

SACP
Kimberley District



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OF THE PROLETARIAT

**WOMEN'S
EDITION**



SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE / BUILD IT NOW!

1956

Women's March

By Michia Moncho



The women's anti-pass campaign became synonymous with the struggle and continued to inspire generations of women beyond the dawn of democracy.

As South Africa commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the Women's March to the Union Buildings, we are reminded of women like Rahima Moosa, Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Sophie de Bruin who against all odds, presented a petition against the carrying of passes to the then Prime Minister JG Strydom. The women's anti-pass campaign became synonymous with the struggle and continued to inspire generations of women beyond the dawn of democracy. We need to remind ourselves that as women activists and progressives to use theory and practice based on historic and current material conditions to fast track the shaping and changing of the lives of all women, especially those who may not have the luxury of being exposed to this analysis of dialectic materialism. The continued struggles of rural women should not be discarded in this equation as it begs more attention. They, like all of us, must benefit from our actions, we who refer to ourselves as progressives, yet learn to assist in advancing the lives of all, including our oppressors.

Like many other women from the past like Ruth Mompati, Lilian Ngoyi, and others; as

women we need to draw life lessons from them. They stood against patriarchy and chauvinistic tendencies that thrived under apartheid regime much more than it is in our democratic dispensation. They sacrificed their time and resources to ensure the struggle for women is advanced. We need to look closely at these organisations that say they are for the interests of women, organisations such as the ANCWL and PWMSA. Do they still abide by their founding principles, another question would be are they still for emancipation of women

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struggles? What tools of analysis ought to be used in gauging the gains made? Or would it be fair to dismiss them as one would also argue that they are seen as employment and deployment agencies for aspirant middle class and petty bourgeoisie women?

Vladimir Lenin argued that if women are not drawn into public activity, into militia and political lives and not tear

women away from the deadening atmosphere of household and kitchen; then it is impossible to build democracy. On the other hand, one of Africa's foremost sons, former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan asserted that: *"Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building governance."*

It has been difficult for women's views to find expression in stressing their views and sugges-

tions. Women from around the world have been shut out of the machinery that oils and drive the world. Only until recently have we been afforded a chance to part take in critical, crucial and strategic sites of power.

Therefore in finding common ground in the perspectives of Lenin and Annan, the question then becomes why is the “developmental state” not investing much more in women empowerment which will certainly translate into much more benefits for succeeding generations? This



ought to be done with utmost urgency; more women in leadership positions, and more women in decision making positions that seeks to address issues of grassroots poverty.

Maybe we need to look back into where it all comes from. Frederick Engels wrote a document titled, “Family, private property and state.” The document seeks to outline the common, interdependent origin of private property and the state, the fall of women into the oppressive condition which they subsequently continue to suffer, and the institutions of money, writing and law. Women were once treated as equals. In fact, the question of who is above who never existed until the privatisation of property. This led to the privatization of women into property for men.

South Africa, mainly Africa in particular, had been subjected to immense respect for men in their respective tribes. Many had and still play critical roles and take crucial decisions. Women played an important role in liberating South Africa. Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) led the drafting of the Women Char-

ter, a year before the Freedom Charter was drafted and introduced. We now hear nothing of the Women Charter. Our role in the struggle is mainly portrait as wives, mothers, daughters and sisters of heroes.

Let us not for a day forget the role played by women in the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa. For example, the rural boycotts against taxes and land invasions, the anti-pass protests, Women- and Freedom Charter, our role in 1976 and around 1980’s State of Emergency, when our

mothers went into bars and taverns to urge men to stop drinking and fight the apartheid system. Ours is now to identify the role of women of today. Substance abuse, domestic and human rights abuse, advancing and enhancing affirma-

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tive action and most importantly; empowering the powerless, fighting for the weak and not hurting the vulnerable. The recent income statistics show that female headed families earns an average of R2000 monthly and whereas male headed families have an average income of R6000 per month.

Ours should be about us coming together and mobilising women for self-reliance in

wealth creation, exploiting their domestic skills that they have acquired as a result of the triple oppression to advance and better their social standing in society. Let us come together and build on the foundation laid for us by the women of 1956, and continue to take the struggles of women forward.

Aluta!

Michia Moncho is a Provincial Committee Member of the YCLSA in the Northern Cape.



Progressive Women

By Eunice Bojozi



“You strike a woman, you strike a rock” (“Wathiti bafazi wathiti bokoto”).

When we remember the protests of 1956, we must also remember the women of today who are playing vital roles in our communities.

Together we fought apartheid and overcome it! And together we can fight unemployment, poverty, and inequality and bring to an end to the challenges that reproduces social and economic problems. It is not a secret that the role of women in these struggles continues to be just as vital as the struggle against apartheid.

All though discrimination on the basis of gender has been made illegal by our own constitution a lot of work still has to be done on the ground before women could enjoy real social and economic freedom. Non-sexism therefore continues to remain a strategic objective of in our revolution.

While female activists supported the goal of the struggle against racism throughout our history, they also supported each other in the struggle of women against sexism and patriarchy. In these struggles they found common ground with all women regardless of race or class and created a non-racial organisation long before men did.

Women embraced the idea of mass campaigns and went to jail and endured detention for their protests.

Ntate Chief Albert Luthuli said “women shouldered equal responsibilities with men in the defiance campaign of 1952.” The 1954 women charter said that the law has become an obstacle to the progress of women and therefore on the whole society this would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of large sections of our male counterparts to concede to us women, the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves.

Today the South African government has got more female representatives than most other governments in the world.

Although there are lot of problems that women are still facing in our society today, I want to single out the problem of inequality between men and women. We still find that females are being measured inferior to men, they cannot get equal opportunities as men. Certain positions

are addressed to belong to men. For example in our own political arenas most women are often elected to the position of Treasurer and not as Chairpersons or Secretaries.

The African Union declared the period from 2010 – 2020 as a decade of women. In 2012 it also elected its first female leader, Dr Nkosazana

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Dlamini Zuma. Our government demonstrated its commitment and political will towards women with the creation of the Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities

In 1990 the ANC expanded its concept of liberation to include gender equality as one of its central goals.

Chief Albert Luthuli, President of the ANC in 1962 said that the weight

of resistance has been greatly increased in the last few years by the emergence of our women. It may even be true that, had the women hung back, resistance would still be faltering and uncertain. Further more women of all races had far less hesitation than men in making common cause about things that are important for them.

Some obstacles still remains in our fight to promote gender equality:

- Strong cultural and traditional practices construing the progress of achieving gender parity.
- Discrimination practices towards the advancement of women is a huge challenge.
- Lack of ratification of instructs that pro-

mote gender equality.

• Ineffective institutional and policy implementation mechanisms.

- African women, especially those living in rural communities, and those with disabilities still face exclusion from participating in development processes that can empower them and improve gender equality.

Ntate Mandela said in 1994 that freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated. He further said that as long as women are bound by poverty and as long as they are looked down upon human rights will lack substance.

In conclusion

Let us continue to empower women as they are capacitated to build a sustainable society by electing women in leadership positions and break the dependence on the exploitative capitalist mode. We are calling to the appointment of capable women as Mayors, Municipal Managers

and Head of Departments.

Amandla!

Cde Eunice Bojozi is a District Executive Committee member of the SACP in the Kimberley District.



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