

Reminiscences No 6

On the stern deck of the Ruys, where I was entirely only the whole passage, there was nothing to see or hear other than the noise of the engines, the thrashing of the propeller and the surging of water. Away at last! I said to myself, feeling that I'd never see this receding coastline again. There was an indomitable desire to realise a dream, by what means I had not yet had the time to plan properly and even now was putting off till another day. In the meantime I was being what was expected of me because this was not a pleasure cruise. Well, I was enjoying it immensely, though, incredibly, others were not so fortunate.

A certain van Renesse, a driver, that was with me in the transport unit in Surabaya had also survived it all and had also been accepted as a working passenger on the Ruys, though he could have shipped out a lot sooner than I. My job on the ship was opening medical supplies boxes for the ship's hospital, which was empty.

There were very few passengers on board, which became clear in Colombo where a large contingent of women and children came aboard from India where they had been awaiting onward transport. We'd first stopped in Belawan, and possibly Sabang at the northernmost point of Sumatra; the Indian Ocean was as calm as a lake, with only the slightest swells rolling the ship. For us space had been made in the forward cargo hold, which was unused at the time.

The cargo hold was unadorned and had a steel floor, but it was warm without being hot, and I slept on the hatch cover, which was from canvas pulled tight over a frame, and softer than the steel of the hold's floor. While lying on the hatch cover you could look up at the mast and spar against the moonless, starry sky. For my friend van Renesse, who worked in the galley, the work became intense after Colombo where all the refugees came aboard and wanted to eat; for me work actually stopped there since I'd unpacked all the medicines by then.

As I now continue a problem arises, and that is that this narrative is all about all aspects of what the future held in my thoughts – a future that had yet to begin, and yet now is all in the past, because now I am alone again. Ina, or as I call her, my Mam, is not here anymore, and I imagine that the very long road we both had to travel to reach our desired destination, which also meant that we had to start at the very bottom of the ladder, united us more closely. This welding will become more evident as the story of our lives unfold, rather than just mine alone.

The happy union between us was undoubtedly a fact, but what is also true is that Ina was headstrong and never quite said everything she meant – you had to do some guessing to complete the picture, and I also had an outspoken view of matters, which I expressed fully. This was undeniable and obvious.

After Colombo the only thing that was different was the overcrowding on the ship, almost all being women and children – the general mood was positive because we were homeward bound, but irritable as well. The Red Sea was hot as hell and my work, or attempts at work, reached a nadir, and for the first time in many years, I was totally idle; nor was there actually anything to do. Also on board was a mother with two daughters that I knew from Surabaya. Fore and aft the ship had two crude wooden extensions suspended over the sea that served as wash rooms, the waste water dropping straight overboard.

The next stop was Aqaba that during the war had served the English armies in Egypt and the Middle East. It was a typical war-time port with a pier of concrete caissons sunk to the

sea floor, a number of sheds on the desert sand, and a road leading inland. The harbour no longer needed but the sheds provided storage for the refugees possessions, except for a small area used for brief and superficial medical examination. We, the working passengers, were also processed and I was told that the X-ray photos indicated that I may well have TB, and should visit a doctor as soon as I'd landed in Holland – depressing news indeed, but the chief medic aboard ship examined me carefully and told me in his opinion there was nothing to be concerned about.

What can one do? Hope for the best and keep going. Obviously long-term planning was out of the question with this hanging over my head, I do remember feeling acutely sorry for myself: “How much more must I endure?” In the meantime we sailed non-stop through the Suez Canal and entered the Mediterranean Sea at Port Said, where the weather turned suddenly cold, making it impossible to sleep outside while there was very little room below.

We crossed the Med and passed Gibraltar where there were allegedly no air defences – not quite true: I spotted four anti-aircraft guns. It's remarkable that the colour of the sea changes to grey as you sail northward into the Atlantic, and then in the English Channel suddenly everything metal kept clinging to the ship – a curious phenomenon caused by electrification or ionisation I believe, that was intended to protect the ship from magnetic mines lying on the sea floor.

And then the dunes of the Dutch coast, and the dizzying certainty: We made it! And then came that churning in the stomach: There at last is Holland! My stomach always reacted to uncertainty and mixed expectations. Then through the locks and into Amsterdam's harbour with my meagre baggage: a half-full duffel bag.

