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WOMEN



MARCH TO FREEDOM

WINNIE MANDELA



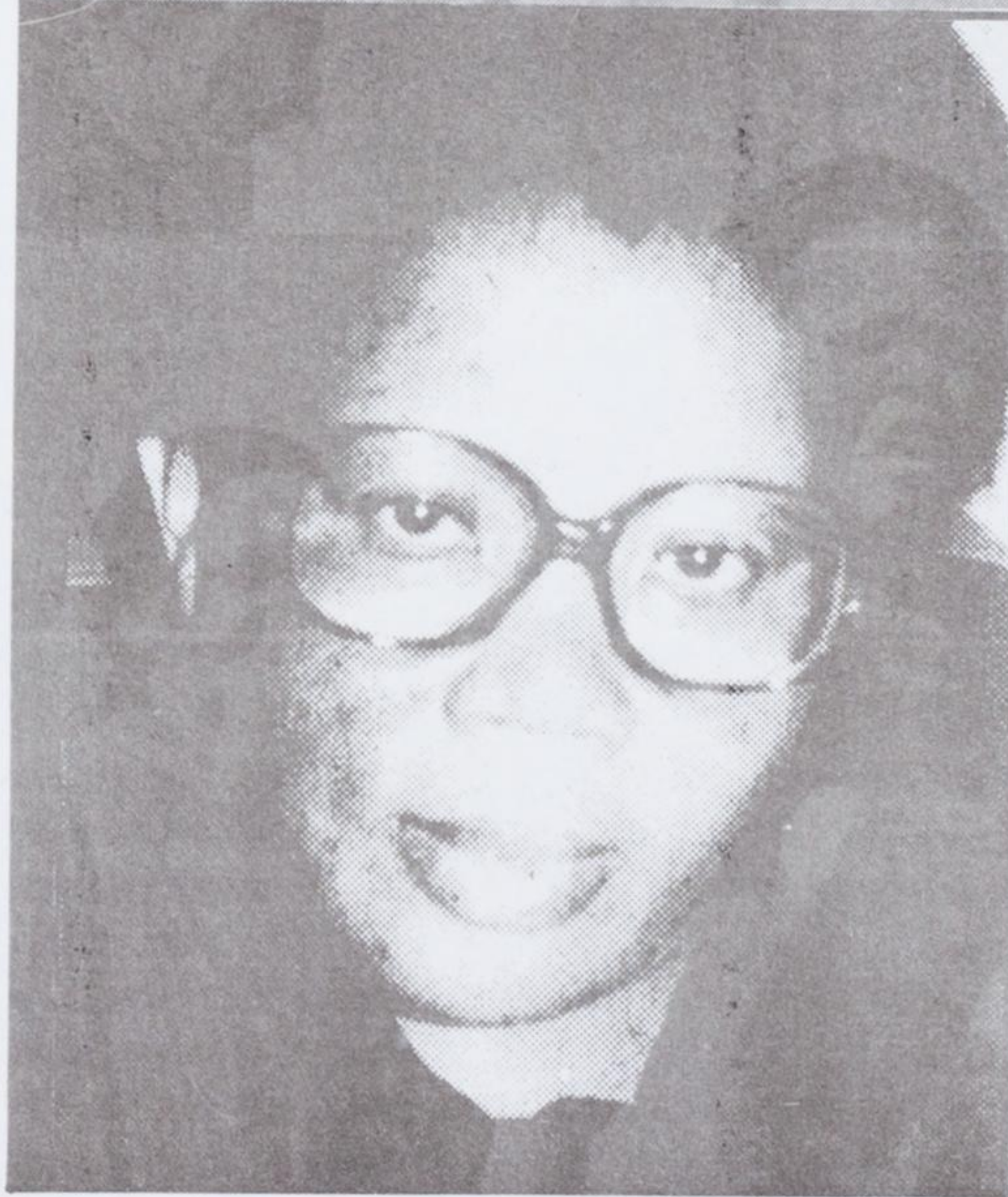
GERTRUDE SHOPE, HEAD, ANC WOMEN'S SECTION



ALBERTINA SISULU



VICTORIA MXENGE



RUTH FIRST



DORA TAMANA



SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN MARCH TO FREEDOM

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INTRODUCTION

Apartheid has been declared by the United Nations as a crime against humanity. The viciousness of that crime has permanently scarred the lives of all the people of South Africa, who have a proud history and tradition of resistance to oppression and conquest stretching over more than 250 years.

The African National Congress has led the fight for freedom ever since its formation on January 8th, 1912. In sharp contrast to the Pretoria regime's repression and subordination of women, the ANC has committed itself to fight for the emancipation of all South African women as an integral part of the national liberation struggle. In 1985, ANC President Oliver Tambo, declared at the Nairobi Conference on the Decade for Women:

'We will not consider the task of liberation achieved until the emancipation of women has been accomplished'.

The black people of South Africa are denied political rights by the white regime who own and control the state apparatus and all major sectors of the economy. Black women in apartheid South Africa suffer a triple yoke of oppression: oppressed as members of an oppressed nation denied all political power or rights in the land of their birth; oppressed as members of the working class and landless peasantry, having been forced into wage employment at derisory rates of pay under highly exploitative conditions; and thirdly, oppressed as women, subject to discrimination in laws they have not made regarding the ownership of property, rights in marriage and access to health care.

There is a long history of women's resistance to oppression in South Africa. At the beginning of the century black women in Bloemfontein led a militant and successful campaign against official actions aimed at forcing them both to carry passes and permits and to enter domestic service for white families.

Struggles led by women against the control and direction of their labour through the pass law system occurred throughout the first half of the century. In 1956 a march attended by thousands of women from around the country, the majority mobilised through the ANC Women's League, protested at the attempt to impose passes on all African women. The women served notice on the then Prime Minister: *Strijdom, you have touched the women, you have struck a rock.* Indeed, women's struggles have been an integral part of the national liberation fight. In a statement made to the World Conference for the UN Decade for Women in Copenhagen in 1980, the following analysis was made:

'Women in South Africa, from the turn of the century, have emerged as primary catalysts for protest and challengers of the apartheid regime. With all the disabilities and devastating effects of apartheid on the status of women ... those most oppressed of the oppressed have never lost sight of the fact that meaningful change for women cannot be forthcoming through reform but only through the total destruction of the apartheid system. Thus the common exploitation and oppression of men and women on the basis of colour has led to a combined fight against the system instead of a battle of women against men for "women's rights". While women desire their personal liberation, they see that as part of the total liberation movement. Although there is no doubt that the overt leadership has been dominated by men, the seemingly unacknowledged and informal segment of society controlled by women has been the key to many of the most significant mass movements in modern South African history. It is only in the very recent past that the crucial role played by women in raising basic issues, organising and involving the masses, has become more widely recognised ...'

The ANC, in recognition of the importance of the role of women in the fight for freedom, declared 1984 *The Year of the Women*. Throughout that year attention was focused on the triple oppression of women, and the burning issues affecting women were brought to the fore. The succeeding years have witnessed the liberation movement's constant attention to the demands of women

for total liberation. This was stressed by President Tambo in his January 8th, 1987 address to the South African nation:

'The mothers of the nation, the womenfolk as a whole, are the titans of our struggle. The oppressors and the exploiters see in black womanhood nothing but the calloused hands of the washer-woman, the cleaner, the agricultural and factory worker: their white sisters are themselves domesticated possessions kept as objects for reproduction. Our revolutionary movement has long recognised the fact that an oppressive social order such as ours could not but enslave women in a particularly brutal way. One of the greatest prizes of the democratic revolution must therefore be the unshackling of the women.'

The women of South Africa are fully conscious of their triple burden of oppression. United in action, they are determined to take on the full might of the apartheid state so that they, their menfolk and their children shall enjoy the right to life in the land of their birth.



Florence Matomela (speaking), was elected vice-president of the Federation of South African Women, formed in 1954, and Ray Alexander (with scarf) secretary.

WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The struggle for national liberation in South Africa is a struggle for the democratic transformation of a system in which a minority has denied political rights for centuries to the majority of the people. The political repression of the black people of South Africa has been coupled with their economic exploitation, their loss of land, the denial of the basic human needs of adequate health, housing, family life and sustenance. Women's participation in the revolution is central to the strengthening of the national liberation movement and the nature of the transformation of society.

For seventy five years, since its formation in 1912, the African National Congress has led the national liberation struggle. Our vision for the country, enshrined in the Freedom Charter which was adopted by delegates nationwide to the Congress of the People, held on June 26 1955, encompasses a land governed by all the people, with the national wealth restored to the people, the land shared among those who work it, all enjoying human rights, housing, security, education and peace.

