

HEROINE OF OUR REVOLUTION



LILIAN NGOYI

BOY NXUMALO

Lilian Ngoyi was born in Pretoria in 1912. Her father was a miner and mother a domestic servant. Her religious background made an indelible imprint in her life. Lilian's childhood was that of poverty-deprivation as is the case with many African children. In later years, she had to ask herself this question: "Why can God not answer my parents? Something is wrong. The more we pray, the more poor we are". This is when she realized that something more than praying had to be done.

During those days it was a blessing for an African child to complete higher education. While attending school she had to help her mother with washing of a white woman who employed her. In accordance with Pretoria's laws she was sometimes refused entry into the yard of the white 'lady'. An African child could not be allowed entry while a dog could come in from whatever direction.

Lilian left high school in the first year because her family could no longer bear the expenses of her taxing education which included an annual 12 pounds 10shillings for school fees. She worked to help support her family and immediately came to learn of the South African realities.

Early in her married life she was widowed and with her meagre wage she had to support her three children, her mother and other members of the family, rent for the match-box house, transport fares and poll tax. She resolved to take action against all forms of injustices perpetrated against Africans. At times she had to leave her ailing mother to participate in campaigns against apartheid. Continuous exploitation led her to join the Garment Workers Union which later elected her to its executive committee. In 1952 she was involved in a protest march with her daughter against the banning of GWU Secretary General, Solly Sachs. Incidentally Helen Joseph and Mary Moodley who later became outstanding leaders of our women, were also in this demonstration.

In the same year, Lilian found her place in the African National Congress Women's League. With Ida Mtwana, Bertha Mkhize, Florence Matomela, Ray Alexander and Helen Joseph and other women leaders led the way to the formation of the Federation of the South African Women in 1954. In that founding conference she was elected the

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Vice-President. The valour of the South African women made its landmark when Verwoed, then Minister of Native Affairs decreed that all African women are to carry passes. The enemy had "dislodged a boulder", Mangoyi and thousands of other women from various parts of the country, on August the 9th, 20,000 women strong besieged the Union Buildings in Pretoria led by Helen Joseph and herself.

"All processions to Pretoria were banned that day", as Hilda Bernstein recalls this historic event, "so the women walked to the Union buildings to see the Prime Minister in groups of not more than three. All of Pretoria was filled with women. This was four years before the national liberation movements were banned, and thousands of women wore the green and black congress blouses. Indian women dressed in brilliant saris, Xhosa women in their ochre robes with elaborate headscar-

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ves." J. G. Strydom, the racist prime minister then unaware of the developments outside, absorbed his shock in flight. Francis Baard who was also in the march gives a lucid picture of this corwadike. "He (Strydom) refused to see us...he just ran away, away from us ...We were proud that we went there, although dissapointed not having seen him in person. Still the message was there. We left our message there. He knew by that...we were a lot of people."

FEARLESS FIGHTER

The roaring fifties was a period of trial and tribulations under the reign of the Nationalist Party which assumed power in 1948. From the time it came into power

it assigned itself the task of suppressing all opposition against it. Mangoyi established herself as one of the fearless fighters against this Nazism. Her determination made her the victim of repression and police harassment. However, she is a source of inspiration to many women in our country. In one village in Western Transvaal, out of 400 women only 76 accepted passes. One shall remember that passes were not the only source of torment within the African community. Africans were also forced to drink »kaffir beer» against their traditional brew Umqombothi.

Her indomitable spirit was never broken by banishment during the state of emergency and numerous prison spells she went through. From 1961 she was barred from attending or addressing any gathering until November 1982. She died confined to her house in Orlando. In dipping our revolutionary banner in honour of Mangoyi a very

this courageous woman, we remember her inspiring message during the 1952 march in which she said: "I must say I had a tough time, but my spirits have not been dampened. You can tell my friends all over the world that this old girl is still herself, if not mature after all the experiences. I am looking forward to the day when my children will share in the wealth of our lovely South Africa." It was in appreciation and honour of this trailblazing heroism that the ANC awarded Mangoyi *ISITHWALANDWE* in 1981. It is with pride that in this year of the South African women we furthermore pierce the heart of this already growing Pretoria beast with the sharp spear that has been left by this warrior.

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a powerful weapon with which the workers can defend themselves. All our work has been directed to achieve this goal. It is through unity that we can defend our rights and protect any gains we have achieved through the heroic efforts and sacrifices of our workers. It is through unity that we can then move on to the offensive — by initiating mass national strikes, solidarity actions or joint actions with community organisations.

The struggle by workers for higher wages and better working conditions, is inextricably linked with the struggle for political rights in the land of our birth. Therefore, SACTU's role is to build the necessary unity in order to finally overthrow the oppressive exploitative state. We know no other path of struggle.