Ilen was standing on the quay in her Marine uniform, framed in the doorway of a large warehouse, while I was on the high foredeck of the MS Ruys that was slowly closing with the wharf, a most poignant time – you might try calling across the distance, or you can just wait the interminable time for the ship to be moored, and the gangplank laid into place. It's hard to describe such a moment of meeting after all that has happened over the many years other than to say that the rest of the world ceases to exist – until a seaman at your shoulder asks, “Is this your suitcase?”, and you have to take a moment to search for an answer. The suitcase was one I'd brought across for someone in the bank.

When I write about this now it is so many years later that everything is in the past – our entire lives gone with the wind. I'm thankful that we, or rather Ilen, (who I called my Mam in the last years), was aware of what awaited us at the end of our lives, which were in some respects already difficult. In store for Mam was twelve years of misery of one kind or another with longish intervals between setbacks.

First in 1991 my Mam contracted cancer which required surgery that removed all malignancy and there was no sign of metastasis, but nevertheless an intense radiation therapy was prescribed, which weakened her bones and serious osteoporosis resulted, so serious that I had to carry her to bed. After lengthy treatment she recovered sufficiently to be able to move around freely. Then there was pneumonia, followed by an infection outside the lungs which required the insertion of a tube to drain liquid followed by another debilitating operation to remove a benign growth. In three months I booked Mam into hospital six times, five into the Morningside Clinic, and once into Mill Park Hospital. Then there were serious blockages in blood vessels in her right leg.

For a time there was respite, and then her first stroke – the poor woman was bent nearly double and required assistance, but remained brave and positive. There were a number of minor blockages in her brain before the big and final one hit that left her almost entirely paralysed. At this point Mam had but one wish – to be taken home to die in her own bed. I took her home and there followed a terrible year – I'd caught her falling when she had her first stroke and I was there at the end.

The nurse was in attendance when this happened and told me I said: "Goodbye my Mam", and then she gave a great sigh in answer, though she'd already lost consciousness by then. The end came after a struggle lasting an hour and a half, at 2:30pm on the 24th February 2003, and I cannot say that I knew what was happening. Only now, four months later, while I write this, do I realise that there is no respite from the grief. "Why? This is unfair – such a beginning, and such an end! More than a year paralysed in bed!" And then the questions start: why didn't do something differently, why not this way? And there's no answer to that.

This deviation from the narrative appears out place, though it is not – I want to impress on readers how important living life fully is, many things cannot be repeated, as I have experienced. Apart from this, which a cry from the depths of despair, there are countless things to be very grateful for, and that's what I'm going to describe now – it is a story about the two of us, but according to my memory because I cannot ask Mam to help me with how any little detail was exactly.

And now we're back on the dock in Amsterdam, back to the beginning of the story, the story of our lives together.

I walked a straight line from the gangplank down to the quay and direct to the warehouse door where len stood unmoving until the last instant, when she hugged me fiercely, and I can remember clearly, for just how long – this being the first time in our lives. It was totally natural – len voice was more decisive, was my impression. We went directly to a phone box for len to call Jan ter Haar, announcing my arrival and summoning him to fetch us, since there was no parking in the vicinity of the harbour,

After this I faintly remember us taking a bus to Zeist where the official demobilisation from the army took place along with some payment – not army pay, something else, I forget exactly what. I reported that a doctor in Aqaba had advised me about traces of TB that appeared on an X-ray. The answer was literally: "That's not our problem, sort it out yourself with your own doctor."

This is where the first seeds were planted for leaving this place – the same opinionated bastards again. "What happened to my pay over all these years?", "For that you have to go to the KNIL (Dutch Indonesian Army)". "But that doesn't exist anymore." That was the Dutch army for you.

I well remember thinking: with this kind of junior bureaucrat there's no point arguing – I want to be free of years of being pushed around, and must now carefully consider how the two of us are going to tackle the future. There was also too much urgency to swap all of the wandering of the past for a period of stability. Looking back I realise that I often undertook something without properly discussing it with len, who never said much other than about general things.

Then home, which was at the time Bussum, with Jan's car and len and I in the back, while Pa Tamsma rode in front with Jan. It had become quite late as we neared the house

that I had left all those years before. Ien knew it well because she'd visited the place regularly for tea and walks, or something like that.

