**South African History Journal Special Edition – You strike a woman, you strike a rock: Women fighting against apartheid**

**South African Women and Black Internationalism**

The World Congress of Mothers began on the 7th July 1955. Organized by the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the conference brought together 964 delegates from 66 countries in Lausanne, Switzerland, with the stated aim of protecting “our children from all threats of war and to assure them a future of happiness and peace.”[[1]](#footnote-1) As a left-wing membership organization committed to feminist and anticolonial politics, the WIDF embraced the symbolic and performative politics of motherhood to challenge gender, race and class inequalities on a global scale.[[2]](#footnote-2) The congress demanded disarmament and self-determination for all regardless of race, linking the politics of the Cold War and decolonization to material issues relating to health, education, work and wages that shaped women’s lives on a daily basis.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Delegates from ten African countries travelled to the World Congress of Mothers.[[4]](#footnote-4) Amongst them was Lilian Ngoyi, who chaired the second session of the conference. Attending as the Vice-President of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the President of the African National Congress Women’s League (ANC-WL), Ngoyi recalled that, “I presided, not forgetting I was doing so on behalf of the struggling women of South Africa, women who never know any joy whatsoever, and on behalf of the struggling women of our country, African, Indian, Coloured and European." She noted how delegates “asked many questions,” including “What is apartheid? What are the pass laws? What is Bantu Education?” adding that, “To my answers, there were cries of ‘Shame!”[[5]](#footnote-5) Ngoyi also detailed the mass civil disobedience associated with the 1952 Defiance Campaign, while also describing the importance of the Congress of the People and the meaning of the Freedom Charter, which had been adopted less than two weeks prior to the gathering in Lausanne. Dora Tamana – of FEDSAW, the ANC-WL and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) – also made the journey with Ngoyi. She was scheduled to deliver a speech at the congress on the experiences of African women under apartheid, however ill health meant she wasn’t able to attend the proceedings in person. Nonetheless, her travels had a profound effect on her life and politics, with Tamana commenting that during her time abroad, “I tasted a new world and a new heaven…I have seen many things to give me added confidence in the future of our country and people,” while adding, “We have millions of friends overseas who are with us, who understand our struggle for freedom and who are on our side.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Following proceedings in Switzerland, the WIDF published a short pamphlet that focused specifically on the presence of African women at the World Congress of Mothers. Forcefully denouncing racism and colonial oppression, the WIDF spoke to the African delegates, asserting that, “The unity of all African women in the common struggle of women of the whole world and of all peaceful forces will assure a happy future for all children and the whole of humanity.” Adding in the foreword to the pamphlet that, “Your participation represents something new and of great importance in the history of women of Africa, in the history of your people… You came to the Congress and you spoke to the women of the whole world. Who could tell the suffering of the women of Africa and of their desire for peace and happiness better than you mothers of Senegal, the Ivory Coast, the Congo, Madagascar, South Africa and Morocco?”[[7]](#footnote-7)

The involvement of Ngoyi and Tamana with the WIDF and the World Congress of Mothers demonstrates the global outlook of the African women who were at the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle. While the national liberation struggle within South Africa was always their primary focus, these travels speak to how African women were central to the politics of Black internationalism throughout the twentieth century. This experience placed both women at the heart of the geopolitics of the Cold War and the global struggle for decolonization, while also providing them with the opportunity to forge transnational solidarities and exchange ideas that they believed would aid them in their struggle to dismantle the apartheid system. As Ngoyi commented following the Congress, “I cannot find words to express my gratitude for all that I have seen during my recent visits. Without the Women's International Democratic Federation I would never have been able to meet so many women from other countries. It is good that you know that our visit abroad has marked a new page in the life of South Africa."[[8]](#footnote-8)

**Black Internationalism: Geography and Gender**

Black internationalism refers to the political and cultural practices by which people of African descent the world over have interacted with one another to resist the racial hierarchies integral to slavery, empire and imperialism. In their seminal edited collection, *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, Michael O. West, William G. Martin and Fanon Che Wilkins insist that Black internationalism has “a single defining characteristic: struggle.” Recognizing the political, intellectual and creative work integral to these histories, they argue that these forms of global Black activism are always, “a product of consciousness, that is, the conscious interconnection and interlocution of black struggles across man-made and natural boundaries – including the boundaries of nations, empires, continents, oceans, and seas,” while concluding that, “From the outset, black internationalism envisioned a circle of universal emancipation, unbroken in space and time.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

