

**LILIAN NGOYI** – the first in our new series:  
**ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS**

May 2022 Voice of the South African Communist Party



# Umsebenzi



**MAY DAY**

**Socialism  
is the future.  
Build it now!**

SACP MAY DAY MESSAGE

# End the mobile monopoly – bring down data costs!

*This is a shortened version of the SACP's  
May Day statement, released on 1 May 2022*

Today marks the 28th anniversary of the International Workers Day since the democratic breakthrough of 1994 through decades of our struggle for liberation, democracy and universal social emancipation. The key question is: What are the conditions of the South African working class, how much tangible progress have we made since 1994 towards the achievement of all the goals of the Freedom Charter, the basic programme of our national democratic revolution? How far are we towards successfully completing the national democratic revolution?

Millions of our people, the majority of them working class, have realised massive social advances building on our April 1994 democratic breakthrough. We have rolled back the apartheid workplace through post-1994 labour legislation, based on the recognition of human and workers' rights that we won through struggle. These rights are enshrined in our constitution, in the Bill of Rights, not as an accident of history but as the direct fruit of our own struggle.

Through active mobilisation by Cosatu, its affiliates and other supportive trade unions, and through our Alliance in key centres of power, such as the ANC-led government and majority in parliament, we secured labour law amendments to improve the labour relations framework. These amendments did not occur without opposition by the capitalist bosses, who remain determined to roll back workers' hard-won rights and gains. We need to build and strengthen maximum worker unity and power to defend our hard-won gains and progressive labour law advances and deepen the struggle to achieve more improvements, defend them and ultimately end the bar-



barity of capitalist exploitation.

In the same way, we need to stand together to defend the massive social advances that benefit millions of our people. For example, the millions of free homes, massive electrification and provision of water and education and social grants.

But these advances are facing the threat of erosion because of the neoliberal policy regime and its failures, corporate and corrupt capture of the state, and the associated social decay. Instead of advancing decisively towards completing the liberation of the formerly oppressed and achieving universal social emancipation, our democratic transition is being forced to go against the Freedom Charter. Most especially, it is the economic content of the Freedom Charter.

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**Let us unite to tackle neoliberalism,  
corporate and corrupt capture of the  
state, and the associated social decay.**

Let us take what has happened unabatedly to public infrastructure as if our country is a stateless capitalist society, for example. This includes railway and electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure, which has been vandalised, looted and destroyed. We inherited from our unpleasant past working infrastructure that is deteriorating and has in many areas now been destroyed. In the rail infrastructure and commuter rail transport, there has been virtually no public investment in expanding it to areas excluded under apartheid and the new human settlements that have massively expanded post-1994. This shows a lack of proper national development planning. In all this, workers are the most affected.

There are no more commuter rail transport services in all railway infrastructure corridors that have been destroyed through vandalism and theft of rail tracks, cables, steel and other metals, train station building materials and other components. As a result, workers spend more from their meagre wages on transport than before, because the affordable trains that they relied on are no longer available.

Similarly, when there is no electricity because of the power failures caused by the theft of copper cables, other electric conductors and components, it is the workers who suffer the most.

It is the workers under social coercion, under the yoke of capitalist inequality and exploitation, who are without lighting because of power cuts and have to walk in the dark on the streets, in townships, in informal settlements and in villages, in the early hours of the



Posters produced during the 1980s' struggles to make May Day a public holiday, by the Gardens Media Group, Cape Town. Published courtesy of the South African History Archive's Images of Defiance: South African Resistance posters in the 1980s

morning and the evening, and at night either going to or coming from work. Workers are more exposed to crime, with women the most vulnerable.

Under rolling load-shedding, the capitalist bosses simply place workers on short-time or dismiss them without pay until electricity supply is restored. Both the successive colonial and apartheid regimes and the post-apartheid government are responsible for this.

The successive colonial and apartheid regimes excluded the formerly oppressed from electrification, building power generation capacity for the white community and industries. While the democratically elected government commendably expanded electrification to cover the formerly excluded, because of the neoliberal economic policy, Gear, that the government imposed in 1996, it deprived Eskom of adequate recapitalisation and modernisation.

In pursuit of neoliberalism, the government took a decision at the end of the 1990s to not advance public investment in new power generation capacity but convert power generation into a new field of profit-making by profit-driven interests. This decision went against warnings in the White Paper on Energy, that South Africa was destined for electricity shortage within a decade without early, proper planning investment preparations to prevent poor performance by its aging power generation capacity.

When the Medupi and Kusile power stations came forward, it was too late. Frequent rolling load-shedding took precedence, also hamstringing growth. The Medupi and Kusile power stations were

fatally flawed from conception and design.

We need to build maximum worker unity and forge patriotic and popular left fronts to stop the decay bringing our country down. The destruction of public infrastructure must stop. This can only happen if decisive action is taken by the state, supported by popular mobilisation, with the working class at the forefront. The destroyed public infrastructure must be rebuilt, through public investment. We need to build popular mobilisation and be the first to hold the government accountable. The democratically elected ANC-led government must build developmental state capacity, drive public investment in the economy and perform better than the successive oppressor regimes.

The successive oppressor regimes invested in the productive sector not only in power generation, transmission and distribution but also in steel manufacturing and network infrastructure areas, such as in railways and related commuter and freight transport equipment, ports, communication and telecommunication, and water. The successive oppressor regimes drove this separate development agenda to serve the needs of the white community, excluding the

**The  
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must stop**

oppressed majority except where it was necessary to facilitate their movement to super-exploitation.

**Let us tackle the oligarchs<sup>1</sup> in all sectors of our economy and push national transformation towards a capable democratic and truly developmental state.**

A capable democratic developmental state must advance decisively towards the goals of the Freedom Charter, through redress, transformation and inclusive development, to socially uplift the formerly oppressed and serve the needs of the people. Neoliberalism will have none of that. Instead, it will tell the people that the role of the government is to look after profit-driven interests, assuming that the needs of the masses will flow from a trickle-down of state support. To that we say: No! A capable democratic developmental state must serve the needs of all the people and put people before profits.

Putting profits before people has resulted in the emergence of a new oligarchy, over and above the oligarchs who commanded control in the economy under apartheid. The oligarchs have no interest in serving the needs of the people.

A massive amount of wealth in our country is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority of individuals, while workers are exploited in low-wage jobs and suffering under the yoke of the monumental problem of inability to support their lives—a crisis of social reproduction. Why this is not in the

1.Oligarchs: very rich business leaders with a great deal of political influence

Guinness World Records is more probably a function of the capitalist system.

While heaping up millions and millions of rand in executive pay, the oligarchs intransigently deprive the workers any notable improvements in their employment conditions, including wage increases. This refers to the likes of Sibanye-Stillwater CEO Neal Froneman, who was paid an astronomical R300-million in 2021.

The SACP reiterates its unwavering solidarity for the National Union of Mineworkers, and for the co-operation it has forged in struggle with the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, in pursuit of the common interests of the downtrodden at Sibanye-Stillwater.

Sibanye-Stillwater is offering the workers increases of just 7,8% to their peanut wages in year one, 7,2% in year two and 6,8% in year three of a three-year bargaining cycle starting in 2022. The workers have rejected the insult.

Compare the staggering personal acquisition of wealth by the oligarchs with the emerging clamping of access to the miserable R350 Social Relief of Distress grant. As if that were not enough, if the government does not extend the Social Relief of Distress grant beyond the end of March 2023, its beneficiaries will fall deeper into poverty and the crisis of social reproduction.

MTN CEO, Ralph Mupita, was paid a whopping R84,2-million in 2021. Together with Vodacom, MTN is in the duopoly that dominates the mobile ICT network sector. Like other behemoths in the sector in other parts of the world, the duopoly raked in huge amounts of profits during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, when many sectors were under lockdown and an increasing number of people worked from home.

The mobile ICT network behemoths drove up the cost of mobile communication data and other digital communication pathways, relying on their dominance in mobile communication and digital connectivity infrastructure. The recent auctioning off of the high frequency broadband spectrum will deepen the Vodacom and MTN duopoly.

The SACP calls on the working class and other progressive sections of our society to deepen the struggle to achieve transformation and de-monopolisation of the mobile ICT network sector, and every other sector of our economy. We must ensure countrywide digital connectivity, including in rural areas, and bring down the cost of data, including through



the rollout of free Wi-Fi hotspots in poor areas. Just like water, the high frequency broadband spectrum, which is a national resource, is a key means of production. Facilitating access to the broadband spectrum, data is increasingly taking the centre stage in every section of economic activity and social life. The working class and progressive sections of our society need to stand up to challenge neoliberalism and the fostering of private monopoly, which goes against the direction of the Freedom Charter.

**Let us strengthen workplace and industrial organisation of workers to respond strategically to new advances in technological change and their impact on work.**

The industrial revolution which began in the eighteenth century, with machine invention as its foundation, has deepened and widened since then. Advances in new forms of energy, such as the discovery of electricity and its distribution, contributed to the advance in the industrial revolution. Based on electric power, the intensification of digital electronics, digital systems, digital computers, digital applications and digital platforms—in two words, digitisation and digitalisation, including more profound automa-

**Deepen the struggle to achieve transformation and de-monopolisation of the mobile ICT network sector**

tion and robotisation of production—is deepening and expanding in scope. As a result, new questions have arisen about the impact on work and the future of work and workers.

In industries such e-commerce and linked with it the delivery of the goods bought online or transport through the rides requested via online platforms, workers are managed not by team leaders, not by supervisors, not managers. New trends, such as algorithmic management, have come to the fore. There is a shift in employment relations, in terms of which workers are removed from labour rights under the pretext that they are independent contractors. This has implications for trade unions. In these sectors, trade union organisation is virtually absent and there are serious violations of the basic conditions of employment and occupational health and safety.