Laying the Foundations

In 1913, at the time of the notorious Land Act, the year after the formation of the ANC, African women staged a spirited campaign — including passive resistance and civil disobedience — against pass laws for women in the Orange Free State. This province was unusual in applying pass laws to women. In general, before 1950, the pass laws — used to control African men in the labour force — were not applied to African women, primarily because there were so few women living in towns. But not so in Bloemfontein where African women, present in significant numbers, were subjected to pass laws — the badge of slavery. They condemned pass laws for women arguing that the family was sacred — jail would separate them from their families — and women had a special role in maintaining its integrity. This anti-pass campaign forced the ANC to pay greater attention to women and led to the formation of the Bantu Women's League in 1913-14 — the first national organisation of black women. Its first president was Charlotte Maxeke, 'the mother of African freedom', and was a landmark in the politics of the liberation movement.

However, women were not allowed to become full members of the ANC, and for the next 25 years were accorded the status of 'auxiliary members' without voting rights.

It was in the climate of mass mobilisation of the early 1940s, marked by events such as the successful Alexandra bus boycott of 1943, that women were granted full membership status in the ANC and the ANC Women's League was set up. All ANC women automatically belonged to the Women's League. Rapid changes were made once the 1949 Programme of Action had been adopted, ushering in the dynamic ANC leadership of Mandela, Tambo, Lembede and others. In that year Ida Mtwana was elected president of the ANC Women's League. As the ANC grew into a mass organisation in the 1950s — particularly during the Defiance Campaign — so the scope of the ANC Women's League expanded. But what really galvanised women was the threat to introduce passes for all women.

In 1953, filled with confidence from the success of the Defiance Campaign, women such as Florence Matomela (Cape President of the ANC Women's League), Frances Baard, and Ray Alexander worked for the establishment of a political body which would provide a stronger voice for women involved in the Congress Alliance, and the Federation of South African Women was formed in 1954. Amongst its aims was the drawing up of a Women's Charter. In 1955 Lilian Ngoyi, outstanding national and women's leader, and recipient of the highest honour the people of South Africa can bestow — Isitwalandwe-Seaparankoe — was the first woman to be elected to the ANC national executive. As the 1950s wore on, women came to the fore in the anti-pass campaign, and the status and prestige of women in the Congress Alliance and within the ANC increased. Symbolic of this was the ANC's decision to commemorate August 9th as 'Women's Day', in honour

of the massive anti-pass demonstration staged by the women in 1956. Women had made anti-pass demonstrations their own platform.

The banning of the ANC in 1960 and the infamous Rivonia Trial of 1964 saw the mass upsurge of popular resistance of the Fifties transformed into underground, illegal work. The next twenty years witnessed the painstaking rebuilding of organised resistance despite intense repression. The Soweto Uprising of 1976 marked a turning point, and the 1980s have seen the flourishing of the broad democratic movement, uniting millions of our people — women, youth and students, workers and peasants — in opposition to the tyrannical apartheid regime.

The Mass Democratic Movement

The participation of women in the struggle for liberation has grown from strength to strength. The mobilisation and emancipation of women has become a central issue in the national liberation struggle. This is true both in those many organisations which have sprung up in the 1980s, and within the ANC itself. When President Tambo addressed the Second National Conference of the ANC Women's Section in Luanda in 1981, he said:

'... Women ... have the duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society and in the development of our revolutionary struggle ... We invite the ANC Women's Section and the black women of South Africa, more oppressed and more exploited than any section of the population, to ... assume their proper role — outside the kitchen among the fighting ranks of our movement and at its command posts'.

The ANC sees the struggle for national liberation resting on four pillars: the mass democratic movement, the revolutionary underground, the people's army and international solidarity. Today women feature prominently in each of these four pillars. Working for national liberation, we challenge and combat women's oppression and have begun the work of building a South Africa free from national oppression, exploitation and women's subordination.

In 1983 the United Democratic Front was launched nationally in South Africa as an organisation drawing together over 600 political, community, trade union, professional, youth, women's, sports and religious organisations dedicated to 'uniting all our people ... to fight for our freedom' and to campaign for the implementation of the Freedom Charter. In 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions was launched, as a union federation bringing together unions in industry, mining and the service sector representing over half a million workers. In 1986 a National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed with affiliates from parents', teachers' and student associations countrywide, dedicated to transforming the segregated and authoritarian education system of South Africa. The formation of the South African Youth Congress (Sayco) in early 1987, representing over half a million youth and students throughout the country, in the face of a brutal state of emergency, detention and intense repression testified not only to the dedication and bravery of those who formed it, but also to their organisational skills in operating under police and army occupation.

Partly because of their diverse structures it has been difficult for the regime to outlaw the organisations, although it has meted out cruel repression against individual activists, destroyed buildings, hampered access to funds and attempted to sow divisions between various groups of people. All these tactics have not lessened the popular determination and commitment to achieve national liberation. The mass democratic organisations have increasingly had to organise in secret, and many of their leading members, men and women of all ages, have been forced to operate while in hiding.

The Women Organise

Women are prominent in the ranks and the leadership of many of the organisations, including the UDF itself. Albertina Sisulu epitomises the heroism of South Africa's women. Banned for 17 years and arrested many times, her husband Walter has spent almost a quarter of a century behind bars serving life imprisonment, her family has repeatedly been detained, tortured and harassed, some forced into exile. Albertina was an executive member of the ANC Women's League in the

1950s. The breadwinner while other family members are in jail, she was elected one of the three presidents of the UDF. With other notable veterans such as Helen Joseph and Frances Baard, Albertina Sisulu demonstrates the continuity of women's struggle. Another patron elected at the founding congress was Martha Mahlangu, detained for many months during the 1986/7 state of emergency. Her courage and movingly defiant speeches touch all who hear them. Her son Solomon, ANC cadre and member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, was executed by the Pretoria regime in 1979. The tasks women fulfil are not only overtly political. It is our responsibility, often in the absence of our menfolk, to hold the fabric of our society together. We who are faced with apartheid's death squads, squalid living conditions, deprivation of family life, hunger, poverty and disease engage in the daily battle to create a home and environment from which our future can grow.

The deepening and strengthening of popular organisation that took place partly because of the leadership of the UDF, Cosatu and the NECC, and partly in response to the increasing crisis in which the regime found itself, politically and economically, led to a wide range of women's organisations springing up and affiliating themselves to the major groupings within the mass democratic movement. Initially women organised locally and regionally around issues that touched their communities. For example, in the townships around Uitenhage, where a notorious police massacre took place in March 1985, women gathered to form the Uitenhage Women's Organisation:

'The hippos (police armoured cars) hide in dark corners and shoot our children. We cannot even send them out to the shops without fear. The week after the massacre they drove through the streets just shooting at people in KwaNobuhle ... We decided we had had enough. It was time the women united against the brutality our families face, to be a mouthpiece for women who suffer so much under apartheid, and to participate in the struggle as women. We started by holding house meetings, but as the numbers grew we had to use church halls. We discuss the hardships we face and the struggle to end those ...'

By 1986 three large regional women's organisations existed in the Transvaal, the Cape and Natal. Their branches consisted of urban and rural women, young and old, black and white. The women's organisations campaigned on a range of issues: they held marches in protest at the presence of troops in the townships, they were an important force in the nationwide township rent boycotts, and in one town, Port Alfred, the women organised a week-long stayaway from work in protest at the lenient action taken by the police against a known rapist, which so contrasted with the way in which young people had been detained and dealt with.

We women worked hard to build our organisations, to mobilise young women and to spread organisation into the rural areas. As the regime's war against our people escalated, women's organisations spread to new areas, for instance running self-help classes in first aid so that people injured by the police and military on the streets would not have to go to hospital for medical assistance and run the risk of being detained.

In May 1987 all the regional women's organisations came together and, in conditions of secrecy because of the Pretoria regime's record of harassing activists, launched the UDF Women's League. Preparations are under way for the rebirth of the Federation of South African Women nationwide in 1988, strengthening the national unity of women.

The organisation of women has not been confined to women's organisations. Women have joined trade unions in large numbers, and have been prominent members of parent-teacher-student associations and community civic organisations. It is here that women have developed many skills — talking, mobilising, educating and campaigning about all issues affecting their lives — cementing their integral role in the liberation struggle. As Transvaal women said of their organisation in 1984:

'We need women's organisations because of the special problems we face as women. This struggle will never be won until all the women are involved as well.'

Heroines of the Revolution

Individually and collectively, women have been engaged in all aspects of the liberation struggle and have been repeatedly detained, tortured and imprisoned. Many have been charged with treason,

subversion, public violence and membership of the ANC and our people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Many have spent long periods in jail — Dorothy Nyembe served a 15-year term of imprisonment, Thandi Modise eight years, while Marion Sparg proclaimed herself a soldier in the army of liberation when sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. Theresa Ramashamola, a woman in her mid-twenties only, is awaiting execution with other political prisoners in Pretoria's death cells. Others have been assassinated by Pretoria's death squads — outstanding women such as Victoria Mxenge and Ruth First. They are among the many unsung heroines of the South African revolution.

The Voice of Women

Amanda Kwadi, who was an executive member of the Federation of Transvaal Women and of the UDF, summed up the demands of the women of South Africa in 1985 when she said:

'To appreciate the type of demands made by women in South Africa, the context needs to be properly understood. We are waging a struggle different from that in the United States and Western Europe. Ours is for national liberation and the type of demands found in the Freedom Charter reflect this. The vote is denied to black South Africans. That is so basic a right that it is taken for granted by Western European and United States feminists. Without the vote we do not control our own country, let alone have rights as women. That is why many of our demands are ones for which we struggle shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk.'

