



While K was the Head of the Standing Group on the Oil Market (SOM), monitoring and analysing short- and medium-term developments in the international oil market, he lived with *La Kahina* in 33 Avenue Cortambert in Passy/Paris.

If a veil of anonymity has been granted the *two main characters* in the project *Trolling words*, it is for several reasons: **1)** because they lived under a veil of *anonymity*, as was common in career-diplomacy, in their days (1981-1999); **2)** also since the details of their lives was largely *unknown* to their family and progeny in Norway; **3)** to cut clear of basic assumptions on the lives of diplomats in Norwegian public culture; **4)** because their lives were fictional, though never under a false cover.

The address 33 Avenue Cortambert was the most anonymous and least shiny of the addresses in Paris, during the senior phases of K's career as a diplomat: the years 1983-1985, when K was at the head of SOM at the IEA, appear to have been a happy *two-year* from what is written in *La Kahina's* diaries, from that time. They were on their own, without children to care for, the future was uncertain but open: a sense of freedom and adventure exudes from her entries in those days.

They lived where they could afford on a good international salary. Accordingly, they were free of the mismatch between **a)** the *front* of addresses used by governments to present their local missions; **b)** the government-salaries, topped with bonuses, that they live on *day-to-day*. That is, the same mismatch between *funds* allocated to dinners, receptions and cultural events, and the *regimen* of daily life that contrasts with the life-style and wealth found in the diplomatic residence's *entourage*.

STOPS on the journey of a husband-and-wife team:

1. Paris
2. New York
3. Oslo
4. Geneva
5. Oslo
6. Brussels
7. Paris
8. Washington D.C.
9. Baghdad
10. Oslo
11. Paris
12. Oslo
13. Paris
14. Athens
15. The Hague

In a social sense, they live fictional lives in a very concrete sense. If they are part of the local elite, it is on account of the importance of their *mission* than by account of their wealth. It is *not* based on illusion (such as making wealthy neighbours believe that they are rich). They are professional event-makers, at a level that can match, and even surpass, their wealthy entourage. While their everyday standard and life-style is austere by comparison. So, they are *not* socially integrated.

Nor are they *meant* to be. They are *not* liable to the law of the country, in which they work, but are legally bound by the laws of their *own* country. Which means that they are genuinely *foreign*, though *without* being alien. The reader will be quick to pick up the paradox of this mode of existence: since they are certainly not living *abroad* on the same terms as they are when at home. At home their is nothing to indicate the life the kinds of households they entertain abroad.

Seen in isolation this makes their life almost impossible. It doesn't add up and it their living conditions are almost designed *not* to level with realities. That is, from the vantage point of their social and economic conditions. Their only chance to level with reality is their success at

The cities where K and La Kahina lived and worked.

being on the *mission* they are delegated by their governments. Or else, spend time and effort on acquiring a knowledge of local culture. Being local on the level of *knowledge* and *education*.

So, their interest in culture, knowledge and education is not superficially mundane, but their chance of surviving, and in some sense *be people*, where they live: spending their lives not only with other diplomats but with university people, artists and segments of the business world. And they have the means to do it: their invitation lists regularly includes people from these categories. And what from their salaries they spend time on cultural arenas, travelling and eating on a relatively *modest* fare.

Which makes their life socially *almost* impossible to categorise in terms social *hierarchy*, where they actually *belong* and what kind of life-*experience* they have: it readily slips from the current standards. Their families and social entourage at home can be largely uncomprehending. They may have an idea of them as part of an elite, but this assumption quickly falters as they are matched up with someone, beyond their own ranks. In sum, they grey eminences in a really *deep* sense.

Accordingly, the reality of being on a mission for one's country provides a needed focus: both to be on the page while being posted abroad, and in relating the nature of their work to family, social circle and fellow nationals. However, the operations that they are involved in are of very large scale, placing high demands on their audience's endurance for technical and detailed accounts, often at high level of the high-strung intensity required to have a handle on large-scale operations.

A recent estimate of the price/m<sup>2</sup> in the area of 109 Avenue Henrik Martin—where *K* and *La Kahina* moved in by 1989, to live there 5 years—is currently at an average of **11 147€**. The cost from *running a country* abroad: whether the residences are bought or rented. Which, with the tangle of trade and inter-dependencies, that make up the groundwork of national economics, gives an idea of the importance and size of the operations. Very few questioned the reality of these expenses.



109 Avenue Henri Martin. Former residence of the Duchess de Noailles, who was a poet and hosted a salon. Today: the Embassy of Bangladesh.

The pseudonyms *K* and *La Kahina* have diverse, but still related origins: *K* is inspired by the geometer—the land-surveyor—in Kafka's novel *The Castle*, whose name is *K*. It has been selected because *K* (the geometer) was called upon by the Castle, but could never be sure of his assignment. While *La Kahina* is inspired by a historical character shrouded in legend and myth: La Kahina, a Berber Jewish queen-prophetess and warlord, from 1st century (c.e.) Algeria.

Which is  $\Lambda \Xi \Phi \Sigma$  in Amazigh. During their first residence in Paris (1960-62)—as a young couple—the Algerian war was in its critical closing *two-year* phase. Paris was a dangerous place at that time. Later on, while in Baghdad, *La Kahina* contracted a condition that, over the years, developed Copd (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). She had a real story with the desert: the fine dust and its action on lung tissues, as miners in Europe. She would never cover her face.

In the deposition of the private archive that *K* and *La Kahina* left behind, the her 71 diaries will inevitably provide the lens that their home constituted into oil-trade politics—emphasising the Gaz agreement with France on Troll—on the backdrop of her portrait. A story of a major operation and deal in international trade politics.