I noticed that not much had actually changed – a bookcase on which my photo was displayed had disappeared, the photo had been taken prior to my departure by a photographer in Bredius Street, in an old building that housed his studio. After a short conversation Pa Tamsma, Ien and Jan ter Haar departed leaving me standing in the sitting room of the ancestral house which seemed smaller than I remembered – and made the serious mistake of saying so.

There followed a number of highly personal questions, which reinforced the impression that nothing had changed, it was as if the entire war had never happened – which was fine for old people who must have suffered through it. The most personal questions remained unanswered because something inside me said that I should make it clear that some things had indeed changed.

And then my mother served me a cup of tea, my first since my arrival in Holland, which she always did in very elegant though small cups. She was aghast when it only took me two swallows to empty the cup. A bad start, exacerbated by my American army uniform with a green wind-jacket - the old type that ties with a drawstring, which added to the impression of roughening. My personal appearance was not enhanced by my 90kg weight and my American shoes made me look even taller than I was, and I sensed that I was something of a disappointment - they'd hoped for something better. This was not unexpected - between my departure in 1939 and my return in 1946 much had changed, particularly in me - I was now a much different KC.

Then the question arose of 'where do I sleep?', and 'where can I stow my baggage?', the duffle bag that I still have. "Oh, in the bathroom, because that's where you'll be sleeping as well". "In the bathroom?", "Yes because you'll be leaving again soon". That sounds heartless though not meant to be, but an example of something that seems unpleasant at the time but proves, over the passage of time to be a blessing.

This was the first night in many years that I'd slept in a real bed - it was strange and not totally enjoyable. The next day I told Ien what had transpired and she must have started planning immediately because very soon I was invited to move into one of the two bedrooms in the loft, the other of which was being used by Ien herself - a difficult offer to improve upon!

This was the start of an intense re-acquaintance and the agreement we made was that we had both changed and matured in the years of separation that the war had forced on us. We had no need to acclimatise to each other's personalities, that had changed, each in our own way as dictated by circumstances. Did the 'bathroom' comment cause this? I cannot say but it definitely helped to have a good reason to relocate.

That was the beginning of a period of joy and nothing but joy day in day out.. For three months I received a payment from the state. Father and Mother Tamsma let us live a much freer life than we would have had in Bussum. I do not think we transgressed or were burdensome. Ien's parents were used to having people around and staying with them in the house.. And in that period we were lucky enough to cement and what had been perhaps even a fantasy ::that picture that I had carried around and sounding unbelievable had always been a sort of pin around which things revolved, that picture became reality and was henceforth reality: I could talk to it and there were answers :the picture [not the paper picture] but the mind picture turned real.

That was it. This does not mean that for the future we were always angelic without a difference of opinion strong or weak, but for my part the tie was unbreakable and for len it was the same I am sure. And it is thanks to len's parents that this could happen. And the word tie is not the correct description as far as I am concerned. It is more the knowledge of: she is there. To put it in another way; The picture that existed in the dreams fitted reality. The picture became reality Which does not mean without effort. Nothing happens without the will for it to happen. If there were shortcomings, and there were, it was communication. len could talk, shu over everything and anything. But when we touched on future that was another matter Decision making was then a major factor. Oh and Mam could make decisions but not so openly; more silent and quietly.

Soon after arrival we had a dinner in Bussum with len's parents present and then Pa Tamsma gave a speech, the exact subject I do not remember but the one thing that he said that did impress is: "Well we can think of Kees and len as being practically engaged", to which my reaction was: Let us not be too hasty: I have not got a job, not even the prospect of a job, no money no nothing; just one give-away suit from Aqaba ill fitting, hairy and prickly, like a duffle bag and so the first seeds were then laid I think of a growing desire to make up for lost time And there was the needle of tuberculosis.

Jan en Noor [Noor is a sister of len] had a very nice little house in the open on the edge of the woods, all furnished and settled. My brother had a job and soon a flat. Everybody had what is needed and when I looked at prices I had far to go, From now on I will talk of Mam and not of len anymore the word Mam is what I always use now, also in my thoughts. We were there one evening to eat and it was getting late so we were to sleep at their place. The special attraction was the 'hooiberg' It had been a little farm house and the hay was not stored for the winter time in the loft but in a separate contraption: four poles carrying a roof Under that roof the hay was stored. As and when hay was taken away for fodder the roof could be lowered. This contraption had been converted into a large covered place, for kids to play and in one corner stood a little separate a bunk for visitors to sleep. All very homely and cosy.