Since the 1913 women's march to the Bloemfontein Administration Block against the Land Act, women have waged a number of campaigns. Many of the demands of the Women's Charter and a separate document, the Women's Demands for the Freedom Charter, were ultimately incorporated into the Freedom Charter. The demands of the Freedom Charter have not yet been met. The struggle for women's emancipation in South Africa is inseparable from the struggle for national liberation, the struggle to realise the demands of the Freedom Charter.'

Advance to People's Power

In his January 8th 1987 address to the nation, ANC President Oliver Tambo called on women *'to reproduce themselves in the mould of (our) heroines, to build and strengthen their democratic organisations and to raise the level of participation of the millions of our women in the struggle for liberation. Black mothers have to live with the agony of having to bury their children every day. Across the barricades, white mothers see their children transformed and perverted into mindless killers who will not stop at murdering the black unarmed, but will surely turn their guns on the very mothers who today surrender their sons, willingly or unwillingly, to the South African death force. These black and white mothers must reach across the divide created by the common enemy of our people and form a human chain to stop, now and forever, the murderous rampage of the apartheid system.'*

While it is the task of women to assert themselves more strongly and to resist all forms of sex discrimination, the winning of national liberation for the entire South African nation is an absolute precondition for any change in the social status of women as a whole. Women's oppression cannot be fully liquidated in isolation. Any attempt to deal with the emancipation of women as a separate issue from the overall struggle is self-defeating. Together, South African women and men are fighting side by side to achieve freedom in our beleaguered motherland.

POPULATION STATISTICS

(based on figures of the 1985 census and excluding Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei bantustans)

	Numbers	Proportion
African	15 242 828	65.0%
Asian	793 978	3.4%
Coloured	2 825 094	12.1%
White	4 576 690	19.5%

The estimated population of the so-called independent bantustans — Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei — is 5 954 425, while that of the remaining 'non-independent' bantustans — Gazankulu, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa and QwaQwa — is estimated to be 6 877 975

WOMEN UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

For the black population of South Africa normality is unknown. The world regarded the introduction of draconian new regulations in 1985 and 1986, renewed and further strengthened in June 1987, as a new phase of repression. It is certainly that. And yet to treat the state of emergency as a special situation, as a temporary solution which will be alleviated once the special regulations are lifted, is to ignore the conditions which Africans and other blacks daily endure.

Under 'normal' conditions of apartheid, a vast web of restrictions controls the black population, which is continuously subjected to official surveillance and brutal treatment. The first state of emergency in 1960 heralded a whole host of new legislation aimed at suppressing protests of the black majority. And yet when that emergency was formally ended by the apartheid regime, many of the new measures were incorporated into the statutes. The principle of detention without trial became part of the ordinary law of the land. In addition, organisations could be subject to orders from the Minister of Law and Order to discontinue their activities if the Minister believed that this was necessary for the 'maintenance of public safety'. As a result organised legal protest in South Africa was drastically circumscribed.

But despite this already existing situation, in 1985 and then again in 1986 the apartheid regime introduced two extraordinary states of emergency which gave the police and army even greater powers of repression.

There are many reasons for the introduction of these new states of emergency — not least the heightened level of resistance amongst the whole black population.

Mass gatherings, mass funerals, whole organisations, have effectively been banned. The regime's targets are unmistakable. It is no accident that in the first of the current emergencies 83% of detainees were members of the United Democratic Front: in the second emergency the proportion was 79%. It is no coincidence that during the emergency there have been continual raids on the offices of the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu); that in May 1987 its headquarters were wrecked by bombs.

While the trade union offices are being bombed, the media muzzled inside South Africa, the regime uses its laws to silence opposition. While Cosatu was being regularly raided, the South African Broadcasting Service launched a propaganda war against the organisations.

This points to another aim of the declaration of emergency: the gagging of the press. The world watched in horror as the army slaughtered defenceless children in the townships. Now the state of emergency has ensured that the world can no longer watch. A cordon of secrecy has been placed around the townships and villages while police, army and government-sponsored vigilante groups (both official and unofficial) are given free rein.

Even the simplest of statistics are unobtainable. Responsibility for daily unrest reports and inquiries concerning unrest have been turned over to the South African Police Public Relations Division. The result is an almost total blackout on news. As on many previous occasions, in May 1987 whole sections of black townships were sealed off and journalists refused entry. A police spokesman's only comment was to deny the extent of the army occupation and to say that it had occurred because of 'isolated stone throwing'.

In the same month the Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok said that it was not in the public interest to reveal information on the total number of children detained. Journalists who try to overcome censorship and discover the truth are either detained or ordered to leave South Africa.

And in the last analysis the emergency seems to have a final chilling goal: to kill off the opposition. Since the second declaration of the emergency, it is estimated by various organisations that almost 3 000 people have been slaughtered. The figure is likely to be much higher, as many deaths go unreported and accurate statistics virtually impossible to obtain.

And yet there is another reality to South Africa: the reality of the minority, of the white citizens of that land. The declaration of a state of emergency has also been aimed at them.

The world is no longer permitted to see what is happening in South Africa: neither are the whites of South Africa. While the townships and villages in bantustans go up in flames, while children are imprisoned and tortured, while armed Casspirs patrol the streets, white South Africa can choose to ignore what is happening. They have no news of it in their papers: they have no way of going to see for themselves. A wall of silence has been erected between the white community and the rest of the country. The entire population is increasingly under military rule, even if it is only the black population which understands this.

Effect on Women and Children

Women and their children have borne much of the brunt of the declaration of the emergency. Again figures are difficult to obtain. What statistics are available indicate a startling picture. Children have been a prime target of the regime. The Detainees' Parents' Support Committee has estimated that 40% of those gaoled under the current state of emergency are 18 years and younger, while 30% are 17 or younger. Government ministers have revealed that 1 424 children aged between 12 and 18 were being held on April 15, 1987. The true figures are almost certainly considerably higher since in September 1985, during the first declaration of emergency, 1 200 children from one school in Soweto were arrested *en masse*.

Many of the children imprisoned are subject to either psychological or physical torture. Some are held in solitary confinement and there is a catalogue of accounts of children being taken into showers and given electric shocks. The National Medical and Dental Association concluded in a recent study that the agony of such children does not end after their release from gaol: that many of them are subject to stress disorders which make reading and concentration difficult for them.

Even under general conditions of apartheid, infants in gaol are not rare. In March 1987 the Minister of Prisons reported that there were over 2 200 babies imprisoned with their mothers. Since mothers can only have their children with them if they are lactating, the number of children left at home without parental care must be overwhelming.

But the outrages are not restricted to inside the prison walls. When in November 1985, 4 000 women from Mamelodi marched together to demand the withdrawal of police and troops from the street and an end to the emergency, police fired on the crowd. Amongst the casualties was a two-year-old who suffocated to death when police fired teargas canisters into her home. A sixteen-year-old was shot and killed on June 12, 1986 — the first day of the second recent state of emergency.

In such a situation women are reluctant to leave their children at home. They have the choice — go to work and worry, or starve and lose their urban housing rights, which are frequently dependent on their being in employment.

The Women's Response: Building People's Power

In 1986 women in Chesterville banded together to solve this very problem. They formed a guard to protect their children. The idea came when one woman got warning of an imminent raid by a state vigilante group called the 'A-Team'. The woman said that her first reaction was to take her children and run:

'Then I called myself a coward and went down the street and decided to call the mothers out of their houses to keep a vigil that night to see what happened. We were not armed and did not mean to harm anyone. We just wanted to use our eyes and witness what would happen to our children'. The nightly watch by the Chesterville women kept the 'A-Team' at bay and protected the UDF-affiliated activists in the area. The Chesterville Women's Guard is just one example of new ways of organising. The declaration of the emergency was the regime's response to a heightened level of resistance in South Africa. And yet it does not appear to have worked. Despite the fact that

leaders are continually picked off, that Pretoria's vigilante squads target those who have the temerity to speak out against the injustice that is apartheid, that new organisations are daily harassed and banned, there is every indication that conditions imposed by the emergency have laid the ground for the flowering of new forms of resistance.

People's committees, which are mainly composed of women members, have been set up. They have combined local struggles with trade union activity; local issues with countrywide struggles.

Women have marched in their thousands to protest against forced removals and evictions; against detention and harassment of students and youth, against rent rises, against the occupation by troops of the townships. They have been a driving force which sustained rent, consumer and business boycotts.

So drastic has been the emergency that issues formerly considered as belonging to the private sphere have become politicised. Local groups have initiated projects around child care, adult literacy, co-operative buying and other forms of self help. Issues which used to fall on individual shoulders are being raised by the new organisations springing up all over South Africa.