In other sectors, such as the banking sector, paid work that was performed by tellers before is performed by account holders themselves through digital banking applications but as unpaid work. Certain banks have even shutdown many ATMs. Without expiations, all the banks have increased banking services inside the banks, repelling account holders to the remaining ATMs and most especially to the digital banking applications. Restaurants have also embarked on this shift, moving paid work from the tellers to unpaid work by the customers via touch screens and digital applications.

Examples of the changing social character of work based new advances in the electric powered digital technology are multiplying and we cannot cover each one of them or all sectors now. These include online tasking, which is akin to digital labour brokering.

All these require effective industrial trade unions and strategic trade union responses. We cannot overemphasise the crucial importance of building such strategic unionism and the capacity to engage with the Digital Industrial Revolution, which is likely to deepen under Quantum Computing Development.

Technology is a product of human labour and the social relations of production. While others want us to focus narrowly on efficiency and productivity, they turn a blind eye to the much-needed scrutiny of the class content of who is benefiting the most in economic terms.

As Karl Marx said, capitalist bosses want new advances in production technology not to lighten the toil of the downtrodden, who they exploit, but

to deepen exploitation and maximise profits. As the capitalist bosses retrench more and more workers and unemployment rises to crisis-high levels, the number of people with the purchasing power to buy the goods and services produced falls. This leads to a crisis of overproduction or overcapacity because the goods and services are not produced to look after the needs of everyone but as commodities for sale.

The SACP says: let us build and strengthen strategic unionism and societal power to shape the direction of technical change in the interests of, and to look after, the needs of all our people.

**Let us study in full and produce a comprehensive response to the report of the commission of inquiry into state capture, to dismantle corporate, corrupt and criminal capture of the state.**

The SACP welcomes the release of the latest part of the report of the state capture inquiry commission, as we did with every single part previously released. We stand firm in cautioning against selective considerations of the report and what must happen. South Africa needs to ensure that corporate, corrupt and criminal capture of the state does not rear its ugly head again.

A selective and partial response with its eyes bent against certain individuals or entities and turning a blind eye to others will cause more problems. For example, the commission admits to the weakness that because of time constraints, and presumably this goes for resources as well, it could not follow through on the inquiry to reach definitive conclusions and make findings and recommendations on certain matters. We need a comprehensive response that covers the report in its entirety, including its strengths and weaknesses. The SACP will itself produce its own comprehensive response, covering the commission's report in its entirety, and publish it at an appropriate time.

The SACP has called for the entire criminal justice system to complete its investigations and prosecutions based on evidence without being selective, without fear or favour. The foreign-controlled multinational corporations from the United States, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere that were complicit in, state capture must not be left out. This includes the tender system, which was - and probably still is being - manipulated, as Covid-19 procurement irregu-



larities and corruption show. We must unite and together stop the tenderisation of the state and public entities. We need to build a capable democratic developmental state with its own capacity to serve the people.

We are calling on the state to recover all the funds that were stolen from the state and seize all ill-gotten and unjustified wealth.

While sections of the media played an important role in helping us to expose state capture, some media houses published misleading stories, a part was driven by factional interests, or was in defence of state capture networks and propagated their fabricated version against the truth.

**Let us unite to push the advance towards a caring social policy, towards a comprehensive social security system.**

We reiterate our call, that the government should extend the Social Relief of Distress grant beyond the end of March 2023. Instead of clamping down on access to this miserable grant, amidst crisis-high unemployment affecting 12.5 million active and discouraged work-seekers, the government should gradually improve the grant and use it as a foundation to build a universal basic income grant.

Advancing social protection towards a comprehensive social security system is part and parcel of pursuing an inclusive economic growth path.

**Let us build the unity of the socialist axis of our democratic movement.**

We want to caution against attempts by individuals who are hellbent on trying

to drive a wedge between the Communist Party and Cosatu. If communist and progressive trade union movements allow themselves to drift apart from each other, they will both be defeated. This warning by Lenin remains as relevant as ever. Let us strengthen our joint efforts in closely safeguarding our alliance as the socialist axis.

We also have the duty to promote cooperation, such as NUM working with Amcu. We need to reach out to other organised workers towards greater unity in action, and to organise the unorganised workers into the trade unions. This might not assume a unitary organisational form at the beginning, but it can contribute positively to advances towards broader and greater worker unity of purpose. There is perhaps nothing more important than unity in action, which results from unity in perspective. The organisational configuration this may take will vary from time to time based on material conditions.

We emphasise the importance of building broader worker unity towards working class power and hegemony in all key sites of the struggle. When we are united and strong, there will be no significant centre of power in our society that can exercise power without the working class. ●

## Umsebenzi

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SACP CENTENARY

# 100 years on, SACP is still relevant for working class

*Anilkumar Kesava Pillai looks back to look forward – contextualising the challenges facing the Party today in its proud century-long record of struggle and leadership*



Few political parties across the world have celebrated 100 years of existence as the SACP has.

Modern political parties are considered to have begun at the end of the 18th century. Since then they have played a significant role in drawing the masses into political life, which assisted them to be liberated from social, political and economic oppression and hardship.

Despite the brutal actions of fascist parties, the overall contribution made by political organisations to assist humankind in achieving a better life needs no debate. One must approach their significance in this context.

In 1921, socialists formed the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), braving the brutal attacks and repression unleashed by the colonial and racist system. The efforts of the various communist revolutionaries paved the way to bringing together the International Socialist League and other similar-minded parties under one roof.

## Sound principles

The 100 years since have been times of heroic struggles and supreme sacrifices. Since its inception, the Party has never compromised the principles of internationalism. The significance of this particular bias becomes clear from recent events – Afghanistan, vaccine nationalism. We are faced with the emergence of de-globalisation and narrow nationalism.

The SACP has always strived to be unique in its form and content.

The letter from SACP General Secretary Moses Kotane to the Johannesburg District Party Committee of 23 Febru-



The SACP's 65th anniversary poster in 1986



**Above: Moses Kotane, seen leaving the Treason Trial with Nelson Mandela, provided a clear vision in his *Cradock Letter* (right) of the need to 'concretise the demands of the toiling masses ... become South African, not only theoretically, but in reality'**

I think it is time I ended my 'sophisticated' arguments and gave some suggestions. My first suggestion is that the Party become more Africanised or Afrikanised, that the CPUSA must pay special attention to S Africa, study the conditions in this country and concretise the demands of the toiling masses from first hand information, that we must speak the language of the Native masses and must know their demands. That while it must not lose its international allegiance, the Party must be Bolshevised, become South African not only theoretically, but in reality, it should be a Party working in the interests and for the toiling people in S Africa and not a party of a group of Europeans who are merely interested in European affairs.

ary 1934 (known as *The Cradock Letter*) clearly shows how the SACP needed to be different from other communist parties globally. He suggested that the Party become more Africanised and pay special attention to South African conditions and the demands of the toiling masses.

This recognition that South Africa has its peculiarities assisted the Party to successfully integrate its intellectual and ideological perspectives into the ANC's liberation strategy. The practice of socialism with South African characteristics made the Party unique in its operations.

The party has always dissociated itself from narrow tribal or ethnic interests. Current developments in various parts of the country are a clear indication of how tribalism can stunt democratic principles and institutions.

Rising unemployment figures disproportionately affect black South Africans, prolonging apartheid inequality.

The past 100 years demonstrate the vital role the SACP has played in addressing racism, poverty, and gender issues. The Party has been able to lead the class struggle with a socially radical approach.

It has had a huge impact on the social and political landscape of South Africa – starting from the 1962 programme of *The*

**One thing is certain:  
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*road to South African Freedom* (1962), up to the 2007 programme, *The South African Road to Socialism* (2007), the Party managed to promote massive projects of social engineering.

The SACP's historic link with the trade unions enabled it to secure a distinctive position among the masses.

Campaigns undertaken by the Party had a visible influence on ordinary people's lives. One example is the Mzansi low-cost bank account, introduced in 2004, allowing more than 3,5-million previously-unbanked South Africans to open accounts in its first year alone.

The SACP must continue its historic march with the highest level of ideological, political and organisational discipline. The road ahead is not an easy one for our Party.

The challenges within the labour sector are difficult. Still, huge sections of the working class are not in the organised sector. The immeasurable exploitation of the unorganised informal sector workers is a source of grave concern. The public expects the Party to shoulder the responsibility to bring fragmented sections of the working class into a formidable progressive trade union alliance.

### **New challenges**

The Party also faces the challenges of the new economic and social outlook emerging within and outside the country. Neo-liberal policies have wrought significant changes in SA's class structure and social and political associations.

For the past decade state power has been a highly contested discussion point in Party forums. Electoral politics is a major part of people's political activity and therefore the matter must find a logical conclusion. To broaden the political sphere and activities outside the electoral parliamentary system, it is essential that the much-anticipated Alliance reconfiguration finds an appropriate conclusion.

Various other critical matters include how the Party positions itself in terms of its priority with regards to its membership, whether to stick with quality or quantity.

One thing is certain: ordinary South Africans have huge expectations of the Party and so it should be mandatory for the leadership and members not to be complacent about the challenges at hand. ●

*Cde Pillai is an SACP Eastern Cape PEC member and an ANC MPL*

PHOTO ROUND-UP

# Working Women’s Day around the world

International Working Women’s Day has been celebrated for 111 years as a focus on demands for gender equality, women’s rights and to end patriarchy. It was initially marked on 19 March but within a decade formalised on 8 March. That date was recognised as International Women’s Day by the United Nations in 1975 and is a public holiday in 27 countries, with South Africa and Egypt celebrating their own national women’s days separately – 9 September and 16 March respectively mark major, historic women’s protests in those countries.

This year’s UN slogan is *Breaking the bias*. The day

is marked by women in most countries, with special emphasis given to immediate local and national struggles and priorities – in Malaysia, for example, the primary focus was the ongoing struggle against child brides (the practice of adult, often aging, men paying large bride-prices to marry girls barely into puberty); while in Myanmar the focus was martial law imposed since last year’s military coup that has left about 2 000 killed by soldiers.