Well we had eaten and I became aware that Jan took Mam aside and said something I clearly was not supposed to hear, nor did I have the foggiest idea what it could be. But Mam shook her head. Later I understood what it was all about when Mam told me: Jan had said why do not we sleep in the 'hooiberg' in a bunk anyway An illustration of how times change. The even more remarkable: we were visiting the Vuycken in Amersfoort (remember the school friend and his many sisters and the gulpknopen?) Well we were to sleep with them in their big bed 'just to make sure'. That was not a good night.

I remember that well because in normal conversation I told in Bussum that we had visited the Vuycken and my mother immediately reacted: "And how did you sleep there?". This must now stop, must have been my reaction - this is impossible: "In a bed", which answer was not satisfactory clearly but then sometimes one draws the line suddenly while it should have been done earlier.

Father Tamsma worried about more worthwhile things; I had told everybody concerned about the findings in Aqaba where a superficial check had indicated I had tuberculosis; that whole camp in Omuta must have been infected. And this was a better cause to give attention to. Now Father Tamsma knew very many people also the medical director of a sanatorium in a nearby place Laren, an expert in that field. And he made an appointment. He must have explained the importance of the case to him - that his daughter intended to marry the patient.

Well that had result: the check was very thorough. And his verdict was that undoubtedly I was now completely free of any and all traces of TB, but that at some time I had had the

disease. I clearly remember his pat [it was more than a pat – he was a big man] on the shoulder: There is nothing whatever to worry about “it is all gone” it has cured itself. “In those few months?”, “A year ago I was still digging coal!” “Yes completely cured”. Now that was a blessing. Shu Imagine the consequences had this been different!

It is only the professional writer who can describe the relief that crept up in me “this burden has been lifted.” It slowly penetrated all levels. Quite possibly I walked out of the doctor’s room without saying much if anything at all, like a zombie. And I told Ien; who also was relieved but far less panicky than me; and of course I told Mam’s parents who knew - their doctor friend had phoned already. I forgot the name of that doctor and cannot ask Mam anymore, but remember his face and there was a nurse with him. His doctor’s rooms were close to the Town Hall. An outstanding building in style and colour and I stood looking at it for quite a while. I remember now that I did because it is perhaps a typical older man’s habit: to stand still and ponder: And now what next?

The need of a job clearly! To start moving. Mam’s father was somewhat anxious I am sure being suspicious that I would want to go abroad again, and take his daughter with me. Naturally Mam and I visited many people and I looked around: Oh yes I did, but with no luck whatsoever. It was my impression that the country was looking and working on repair rather than the future, and concentrated on endeavours for a new order, new ways, and avoid a return to a pre war situation.

There was an Exchange control of incredible thoroughness; And little trust in a freedom of action which makes all and everybody more active in his own line of business. Whether good or bad policy I am the last to judge but the consequence was that new jobs –with a future- seemed scarce and in fact were very scarce.

And that was what I was looking for. More and more the sense of urgency took hold of me there was one I really would have liked; in Amsterdam North. Manufacturers of Oxygen Nitrogen etc and the man was looking for somebody to keep track of agencies and maintain liaison with the Government Departments; important in the policy plans of a ‘managed economy’ But then when I was nearly taken on he asked what I had done before; “Well, I was a POW in Japan.” “Oh no”, the man said: “that must have been very demoralizing! No we will not take you on!” That made me very angry and I told Mam.

Then Opa Tamsma sent Mam and me to an old family friend a Mr Gotzen, amongst many others and soon I became known as ‘de man van Ien’ I have got a name I said to Mam; yes but you are new and I have lived here, they know me and so: it is natural. I remember that. You are unknown. True not much success but Mam and I continued to have a good time.

We had endless walks, the house in the Elzenlaan was right at the edge of Hilversum on the south side with open fields and woods practically next door; and we did not always walk: Many times sat and talked. Ah life can be good and it made me sure as anything: I love this woman. I was educated in the strict ‘Gereformeerde’ customs and church. True. But the sharp edges had considerably worn. However, before the war still at home I had prayed repeatedly and very, very often for Ina Tamsma to be my wife! You do not believe me? It is true, very true and it happened! But I did not go back to the old Church, no. Things change and Mam did not feel at home there. So now I say Oh Lord the woman You gave me is no more and I am lonely, nobody or anything can replace her and Thou knowest, help me.! Sounds untrue? It is not!