It is not only the fact of setting up of new organisations which indicates the level of resistance in South Africa. For there is a new mood in evidence: a difference in the way that these organisations come to life and the way that they operate. The emergency restrictions have made official bodies open targets. The response has been to go underground and to develop different ways of getting together which are the beginnings of a form of people's power.

Such structures have been established because mass meetings are effectively banned during the state of emergency. And yet their effect is more far-reaching. For, as a result of the emergency, local consultation and widespread democratic structures are being experimented with and refined. In Alexandra township people's courts and alternative police stations were established before all those involved were detained and charged with sedition. In the Lebowa bantustan the rural population has demanded that the administration hand over the running of their co-operatives to them.

A journalist who visited Cradock in 1987, the site of the huge funeral of four political activists murdered by Pretoria — Matthew Goniwe, Sparrow Mkhonto, Fort Calata and Sicelo Mlawuli — found that street committees were everywhere. A measure taken because public leaders were being locked up has resulted in the spread of activity to those who formerly remained inactive.

Women are in the forefront of these new developments. In December 1985 over 200 women from Crossroads marched in protest against the imprisonment of 140 of their men. 117 of the men were subsequently released.

In Port Elizabeth in 1985 an initiative for a boycott which was started by 150 women soon mushroomed. The women protested against police brutality and the state of emergency, and soon all the township organisations came together on the issue. The boycott was almost 100% successful.

Many of these activities are long term. For more than a year residents of Soweto have been withholding their rent in protest against the state of emergency and the military occupation of their township. Women are prominent in the rent boycott, as payment of rent is frequently women's responsibility. Among the demands made in March 1987, the anniversary of the first year's boycott, was that township councils be disbanded, the state of emergency lifted, and all detainees be released.

Despite the police clampdown, despite the mass arrests and widespread intimidation, despite the open acknowledgement that the emergencies have wreaked havoc on existing structures, a spirit of rebellion still stalks South Africa. New methods of protest, new ways of organising, new participants in this fight against apartheid are emerging daily.

1985 CENSUS (per 000)							
African		Coloured		Indian		White	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
9 666	9 082	1 433	1 489	44	457	440	2 461

These figures exclude the estimated eight million people living in the so-called independent bantustans of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. As a consequence, the proportion of African women in the population is artificially small.

WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In South Africa today the oppressed black population fight for liberation, dignity and physical survival. The struggle begins from conception. The poor diet and nutrition of women means that children are born underweight and malnourished. Their chances of survival compared to white children are thirteen times worse. Most deaths occur in children under five years old, with poverty and malnutrition being the major killers of black children in South Africa.

Women and Migrant Labour

As workers, black women are the most exploited of the workforce and as citizens they have the fewest rights, being bound not only by repressive legislation but by oppressive traditions that are fostered by the racist government. One of these 'traditions' is migrant labour: it is at the centre of the problems black women face.

After the Second World War, the suffering associated with migrant labour grew worse under the impact of the apartheid policies of the Nationalist government, which came to power in 1948. These policies — 'influx control' and 'resettlement' in particular — have had a devastating effect on the black family. While the impact on women's physical well-being has been profound, the psychological stress inflicted has been no less severe. South Africa is a vast country and the regions vary. What women experience in the Transkei bantustan is often very different from what other women experience in the border regions of the Transvaal. But all women who live on the land are faced with a central contradiction. The absence of men is an economic condition of a family's survival, but the absence of men also undermines the stability of the family.

Women take care of the day-to-day management of households, but they have little control over the household budget. In the bantustans as many as 60 per cent of the households are headed by women. Dependent on money sent by their men, they suffer constant anxiety and insecurity. Living as 'grass widows' as the majority of the men are migrant labourers who 'visit' home for not more than one month each year, black South African women are forced to shoulder virtually all family responsibility. The traditional support that the extended family gave has further been eroded by widespread and severe poverty.

The situation has become so acute, that some women talk like this:

'We feel deserted. We feel lonely in this desolate place where so many of our husbands must leave to find work, and stay away all year, sometimes many years ... I do not hear from my husband for many months. The money has stopped coming, even when I cry for it, it does not come. My children are hungry. I am hungry. No food. No money.'

Migrant labour earnings account for between 70% and 80% of household income in the bantustans and only those bantustans sending out migrant labour can survive. What this system does — apart from destroy families — is to ensure continued low wages in the urban areas. Initially low wages were justified by employers on the grounds that they were simply an addition to the subsistence production of women in the reserves. This is no longer the case, and has not been true for several decades. The bantustans are heavily overpopulated due to apartheid's policy of forced removals, which has affected over three and a half million people. They cannot produce enough food for this ever-increasing population.

Health

In South Africa today there are about ten million children, of whom eight million are African. Nearly 70% of these live in the rural areas. Health is a racial matter, for it is racial legislation which determines access to nutrition, medical care, education, housing, community resources, employment and often family cohesion. Our country is one of sharp contrasts. The health of the white and affluent is on a par with that of children in the major industrial countries. The health of the rural African is similar to that of the poorest of Third World countries. This can be seen

most sharply in the causes of infant mortality. African children die of diseases like gastro-enteritis, malnutrition and pneumonia — common in poor countries — while white children die of immaturity, anoxia and congenital heart diseases in common with developed countries.

Sickness amongst Africans is the direct consequence of poor housing, poor sanitation and totally inadequate water supplies. Often modern sewerage disposal is non-existent with devastating consequences for infant health — diarrhoea and intestinal parasites (round worm) are widespread. Lack of water also leads to skin diseases like scabies and scalp infections. Overcrowding in the cities encourages airborne infections like TB which in turn is taken back into the rural areas by migrant workers.

Physical growth, we know, is rapid during the last three months of pregnancy. This period, together with the first 18 months, is also the period of maximum brain growth. Malnutrition at this stage severely retards development. Weight-for-age is a good global indicator of health. Where there have been surveys in South Africa, they have all shown that about one third of African, Coloured and Indian children below 14 are underweight and stunted for their age.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund has adopted four recommendations to protect young children in poor communities. They are referred to as GOBI: (growth monitoring; oral rehydration; breast-feeding; immunisation against TB, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and measles). Three further stages are recommended: family spacing; female education; and food supplements.

There is little that is new in the four key GOBI-FFF components, but even they are not implemented in our country. They can be implemented very easily, involving communities in their own health care. This, of course, would require a single health service for all races, not part of apartheid policy or practice. The average number of people per hospital bed tells its own story: 61.3 for whites, 504 for Africans, 346 for Coloureds and 337 for Asians. Segregated health services mean that the worst care goes to the poorest.

Women in Rural Slums

The worst cruelties of the apartheid system have been enacted under the name of 'resettlement'. The regime boasts that over 3.5 million people have been resettled to promote consolidation of bantustans — to remove so-called 'black spots'. Let us take one example of what happens to women and children who are 'resettled'.

In 1977, the regime moved 78 400 families at gunpoint from a number of small reserves in the lower Tsitsikama forest near Humansdorp in the Cape, took them 300 miles away and dumped them at Elukhanyweni.

They were deprived of the agricultural base of their society and the men and a third of the women were forced to migrate to find work. One grandmother described the situation in 1985:

'Things were good when I was a child. They were good and right and we knew how things were done. I learned many things but the most important thing I learned was to love and respect all grown-ups ... But these children now. They are not me. They are different ... What can we teach our children? My father told me: "This land is yours. We bought this land with our life. We fought for this land." And we knew: our children will inherit this land, and our daughters, yes, our daughters too will have their piece of earth. But what can I tell my sons? I see what has become of my daughters. They already have daughters who have sons, and the sons don't have fathers and they don't have names and they will never, never have land. No, indeed God has left us.'

This description of the end of a way of life and its values brings into focus what the youth have lost with the land: a feeling of certainty about their future, the supportive family network based on family ownership of land and the faith of their elders in a Christian God.

The children now feel that there is nothing that their parents can teach them. They are trying to build a new world without the support of their elders. Money is scarce and, although rural struggle is escalating rapidly, they are divorced from urban centres of political activity. They look



1955 — Women at the Congress of the People, where the Freedom Charter was adopted.



1957 — Alexandra women walk to work rather than take buses. The bus boycott, against a rise in fares, lasted for months and ended in victory.



1976 — The Soweto uprising led to nationwide resistance and protest against the Bantu Education System. The struggle against indoctrination for inferiority continues to this day.