In more recent years, historical studies have emphasized how the global outlook of people of African descent has not always been limited to Africa or the African diaspora. As Monique Bedasse has noted, “Unlike Pan-Africanism, Black internationalism also covers the different ways that Black people have connected with non-Black people, not through a sense of common struggle (empathy, shared heritage, culture, and so forth) but based on a commitment to a larger principle, such as self-determination or human equality.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Black internationalism then, encompasses the entirety of global Black thought. It is a way of considering how people of African descent have worked to transcend boundaries of race, ethnicity and nation to a imagine a better world free from racism and economic exploitation. Given the bold liberatory aims of the movements and individuals who engaged in this expansive form of politics, it is impossible to account for Black internationalism without acknowledging the tensions and complications that were part of these efforts to construct similarity out of difference.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Regional location, issues of class and gender (especially in relation to how this shaped people’s ability to move/be mobile,) as well as obstacles of language and culture, have all shaped the character and practices of Black internationalism. Tiffany Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley’s observations on the politics of the African diaspora are relevant here. Famously, they assert that the construction of the African diaspora “is both a process and condition” – a ‘process’ in the way that diasporas are produced by movement, cultural expression and political action, and a ‘condition’ in the sense that these diasporic identities are always produced “within the context of global race and gender hierarchies.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Given the centrality of the African diaspora as an identity formation integral to the forging of Black international solidarities, this observation is useful in that is stresses the need to be attentive to the disparate power relations that inevitably shape how solidarities are constructed between the so-called “darker races of the world.” Indeed, when writing the history of Black internationalism, academics have sometimes been guilty of replicating these hierarchies of geography, race and gender in their own work.[[13]](#footnote-13) Noting how these power relations and differences have always shaped the history and politics of Black internationalism, the historian Brandon Byrd points out that these complicated and multifaceted networks of solidarity force us to think through how, “…multiple forms of blackness [can] coexist? How can they complement?”[[14]](#footnote-14)

When grappling with difficulties associated with navigating different forms of Blackness, there is a need to question how North American voices are often privileged in historical accounts of Black internationalism. As scholars such as Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, Minkah Makalani, Patricia de Santana Pinho, Quito Swan and others have all pointed out, there is still work to do to correct this imbalance, and to better centre the global vision of Black activists in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific in Black international histories.[[15]](#footnote-15) Indeed, the historian Kira Thurman put this nicely in a recent roundtable in the *American Historical Review* by asking, “How much is Black internationalism indebted to a particularly (African) American sensibility, even while it works to disavow nationalist hegemonies?”[[16]](#footnote-16)

When thinking about the focus of this article, and the broader special issue of which it is part, this marginalization of the global vision of activists operating outside of North America has worked to obscure many of the historical transnational engagements of Black South Africans. As the literary scholar Laura Chrisman has noted when tracing the many trans-Atlantic ties that connected the U.S. and South Africa, Black America did not necessarily represent “a modern vanguard to lead black South Africa” when it came to challenging the construction of the ‘global color line.’[[17]](#footnote-17) Tracing how and why Black South Africans worked to connect their struggles to broader movements for racial justice around the world is therefore significant in that it speaks to the ongoing need re-center the actions and agency of Africans in historical accounts of Black internationalism. Here I’m inspired by the observations of Su Lin Lewis who, when assessing the field of international history, asks, “What happens when we flip our perspective, and view internationalism from the point of view of the decolonising South?”[[18]](#footnote-18) Lewis shows how “internationalism was lived, as well as practiced” by historical actors throughout the Global South who challenged empire, colonialism and racial injustice in their own terms. As Lewis states,

The act of decolonising history – of undoing, challenging and questioning structures of power – must also be an act of democratising history, of globalising history, of stitching back together and forming new regional connections across the South. It must involve making the archives of internationalism more accessible; broadening our view of internationalism; understanding what internationalism looks like from the point of view of activists who speak truth to power; creating opportunities for researchers and activists to meet across borders and recover these histories collaboratively.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Accounting for global political vision and transnational activism of Black South African women therefore helps broaden our understanding of histories of internationalism.[[20]](#footnote-20) Indeed, when critically assessing the “gendered contours of Black internationalism,” Keisha Blain and Tiffany Gill explain that centring the experiences of women “expands the dynamics of internationalism beyond the narrow confines of political struggle,” which have often been viewed through a predominantly masculinist lens. (11 – and Farmer 632)[[21]](#footnote-21) Black South African women repeatedly insisted their own fate and the future of their families were intimately bound up with geopolitics. Many women who were part of the struggle for national liberation, also saw themselves as part of a global community that was intimately bound together through their shared opposition to empire, colonialism and racism. Specifically, they drew attention to the gendered nature of the oppression they faced and worked to deliberately link their opposition to racial segregation and apartheid to the struggles of women all over the world. African women, then, played an integral role in insisting the struggle against racism and sexism in South Africa could not take place solely within nationally-constrained isolation.