Then how and who I do not remember but I talked to the representative of the World Bank in The Hague. An enterprising youngish man who said: He would love to take me on but the institution had not by far grown enough to employ more people. I had a longish

conversation with this man explaining my situation and willingness, preparedness to go far to make up for the loss in time. He told me: You will not find that here, not for quite some time: what you must do is go to South Africa!

This was at a time that I regretted not having tried to abscond in wartime and join the American Army and so try to become an American But I never did that, fearing to be sent back as a deserter. Who was going to pay the cost to go to South Africa? I told Mam, must have, but cannot remember a reaction. Possibly, no likely, Mam did not like the idea but felt safe because of the financial difficulty.

So eventually I ask the Nederlandse Handel Mij. And they took me on. But I explained in great detail to the chief of their letter of credit department my predicament: I made the promise to do my total level best if his organisation would agree not to start me on a beginner's salary. That was agreed and he mentioned a sum. How much I do not remember. So, I am employed, and we can start making wedding plans and soon. The arrangement was clear: They would pay me their maximum they could go against my effort to catch up as fast as possible.

Now I am not quite sure about the sequence of events. I think that before this NHM employment an advert appeared in the paper: The Nederlandse Bank voor Zuid Afrika looks for experienced young people to be sent out to South Africa which I showed to Mam. That would solve the financial problem. From what I have been telling so far it may look as if I never ever discussed the job problems with Mam but that is not so. Of course I did the running around and always said I am about to get married.

However (and I am not quite sure of the timing anymore) there was no reaction to my application in answer to this advert, and then decided upon the Nederlandse Handel Mij which to a certain extent must have been an act of desperation: To sit behind a typewriter making out letters of credit is not what I was born to do.

So while I travelled daily back and forth to Amsterdam the wedding was planned and the decision as to the date was the 19th October. When one leaves Amsterdam Central Station going east back home to Hilversum parts of the harbour can be seen when one looks to the left.

Passenger liners can be seen and I admit to certain nostalgia: will I never travel on such a ship anymore, tied to my typewriter? And I said something like that to Mam, a bit carefully though.

Shortly after I arrived back I called on The Nederlandse Indiesche Handels Bank that I had said farewell to so long ago. I had asked for the balance of my pay for the work done in their Manila Office, since they had paid me only half of what was due. I spoke to the Chief executive a Mr Dunlop. No he said you were cared for in the army and in the spirit of bankers everywhere you jumped at the occasion to help rebuild the bank.

Being very hard up for money this was not what I wanted, and resigned, writing to Mr Dunlop personally, and saying something like this: I did not want to tie my future to a bank that cannot even pay salaries. It was a good letter venting anger and Mam typed it, and you know in a little over 2 years that bank had to close their doors. Not my wisdom or foresight but it happened!

Because of the developments in Indonesia I could safely resign as clearly the prospect of any payment was nil and Mam and I were not going to get mixed up in the developments. The Government could not see that a colonial empire had collapsed, the population had been exposed to Japanese propaganda for years and the old, the past, had gone forever. All that remained as a possibility was a salvage operation as to investments and what

they could not grasp in The Hague that it is not possession that is wanted NO it is trade; and leave responsibility to the others: They want it? Give it to them!

But then something dramatic happened real dramatic that would affect our entire lives, Mam's and mine and eventually our children. After many months so many, that the Nederlandsche Bank voor Zuid Afrika had been forgotten, there was a letter proposing an interview on such and such a day; out of the blue, and I had been working for NHM for months now. Not sure what Mam's reaction was. Mam many times kept thoughts to herself. So I went. A Mr. Van Os van den Abelen would interview me. Elderly gentleman, deftig no doubt I thought. Not at all, youngish and quite openly Socialist seemingly, and a nice open fellow who explained the situation: this was not a colonial matter, and that I would therefore in the eyes of the local population working for the bank have to show ability and intelligence enough to warrant promotion, and every 5 years overseas leave.

I must have given all the right answers and then explained that because there was no answer to my application I had addressed to them I had in the meantime taken a job with the NHM. His answer was: Excellent! stay there for the time; it will help you to adjust after your POW time and in any case a permanent residence visa takes a long time to be issued.. So walking out I thought they are going to take me on! And told the news at home! I cannot remember reactions so if there were, there was no expression of dismay and ifs and why's!