These pages give a sense of the unity, and the diversity, of IWWD events globally



**COLOMBIA:** Massive crowds of women, wearing the reproductive rights movement’s green, hit the Bogotá streets to celebrate a constitutional court ruling decriminalising abortion under 24 weeks. It follows recent similar gains in Mexico and Argentina



**MEXICO:** Thousands of anti-femicide protesters marched through Mexico City to the presidential residence to cover the fence with hundreds of placards commemorating victims of femicide – officially 1 006 last year, although the actual death toll is far higher



**KENYA:** Women protest a violent assault of a Nairobi woman motorcycle taxi driver in early March, seen screaming in a viral social media video, as male taxi riders beat her. Women lawyers handed in a petition demanding action against the rogue riders



**MYANMAR:** Young IWWD protesters flash the three-fingered anti-military salute, donning cat masks as disguises – the second year in which women marked the day by protesting the February 2021 military overthrow of the democratic government

# Nigeria: Pushing back against a gender setback

IWWD protesters in the commercial capital, Lagos, varied the UN slogan to march under a #BreakTheConstitutionBias banner to protest the national assembly's rejection on 1 March of five bills and constitutional amendments intended to introduce some level of political and social gender equality. While the ruling All Progressives Congress has since promised to reconsider three of the bills, the national assembly vote is a major setback for the gender struggle in Africa's most populous country.

In a nation in which more than 19 in 20 national assembly MPs are men, one of the constitutional amendments would have assigned 35% of state (states are equivalent to South Africa's provinces) legislative seats to women and reserved 35% of political



party leadership for women.

Other bills and constitutional amendments voted down would have added 111 seats to the 469-seat Na-

tional Assembly reserved for women (the National Assembly covers both the 360-seat House of Representatives and the 109-seat Senate).



**TURKEY:** Police blockade Istanbul's main pedestrian walkway – and later used teargas – to stop the Feminist Night Walk on IWWD, this year protesting Turkey's 2021 withdrawal from the EU treaty on women's rights and domestic violence



**MALASIYA:** IWWD marchers on their way to a picnic protest in Kuala Lumpur demand an end to child marriage. Protesters also demanded gender equality legislation, closing gender pay gaps, prioritising healthcare gender mainstreaming and ending GBV



**SOUTH KOREA:** A trade union backed IWWD picket by cafeteria workers in Seoul, South Korea, against the country's gender wage gap – the highest among OECD countries. South Korean women earn a third less than their male counterparts



**INDIA:** An IWWD rally in Kolkata, India, loudly protests rising fuel prices, triggered by the Ukraine conflict – the first of an India-wide series of protests, continuing into April, with opposition parties following the IWWD women's lead

## Zimbabwe: Indigenising #BreaktheBias

In the streets of Harare, young activists painted murals of a Zimbabwean adaptation of the 2022 IWWD image, while official responses to IWD aligned with the UN 2022 theme, 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. This is unsurprising in a country in which seven out of 10 participants in UN-backed agricultural courses are women. But other responses to patriarchy appeared, with Women Affairs Minister Sithembiso Nyoni warning that gender-based violence was surging, fuelled by the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change: 'GBV is often employed to reinforce gender imbalances and maintain control of shrinking resources'.



**KYRGYZSTAN:** Masked Kyrgyz nationalists attack women's rights activists and destroy placards during an IWWD protest demanding gender equality in Kyrgyzstan's capita Bishkek. Police arrested 70 protesters 'for their own protection'



**JAPAN:** One of the dozens of marches of 200-300 people each throughout Tokyo, Japan against gender-based violence, gender discrimination and, this year, calling for an end to the conflict in Ukraine



**THAILAND:** Women, labour activists and state-enterprise unions march in central Bangkok to mark International Working Women's Day, calling for extended maternity leave (from three to six months) and its extension to all sectors of the economy



**FRANCE:** Midwives in Strasbourg, France, protest on IWWD for better working conditions under French healthcare reforms, the Ségur de la santé, negotiated without involvement of their trade union



**PHILIPPINES:** Police attempt to block a massive IWWD march through the Filipino capital, Manila, targeting President Rodrigo Duterte's rightwing administration for 'six years of unprecedented hunger, poverty, failed pandemic response and misogyny



**KAZAKHSTAN:** Kazakh women celebrating IWWD (a public holiday in Kazakhstan) march through the capital, Nur-Sultan, with the leader beating a drum bearing the word patriarchy – symbolising the ongoing struggle against patriarchy



**SUDAN:** The sign carried by the leader of this women's day march through the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, says it all: Our revolution is against dictatorship, masculinity, racism, capitalism and classism



**PERU:** Peruvians march through Lima on IWWD. President Pedro Castillo supports initiatives to achieve gender equality – but Peruvian women must overcome centuries of brutal Spanish colonial patriarchy, and the effects of rightwing rule

## Egypt: Celebrating two women's days

Like South Africa, Egypt marks 'women's day' twice a year – IWWD on 8 March, and the women's day national holiday on 16 March. The holiday marks the start of Egypt's 1919 revolution, when tens of thousands of women began protesting their British rulers' attempts to ban and exile nationalist leader Saad Zaghlul, and other members of the Wafd Party.

"Women from all social classes," wrote one of the marchers, Huda Sha'arawi, founder of the Egyptian Feminist Union, "poured out of their harems, clad in veils, on to the streets to demonstrate." British controlled police stopped the march and later that day fired on marchers. Six women died – the first of 800 Egyptians killed in the next five months as British troops



tried unsuccessfully to suppress the nationalist uprising.

Britain eventually granted Egypt self-government, under a conservative monarchy, in 1922, although it maintained a powerful military presence

along the Suez Canal. In 1923, on her return home from a feminist conference in Rome, Sha'arawi took off her veil in Cairo railway station – the first of millions of Egyptian women to do so during the 1920s.

INDIA

# Battling Covid, economic distress & gender oppression

*India's BJP government has reacted to the pandemic and resulting economic crisis by rewarding its corporate allies at the expense of India's working class and poor, writes Mariam Dhawale – and women are bearing the brunt of the assault*



India has never witnessed such a macabre dance of death since its independence in 1947. The second wave of the Covid pandemic left more than 250 000 dead. Women and men have died gasping for oxygen, without ventilators, medicines and hospital beds. Crematoriums and cemeteries were overflowing as never before. The poor did not even have the means to give their dead loved ones a decent farewell. Thousands of bodies floating in the Ganges River were a testimony of this heart-rending disaster. The health system had almost collapsed. Private hospitals were fleecing patients, with no regulation by the government. The black marketing of oxygen and medicines abounded.

The current pandemic has revealed yet another stark fact. Capitalism makes predators of human beings. It tries to squeeze profits even from dead bodies. The shameful black marketing of oxygen cylinders and medicines, the rapacious loot by private hospitals, the nauseating extortion by vaccine corporates, hold a mirror to the inherent evils of capitalism.

The Narendra Modi-led BJP-RSS<sup>1</sup> central government is squarely responsible for this colossal human tragedy. There was a complete absence of planning and contempt for scientific advice.

The Modi regime has been exposed for its heartlessness towards the poor. This was seen in 2020 when the national lockdown was imposed at four hours' notice: millions of migrant workers had to walk in the scorching sun for hundreds of kilometres with their families to return to their villages. Hundreds died of

hunger, exhaustion, and accidents. The pain of pregnant women is incalculable.

With the lockdown, millions were thrown out of work. Workers and farmers suffered as never before. But no policies were in place for helping people, especially the marginalised sections. Constant demands made for cash transfers to the poor and free food grants fell on deaf ears. Due to public pressure, free food grain was given out for a few months. But no decision has been taken about cash transfers.

All this has been compounded by the government's vaccine policy. It has not provided free and universal vaccines to its people, although previous central governments gave free and universal vaccines against smallpox and polio, leading to eradication of these diseases. But this government is more interested in assuring super-profits to its corporate friends. Vaccine prices in India are the highest in the world.

The ruling regime has not provided even basic health facilities to its citizens, with India spending less than 1% of GDP on health. More people die of dysentery and malaria in India than anywhere in the world. More than 10-million children under five years old succumb to prevent-

able diseases like pneumonia and diarrhoea every year. Almost 50% of teenage Indian girls are underweight and 52% are anaemic. But the BJP government is pushing privatisation of the health sector.

The BJP Central government is using the pandemic to further its Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) agenda and push its drive of revenge and victimisation, coupled with an aggressive pursuit of authoritarianism and neoliberal economic policies. Through the vile and hate-filled messages on social media and backed with physical attacks on minorities, the BJP and RSS are working overtime to divide people in the name of religion.

Voices of dissent, activists championing democratic rights, civil liberties, the rights of minorities and marginalised sections are being booked under laws like the Sedition Act, Unlawful Activities' Prevention Act, National Security Act, arrested and jailed.

## Disparity and inequity

The Covid pandemic has destroyed the lives of millions of the poor working people. But it has massively enriched the corporates. The wealth of the richest 140 corporates in India has nearly doubled to US\$596-billion (R8,7-trillion). And it is only they who are still being helped generously by the Modi government's policies.

Disparity and inequality in India have multiplied during the liberalisation era. The richest 1% in India own 58,4% of the country's wealth, the richest 10% own an astounding 80,7%. The bottom 10% of the nation own 0,2%. This mind-boggling concentration of wealth accom-

**The Modi regime  
has been  
exposed for its  
heartlessness  
toward India's poor**



**The funeral pyre of a pandemic victim in Delhi, where so many died from Covid-19 that authorities had to cut down trees in public parks to provide wood for cremations**

panies the pauperisation of vast masses of the people. India has the world's most abject poor – and women without any property in their name constitute most of them.

Stories of the disaster caused to women's lives are heart wrenching: despair when confronting the tormenting faces of hungry, starving children and the pressures to keep the home fires burning, while coping with illness and death.