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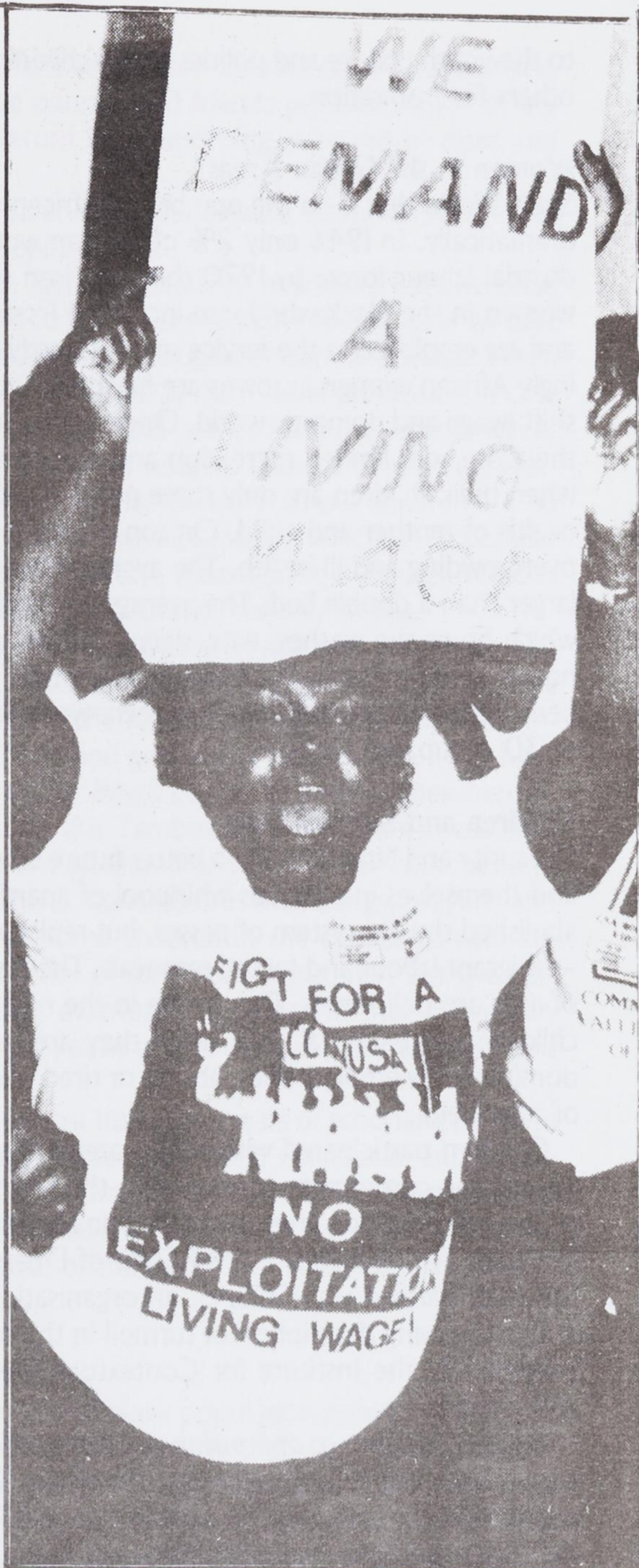


STRUGGLE CONTINUES!



Crossroads — Forced Removals

In Africa, many have been forcibly uprooted from their homes and dumped in barren rural wastelands. Women have been in the vanguard of resistance to forced removals at Crossroads. Though the government has stopped this policy, thousands of people continue to be displaced under cover of the state of emergency and censorship.



1985 — In December women trade unionists helped to bring more than half a million South African workers into one national federation — the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

to the youth culture and politics of the children of Soweto, Mdantsane, Guguletu, Mamelodi and others for inspiration.

Women in the Urban Areas

Since World War Two the number of African women entering the urban workforce has climbed dramatically. In 1946 only 2% of African women employed outside agriculture were in the industrial labour force; by 1970 this had risen to 10%. Between 1973 and 1981 the proportion of women in the black workforce increased from 14% to 22%. The vast majority of women were and are employed in the service sector (mostly as domestic servants) and as farm workers. Increasingly African women in towns are having to face the problems of being poorly paid with a double shift (wage and domestic work). Once again the stability of family life is affected. In the townships there are very limited recreation and day-care facilities. Working mothers often return to work when their children are only three months old. This seriously affects the physical and emotional health of mother and child. On top of this there is a shortage of housing which has resulted in overcrowding and ill-health. The average black person in South Africa lives in a space not much larger than a double bed. The average township resident occupies a patch of floor 3m square in which he or she washes, eats, sleeps, studies and relaxes. Reports indicate that in Soweto each house has an average of 16 occupants, while in Uitenhage as many as 42 people occupy a two-bedroomed house. In Kimberley, renowned for its diamonds, four-roomed houses hold as many as 30 occupants each.

Children and Survival Skills

Insecurity and little hope for a better future confront the township child from an early age. Parents find themselves in a vicious whirlpool of apartheid legislation such as influx control — they have abolished the old system of passes, but replaced it with a more sophisticated and ruthless system — migrant labour and forced removals. The first whites the township children meet at the earliest of ages are policemen. They come in the night, break down doors and humiliate parents. Thus, children learn survival skills when they are very young. But always their early experiences are dominated by empty bellies, absent or tired parents, and every form of violence, the consequence of apartheid.

Children participated with their parents throughout the campaigns of the 1980s, particularly against the community councils and the fraudulent new constitution of 1983. They boycotted classes, joined picket lines, and called on residents not to vote in 'puppet elections'. Many children lost their lives. When the 1985 State of Emergency was declared, one of the first organisations the state banned was COSAS, an organisation of school children.

The following description of turmoil in the townships was provided by Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology and Deputy President of the Soweto Civic Association:

'As the resistance to oppression and exploitation intensified, state repression increased to alarming proportions. The revolt in the Vaal Triangle in 1984 resulted in a bloody confrontation between the people and the police. In the early hours of 23 October some 7 000 police and troops besieged the Vaal townships, conducting house-to-house searches to stamp out the resistance and to restore law-and-order. As more and more black townships revolted against the regime, the SADF moved in and occupied the townships. There have been allegations of rape, torture, assaults and brutal killings by the security forces ... But the state action did not stop the consumer boycotts, particularly in the Eastern Cape. The people demanded an end to the Emergency and the withdrawal of the troops from the townships. In the minds of the people in the townships there is a war between them and the apartheid army, which is perceived as an enemy army...'

This description of the war situation in South Africa depicts the conditions under which the township child is growing up. They have affected children more than people realise. The world of the township child is extremely violent. It is a world made up of teargas, bullets, whippings,

detention, and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids, of roadblocks and body searches. It is a world where parents and friends get taken away in the night to be interrogated, no one knowing who will return in the morning, who will be dead and who still alive.

It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol bombed. Such is the environment of the township child today.

Children, thousands of whom have been detained, tortured and kept in solitary confinement, spend much of their time thinking and planning how to outwit the security forces, how to take defensive action. For instance, to fight the effects of teargas, they organise cloths and water. When there are mass funerals, buckets of water are put along the route of the funeral procession in case of a teargas attack. They have learnt how to set up barricades and how to keep the security forces out. Life in the townships has changed irrevocably. A township resident said: *'When my two-year-old daughter sees a military vehicle passing, she looks for a stone.'* Nursery school children are no exception. They too have learnt the language of *siyayinyova* (we will destroy), which is the popular slogan used by the youths when attacking what they call 'targets', meaning the buildings, vehicles and individuals regarded as symbols of the apartheid regime and its security forces.

The exposure of children to outrages in the townships has resulted in adaptive behaviour patterns. They are learning a different set of survival skills. Their songs tell of the world as they perceive it, a violent world, a war situation. They move in groups in the townships: a commander, his 'armed forces' around him. Their ammunition is stones, sticks and probably petrol bombs. They have different values. No longer are the local football players or Bruce Lee of the movies their heroes. They know now only of the Mandelas, the Sisulus and the Tambos. And there are those who are joining the ranks of Umkhonto we Sizwe to fight the system. The youth in the churches and church groups are also adapting to this new reality. This is manifested in their songs, prayers, and various forms of expression of faith. There are indeed some children in the townships who are not as radical or even politically conscious as the majority of their contemporaries, but the pervasive atmosphere of violence and confrontation tends eventually to plunge all into active participation. They find themselves either confronting the system or running away from teargas and bullets.

The upshot of all this is that there are many who have lost up to four years of schooling between 1976 and 1986. The school boycotters have fallen behind those in apartheid's bantustan and private schools. The war that is being waged on the streets of the townships by the SADF, is waged mainly against children. The chaos created in the lives of the children, coupled with their physical elimination, is a major threat to our very survival, and a denial of the future generation that must lead our country.

Women and the Future Generation

It is a widely held belief amongst white South Africans that if black population growth was slowed down, under-nutrition would not be so widespread. If there were fewer Africans, so their theory goes, there would be more food and resources to go around. This is an argument the racist state has actually gone to great pains to try to make effective. In 1973 — following hot on the heels of a series of major strikes and combined with a growing white awareness of the scale of black unemployment — the Pretoria regime launched a massive family planning programme. At clinics and in advertisements Africans were told: 'A small family for a big future'. But at the same time whites were told to have large families for the Republic. White mothers of ten children are even rewarded with a special medal from the the racist State President. By 1978 the Health Department boasted that its family planning programme was the eighth biggest in the world, and taking population size into account, it was surpassed only by China. Over the next five years, expenditure on family planning increased three-fold. In 1983-4 approximately six rand were allocated for every African woman aged 15 to 45 years. At that time the total health budget for the bantustans of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophutatswana and Venda amounted to 24 rand per person.

