

# A Letter to Nelson Mandela

Cathy McCormack

SUMMARY: A letter from Cathy McCormack, a mother in a Glasgow 'township', to Nelson Mandela written in 1996.

KEY WORDS: ANC, Apartheid, autobiography, community, dampness, Easthall Residents' Association, health, justice, liberation, Long Walk to Freedom, oppression, Passive Solar Housing Energy Conservation Project, personal testimony, township, truth, war without bullets

Dear Nelson,

I've just read your autobiography, *The Long Walk to Freedom* (2008), and it really inspired me to write this letter to you.

I, too, have been trying to write an autobiography – not just of myself, but of my community's fight in Easterhouse to expose the truth of our children's reality.

Reading your personal testimony, I could hardly believe how much our minds and spirit had in common. Your story threw up so many similarities with my own – although, geographically, we're worlds apart.

Nelson, I have spent every moment of my life since I became a mother trying to understand the insanity of my children's reality. That is why I understood it when you wrote: 'that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. The man who takes away another man's freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.'

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Cathy McCormack is a Scottish activist, author, blogger, broadcaster, film maker, popular educator and teacher.

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