Food intake in rural areas has plummeted. A hunger pandemic stares the poor in the face. With too little food, women are the last to eat, and eat the least. India ranks 94th among 107 nations in the Global Hunger Index 2020 and is in the serious hunger category – with 14% of India's population undernourished. The country has a 37% stunting rate among children under five and a wasting rate of 17%.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy estimates nearly 150-million people have lost their jobs during the lockdown. Daily wage labourers, workers in the informal sector and small traders account for most of these losses. Women are a large part of the workers in the informal sector – 94% of women work in the unorganised sectors. In addition, 21-million salaried employees have also lost their jobs. This pandemic has led to increases in child marriages and trafficking of women and children. It has again

pushed millions of people into bonded labour and desperate deprivation.

New farm laws and labour codes were passed by the Modi regime in September 2020 to benefit the corporate lobby. It had to withdraw the three anti-farmer laws after more than a year-long struggle by farmers in which more than 700 of them lost their lives.

#### **Soaring violence against women**

Crimes and violence against women have reached alarming proportions under the Modi government. Gang-rape, abduction, physical and mental abuse, torture, moral policing and honour killings are a part of a larger, systemic problem. Extra-constitutional and self-appointed vigilante groups have free rein and roam scot-free after killing, lynching, murdering and looting people with impunity under political patronage of the BJP-RSS.

The National Crime Records Bureau reports a crime against women is committed every three minutes. On average, one woman is raped every 29 minutes and a dowry death occurs every 77 minutes. Six out of every 10 rape cases involve girls under 18.

The National Family Health Survey-4 had shown that 31% of married women have suffered physical, sexual or emotional violence at the hands of their spouses. The lack of any alternative infrastructure available to women in such sit-

uations leaves them with no alternative but to compromise with their abusers. This highlights the need for many more short-stop and shelter homes for women in situations of domestic violence.

#### **United struggles – the road ahead**

Indians are at a threshold where they have a lot at stake. Attempts to change the secular, democratic republic into a fascistic Hindu Rashtra by the ruling BJP-RSS combine is a dangerous portent. The Modi government's use of religion and hate politics to polarise citizens is being unitedly opposed by all the democratic and secular forces.

Regardless of religion, caste, creed, language, age or gender, progressive movements are unitedly striving hard to thoroughly expose and defeat the villains responsible for this unprecedented national calamity, and fight for a radical policy alternative that boldly declares: Another world is possible! Another India is possible! ●

***Cde Dhawale is General Secretary of the All India Democratic Women's Association***

#### **Endnote**

1. The right-wing ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) is ideologically close to the far-right nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [National Volunteer Organisation].

## GENDER &amp; CORRUPTION

# Sextortion: the hidden corruption

*Sexploitation – demanding sexual favours in exchange for services – is rife in South Africa, but barely recognised as a crime, writes Barbie Schreiner. We need to stamp it out*

*'If I don't have money to bribe the water utility staff, he will sexually abuse me because that's the only valuable thing I can give him' (Johannesburg, 2015) <sup>2</sup>*

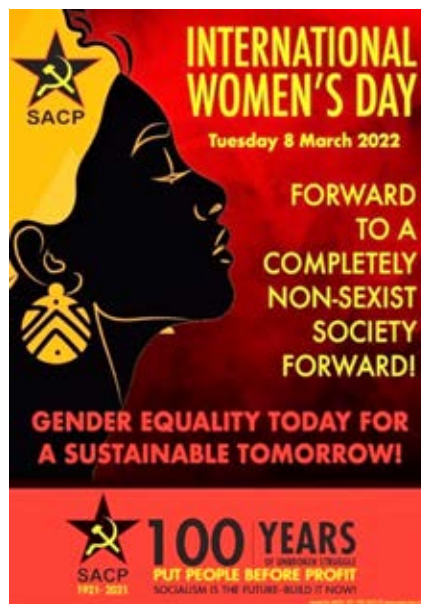


**S**extortion is a form of corruption where a person in a position of power demands sex or sexual favours in exchange for a service or opportunity that someone needs: women pay with their bodies, their health and their dignity in return for services or opportunities. It happens when there are unequal power relations, poverty and unemployment, and includes a range of actions, including sex, exposure of private parts, posing for sexual photos or, inappropriate touching.

Despite being widespread, it is poorly recognised in law and in anti-corruption programmes. It impacts particularly on poor women who do not have the financial resources to pay bribes and exacerbates gender inequality and limits women's development.

The International Association of Women Judges developed the term in 2009 when trying to raise awareness and to "address a pervasive, but often hidden, form of corruption that degrades its victims and undermines social institutions around the world".

The definition of sextortion as a legal concept is important: if looked at through a gender-based violence lens, it can be seen as being consensual and, indeed, not violent. And it is often not recognised as a form of corruption because no money has changed hands. But it is widespread and the impacts on the lives of poor women and gender non-conforming people are devastating



– sexually transmitted diseases including HIV-Aids, unwanted pregnancies, and negative psychological impacts.

While there is limited information on the extent of sextortion in South Africa, there is evidence to suggest that it is widespread.

A youth perception survey conducted by CorruptionWatch<sup>3</sup> in 2020 showed that one in three young people in South Africa have been asked for sexual fa-

vours. Young women and people identifying as gender non-conforming are 50% more likely to be asked for sexual favours in return for employment, access to financial resources, or higher marks at school or university.

When faced with the possibility of arrest, gender non-conforming people are three times more likely to be asked for a sexual favour than other youth. With the high levels of unemployment among the youth in South Africa, they are very vulnerable to corruption when looking for work, including sextortion.

At George Mukhari Hospital in Ga-Rankuwa, Tshwane, cleaners, porters, mortuary attendants and laundry workers were exposed to sextortion in recruitment between 2007 and 2014.<sup>4</sup> More work is needed to understand how widespread sextortion is in South Africa.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption, to which South Africa is a signatory, does not refer to sextortion, and it is not monitored in international or national surveys. It is also not addressed in legal provisions in most countries, making it difficult for victims of sextortion report it.

There is little guarantee that they will be protected, and they face a lack of awareness by police of sextortion as a crime, legal obstacles and social stigma.<sup>5</sup> Poor women pay the price of the failure of corruption legislation to be explicit about sextortion.

What can be done?

There are several actions that can be taken to address the issue of sextortion:

- **Leadership:** The SACP, with community organisations, should play a strong leadership role in putting this issue on the political agenda, in campaign-

**Women are 50% more likely to be asked to trade sex for jobs ... or even university or school marks**



Young Kibera, Nairobi, residents fetching water (see below)

## Dignity? What dignity?

'What is this dignity we keep talking about? You see us looking clean, healthy and fed but you have no idea how much sex we have traded to look dignified in front of you' – Local Assembly member at the Sex for Water launch meeting in September 2020 in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya (and the biggest urban informal settlement in Africa).<sup>1</sup>

ing for change, and in speaking out in support of the victims of sextortion most of whom are poor, working class or unemployed women.

- **Education and awareness raising** – educating women, in particular, about their rights and about sextortion as a form of corruption, but also education for government officials. Lack of aware-

ness about sextortion prevents victims from coming forward, prevents actions being taken to address it, and enables impunity for perpetrators.

- **Legislative change** to incorporate sextortion specifically as a crime under anti-corruption legislation. South Africa can learn from other countries: in Tanzania, sextortion is illegal under the Penal Code and the Anti-Corruption Act. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, sextortion is a punishable offence that carries a penalty of three months to five years' imprisonment.

- **Ensuring complaint hotlines** for people to report sextortion, and education of officials about how to respond to sextortion complaints;

This is an issue that the SACP should highlight and act on. ●

*Cde Schreiner is a water sector activist, currently based in Germany, working for the Water Integrity Network*

### Further reading:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/news/>

sextortion-undermining-gender-equality <https://africa.harvard.edu/news/sexual-extortion-%E2%80%99Csilent%E2%80%9D-corruption-across-sub-saharan-africa>

### Endnotes

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BEYOND UKRAINE WAR

# Non-aligned countries must say 'no' to new Cold War aggression

*Vijay Prashad assesses the roots of the uncertainties pervading the global situation in light of the Ukraine war and the options facing countries outside of imperialism's war drive*



It is hard to fathom the depths of our time, the terrible wars, and the confounding information that whizzes by without much wisdom. Certainties that flood the airwaves and the internet are easy to come by, but are they derived from an honest assessment of the war in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russian banks (part of a broader United States sanctions policy that now afflicts approximately 30 countries)?

Do they acknowledge the horrific reality of hunger that has increased due to this war and the sanctions? It appears that much of the 'certainties' are caught up in the 'Cold War mentality', which views humanity as irreversibly divided on two opposing sides. However, this is not the case; most countries are struggling to craft a non-aligned approach to the US-imposed 'new Cold War'. Russia's conflict with Ukraine is a symptom of broader geopolitical battles that have been waged over decades.

On 26 March, US President Joe Biden defined some certainties from his perspective at the Royal Castle in Warsaw (Poland), calling the war in Ukraine "a battle between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression, between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force". These binaries are wholly a fantasy of the White House, whose attitude towards 'rules-based order' is not rooted in the UN Charter but in 'rules' that the US pronounces. Biden's antinomies culminated in one policy objective: "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power," he said, meaning Russia's President Vladimir Putin. The narrowness of Biden's approach to the

conflict in Ukraine has led to a public call for regime change in Russia, a country of 146-million people whose government possesses 6 255 nuclear warheads. With the US's violent history of controlling leadership in several countries, reckless statements about regime change cannot go unanswered. They must be universally contested.

## Principal axis

The principal axis of Russia's war is not actually Ukraine, though it bears the brunt of it today. It is whether Europe can be permitted to forge projects independently of the US and its North Atlantic agenda. Between the fall of the USSR (1991) and the world financial crisis (2007–08), Russia, the new post-Soviet republics (including Ukraine), and other Eastern European states sought to integrate into the European system, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato). Russia joined Nato's Partnership for Peace process in 1994, and seven Eastern European countries (including Estonia and Latvia that border Russia) joined Nato in 2004. During the global financial crisis, it became evident that integration into the European project would not be fully possible because of vulnerabilities in Europe.