The regime's emphasis on family planning is an integral part of its policy of black population control. Family planning, as practiced by apartheid South Africa, includes the use of Depo Provera and sterilisation. It has been fiercely resisted, for in a land where a child's survival is so precarious, many children increase the chances of at least some reaching adulthood.

Conclusion

The catalogue of state violence against blacks in South Africa is a long one. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, floggings and torture, shootings, political assassinations and executions are only the most dramatic. Blacks — and particularly black women — do not suffer only from the violence of the state. Apartheid breeds anti-social and criminal behaviour, which manifests itself in drunkenness, robbery, assault, rape and murder. The deliberate manipulation by the state of ethnic identity has exacerbated the tensions between people already forced to compete along ethnic lines for scarce resources. All these forms of violence make life a daily struggle for survival.

Yet, despite the enormous hardships faced by black women in South Africa, they have not simply become victims of apartheid. In the churches, in community organisations, in self-help groups, in the trade unions and in the African National Congress, women have struggled for survival and have shown quite remarkable strength, courage and resilience.

It would be wrong, however, to underestimate the price paid, or the problems that will confront a democratic South Africa.

	AFRICAN WOMEN IN EACH AREA AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL AFRICAN FEMALE POPULATION 1960, 1970 and 1980		
Metropolitan areas	16.9	15.7	16.3
Towns	9.0	7.7	6.7
Rural areas	30.2	23.2	19.8
Bantustans	43.9	53.4	57.2

(Simkins, 1983)

These figures show dramatically the impact of forced removals policy and the use of influx control specifically to exclude women from the metropolitan areas and the smaller towns. While in 1960 25.9% of African women lived in metropolitan areas and towns, this proportion had declined in 1980 to 23%. By contrast, while in 1960 43.9% of African women had lived in the bantustans, by 1980 this had leapt to 57.2%. On white-owned farms the proportion of women nearly halved in the twenty years from 30.2% to 19.8% as a result of mass evictions of farm workers and the mechanisation of agriculture.



WOMEN IN THE EDUCATION STRUGGLE

The world has reverberated to the sound of gunfire in apartheid South Africa — Pretoria's police and troops once more opening fire on school children, youth and students protesting against education for slavery. Underlying the participation of young people in political confrontation over the past decades, apart from the exploitation, humiliation and oppression that generates black opposition to apartheid, are two fundamental factors;

- The appalling defects of black education;
- The issue of unemployment among black school leavers and the youth in general.

In 1954 Verwoerd, the main architect of apartheid who later became prime minister, proclaimed that education for black people 'should have its roots entirely in the native environment and in the native community ... the Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects ... There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour'. This has been the guiding principle of 'Bantu Education' ever since.

In the 1980s, we must be aware that half the South African population is under the age of 21, while the number of Africans under 15 years of age is 43% of the total African population. A woman aged 21 at the time of the Soweto Uprising of 1976, was born within a year of the adoption of the Freedom Charter. She will have grown up in the face of the fullscale onslaught of the apartheid state — the shootings at Sharpeville, the banning of the ANC, the arrest and imprisonment of Congress leadership, the intense repression of the 1960s when thousands of activists were detained and sent to jail.

The Soweto Uprising, where thousands of children were killed and injured, was both a caution and a challenge, a reminder of the brutality of the oppressor and a call to arms. This generation was reared in an extremely harsh political environment, an environment filled with terror, in which torture is routine, indefinite detention normal, lengthy imprisonment, even for young children, unavoidable and violent death ever-present. It is an environment in which the words *to live* have acquired the same meaning as the words *to be free*.

The education struggle is integral to the liberation struggle in South Africa. 'Bantu Education', designed to keep Africans forever 'hewers of wood and drawers of water', has consistently been vehemently opposed. The racially segregated and unequally funded education system has, particularly since the Soweto Uprising, remained a major field of struggle, first led by high school pupils and university students, and later in alliance with workers, political and community organisations, including some teachers. In May 1980 a group of student leaders, engaged in organising a school boycott, spelled this out in a leaflet:

'Every student action, in order to be successful, has to be linked up with the struggle of the rest of the oppressed people. The condition of the ghetto schools and the gutter education are the outcome of the whole system of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation ... (Therefore) we have got to get our parents on our side ... From the schools to the people! That must be our slogan.'

Throughout the 1980s the education struggle has been marked by the joint action of students and communities. New organisations have been built to promote this alliance — parent-teacher-student associations. During 1980 70% of the workers in the Western Cape observed a two-day stayaway to commemorate the 1976 uprisings. By 1986 the momentum for this protest had gathered to such an extent that there was a nationally observed stayaway to commemorate June 16, 1976 — the first day the school children were shot in the streets of Soweto. The declaration of June 16, like May Day, as a paid public holiday, is a major demand of the democratic trade union movement.

In the mid-1980s the education struggle has concentrated not so much on the inequalities of the gutter education given to black students as on the authoritarian content of all South African

education. A new vision of education has developed, and is being taught in townships by street committees, in student groups and, where possible, in schools. The regime has declared this to be illegal, and stationed troops in schools to try to ensure that only the official syllabus is taught.

Many black women, particularly in the bantustans, have no formal education at all and comprise a large proportion of South Africa's illiterate population, estimated at 50% of the black population (and only 2% of the white population). Although a high proportion of school pupils are girls, as for those black parents who can afford it education is a high priority for all their children, many girls do not continue as far in the education system as boys, because of the very pressing needs of their families to have them help look after younger children and to contribute to the family budget.

In stark contrast the demands of the ANC, enshrined in the Freedom Charter, are for education for all: *'The doors of learning and culture shall be opened'*. No girl or woman in a democratic, non-racial South Africa would be denied an education. Similarly, the commitment of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) to work to establish people's education, is partly an attempt to meet the needs of women who are disadvantaged by apartheid education. People's education was defined at a national conference of student, trade union and community organisations in Johannesburg in 1985 as education that:

- Enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial, democratic system;
- Eliminates capitalist norms of competition, individualism, and stunted intellectual development and one that encourages collective input and active participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking and analysis.
- Eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of any person by another;
- Equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial, democratic South Africa;
- Allows students, parents, teachers and workers to be mobilised into appropriate organisational structures which enable them to enhance the struggle for people's power and to participate actively in the initiation and management of people's education in all its forms;
- Enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their work place.

People's education contains a vision of education beyond that imposed by apartheid, and the struggle to develop this education is part of the struggle to build people's power, to set up popular organs of democratic rule, under the very noses of the regime's police and soldiers. The slogan of the NECC and the students', parents' and teachers' groups affiliated to it has become People's Education for People's Power.

People's education is diametrically opposed to apartheid education which sets out to segregate the people by race and language groups, and which imposes rigid skill differentials by ensuring high qualifications to a majority of whites and a minority of blacks. Apartheid education, unlike the emancipatory commitment of people's education, is concerned with teaching whites to command, to control, to further their own personal careers. Two white schoolgirls told a journalist what they learned in a special course taught in all white high schools, called 'youth preparedness'.

'We learn about terrorism ... Terrorism is a group of people trying to fight for a country and they want it so badly that they're going to go out in any way to get it. It's like communism. Russia's trying to take over South Africa for the strategic position and the gold, and the blacks don't know any better because they're not properly educated'.

Apartheid education attempts to indoctrinate black students to accept apartheid, and particularly the structures of the bantustans. A Soweto student told an interviewer who asked whether politics was taught at high school:

'They only tell us about those homeland leaders, those puppets and those we don't want to know about. For instance, we never learned why Nelson Mandela is in prison for life, or why the ANC turned to violence, or about Oliver Tambo and the other leaders who are out of the country'.

In total defiance of apartheid authority and attempts at thought control, school pupils clearly express their political aspirations. As part of building up the structures of people's education, they

have renamed schools throughout the country Nelson Mandela High, Oliver Tambo High, Joe Slovo High, or Vietnam, Nicaragua, and so on.

The needs of all the people for education for liberation have been addressed in the strategy of establishing people's education. More particularly, needs of women pupils and students have come high on the agenda. In 1984 the mass high school students' organisation, the Congress of South African Students (Cosas), with branches countrywide, drew up a charter of student demands. These included:

- An end to sexual abuse of female students/pupils by a teacher or another student/pupil. Female pupils must be treated as human beings and not as sexual objects. A democratic student representative council would promote and improve understanding and a better relationship between staff and students.

After Cosas was banned, students reformed into regional student congresses. At the beginning of 1987, drawing on the work of these congresses and extending their ambit to include organisation among young people not enrolled in formal education, a national youth congress was launched, secretly, in the face of the stringent repression of activists under the prevailing state of emergency. The South African Youth Congress (Sayco), representing 150 youth congresses nationwide with a membership of half-a-million people, adopted the Freedom Charter as its view of a non-racial, democratic South Africa and committed itself to three primary aims in its political campaigning including 'to strive together with women as equals for the achievement of a non-sexist, free and democratic South Africa.

The placing of questions of women's rights so high on the political agenda of a key organisation in the education struggle indicates the extent to which the struggle against women's subordination, both in the field of education and in society as a whole, is seen as vital to the process of national liberation.

