

Ideas for teachers:

1/ In the play the idea of Ubuntu is introduced at the very beginning – a communal generosity in which caring for others is part of a recognition of the importance of the community. How far do you see this idea reflected in the later politics of Nelson Mandela?

2/ Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years on Robben Island and on occasions before that; he was threatened, conspired against and worked many years as a forced labourer. Winnie Mandela was imprisoned for shorter periods of time, but, unlike Nelson, she was kept in solitary confinement and tortured during more than one of these incarcerations. How far does the differing nature of their treatment explain the growing divergence of their approaches to resistance to apartheid?

3/ The ANC prisoners on Robben Island were united by their politics and experienced in leadership. How do think this affected their experiences of prison and how they dealt with its conditions?

4/ How do you think that the secrecy and deception required by the ANC when operating 'underground' affected the relationship of Winnie and Nelson Mandela?

5/ Were the ANC right to abandon non-violent resistance?

(Bear in mind the moral dilemmas in non-violent resistance; for example, Martin Luther King (subject of a previous TNT production) was tormented by his realisation that it was only when Civil Rights demonstrators were beaten and this was shown on TV that his non-violent demonstrations had any effect – so he had to 'invite' violence in front of TV cameras even though he did not perpetrate it.

6/ How important are personal relationships to large scale political changes?

7/ Consider the importance and effects of the recruitment as police informers of many black anti-apartheid militants by the white security forces. How do you think this might have affected relations between people in the black communities where it was known that many people there were informers?

8/ Nelson Mandela (rather like Martin Luther King) is sometimes portrayed as a saintly figure who never did a wrong thing. Winnie Mandela is sometimes portrayed as an evil, demonic and sadistic organiser of murder who never did a valuable or positive thing. Does 'Free Mandela' give more nuanced portraits of these two people? In what ways do you think the reality differs from the saint/demon stereotypes?