At the Munich Security Conference in

February 2007, President Vladimir Putin challenged the US's attempt to create a unipolar world. "What is a unipolar world?", Putin asked. "No matter how we beautify this term, it means one single centre of power, one single centre of force, and one single master". Referring to US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 (which he had criticised at that time) and the US's illegal Iraq War in 2003, Putin said, 'Nobody feels secure anymore because nobody can hide behind international law'. Later, at the 2008 Nato Summit in Bucharest (Romania), Putin warned about the dangers of Nato's eastward expansion, lobbying against the entry of Georgia and Ukraine into the military alliance. The next year, Russia partnered with Brazil, China, India, and South Africa to form the Brics bloc as an alternative to Western-driven globalisation.

For generations, Europe has relied on imports of natural gas and crude oil first from the USSR and then from Russia. This dependence on Russia has increased as European countries have sought to end their use of coal and nuclear energy. At the same time, Poland (2015) and Italy (2019) signed onto the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Between 2012 and 2019, the Chinese government also formed the 17+1 Initiative, linking 17 central and Eastern European countries in the BRI project. The integration of Europe into Eurasia opened the door for its foreign policy independence. But this was not permitted. The entire 'global Nato' feint – articulated in 2008 by Nato secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer – was part of preventing this development.

Fearful of the great changes occurring in Eurasia, the US acted on commercial

**US attitudes on a 'rules based world order' are not rooted in the UN, but on 'rules' the US pronounces**



**Frightened Donbas refugees crowd aboard transport bound for Russia**

and diplomatic/military fronts. Commercially, the US tried to substitute European reliance on Russian natural gas by promising to supply Europe with liquefied natural gas (LNG) from both US suppliers and Gulf Arab states. Since LNG is more expensive than piped gas, this was not an enticing commercial deal. Challenges to Chinese advancements in high-tech solutions – particularly in telecommunications, robotics, and green energy – could not be sustained by Silicon Valley firms, so the US escalated two other instruments of force: first, the use of War on Terror rhetoric to ban Chinese firms (claiming security and privacy considerations) and second, diplomatic and military manoeuvres to challenge Russia's sense of stability.

#### **No effective substitute**

The US's strategy was not entirely successful. European countries could see that there was no effective substitute for both Russian energy and Chinese investment. Banning Huawei's telecommunications tools and preventing NordStream 2 from certification would only hurt the European people. This was clear. But what was not so clear was that the US concurrently began to dismantle the architecture that held in place confidence that no country would begin a nuclear war. In 2002, the US unilaterally abandoned the Anti-Ballistic Missile

Treaty and in 2018–19 left the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. European countries played a key role in establishing the INF Treaty in 1987 through the 'nuclear freeze' movement, but the abandonment of the treaty in 2018–19 was met with relative silence from Europeans. In 2018, US National Security Strategy shifted from its focus on the Global War on Terror to the prevention of the "re-emergence of long-term, strategic competition" from "near-peer rivals" such as China and Russia. At the same time, European countries began to carry out "freedom of navigation" exercises through Nato in the Baltic Sea, the Arctic Sea, and South China Sea, sending threatening messages to China and Russia. These moves effectively brought China and Russia very close together.

Russia indicated on several occasions that it was aware of these tactics and would defend its borders and its region with force. When the US intervened in Syria in 2012 and Ukraine in 2014, these

**No state should accept the so-called 'certainties' that reinforce Cold War dynamics**

moves threatened Russia with the loss of its two main warm water ports (in Latakia, Syria and Sebastopol, Crimea), which is why Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and intervened militarily in Syria in 2015. These actions suggested that Russia would continue to use its military to protect what it sees as its national interests. Ukraine then shut down the North Crimean canal that brought the peninsula 85% of its water, forcing Russia to supply the region with water over the Kerch Strait Bridge, built at enormous cost between 2016 and 2019. Russia did not need security guarantees from Ukraine, or even from Nato, but it sought them from the United States. There was fear in Moscow that the US would place intermediate range nuclear missiles around Russia.

#### **Contradictions**

In light of this recent history, contradictions rattle the responses of Germany, Japan, and India, amongst others. Each of these countries needs Russian natural gas and crude oil. Both Germany and Japan have sanctioned Russian banks, but neither German Chancellor Olaf Scholz nor Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida can cut energy imports. India, despite being part of the US-backed Quad along with Japan, has refused to join the condemnation of Russia and the sanctions on its banking sector. These countries have to manage the contradictions of our time and weigh up the uncertainties. No state should accept the so-called 'certainties' that reinforce Cold War dynamics, nor should they neglect the dangerous outcomes of externally influenced regime change and chaos.

It is always a good idea to reflect on the quiet charm of the poems of Tōge Sankichi, who watched the atomic bomb fall on his native Hiroshima in 1945, and then later joined the Japanese Communist Party to fight for peace. In his Call to action, Sankichi wrote:

*stretch out those grotesque arms  
to the many similar arms  
and, if it seems like that flash might fall  
again,  
hold up the accursed sun:  
even now it is not too late.*

*Cde Vijay Prashad is the Director of the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research and the Chief Editor of the New Delhi-based LeftWord Books. This article first appeared as a newsletter of the Tricontinental Institute and is reproduced with kind permission.*

BEYOND THE UKRAINE WAR

# Imperialism's war is a global nightmare we need to end

*South Africa and other non-aligned states could muster their energies to drive a peace wedge between belligerent blocs, writes Mark Waller, and wind down the crises they force on us all*

The war in Ukraine badly affects us all. The capitalist powers of the West – Nato and the European Union – are involved in a proxy war against capitalist Russia that threatens to spiral out of control. As the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres put it on 13 April: “the impact of the war is global and systemic.”

The Ukraine war and the West's sanctions against Russia are choking food, fuel and raw material supplies, hitting countries in Africa, Asia and South America hardest, and according to the UN, heralding a global hunger crisis. As with all imperialist wars, it's the workers and poor who suffer most. Now globally.

Guterres continued: “As many as 1,7-billion people — one-third of whom are already living in poverty — are now highly exposed to disruptions in food, energy and finance systems that are triggering increases in poverty and hunger.”

Regardless of the causes of the war, the justifications declaimed, or sides taken, the impacts of the conflict, including sanctions, remain the same: catastrophe for the working class and poor in Ukraine, Russia and in the many countries across the world that rely on imports from them. We're only just beginning to see the effects of this.

Most grain (wheat and barley) bought by the top 36 grain-importing countries, which include the poorest, comes from Russia and Ukraine. Ukrainian and Russian grain accounts for 30% of the

world's grain supply. This is now all on hold. A fifth of the world's fertilisers are produced by Russia and its neighbour and ally Belarus. The sudden disruption of supplies is worsening the food crisis across the Horn of Africa and hiking up food and fuel prices in the most vulnerable countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

The West is hell-bent on stoking the tensions that shape the context of the conflict, but which stretch beyond: cold war with China, placing Russia on embargo well into any foreseeable future, vilifying approaches that don't toe the Western line, a reckless polarising of international relations. Russia has referred obliquely to its possible use of nuclear weapons, a nightmare scenario that contrasts sharply to the 1982 Soviet commitment to the no-first-use of nuclear weapons. Nato has an unequivocal first-use policy.

There are no cool heads among the immediate or wider belligerents in the war.

The 20th century Cold War saw the Soviet Union issue a constant stream of peace proposals to wind down the nuclear arms race and encourage neutral and non-aligned countries to host peace and security forums (the momentous Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Finland in 1975 was one). Most, but not all, such communist pressure for peace was met with cynicism and rebuttal by the US. Some of it succeeded in calming tensions and creating

crucial disarmament agreements.

There's now no such restraining influence between the West and Russia. Quite the opposite. The US' pumped and primed regime-change rhetoric ('Putin must go'), massive weapons supplies to Ukraine – worth \$US3,8-billion (R61-billion) between the end of February and the beginning of April – bellicose sanctions against Russia and vilification of all things Russian, troop deployments to Poland and the Baltic States – all adjoining Russia – increase the likelihood of the war spilling over beyond Ukraine's borders.

The same goes for the hawkish slant of the EU's 27 member states. Twenty-one of them are members of Nato. EU-Nato members are arming Ukraine. The EU itself has sent €1,5-billion (R25-billion) in military 'aid', the first time the bloc has directly sent weapons to a country at war. Not to be outdone, the ever-hawkish UK is supplying weapons to Ukraine worth nearly £3-billion (R58-billion).

Like the US, the EU and the UK have imposed sanctions against Russia and banned all Russian aircraft from their airspace. They are also targeting the Russia's energy sector. Once neutral and pacific, Finland and Sweden are now part of the problem, clamouring to join and further expand Nato while also sending arms to Ukraine.

Nato, created in 1949 to muster Western military superiority over the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe, kept its sights on Russia after the Soviet collapse in 1990. It absorbed new members eastwards (the Baltic States, Poland), reaching Russia's Central European borders, despite pledg-





**Nearly 2-billion people face hunger because of the Ukraine-Russia conflict - the two countries produce a third of the world's grain**

ing not to. So, Russia – which alone lost nearly 14 million of its people in World War 2 following Nazi Germany's invasion (total Soviet losses were some 27-million) – has a deep-rooted fear and suspicion of any military posturing from the West.

But as the Communist Party of Greece sagely pointed out at the start of the Ukraine war: “Irrespective of the pretexts used by both sides, the military conflict in Ukraine is the result of the sharpening of competition between the two warring camps, primarily focused on spheres of influence, market shares, raw materials, energy plans and transport routes; competition which can no longer be resolved by diplomatic-political means and fragile compromises.”

The widening polarisation now gripping global politics and the rippling threats and crises it prompts reflect this.

Countries that try to stand outside the inter-imperialist conflict – especially outside the Western orbit – are populistically condemned as pro-Putin. Much Western mainstream media has gone into deep propaganda mode over the war, castigating any country that does not roundly condemn Russia or unequivocally support Ukraine. All nuance is gone. Within parts of the left in the West there's an often opportunistic loss of bearings, reminiscent of the pro-war stance of some social democratic parties during the First World War and which led to the collapse of the Second International in 1916.