During the era of apartheid, South African women understood the struggle against white settlerism as being bound up with global discussions concerning empire, human rights, and the system of global capitalism. Figures such as Lilian Ngoyi and Dora Tamana made vital intersectional contributions to global anticolonial politics. Both women foregrounded the concerns, needs and political leadership of African women – making it clear that familial and domestic concerns were integral to national and international movements dedicated to Black liberation. As such, they should be considered part of what the historian Erik S. McDuffie refers to as a leftist “black women’s international” consisting of radical Black women who, through their travel, writing, speeches and organizing, worked to forge a “gendered vision of black internationalism” that placed women’s demands at the centre of global struggles against racism.[[22]](#footnote-22) More recently, scholars including Iris Berger, Dawne Y. Curry, Meghan Healy Clancy, Emma Lundin, Holly Y. McGee, Rachel Sandwell and others have all traced the ways in which Black South African women have challenged race, class and gender oppression on a global scale.[[23]](#footnote-23) While this work has helped decentre male leaders in histories of Black internationalism, there is still much to be done to account for the broad multifaceted ways African women forged transnational networks dedicated to Black liberation.

**South African Women and Black Internationalism**

Black South African women have always been on the move. Despite the strict regulation of their mobility under the systems of settler colonialism and racial capitalism, African women fought for their right to travel and enter/claim space. This was primarily a struggle that took place within the borders of South Africa, as they, at various times, navigated the violent effects of land dispossession, the labor market, poverty, segregation, apartheid and passes had on their own lives and the lives of their families. However, a small but significant number of African women also travelled beyond the borders of the nation in ways that were significant in terms of internationalizing the struggle against white settlerism in South Africa.

In the early twentieth century, Charlotte Mannya Maxeke and Cecilia Lilian Tshabalala both travelled to the United States, with their experiences overseas resulting in the establishment of important connections between Black American politics and the race and gender concerns of Black South African women. Maxeke, who initially went to the U.S. to tour as part of the African Jubilee Choir, adopted and reworked the civilizationist politics of racial uplift that she encountered through her involvement with the African Methodist Episcopal Church. While Black Americans in the church often positioned South Africans as being in need of ‘rescue,’ Maxeke used the training and resources she was able to access in America – where she became the first Black South African woman to obtain a university degree at Wilberforce University – to launch social and political initiatives designed to benefit the lives of African women.[[24]](#footnote-24) Selina Makana has described Maxeke as “an anti-colonialist activist-thinker.”[[25]](#footnote-25) Indeed, interactions with Black American reformers played an important role in her founding of the Bantu Women’s League in 1918, which would play a significant role in challenging the proposed introduction of Pass Laws for women.

As Meghan Healy-Clancy and Dawn Y. Curry detail, the religious networks that brought Tshabalala to the United States in the early twentieth century to study shaped her subsequent organizing in South Africa.[[26]](#footnote-26) As Healy-Clancy notes, “South African women used diasporic models of club work to proudly fashion the identity they called *African*.”[[27]](#footnote-27) Tshabalala’s founding of the Daughters of Africa (DOA) and her writing in the *Bantu World* newspaper gave voice to the experiences of African women, functioning as spaces where women could challenge segregation, while also insisting on greater control over the home and the fate of African families. Both Maxeke and Tshabalala therefore used their time overseas to construct a global vision of racial advancement, arguing that Africans could learn from this and adapt to develop community initiatives and push for social and political rights.

Frieda Bokwe Matthews followed in the footsteps of Maxeke and Tshabalala. A talented writer and musician, Matthews was an outspoken critic of South African racism, particularly in relation to the issue of ‘Bantu’ education.[[28]](#footnote-28) She traveled widely, and in 1935 moved to London with her husband Z.K. Matthews, a renowned Fort Hare Professor and, president of the Cape branch of the ANC, while he studied at the LSE. In London, she met with anticolonial activists including Jomo Kenyatta as well as Eslanda and Paul Robeson.[[29]](#footnote-29) The following year, the Matthews hosted Eslanda and her son Paul Jnr. at their home in Alice in the Eastern Cape. Frieda would develop these Black international conversations in the U.S. in the 1950s. She arrived in New York City – where her husband Z.K. had taken up a visiting position at the Union Theological Seminary – just as the Defiance Campaign was in full swing. As the racial situation in South Africa made headlines around the world, Frieda seized upon the timing of her trip to become a key overseas spokesperson for the anti-apartheid movement. The Matthews were inundated with invitations to address the political situation in South Africa, with Frieda being as much in demand as her husband, speaking at meetings “at least four times a week”.[[30]](#footnote-30) Frieda also engaged in lobbying work for ANC in the U.S., engaging with diverse groups interested in African affairs such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Americans for South African Resistance (AFSAR) and the Council on African Affairs (CAA).[[31]](#footnote-31) Their activities provoked the ire of the National Party, while also arousing the suspicions of the FBI.[[32]](#footnote-32) Commenting on her advocacy on behalf of the Defiance Campaign, Frieda noted, “Little did we realise that our government was keeping a close watch on us,” adding defiantly, “Not that this knowledge would have made any difference to what we told our audiences."[[33]](#footnote-33)

