country's Wealth !

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and enter all trades, crafts and professions.

The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It!

Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labour and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All Shall Be Equal Before The Law !

No-one shall we imprisoned, deported or restricted without a fair trail;

No-one shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at reeducation, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, color or belief shall be repealed.

All Shall Enjoy Equal Human Rights!

The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children;

The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by law;

All shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from province to province, and from South Africa aboard;

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There Shall Be Work And Security!

All who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers;

The state shall recognise the right and duty of all to work, and draw full unemployment benefits;

Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work;

There shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave, and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers;

Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The color bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

The Doors Of Learning And Of Culture Shall Be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;

Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizen;

The color bar in culture life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

There Shall Be Houses, Security And Comfort!

All people shall have the right to live where they choose, be decently housed, and to bring up their families in comfort and security;

Unused housing space to be made available to the people;

Rent and prices shall be lowered, food plentiful and no-one shall go hungry;

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A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, transport, roads, lighting, playing fields, crèches and social centers;

The aged the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state;

Rest, leisure and recreation shall be the right of all;

Fenced locations and ghettoes shall be abolished, and laws which break up families shall be repealed.

There Shall Be Peace And Friendship!

South Africa shall be a fully independent state, which respects the right and sovereignty of all nations;

South Africa shall strive to maintain world peace and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation – nor war;

Peace and friendship amongst all our people shall be secured by upholding the equal rights, opportunities and status of all;

The right of all the people of Africa to independence and self-government shall be recognised, and shall be the basis of close co-operation.

Let all who love their people and their country now say, as we say here;

These Freedoms We Will Fight For

Side By Side, Throughout Our Lives,

Until We Have Won Our Liberty.

Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown on 26 June 1955.

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