## Now is the time for non-alignment and peace

**W**e need to summon the old spirits of peace and non-alignment and bring these to life inside mass movements that are the only hope of this planet.

It is not merely sentimental to reach back to the past to breathe life into the Non-Aligned Movement of today.

Already the contradictions of the present have raised the spectre of non-alignment in parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

What is needed is an alternative to the two-camp world of the cold war. That is the reason why many of the leaders of these countries — from China's Xi Jinping to India's Narendra Modi to South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa — have called, despite their very different political orientations, for a departure from the “cold war mentality”.

They are already walking toward a new non-aligned platform. It is this actual movement of history that provokes us to reflect on a return to the concepts of non-alignment and peace.— *Morning Star*, UK, 19 April 2022

“Does South Africa support this?” thundered the front-page headline of the *Saturday Citizen*, 9 April. The accompanying photo showed the aftermath of a Russian rocket attack in Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine. The blurb read “Minister Naledi Pandor stood firm, backing South Africa's pro-Russia stance in the Ukraine war, despite a Putin rocket with the words ‘For our children’ on it yesterday tearing through a train station packed with civilians waiting to flee, leaving behind dozens of bodies – including kids – in pools of blood.”

For the *Saturday Citizen*, and in line with the West's torrent of war propaganda, if you don't condemn Russia, you support the slaughter of civilians, including young kids. But South Africa has very clearly not voiced support for Russia since the start of the war. Dircó's first statement on the war, issued 24 February, called on Russia to “immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine”.

South Africa later abstained, together with 37 other countries, in a UN General Assembly vote on a resolution drafted by Ukraine on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine that pinned the blame on Russia. It was titled the Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, and it was supported by 140 states with five against.

South Africa didn't take a pro-Russian position by abstaining. But it did fault the slant of the resolution, where, as South Africa's ambassador to the UN, Mathu Joyini, cautioned: “Instead of placing the humanitarian crisis and our [the UN's] response at the centre of our deliberations, the political divisions in the Assembly suggest that perhaps, in the minds of some delegations, the humanitarian response is secondary to geopolitical objectives.”

For much the same reason South Africa also abstained in an earlier vote on an emergency resolution of the General Assembly, passed immediately after the Russian invasion.

South Africa's own resolution on resolving the humanitarian crisis was titled the Humanitarian situation emanating out of the conflict in Ukraine. It avoided apportioning blame for the humanitarian crisis, and for good reason: the only way to mediate an easing of tensions in any armed conflict to aid civilians is not to mouth off about blame.

That's basic to the ABCs of peace mediation. Unless, that is, you don't really want such mediation in the first place. Ukraine's resolution, which had

90 sponsors, was more about using the UN as a circus to isolate and castigate Russia than doing anything to ease the horrific plight of civilians in Ukraine, which would require bringing Russia on board.

South Africa's resolution was defeated by a vote of 50 for and 67 against. South Africa officials were, according to the Daily Maverick, "not too dismayed because they had not lobbied anyone very hard to support their resolution".

Maybe they should have, because South Africa's approach relates strongly to how countries like it could bring about positive change amid today's triple horrors of the climate emergency, the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and a sharpened imperialist war drive.

There's a desperate need now for the

creative diplomacy, peace mediation and non-offensive defence modelling that non-alignment in global politics could provide.

South Africa's UN resolution on Ukraine hinted at this. It was a serious but not-serious-enough attempt to achieve something worthwhile that entailed going against the grain of Western (US-Nato-EU) diktat. It's made all the harder because the UN, once central to efforts to reduce inter-state tensions, is increasingly sidelined, all too often, as we have seen recently, a catwalk for imperialist swagger.

Non-alignment is not fence-sitting, nor, as the *Citizen* and other mainstream media would have it, arse licking an aggressor. It's tuned into the need to end war and conflict and build international

relations on purely cooperative bases. That's precisely what workers and the poor in South Africa and around the world sorely need.

Non-alignment often means standing up to imperialism's ready resort to war, but also developing forms of common security that work. Recent calls to revamp and reassert the Non-Aligned Movement (see box) suggest that such ideas are now spreading. South Africa has a clear role to play here, and it should do so urgently because we're really running out of time to avert the worst. ●

*Cde Waller is a sub-editor on Umsebenzi and the AC, a member of the Communist Party of Finland and editor at the World Peace Council in Helsinki.*



**The founders of the Non-Aligned Movement (from left): India's Jawaharlal Nehru, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, Indonesia's Sukarno and Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito**

**T**he Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) with its 118 member states, is the largest grouping of countries outside of the United Nations itself, making of it a crucial lobby in global affairs. It was created in the aftermath of the 1950-53 Korean War to counterbalance the polarisation of the geopolitical tension between the US and Nato on one side and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) comprising the Soviet Union and its East European allies on the other.

But the principles of non-alignment were not based on 'a plague on both your houses' approach. The point was to foster economic and cultural cooperation between the participants to oppose colonialism and neo-colonialism. In this it had a ready ally in the then

## The non-aligned movement

socialist world. The precursor of the NAM was the great Bandung Conference of 30 Afro-Asian nations in 1955.

The NAM was established in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961 at the initiative of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah and Indonesian President Sukarno. This led to the first conference of non-aligned countries the same year. The term Non-Aligned Movement was first used at the fifth conference of the participants in 1976.

The aims of the NAM was summed up by Cde Fidel Castro in 1979 as to ensure "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries" in their "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as against great power and bloc politics".

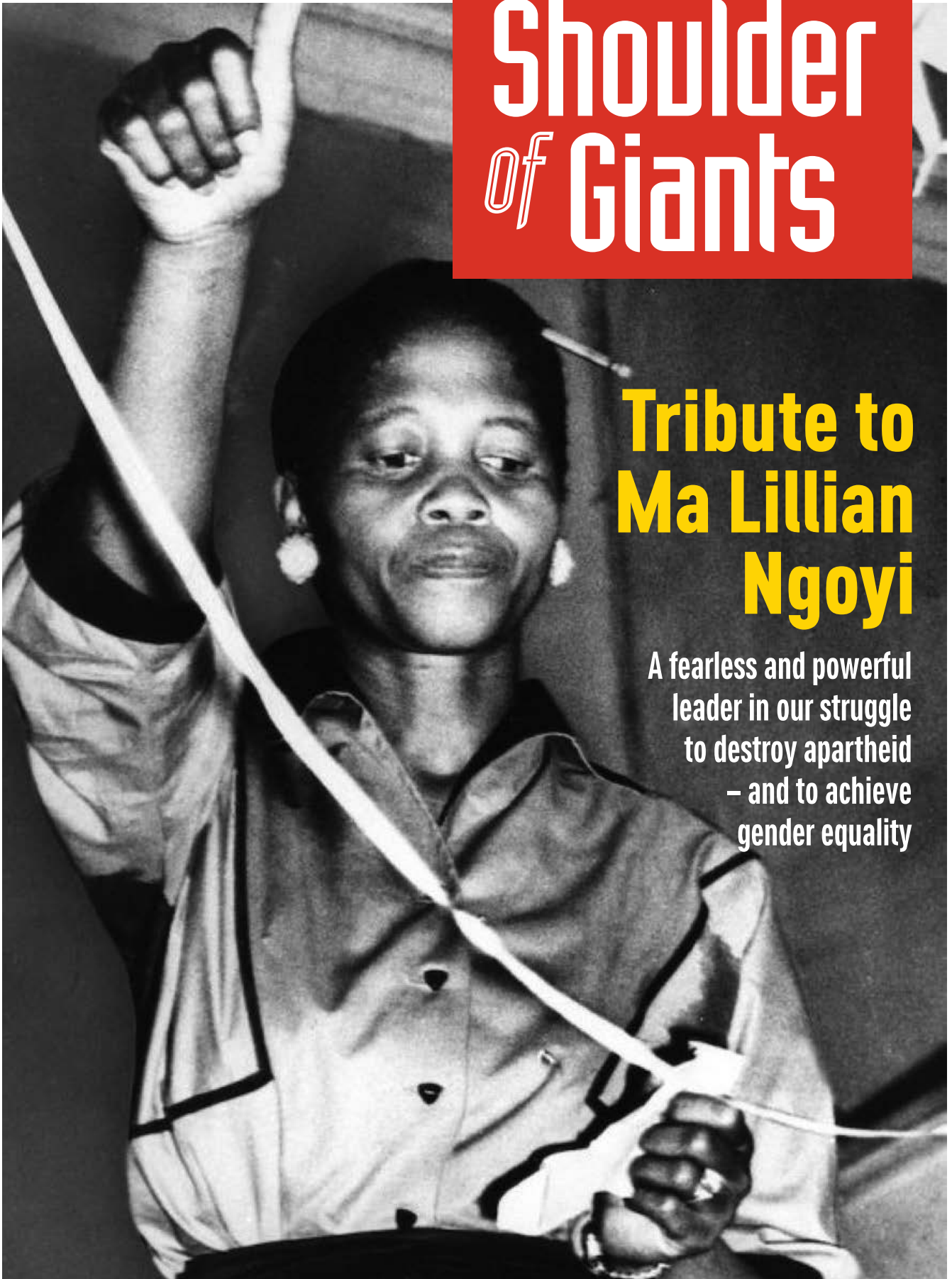
Since its inception, the NAM has played a crucial and highly visible political role in representing the interests of developing countries, particularly in the eradication of colonialism, supporting struggles for liberation and self-determination, the pursuit of world peace and the search for a more equitable and just global order.

SUPPLEMENT TO  
**UMSEBENZI**  
MAY 2022

# On The Shoulder *of* Giants

## Tribute to Ma Lillian Ngoyi

A fearless and powerful  
leader in our struggle  
to destroy apartheid  
– and to achieve  
gender equality





More than 20 000 women stand silently in the Union Buildings amphitheatre on 9 August 1956 ...

