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AUGUST 9 1956:

INTRODUCTION:

August 9, marks the 26th Anniversary of the 20,000 militant women's march to Pretoria in 1956, demonstrating against the most hated passes. It was on this day that women of all races in South Africa shook the Apartheid regime, signifying their dedication, courage and the mass participation in the struggle for National Liberation. August 9, was the impressive evidence, of angry but highly organised women, it marked an important stage, in the growth of unity, amongst the oppressed and progressive forces, in the continuation of the past struggles, waged by women against the introduction of passes to them.

The women confronted the Apartheid regime, in all forms of struggles, against this hated document, meant at forcing the African people to remote areas, determining where an African can be employed, where he can live, and worsely determining who his wife or husband should be. A document supposed to be carried wherever you are, from the age of 16 to both Male and female.

RESISTANCE TO THE PASSES

As far back as 1913, when the Apartheid regime for the first time introduced passes to women, women in the little town of Winburg in the Orange Free State, fearlessly opposed this law, and staged a demonstration to the local administration making clear their point, that they will never carry passes, or any document ~~which~~ ~~meant~~ that will perpetuate the oppression.

The pass campaigns that followed thereafter, inflicted to the Apartheid regime, the Women's refection - outcry of this most hated passes. And this took the Apartheid regime 50 years to extend this hated pass laws to African women.

The same year in Bloemfontein, 600 women led by Charlotte Maxeke, a founder member of the ANC, a member of NEC and of the Women's league, ¹⁹¹⁸ carried their passes in a bag to the Bloemfontein Mayor's office, and dump them there, informing the deputy mayor that they will never carry them.

Charlotte Maxeke's dedication in organising the Women against these pass laws, her contribution in the Labour issued, giving support to launch a Federation of Trade Unions for African People in the '20's. And as a editor of a number of African newspapers, was also at the forefront in the massive campaigns which was mounted in Johannesburg the year 1919.

WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS:

in 1918

The formation of the Women's League¹ arouse the interest of the African women in the struggle for Freedom and peace, condemning the Apartheid ~~regime~~ system for its discriminating and humiliating laws. The women in South Africa showed abundantly clear, that the women emancipation is not an inseparable aspect of the struggle for National Liberation.

The oppression that our people have, and are still experiencing in their day to day life under apartheid, as Migrant labourers, Domestic Servants, being forced to stay in the unbearable condition in the Reserves, are a clear indication of what Apartheid is.

Men as well as women, suffered brutal methods used by the regime, detained without trial, imprisoned, banned, forced to exile, ~~was~~ tortured, and harassed in the daily lives. They have suffered from racial discrimination, poverty and distress. The regime is trying to divert the escalating struggle waged by our people, and want to appear ~~as~~ as a mighty force that nothing could shift it.

The women saw a need to form a joint organisation, to embrace all women irrespective of race. THE formation of the Federation of South African Women in April 1954, was a beacon of inspiration to strengthen the joint activity of various women sections all over the country - to a Free and a democratic South Africa.

The Nationalist Party on coming to power, launched vicious assault against few rights remaining to the oppressed black majority. They suppressed any organisation -al resistance, installing completely white domination. The process of Bantustanization was set in motion, paralleled to group areas act. All these acts, were linked with the Industrial Legislation ~~was~~ acts and the introduction of Bantu Education, to the Blacks. The education, meant at enslaving the ~~was~~ blacks, the education which led to the loss of over 1,000 lives in the 1976 June 16 Uprisings and forced the Youth of our country to exile.

For us, the mothers of those daily imprisoned, tortured, children, hanged in the faces of the fascists Regime, like comrade Solomon Mahlangu, who was hanged for his just cause, Thandi Modise who is still in the fascist dungeons, Dorothy Nyembe, the six comrades who are condemned to murder, Naphtali Manana, Johnson Lubisi, Petrus Mashigo, Anthony Tsotsobe, Johannes Shabangu and David Moise. We thank all the progressive mankind the World over for condemning the Apartheid regime to save the lives of the our comrades, today the South African regime have ^{COMMUTED} the three to life.

WOMEN IN ACTION:

October 1955, the Nationalist Party once again announced through the Native affairs the extension of passes to women. IT stated that the first women to be issued were the women in Orange Free State. Women who had been ~~the~~ most active in the previous campaigns. As from the end of 1955 the ANC and Federation of South African Women took it upon themselves to organise ~~was~~ and mobilise women to stage protests against these humiliating pass laws.