The organisations engaged in the education struggle in South Africa are dedicated to establishing universal education, eliminating illiteracy, redressing the inequities of apartheid education and creating a new education system that emancipates the individual, teaching critical thought and commitment to the democratic transformation of the country.

The ANC strives to put these goals into practice. Many thousands of children have been forced to flee apartheid repression. To meet their educational needs the ANC has built the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Mazimbu, Tanzania. But it also caters for the education and training of an adult population. It attempts to educate people to provide for the needs of our struggle, and at the same time prepare cadres who will be able to contribute meaningfully to the building of the new South Africa.

At Somafo women students have come to understand the oppression of women and the way the liberation struggle can overcome this. A women wrote in the school journal:

'All women throughout the world have been oppressed and have had to fight for their rights ... Here at Mazimbu great developments have taken place which make it possible for them to join any production unit they want and emancipate them from stultifying and unproductive housework ...'

At Mazimbu, just as at the innumerable schools named after the people's leaders inside our country, people's education is developing with its strong commitment to the elimination of exploitation, the emancipation of women and resistance to apartheid's education for slavery, imposed ignorance and oppression.

WOMEN AND WORK

The militancy of South Africa's black working class has shaken the Pretoria regime to its very foundations. The progressive trade union movement has united in a giant federation — the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) — representing over half-a-million workers. Cosatu and its member unions, as well as individual trade unionists, face the full might of the repressive state machinery coupled with that of the bosses. Cosatu is fighting to achieve broad demands for all workers such as one federation within South Africa, one union per industry, against unemployment and for a living wage for all.

Official statistics acknowledge that there were 793 strikes in 1986 involving 424 340 workers. In 1983 the number of strikes was 336 (64 469), 469 in 1984 with 181 942 workers and 390 in 1985 involving 239 816 workers. These figures indicate the ever-increasing militancy and organisation of the workers, and exclude political industrial action, such as stayaways, symbolic work stoppages, sympathy strikes and go-slows.

Yet such political action in fact was responsible for 77% of the work-days lost through industrial action, and included two of the biggest political stayaways in South Africa's history — May Day and June 16 — where millions of workers defied the apartheid regime and their bosses, declaring both days to be workers' holidays.

Black women have joined trade unions in large numbers, spurred on to fight for their rights by the super-exploitation they experience. Black women workers are employed in the lowest paid sectors of the economy: agricultural work, domestic work, clothing and textile manufacturing, food processing etc. Women work long hours for very low rates of pay. Influx control laws severely discriminate against women and limit their access to jobs.

The composition of trade unions such as the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union is 70% women. 1986 saw the launch of the South African Domestic Workers' Union to fight for the rights of domestic workers, the vast majority of whom are women. All trade unions have put women's rights high on their agenda, as discrimination against women is seen as an attack on all workers.

Cosatu wrote into its constitution a resolution on women which commits its membership to fight for women's rights at work and in the community, and, aware that women workers suffer the most under both the bosses and the apartheid system, it 'believes that women workers should take first place in our struggle'.

Agricultural Workers

In 1980 89% of all African women workers were employed in agricultural work. This work is the lowest paid as it is predominantly seasonal. During the planting and harvesting season a normal working day on farms is from morning to sunset, although workers are often required to work through the night when generators light up the fields. On one farm in the Steelpoort area of the Transvaal, women working an eleven hour day starting at 6am received R1 a day and their children 90c a day, picking cotton under the blazing sun. Often wages are paid in kind — a bag of mielies, occasionally meat or rent-free shacks. On many Cape wine farms women have to face immense family disruption owing to payment in part of 'tots' of wine, and alcoholism is common, even among children.

Many women workers are not provided with any protective clothing when working with agricultural chemicals and machinery. It is also not uncommon for fields to be sprayed with insecticides whilst women and children are hoeing and weeding. This causes grave health damage and gives rise to an increase in miscarriages and birth deformities.

Over the past 14 years the number of permanent workers employed on white-owned farms has declined as mechanisation has increased and more and more full-time workers are replaced by lower paid part-time female workers. There has been an estimated loss of a quarter-of-a-million

agricultural jobs between 1979 and 1986. Where a farmer requires extra seasonal or part-time labour, he sends a truck into the bantustans, hiring women, children and any able-bodied men available.

What this means for the families of agricultural workers is that where once they lived on the farm and kept their own stock, they now live in overcrowded, barren areas of the bantustans where they may not keep stock. Women living in the bantustans, until the change in the influx control system in 1986, could not legally leave the bantustans for work in the cities. The changes in the law, however, have not made this much easier, as bantustan workers have no rights to urban housing and without housing they cannot remain free from harassment in the cities.

Farm workers have organised protests at their removal, and union organisers are striving to build up unions amongst agricultural workers, despite fierce opposition from farmers and the virtual total control they exercise over the lives of their workers.

The growth of community organisations in rural areas and mounting opposition to the oppressive bantustan regimes has helped to strengthen this trade union drive.

Domestic Workers

There are 800 000 registered domestic workers in South Africa, the vast majority of them African women. Mary Mkhwanazi, an organiser for the South African Domestic Workers' Association, (a forerunner of the Domestic Workers' Union), described their work:

'Domestic workers are the ones who light up South Africa! When every one else is asleep, they have to get up, dress themselves, go to the kitchen, switch on the light, then take their employers a cup of tea in bed. The next hour is all running backwards and forwards, running the baths and cooking breakfast so it is just ready when they come down for it.'

Domestic workers work long hours for derisory pay. In a survey conducted by their union in 1987, it was found that nowhere in the country was the union's minimum wage of R150 per month being paid. The average wage paid was R98 per month, although there was wide variation between regions with R110 per month paid in the metropolitan centre of the Witwatersrand, and R59 in rural areas. Some domestic workers have actually experienced a decline in wages, as there has been a shift away from employing full-time, live-in domestic workers to part-time workers. 41% of domestic workers were in full-time work in 1982. This has declined to 37% in 1987; part-time workers increased from 40% in 1982 to 47% in 1987.

Many black domestic workers are isolated and at the mercy of their employers. They are specifically excluded from minimum wage legislation, maternity leave, unemployment insurance, specified hours of work and paid holidays. It is a criminal offence for a black woman worker to have her husband or her children stay with her overnight on her employer's property.

Many efforts have been made to organise domestic workers into a union. This has come to fruition during the present time of intense crisis and turmoil, detentions and harassment for the whole black population. The Domestic Workers' Union was launched nationally in November 1986, with membership open to men as well as women. Their demands are as follows:

- A law to protect the rights of domestic workers.
- A living wage of R200 per month.
- Unemployment insurance.
- Compensation for injury at work.
- Maternity benefits and sick pay.
- Specified working hours and specified leave.

Industrial Workers

Although women are employed in the lowest paid sectors of industry, they have a history of militant trade unionism, and are currently engaged in winning significant struggles over maternity pay, minimum wages and union recognition. In 1980 50% of African women workers were employed in manufacturing, while women workers accounted for 24% of all workers in industry.

Although it is illegal to discriminate in wage rates between men and women, women workers are concentrated in the less-skilled grades of production workers and hence earn lower wages. Consequently, the unions have negotiated not for percentage increases in pay, which widen differentials, but for flat rate increases which favour the low paid.

Unions are also fighting for a living wage for all workers rather than a 'family' wage, which regards women's wages as 'supplementary'. Recently, as a result of this, the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union and the Vulco Latex Rubber Company signed a wage agreement for a R30 a week increase for women and R20 for men. In May 1987, approximately 8 000 workers from the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union at Pick 'n Pay retail outlets throughout the country staged a seven day strike in support of their wage demand of R90 monthly increase across the board. The company was forced into an agreement of R85 monthly after protracted negotiations. The strike cost the company R6.5-million in turnover.

Job Security

Job security is one of the crucial demands for women in their unions. As mothers and as workers, job security is further threatened by lack of paid maternity leave. The majority of women get sacked, let alone paid maternity leave, when they become pregnant. The struggle for maternity benefits has been one of the major women's demands and has met with some success. The desperate situation of women, fighting to protect their jobs, can be highlighted by the instance of a young woman teacher who gave birth on the classroom floor, in a lower primary school in Soweto, in front of her pupils, too afraid of being fired. Unmarried teachers cannot apply for maternity leave.

Bosses have always used the 'last in, first out' principle which has usually affected women most — but unions are battling against this principle as for example in the case of Ccawusa members at the Foschini clothing factory, where workers struck for over four weeks against retrenchments, arguing for a job-sharing system which would ensure some income for all workers.

Health and Safety

Health and safety is an important component of workers demands. Some unions have, through bitter struggle, wrung recognition agreements which include health and safety measures. In general, many women in industry are still subject to the forcible acceptance of the hazardous Depo-Provera clinics and other family planning measures instituted by management in support of apartheid's policy of black population control.