Then too, the relationship with the NHM: It had, or would also basically change::[if the South African bank took me on, of which I was positive]and it would only be right to tell them, after all they had allowed the maximum pay merely on my undertaking to do "level best"]. So in a few days: knock, knock on the door of the PP (short for 'procuratie houder') and told him the story! "

"But why? Everything went well! Is it a matter of money?" Well in a way it is and also progress, in such a department will of necessity be slow and time is not on my side!". "Well that is easy! What is your salary?" "FI 250 sir". "Oh that is easy: from now on FI 350". (That is close on 40 % more) and we had a nearly equivalent to a sworn agreement he would pay me tops!! That man is not to be trusted I thought] and my reaction was straight: You are too late sir. "Have you been taken on in the new job yet?" "No sir but I'm sure I will be!"

Immediately I was taken off the work I was doing and transferred to the "reports department" sorting little info cards. [Yeah that tore it people say] The man [the PP] made a mistake and I can prove it and if I do that, I will seem boastful; that I am not but I will sound or it will sound like self aggrandizement, not intended to but unavoidable. I would refer him to the letter I received from these new bank employers from the Chief Executive 33 years later when I went on pension ending my career that led to the top echelons. In that bank. Thinking back and considering what that fellow was actually doing and responsible for I am amazed how limited that was. The subject matter in letters a pp. was allowed to sign was purely routine, really basic only. It was a good thing I left.

Now back to the home life. Make no mistake: the home life is the most important, the other things in life all of course necessary but the basis is the home, however important the work environment is. That is what I found. Now that the work and future were given direction one could start laying a basis as it were. In addition I had angered this man at the NHM daring to throw in his face his offer so that he paid no attention whatever to what I did. Mam and I had our daily walks for hours upon hours as soon as there was a free moment.

And in time it became late summer. And our wedding date was set as 19 October. Lots of things were being borrowed because it had to be and look special. We were to marry in the 'Hervormde Kapel' by a Ds [that stands for dominie] van Ruler. Who was really a fine person a preacher whose dictum one could say "Up to the joy of life' [op naar de vreugde]. The Gereformeerde Kerk in Bussum was really more a black stocking affair I should say. And the chosen venue looked friendlier and somewhat smaller than a full-blown church.

Our wedding was really something special with fine white-horse-drawn carriages. I think Opa Tamsma arranged that. Ah now I miss Mam for some more important detail. Mam was then the real decision maker and I liked that for sure. For instance we were to move in, in Elzenlaan on the loft floor room across the one which was Mam's room. And the walls of that loft room according to Mam had to be redone; the existing wallpaper was old and stained. Instead we brushed on some sort of porridge like stuff horrible looking actually but nothing better was obtainable in those post war days.

A marriage ceremony in Holland is sort of a double affair; the church wedding on its own is not recognized by law. One has to get married in the Town Hall which in Hilversum at that time was a very special internationally known building in a new style. The whole ceremony the dinner thereafter the speeches made me say repeatedly to myself 'eindelijk' = at last.. The road to "eindelijk" was long but so is any road one has never walked before.

And at the end of that road we were really happy, intensely so. And this remained but then in calmer waters not so wildly happy any more: that would not be possible and in no way did we have a very extraordinary marriage. We needed extra reserves so to speak to endure the stresses and strains of an emigration.

I have not told yet about our honeymoon. In October NHM was still my employer; whether they liked that or not I don't know. And I asked for a few days leave; I got four days. Not much but fair is fair I had not worked for them for a long time. We went to Hotel 'De Witte Bergen' for the first night and then too cycled on the Veluwe. The bicycles had wooden tyres.

We made up for it later in the winter; there was heavy snow and fine weather. And the snow did not melt for a week. I did not go to work Mam and I walked every day in the most beautiful fields and woods. Ah, that was a glorious time. Mam and I still remembered that for a very long time. I am sure she still does. At that time life was perfect, there was nothing that we wanted and we were one; actually not two persons anymore. This sounds like lyrics. In a way it was but for us it was then everyday reality. Which of course does not last; it cannot but it is inspirational thought and a basis to fall back on in more difficult times.

The next chapter must deal with our life in South Africa which in a way was to be our real life, of working, living, holidays, the normal routine of living on our own which we had not done yet.

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