But there is a growing attempt by the detractors of our struggle to divide the trade union struggle from the struggle for political rights in the land of our birth. Therefore, SACTU's role is to build the necessary unity in order to finally overthrow the oppressive exploitative state. We know no other path of struggle.

But there is a growing attempt by the detractors of our struggle to divide the trade union struggle from the struggle for national liberation. African Confidential of the 16 December 1983 writes: *«a more difficult long-term problem is the relationship between the black trade unions and the liberation movements»*. It goes further to deliberately distort historical facts by portraying SACTU as the labour wing of the ANC.

CONSTITUTION

Perhaps those who have chosen to spread and believe this big lie need to

be reminded that SACTU was founded in 1955, 33 years after the birth of the ANC. At its founding Conference, SACTU adopted its own Constitution and elected its own National Executive Committee, and this is still the position today. However, we proudly say that SACTU is a component part of the Congress Alliance led by the ANC and adopted the Freedom Charter in 1955. It goes without saying therefore, that SACTU is committed to a revolutionary change in South Africa.

Having said this, we are surprised that the ICFTU Coordinating Committee on South Africa at its 22nd Meeting held in Brussels, Belgium on the 3rd and 4th November writes: *«it is disquieting to note that SACTU is increasingly trying to take credit for developments inside South Africa, as this could seriously prejudice the progress the independent black trade union movement is making»*.

We say that this is our struggle. It is a struggle for which Vuyisile Mini, Mkhabela, Khayinga, Ndzanga, Mdluli, Jabu Nyaose (Nzima), Mpongoshe, William Khanyile and hundreds more laid down their lives. Who else should take credit for these victories in our struggle, if not us, the executors of our struggle?

UNITE UNDER SACTU

What «progress» does the ICFTU want to see in our country? The birth of toothless trade unions fighting for industrial peace in the midst of apartheid exploitation? The ICFTU deliberately plays ignorant of the reality of the situation inside South Africa, in order to confuse and mislead the international trade union movement. ICFTU painstakingly hides the fact that SAAWU, at its 1983 Congress called upon all the democratic trade unions to *unite under the banner of SACTU*. ICFTU shies away from in-

forming the world that during the unity initiative by democratic trade unions to form a national federation, the preamble to SACTU's Constitution was adopted by July 1983 meeting of the Feasibility Committee, as that for the envisaged national federation.

There are determined efforts by the ICFTU affiliated unions like the Swedish LO/TCO, Dutch FNV, Canadian Labour Congress, and others to undermine and divert the revolutionary path of struggle followed by the militant working class, who are locked in battle with the bosses, transnational corporations and the apartheid regime. The stake of foreign investors in our country is high and the capitalist countries live in mortal fear of any revolutionary change in South Africa.

The funding of trade unions in South Africa is aimed at corrupting and buying over the trade union leadership in order to alienate them from the workers. Such «aid» is obviously politically motivated and has the desire to imbue our trade union movement with reformist tendencies. The exorbitant funding of workers' education is aimed at «educating» our trade union leadership to become obedient and dedicated servants of management and bosses. This is why today a sum of 1 115 325 pounds have been set aside by the ICFTU for the «education» of the black trade unionists. In addition, the benevolent US Ambassador to racist South Africa has recently stated that an amount of 1 million US dollars has been set aside by the US Government for the coming Federation.

PRETORIA'S CRIMES

We in SACTU, on behalf of our workers say: *«There can be no peace*

in Southern Africa or South Africa as long as the illegal Pretoria regime remains in power. How can there be peace when 20 000 children die in South Africa every year from malnutrition? When thousands of black people are forcibly removed and dumped in the Bantustans to die of starvation? When workers are shot dead for demanding a living wage? When we can no longer count the crimes perpetrated daily by the racist Pretoria regime? There can be no peace while the apartheid colonialist regime is the bedrock of international tension. No worker can call himself or herself free while workers in other countries are groaning under the heavy yoke of oppression and exploitation».

We shall continue to intensify our organisational capacities inside the factories, compounds, mines and on the farms. SACTU is rooted there amongst the workers and no amount of treachery or intrigue from foreign trade union centres will change this.

We do not want money that is stained with the blood of the workers from Chile, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Angola, Lesotho or anywhere else in the world.

We wish to restate our commitment to the total overthrow of the illegal Pretoria regime. To achieve this goal, we appeal to you in the international labour movement to play your internationalist duty in supporting by all means at your disposal, the struggling workers of South Africa, in consultation with SACTU.

**AN INJURY TO ONE
IS AN INJURY TO ALL!**