 Apartheid, of course, led to increased state surveillance and tighter regulation of Black mobility – most significantly within South Africa, but also in terms of the regulation of international travel. In the 1950s, at the same time as Ngoyi and Tamana were returning from their global travels, Elizabeth Mafeking left South Africa to attend the World Congress of Workers in Sofia, Bulgaria. A tenacious union organiser, Mafeking helped found the African Food and Canning Workers Union (AFCWU), while also serving as the Vice President of the African National Women’s League (ANC-WL) and a founding member of FEDSAW.[[34]](#footnote-34) As the historian Holly Y. McGee details, Mafeking also took advantage of Soviet sponsored networks tied to the international labor movement to connect the struggle against apartheid to the struggles against colonialism and for workers’ rights around the world. Mafeking translated what it was like to live under apartheid to representatives from sixty six countries, detailing the work and marginalization of African trade unions. After the close of the conference, Mafeking took up a series of invitations from delegates to travel to Czechoslovakia, China the Soviet Union, Poland and London, noting that everywhere she went, “there was an eager desire for knowledge of the struggle of the black people in South Africa.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Ultimately, her representation of Black workers and global anti-apartheid activism led to her being banned by the state. Facing the prospect of being forcibly relocated away from her family, she escaped South Africa and went into exile in Lesotho.

 The historian Rachel Sandwell has traced the border-crossing work of South African women and the politics of exile from the 1960s. This ground-breaking research documents the activist and intellectual thought of women like Florence Mophosho and Ruth Mompati, who were at the forefront of the ANC’s efforts to assert its organisational legitimacy within global anticolonial networks on the left.[[36]](#footnote-36) Both women represented the WIDF and spent time heading up the organisation’s Africa Desk in Berlin, with Mompati following Mophosho in this role. Between them, they travelled extensively, throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as to Cuba, the Soviet Union and China – attending gatherings that determined the direction of the international women’s movement and the politics of Pan-Africanism. In 1972, alongside Adelaide Tambo and Mary Manyosi, Mophosho and Mompati attended the All-African Women’s Conference in Tanzania. This event brought together over 300 delegates to celebrate and discuss the role of women in the struggle for African liberation. Mophosho delivered an address at the conference, while the assembled delegates emphasised the important role women could play in aiding the armed struggle in Southern Africa.[[37]](#footnote-37) As Sandwell points out, women often led the international work of the ANC, while their mobility, “paints a picture of a dense network of women’s anti-colonial resistance work, one that is often missing in both contemporary scholarship on the Cold War, and in histories of women’s international movements.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

This is a limited snapshot of how and why Black South African women travelled during the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century. There were others who also worked to bring South Africa into global conversations about race, empire, and women’s rights. [[39]](#footnote-39) What is clear from this incomplete historiographical overview is that, by the mid-twentieth century, the resources and networks leaders of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) were integral to facilitating these global interactions. However, the Black international politics advanced by South African women should not simply be seen as a ‘Soviet project’. South African communists worked across a range of organisations, while many African activists had multiple political affiliations and often organised across political as well as racial divides. Indeed, whereas Dora Tamana was a member of the CPSA, Lilian Ngoyi never joined the party. Both women were leaders in the ANC-WL and, as we shall see, were integral to the founding and development of FEDSAW. They worked across these political formations to work out ways to best challenge the racial and gendered violence of apartheid. The opportunity to do this in front of a global audience, as well as their shared belief that they could learn from anticolonial and workers movements around the world, is testament to the Black international vision of South African women.