*This first edition of the occasional **On the Shoulders of Giants** series in Umsebenzi is based on a memorial lecture delivered by SACP Deputy Chair Thulas Nxesi in March 2022 to mark the 42nd anniversary of Cde Ngoyi's death.*



*Supplement authors:  
Cdes **Jenny Schreiner**  
and **Thulas Nxesi***

## Remembering Ma Lillian Ngoyi

**W**hen Cde Lillian Masediba Ngoyi died on 13 March 1980, aged 68, we placed her name first on the list of heroines who struggled not only against racist domination, but also for the mobilisation of all the women of South Africa to fight this system. In this our centenary year, we as the South African Communist Party have joined hands with the family of MaNgoyi and our alliance partners to salute this giant among liberation fighters, and to recognise the breadth of her role in our history. We salute her as a worker, as a woman, as a mother, as an orator supreme, as an organiser and as a leader of courage and determination.

As we commemorate her extraordinary life, we reflect on the living and working conditions of working class women today and ask if we are doing enough to transform their existence to one that matches up to MaNgoyi's vision of a liberated South Africa. Working class women today continue to face unemployment, poverty, and hunger. They have inadequate access to neces-

sary water, sanitation, energy, transport and health care. Many working class women are in the unprotected informal economy, battling for survival of their families. We face the scourge of domestic and gender-based violence and femicide. Our families are riven by substance abuse and lack of healthy recreational facilities.

We have made significant gains. All women have the right to vote and be voted for – a central demand of the 1954 Women's Charter. Girls and young women are far advanced in education and working class young women can use Nsfas to access higher education. But the inequality in education access and infrastructure for working class girls remains a big challenge. Austerity budgeting has rolled back many of the gains made for women, and spending cuts tend to be in areas that increase the burden of the responsibility for social reproduction in the household that impacts directly on women.

The struggle to dismantle patriarchy, to transform the marginal role of



**FSAW leaders Lillian Ngoyi, Rahima Moosa (left), Helen Joseph (second from right) and Sophie Williams carry anti-pass petitions into the Union Buildings**

women in the occupational division of labour in all sectors of the economy into a central role, and to transform the women's burden of unpaid reproductive labour in the home and community must go hand in hand with each other and be integrated into our programme of action. While it is necessary that we should have a stronger focus on reproductive labour, on gender-based violence, on equality in the economy and workplace, none of these can be seen alone as a sufficient tool for this revolutionary struggle.

The story of Lillian's early life is informative. Lillian was born in a small village Ga-Matlala outside Pretoria in 1911, the daughter of a mineworker and a washerwoman. With the meagre wages he received, Lillian's father took her through primary school at the Kilnerton Institute in Pretoria, but due to lack of funds she quit school after Std 6 (Grade 8). She went to the City Deep Mine Hospital, where she worked as a probationer. Soon thereafter she got married, but her husband died in the next few

years. Lillian later did some training in nursing, but financially could not pursue that field either. This forced her to work as a machinist in a clothing factory from 1945 to 1956. She joined the Garment Workers' Union, one of the most active unions at the time, led by communist Solly Sachs. Here she developed her determination to struggle for the right of her fellow workers for better conditions and the right of her own people to freedom and justice. Her work in the union should inspire all working-class women to join and be active in your trade union, and where may not be one, form one.

**T**he Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 ushered in widespread repression of union leaders. In 1952, Cde Sachs was forced out of his position of General Secretary of Garment Workers' Union, and about 27000 workers gathered in protest outside Joburg City Hall. The police moved in, arrested Sachs at the start of his speech, and violent confrontation between workers and police

ensued. This confrontation included many women workers being severely beaten, including Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Mary Moodley, a leader from SA Coloured People's Organisation on East Rand. This was a clear warning to women – defy the state and you will be treated roughly. This repression came at time of an upswell of political activism by women in response to threat of passes, and the defiance campaign, but without the trade unions of that time, many working-class women would never have found the means to participate in the women's movement of the 1950s. Today we call on women workers in the formal economy, in the public service and public sector, and in the informal economy to take your place in the ranks of the Women's League, take your organisations into the Progressive Women's Movement, and join the communist party to strengthen the struggle against patriarchy and for gender equality in all spheres of society from a working class perspective.

Lillian's background was largely apolitical. Her family's answer to the hardships and inequalities they experienced was to seek comfort and hope in religion. Increasingly this failed to satisfy Ngoyi and for her the Defiance Campaign in which thousands of people participated in defying all apartheid institutions, offered a dynamic, political alternative. She was arrested for using whites-only post office facilities. This campaign was also an important stimulus for the ANC Women's League in key areas of Rand where she played an important role, and Eastern Cape, with many new recruits entering politics.

Ngoyi rose rapidly within the ANC post 1952. Her flair for public speaking was soon discovered and she became a regular feature on ANC platforms. She had a natural gift as an organiser and a simple, down to earth but dynamic personality. She won the hearts of the thousands of ANC members and supporters, particularly women, who saw in MaNgoyi a true example of what a worker, a housewife, a mother and a daughter can achieve for the liberation of our people.

In 1953 the Transvaal Women's League organised an International Working Women's Day event for first time, taking over the function from the now banned CPSA. This signalled a willingness of the Women's League to take



One of the many women's anti-pass protests leading to the massive march on the Union Buildings on 9 September 1956

a more active lead in organising women to promote greater awareness of their position in society.

MaNgoyi was active in the formation of the non-racial and broad Federation of South African Women (FSAW) launched in April 1954. Here she worked shoulder to shoulder with many communist women – Ray Alexander, Dora Tamana, Josie Mpama, among others. The concept of a broad, non-racial, and working class oriented women's movement had long been considered in the debates in the CPSA, which had a strong focus on organising working class women in the 1940s. Women activists recognised that not every woman was interested in joining the ANC, and that in fact, some women were afraid of it, so they wanted an organisation that would involve all women – church women, trade union women and as well as women from the Congress organisations – the Women's League, the South African Indian Congress, the SA Coloured People's Organisation and Congress of Democrats. MaNgoyi became one of the four national vice-presidents of the

Federation by virtue of her being President of the Transvaal branch. At FSAW's founding conference Lillian Ngoyi was applauded when she complained that if husbands had not kept back their wives there would have been many more delegates present, saying: "The husbands talked of democracy but did not practice it." She also spoke strongly against Bantu Education system that the apartheid regime was imposing, saying: "Bantu education makes African women like fowls laying their eggs for others to take away and do what they like with."

**M**aNgoyi was elected on the NEC of the ANC in 1955, elected President of the ANC Women's League in 1956, and elected president of the federation at the second conference in August 1956. Drum magazine recognised her as one of "the new tough type of women leaders, the woman factory worker who is tough as granite on the outside, but soft and compassionate deep in her..."

The FSAW recognised the need to

send tested cadres of the revolutionary movement to foreign countries to further explain our struggle and to rally international support and solidarity with our struggle from democratic and peace-loving forces the world over. Lillian Ngoyi and Dora Tamana were selected to attend the World Congress of Mothers organised by the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in Lausanne, Switzerland. While abroad for eight months, she and Cde Tamana visited the headquarters of the WIDF, based in the German Democratic Republic – the GDR was one of several socialist countries, including the Soviet Union and China, they visited. They also visited sites of the Nazi extermination camps and returned to South Africa with renewed fervour to fight for the freedom of all humanity. On her return Cde Ngoyi went on a speaking tour across the country, rallying thousands into the Congress movement, and giving her impressions about what she had seen abroad. She held large audiences spell-bound for more than two or three hours at a time!



From 1965, successive banning orders prevented MaNgoyi from working, forcing her to make ends meet by private dressmaking at her Orlando home

In August 1955, the FSAW had its own Congress of Mothers for a report-back. Helen Joseph told the meeting that she had joined a Black Sash organised protest at Union Buildings against passes for African women. This spurred Margaret Gazo, a veteran of Women's League, to propose from the floor that since black women had not been invited to join the protest, they should organise own protest. This led to the mobilisation for a protest on 27 October 1955 by the Transvaal FSAW. This took place against all odds. The Pretoria City Council refused permission for meeting, so a lawyer advised that each woman would have her own signed petition and just happen to all go to Union Buildings in at same time. Then the bus licenses were refused, so women had to use public transport. Between 1 000 and 2 000 women came together in this first non-racial women's protest. The protest was led by Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophie Williams. Carrying the individual signed protests, they ducked through guards and put documents outside cabinet minister's

offices when ministers refused to see them.

At this time the anti-pass campaign was intense. In January 1956, MaNgoyi addressed a huge gathering of 6 000 men and women in Port Elizabeth on the anti-pass campaign, from the back of a truck. In early 1956, Cde Ruth First found out that the government was to begin issuing reference books to women in Winburg in the Free State and began a media campaign to block the move. MaNgoyi, then newly elected National President of the ANC Women's League, skipped into the district and held a meeting with the Winburg women. At the meeting they also had a report back from the delegate who had attended the ANC-organised Anti-Pass Conference held in Johannesburg in early April 1956. Spurred by the presence of their national leader, the women decided spontaneously that the only response to the newly-issued passes was to burn them. The next day they collected a pile of reference books (passes) marched to the magistrate's office and publicly torched the lot.

The experience of the 1955 October March led to the FSAW deciding to mobilise for a national event. MaNgoyi and scores of other women leaders, including Helen Joseph, Dorothy Nyembe, Frances Baard, Sophie Williams, Dora Tamana, Lillian Deidericks, set out to organise women across the country for the demonstration against the extension of the hated pass laws to women. Ngoyi and Joseph were called by senior Congress leaders to secret meeting, secret because many of them were banned, in week before 1956 protest and asked if they were aware of the responsibility for gathering of thousands of women in face of possible police interference, and what would happen if as leaders they were arrested.

