

ABSTRACT

This study is a partial historical biography of the life of one woman, Shulamith Muller. The child of a Jewish immigrant family, she traversed many of her native country's generally impermeable social boundaries to become truly South African. She married an Afrikaner, product of another closed, white community but her politics, and that of her husband, led them both into a completely different South Africa. In this wider world her commitment to, and belief in, the rule of law, justice and the principle of equality before the law gave her a place in a broader black community of her many clients and political comrades, both rural and urban. The study also documents the role of this same irrepressible woman in a political "coup" within another closed society, that of the Pretoria Communist Party in the 1940s, which reflected many of the tensions that were playing out on a larger world stage.