Child Care

Increasing numbers of black women have been drawn into the labour market, but the state and the bosses have failed to provide the very urgent need for child care facilities both in the townships and at the workplace. Most black women have to rely on family members or informal child minders to look after their children. There are virtually no child care facilities available in the townships. There are over four million pre-school children in South Africa. Only 0.33% are looked after in crèches. In a national survey in 1983, working women were asked about their child care arrangements. Half of the women relied on relatives; 40% on adult relatives, particularly grandmothers; 1% on children in the family; 7% left their children alone during the hours they were at work, others sent their children away from home to live with relatives in a different town or in the rural areas. This was as much owing to the lack of child care facilities as factors such as housing shortages and influx controls. Almost half of these mothers only saw their children once a month.

Conclusion

Black women workers experience most harshly the reality of apartheid. It is they who bring up white children in the affluent white society, knowing all the time their own children, whom they seldom see, live in abject poverty. It is black women who suffer the physical and psychological

abuse heaped upon them by both their employers and the apartheid regime. Yet it is these same black women who, in their tens of thousands, in their trade unions, community organisations and women's organisations, are fighting for the goals enshrined in the Freedom Charter:

'Men and women of all races shall receive equal pay for equal work; there shall be a forty-hour working week, a national minimum wage, paid annual leave and sick leave for all workers, and maternity leave on full pay for all working mothers. Miners, domestic workers, farm workers and civil servants shall have the same rights as all others who work. Child labour, compound labour, the 'tot' system and contract labour shall be abolished.

There shall be work and security!

Building on the firm foundations laid by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Sactu) over the decades, the trade union movement of today stands ready, a mighty force united in struggle against apartheid tyranny.

AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS OF WORKERS IN ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY

Year	African	Asian	Coloured	White
1980	189	336	254	767
1981	228	412	309	936
1982	272	513	365	1 093
1983	309	585	418	1 210
1984	363	693	494	1 403



WOMEN AND PEACE

Women the world over have played a significant part in the struggle to achieve world peace and rid the world of the nuclear menace. There have been many women's peace marches through Europe; Greenham Common in the United Kingdom has come to symbolise women's protests; women have participated in many international gatherings to discuss this vital question. We, women of the world, have an important contribution to make in the fight for world peace. We, South African women, have an additional responsibility, for we are engaged in a just war to rid our country, the whole of Southern Africa and indeed the world of the modern-day Nazis.

South Africans have long been among those concerned about world peace. As early as 1951 committees were set up on Johannesburg and Cape Town to organise the collection of signatures in support of the Stockholm Appeal to outlaw the use of the atom bomb. The South African Peace Council was established in 1953. At its founding national conference, Nelson Mandela, then Transvaal President of the ANC, said:

'The people of Africa will be the first victims of a future war ... their raw materials will be used, not to develop their economies but to destroy those of others. The war danger in Africa is very close indeed ... This mad lust for profits and markets in Africa, the war preparations of the United States and its satellite countries, puts the national independence of the people of this continent and their very right to life in serious jeopardy. The threat to national liberation in Africa resulting from the presence of foreign armies arouses the deepest indignation of all patriots. The people of Africa are being forced to realise that peace is their most immediate concern ...'

In 1954 Walter Sisulu, in an article in the weekly newspaper of the liberation movement, *Advance*, stated:

'Many Africans ... think, perhaps, that war preparations are being directed only against far-away countries like Russia and China. They do not realise that these wars are specifically directed against the colonial and semi-colonial countries and, therefore, against the liberatory movement itself'.

The bogey of communism, said Sisulu, was used to hide the imperialist intentions of re-enslaving or perpetuating the enslavement of the colonial peoples. He pointed out that it was the imperialists who supplied the arms to the fascist Nationalist government for the purpose of crushing the liberation movement. The fight for peace was part of the fight for liberation.

More than twenty years have passed since these statements were made, but the foreign policy of the ANC is derived from the situation inside South Africa itself which, in turn, is influenced by the climate and balance of forces internationally.

The ANC characterises the international situation as one in which the world peace and democratic forces are engaged in combating the constant attempts of imperialism, spearheaded by the United States, to regain the lost initiatives by escalating the arms race and the build-up of nuclear weaponry both on earth and in space; by support for reactionary regimes and interference in the affairs of other nations, disregarding the fact that all humankind today recalls the horror of militarism and Nazism defeated forty years ago.

In the whole of Southern Africa the fight for peace is the fight for life itself. The liberation of the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia is being thwarted by Western support for apartheid. The independence of the Front Line States is constantly undermined and their economies destroyed by South African aggression. And the fight against nuclear war should not only be seen in a global context. The imperialist powers of West Germany, France and Israel have helped the Pretoria regime obtain a nuclear capability which threatens the whole sub-continent with nuclear destruction. South African financed, trained and equipped murder squads are active in all the Front Line States. South African troops occupy large areas of southern Angola, and Southern Africa today is an area of conflict in which the embers of a world war are already smouldering.

Inside South Africa itself the military are *de facto* in control. Troops occupy many townships which are sealed off like vast concentration camps; roadblocks are commonplace. Tens of thousands

of people are arrested, tortured and murdered in the fight to rid our country of racism and oppression.

Yet in the Security Council, the imperialist powers, led by the United States and Britain, continue to veto every attempt by the whole of humanity to isolate apartheid and impose comprehensive, mandatory sanctions, to bring an end to the war in South Africa sooner rather than later.

The ANC recognises that the only guarantee of peace in Southern Africa, as indeed everywhere else in the world where people are fighting for justice, is the victory of the forces of national liberation. In South Africa this means the total dismantling of apartheid and the construction of a new society, based on the goals enshrined in the Freedom Charter, where all will enjoy equal human rights and opportunities.

In this titanic struggle to free South Africa from its apartheid yoke, women play a crucial part. Their involvement in the struggle for liberation, always dynamic and meaningful, has grown on every front.

It is the women who were the chief implementers of the successful consumer boycotts of shops throughout our country. Women have organised in the trade union movement. Women formed the Free the Children Alliance, a non-racial forum consisting of child welfare organisations, the Detainees' Parents' Support Committee, the Black Sash and mothers of the thousands of detainees. Women are members of our People's Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

White women also, most significantly, are actively participating in the End Conscription Campaign. The attitude of white women towards military conscription is very important. Mothers, wives, sisters are beginning to campaign against their menfolk's involvement in the brutal apartheid war. Women do not want their children to die needlessly fighting an unjust war. There is an ever-growing revulsion against the use of troops — not to repel a foreign aggressor, but to suppress fellow citizens fighting for basic human rights.

The Pretoria regime is being forced to increase the number of recruits into the armed forces due to the unabating upsurge in resistance by the mass of the people. Morale in the armed forces is low, especially among those troops stationed in the townships. The End Conscription Campaign, begun in 1984, highlights the divisions opening up in the white population. The ECC was born out of the growing resistance among young white South African men to fight apartheid's war, with 7 000 conscripts failing to report for duty in January 1985, in the face of severe penalties. The ECC is yet another organisation that has seen its leadership arrested or forced into hiding. However, it continues, despite severe repression, to campaign against the militarisation of South African society, the training of cadets in white schools, the presence of troops in the townships and the legislation around military service. The ECC is demanding the internationally accepted right of freedom of conscience regarding military service, and to give voice and organisational form to the anti-conscription feeling growing in the land. The regime's repression hardens in the face of these initiatives for peace.

Campaigns for peace are denounced as treason and subversion. Tens of thousands are detained for long periods. Thousands more are on trial, many sentenced to very long terms in jail, among them young children.

We women of the world must unite in action, must actively support the peoples of the world fighting for national liberation and an end to war.

We in the ANC know there can be no victors in a nuclear war. Indeed, the world as we know it will no longer exist. This means that the forces for peace must everywhere be strengthened. We in the ANC call on women to step up the fight for peace in their countries. We believe that states with different social systems can live in peace and friendship. It is more urgent than ever that states should seek and find lasting security. If we do not succeed, the results will be catastrophic.

The question of peace is closely linked with the question of development. This means peace can properly be maintained if all efforts are made to develop the 'underdeveloped' part of the world.

Women, who bring life into the world, have a special responsibility to ensure that children the world over grow up free from disease, poverty and the horrors of war. We feel the peace initiatives

of the socialist community must be seized upon. We fully support the vision of the future as expressed by General Secretary Gorbachev when, at the April 1985 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, he said:

'... People should cherish our planet, the skies above and outer space, exploring it as the pioneers of a peaceful civilisation, ridding life of nuclear nightmares and completely emancipating all the finest qualities of man, that unique inhabitant of the universe, for constructive effort only'.

In conclusion, the ANC appeals to the democratic forces throughout the world to support our armed struggle, because it is a struggle for peace; an armed struggle to rid the world of a threat to peace — apartheid. There is a definite connection between our struggle for national liberation and the fight for world peace.





1913 — Women campaign against passes in the Orange Free State. Hundreds imprisoned,



1956 — 20 000 women demonstrate in Pretoria against new attempts to impose passes.



Lilian Ngoyi (1911 — 1980) — (right centre) led the campaign against passes while president of the ANC Women's League and the Federation of South African Women. She was given the highest honour of the National Liberation Movement — the Isitwalandwe Award.