The conference held in March 1956, after numerous massive resistance against these laws, decided and resolved that they will fight passed to their bitter end. And this culminated to the Great August 9 March to the Union Building in Pretoria.

From the 7th of August 1956, the little town of Lady Selbourne in the outskirts of Pretoria was turned into a overnight transit place for 20,000 women who marched militantly to the Union Building to see Strydom the then Prime Minister. Processions in Pretoria were put to a standstill, the women led by the leaders Lilian Ngoyi, Ratima Moosa ~~and~~ Sophie Williams and Helen Joseph to code a few, on the 9th Assembled in the Union Building Aphitheatre and left hundreds of thousands of signatures on petition form at the office of the Prime Minister, who was not available to see them. After wards they stood in Silence for 30 minutes only the occasional sound of crying babies accentuated the tense stillness. Then burst into magnificent harmony to sing 'Nkosi Sikelela I Africa' They began a new song with it refrain ' Wantinta Abafazi - Wamhinta ibolodo uzokufa - Now you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder - you will be crushed. As they dispersed the whole of Pretoria was echoed by the sound of voices of determined women moving forward to Freedom.

THE SPIRIT OF AUGUST 9:

The spirit of August 9, today predicts the inevitable ~~as~~ just conclusion of our National Liberation. The involvement of women in the past struggles, resisting all forms of injustice, have been an inspiration that will bloom the minds of our people. In the Defiance Campaign, Treason Trial women were arrested, tortured, banned and kept in solitary confinement, but their Spirit have led to the recent events inside and outside the country. Women at home are involved in ~~the~~ various organisations, playing a prominent role in the Trade Union Movements, Civic Associations ~~and~~ church Councils etc. etc.

~~Since 1980, strikes inside the country which~~ ^{have} ~~compel the South African Regime to resort to inhuman methods in order to silence our people, the people at home. Since 1980, strikes a inside the country have compelled the South African Regime to resort to inhuman methods in order to silence our people, by arrests, detentions, killings, in the so-called hands of the Police.~~

Students fronts, since June 16 uprisings, have, and are still saying no to inferior education. ~~Students were in the forefront in the refusal to celebrate the White South Africa Republican Day.~~ The awareness of our people to mobilize against the Regime is gaining momentum day after day. Crisis in the South African Defense Force, of the Whites refusing to defend the White South Africa. Crisis in the Nationalist Parliament. The Everyday Blows inflicted by our Cadres of Umkhonto We Sizwe to the Apartheid are the assurance to our victory.

Umkhonto we Sizwe
Today we speak of women in the Army, we speak of womens involvement in any field intended to end Apartheid. And for our just cause, no Power can destroy our devotion.

SOUTH AFRICA'S MANOUVRES

South Africa with its Western Allies, safeguarding their investments in South Africa, are giving the South African regime the overall support to continue its repression against ~~the~~ our people, and the neighbouring states. The US Administration, has again conducted its manoeuvres by opening the Denton Commission, to investigate the so-called ANC and SWAPO terrorists activities. This manoeuvre by the Reagan Administration is the directive response to the escalating struggles waged by both the ANC and SWAPO in South Africa and Namibia. South Africa is continuously invading Angola, killing innocent people with the pretext of hunting SWAPO Terrorists. It is continuously violating the borders of Mozambique, Distabilizing Peace in the whole Southern Region. Sending Mercenaries in the neighbouring states. The Brutal killing of our comrades in Matola, Killing of our two comrades in Swaziland and recently the killing of the Nyagose couple is an indication of the most fascist nature of the Pretoria Racists, and a clear indication of the last kicks of a dying horse.

We salute the Women of Mozambique, led by their Vanguard Party Frelimo. We salute Women of OMM for giving ^{US} support in our struggle for National Liberation. We salute all the progressive Mankind the world over, for giving us support and courage to crush the Fascists in Southern Africa. We salute the women the World over in their contribution for fighting for Peace and ^{Security} ~~humanity~~ in the World.

As we commemorate the 26 th Anniversary of the South African Women's Day, we must remember our BrotherS and AND Sisters, who are political prisoners in the Botha's Dungeons. Let us fight, intensify our struggle for Freedom and Peace. ~~Let us involve more women in our struggle.~~ The Legacy of August lives on... The assurance of our victory is in ~~our~~ our hands. Our victory is certain