**T**estimony to the determination and courage of these women leaders, MaNgoyi's response was that "other leaders would take our place". On 9 August 1956, while Prime Minister JG Strijdom remained out of sight, 20000 women led by Lillian Ngoyi, overflowed the amphitheatre of the Union Buildings, stood for silence for 30 minutes then sang *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*, rocking the cabinet and the country as a whole, to the realisation that African women said no to passes. So powerful was the march that a year later, in 1957, the first women's day was celebrated, with women holding widespread meetings, and deputations of women descending on native commissioner's offices across the country.

Ever brave, Lillian Ngoyi visited Zeerust area during the anti-pass campaign and unrest of 1967 which had seen deaths and many fleeing the violence. She secretly met with women. The FSAW had organised funding for bail and legal defence, provided by Shulamith Muller, a communist and member of COD.

At the 1959 Women's League conference, Cde Ngoyi provided leadership in responding to the anxiety of the women for continued action, while respecting respect for the leading role of the ANC in campaign: "It is important to understand that the struggle against passes is controlled directly by the ANC. The struggle of the women is merely part of the general struggle of the African people ... Nothing must be done to curb the initiative of the women; at the same

time, women must discuss each stage of the campaign of the mother body. The impression seems to be gaining ground that the women are courageous and militant while men sit frightened and timid; this idea is harmful to the internal discipline and harmony [which] now should exist." This relationship between autonomous women's action and male dominance in organisations remains an ever present challenge.

On behalf of FSAW, in 1957 MaNgoyi raised her voice during an appeal for funds in support of left journalism, saying that "New Age<sup>1</sup> is the only newspaper which fearlessly presents to the world the truth about the conditions of the oppressed people in South Africa." She paved the way for us by showing that fund raising for the movement is an important political task, much as it is today. There is another anecdote of how Cdes Walter Sisulu and Alfred Nzo went to MaNgoyi's house for a fundraising party, only to have the Security Police arrest all three of them for breaking their banning orders – they faced three days in jail, then the charges were dropped!

The apartheid regime metered out brutal harassment and suppression of leading activists. MaNgoyi was one of those who was a victim of this constant intimidation. In December 1956 she was arrested and stood trial in the Treason Trial along with 156 leaders. She was detained for five months during the 1960 State of Emergency. At the collapse of the Treason Trial in 1961, Lillian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph were the only women trialists left.

The banning of organisations and state of emergency was severe. But in 1961, the FSAW showed signs of revival. Innovatively, they established community based clubs, called Save Our Families Clubs, among African women, with the intention that these could affiliate to FSAW and replace the now

i. New Age was a progressive, anti-apartheid newspaper founded in 1954 and banned in 1963. Ruth First, Govan Mbeki and Brian and Sonya Bunting were among the underground communists to serve on its editorial board. Editions of New Age can be found at: <https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/new-age-1954-1963>. The paper was a successor to Congress-aligned papers banned by the apartheid government, *The Guardian* and *Advance*. It had no connection to the newspaper of the same name launched in 2010 by the Gupta brothers.



MaNgoyi in her heyday - a powerful national voice for the ANC and president of the ANC Women's League

banned ANC Women's League. Lillian Ngoyi continued to be active in FSAW in this period, and in particular spoke out at the September 1961 FSAW conference, against white women forming pistol clubs in response to the launching of armed struggle, as a disgrace to womanhood and anti-peace. Banning orders were imposed on FSAW leaders in 1962, including Lillian Ngoyi – who had a 10-year banning order slapped on her – Helen Joseph, and Florence Matomela (Eastern Cape). This impacted negatively on the work of the Federation, which was planning for a conference in 1963.

In early 1969, Cdes Joyce Sikhakhane and Rita Ndzanga approached Lillian Ngoyi, at the request of Cde Winnie Mandela, telling they wished to join the underground. The two comrades had already approached and been turned down by Albertina Sisulu who also advised them that their profile was too high to be involved in the underground. It is reported that MaNgoyi bluntly said "You Joyce, when the security police

give you electric shocks to in your genitals, what will you do? Can you guarantee that you will not talk?" She cautioned the two women against getting involved in reckless activities. They ignored the advice of the two veteran leaders and were arrested and detained along with 22 activists under the detention-without-trial clause (Section 6) of the Terrorism Act. But despite her advice to others to be cautious, MaNgoyi's ongoing involvement in political activity was unshaken.

MaNgoyi's first 10-year ban elapsed at a time when a new generation had emerged and was carrying on the struggle from the ranks of the black consciousness movement. Many leaders of these movements sought MaNgoyi's advice on numerous issues and asked her to address their meetings. She was readily available for any task put before her, undaunted by the constant harassment she was facing. Not surprisingly, her banning orders were renewed in 1975. Unable to work because of her bans, she continued to do private dressmaking at her Orlando home to make ends meet.



Women, women everywhere: 20 000 women anti-pass marchers on 9 August 1956 overflow the Union Buildings' amphitheatre

When Cde Bram Fischer, Chairperson of the SACP, died on 8 May 1975, Cde Lillian Ngoyi sent a message to his funeral. As a Treason Trialist she had been defended by Bram Fischer. She made it clear that the meaning of Bram's life extended much further than the walls of Pretoria Local Prison or the white world from which he had come. "We, the blacks of South Africa, mourn the death of a statesman, a hero of the liberation struggle... With the change that will come in the years ahead, our children will know that South Africa bore a son like you. Blacks everywhere dedicate themselves to carry on from where you have left off. We bear in mind today the men of Robben Island and all political prisoners. Bram, we will always remember you." The bonds between her and Bram Fischer, between her and Helen Joseph who chose to lie beside her friend in death, reflect the very deep non-racialism of our movement. This too is something we should reflect on as we build our democratic South African nation.

In her last years, Ma Lillian Ngoyi, living in Mzimhlophe, was still banned.

Her house was close to where Cde Albertina Sisulu worked and MaNgoyi would sometimes slip in as a patient to see her. After her death following a short illness, MaSisulu and MaJoseph, both banned, had to apply for permission to attend Lillian's funeral – true to their racism, apartheid security bosses granted permission to Helen Joseph but not Albertina Sisulu.

**A**s we reflect in 2022 on her life of dedication and unpretentiousness, her selflessness and her devotion to the cause of freedom, we find a shining example not only to the women of South Africa but to women of the world. She was able to combine her role as a widowed mother of two, the sole support of her ageing mother, with ongoing work as an activist and leader of organisations. Now as we face challenges in our national democratic revolution, as we struggle against unemployment and poverty, against the impact of climate change, against the scourges of crime, violence, substance abuse and other manifesta-

tions of the crisis of social reproduction and as we fight to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic, this is a life, this is a leader who we should hold up as a beacon of how we should be in society.

As we move towards our 15th Congress in July, where we will refine our strategic perspectives and tasks for the South African road to socialism, we call for the building of meaningful black working women's leadership in all economic sectors (both productive and reproductive) in not less than the proportions of women working in each sector; for strengthening the role of women workers in all levels of new emerging forms of work in the fourth industrial revolution (platform economy, gig economy, etc) and for the development of a socialist policy on sex work in consultation with organised sex workers in South Africa and internationally.

The task of fighting patriarchy is not only an exclusive reserve for women within the Party but requires the entire SACP in full commitment. A solid and measurable programme must emerge and be embedded to every aspect of

the programmatic pursuit of the Party. In all our seven key sites of power as enunciated in the South African road to socialism, the fight against patriarchy must be asserted to loom large as a particular and specific enhancement of that key site of power. Red October campaigns must be gendered in their outlook, as a permanent feature of the SACP. If gendering a campaign or programme is not taken seriously at all levels of the Party, this must automatically disqualify such a programme as completely implemented, until it shows vividly how it impacts on improving the lives and status of women in society, especially the working class women. It is this rigidity that will superimpose the responsibility of women's struggles to every member of the communist party, without a choice.

Party structures, with our allies, must seek to influence policy and programmatic work and direction of the Department of Women, Youth and People With Disabilities and the Gender Equality Commission.

**W**e must also mobilise and campaign with all national and regional single-issue activists' civil society gender organisations. Some of these are doing a lot of work on gender-based violence (GBV); some are focused on gender and lands rights in rural communities; and others on children's rights. The Party must galvanise these organs of people's power under the common solid platform and offer support system for purposes of wider buy-in. The Party, with the YCLSA, must resurrect the sanitary dignity campaign and robustly engage the Department of Basic Education to formalise the supply of free sanitary towels to the schools located in poverty-stricken communities, such as those classified as No-Fee Schools. No girl must be out of school because of non-affordability of sanitary towels. We must collectively elevate economic struggles for women in the economy, including taking up struggles for women to occupy leadership and executive positions in the corporate sector in line with the provisions of the B-BBEE Act, while also ensuring solidarity support and participation in ongoing trade union workshops to capacitate shop stewards and worker leaders for them to be able to continue advocating for



As in life ... When Helen Joseph died in 1992, she was buried in Avalon cemetery in Soweto, alongside her lifelong comrade, Lillian Ngoyi

the workers. We must take forward the battle of ideas and the programmes for young women development, violence awareness, HIV-Aids workshops, against sexual harassment, and for trainer education workshops, just to mention a few.

Our posture as the SACP is that the social emancipation of South African women is not possible under capitalism. What it requires is embedded gender equality and anti-patriarchal struggle in the organs of people's power from community level to the state, in the family and cultural institutions, in the education and training sector, in the economy and world of work, and in the building of the socialist institutions and practices.

The struggle against patriarchal

oppression and gender inequality is far from over. We commit to build on the shoulders of communist and progressive women who have gone before us, in full appreciation of the class and national content of the gender struggle and the gender content of the class and national struggles. True to their contributions, we will ensure that women are never relegated or pigeonholed to particular roles and tasks in society. This struggle we take forward in the name of our heroine Lillian Masediba Ngoyi, among others, who continues to inspire and guide us through her extraordinary life and contribution to our freedom.

*Malibongwe lamakhosikazi!  
Put people before profit!  
Socialism is the future build it now!*