**Lilian Ngoyi, Dora Tamana and the Embodied Politics of Black Internationalism**

Both Tamana and Ngoyi insisted on the centrality of women to the anti-apartheid struggle. In their writing, speeches and activism, they made clear how race, gender and class oppression operated in South Africa by detailing how Black women bore the brunt of the apartheid system. In response, they constructed an intersectional vision of anticolonial politics that foregrounded the concerns, needs, and political leadership of African women. As many scholars have pointed out, this often involved the construction of a public politics of motherhood that exposed the violent impositions of the state in the domestic sphere while simultaneously insisting that the experiences and opinions of women be foregrounded in the struggle against white supremacy.[[40]](#footnote-40) This focus on the lived experiences of African women as mothers and care givers resonated globally.[[41]](#footnote-41) In her work mapping Black women’s resistance in the era before apartheid, Dawne Y. Curry argues for the need “to further explore the ‘self’ as a permeable commodity of Black internationalism.”[[42]](#footnote-42) My analysis of Tamana and Ngoyi’s global political vision builds on this important intervention by mapping the personalised and embodied nature of Black internationalism. Both women used their transnational travels to make clear the ways in which the violence of the apartheid system tore apart families and affected the lives of ordinary African women. To do this, Tamana and Ngoyi drew on their own physical and deeply felt experiences – often rooted in the language of motherhood – to advance a global Black feminist vision that imagined what an apartheid-free world might look like.

Dora Tamana was born in 1901, in the small village of Gqamakwe on the Eastern Cape of South Africa. She had little formal schooling and her family relied on subsistence farming to survive.[[43]](#footnote-43) She was part of the Israelite Church, a religious community based in the village of Ntabelanga led by the preacher and prophet Enoch Mgijima. The South African government viewed the presence of the church community as an illegal occupation of white owned land, and in May 1921 the police massacred nearly 200 members of Mgijima’s followers.[[44]](#footnote-44) Tamana’s father and two of her uncles were amongst those who were killed in the violence and, following the death of her mother just a couple of months after the massacre, she and her sisters were forced to go to live with her aunt in Queenstown, about seventy miles to the Northwest of their village.[[45]](#footnote-45) In 1923, Dora married John Tamana – himself a former Israelite who was then working in a private house as a domestic servant. The couple had four children in Queenstown, but three died after succumbing to starvation, tuberculosis and meningitis.[[46]](#footnote-46)

In 1930, tired of the desperate working and living conditions they faced, the couple decided to leave for Cape Town in search of work, driven by “the hope that our children might have a chance to survive” in the city.[[47]](#footnote-47) In Cape Town, Tamana gravitated towards the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) after attending the regular public meetings the organization held in the city. Through the CPSA, she became involved in the union and engaged in local campaigns that addressed issues related to housing, rents and food.[[48]](#footnote-48) After her husband left his family, Dora moved to Blouvlei – an informal ‘pondokkie’ shack settlement amongst the sand and shrubland of the South West Cape Flats.[[49]](#footnote-49) Through persistent lobbying and strategic fundraising, she eventually won approval from the authorities to set up the Blouvlei Nursery School with space for forty children.[[50]](#footnote-50) Later, she led the effort to set up a school in the community – building a hall and classroom for thirty students out of ironed out petrol drums.[[51]](#footnote-51) Tamana joined the ANC-WL in the early 1940s, and played an active role in local political and community organizing.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Lilian Ngoyi was ten years younger than Tamana. Born in Pretoria, she trained as a nurse, but worked as a seamstress, at first from home and then in a factory – where she joined the Garment Workers Union of the Transvaal in 1945. Ngoyi’s union work led to her direct involvement in the Defiance Campaign, and to her joining the ANC-WL, where she was eventually elected national President in 1956.[[53]](#footnote-53) Ngoyi was a brilliant public speaker, and had a remarkable ability to translate the lived experiences of African women into militant critiques of the apartheid system. A speech she delivered at a gathering to challenge rent increases for Africans in the Transvaal region gives a sense of simultaneously personal, national and global dimensions of her political activism. Opening by detailing the living conditions she and most African families endured in townships, Ngoyi detailed how Africans were paid less for their work while being charged more than whites for food, amenities, and transportation. She emphasized the need for boycott campaigns and mass resistance, proclaiming that, “Our children must live and eat. Without us the country can do nothing,” insisting that, “we must find a way to fight against Government laws, for no one can stop the progress of a nation, or of women.” Demonstrating the need to make visible the hardships and violence perpetuated by the apartheid state, Ngoyi asserted,

If a small worm lies on top of a stove plate, it will not be still but will move to show that it is burning. Women must show the world that we are burning…we too must be ready to die for the life of our children. I speak to you African women particularly; the others have come to cry with us. Let us be brave; we have heard of man shaking in their trousers, but who ever heard of a woman shaking in her skirt?[[54]](#footnote-54)

Ngoyi used her personal experiences to mobilize women at a national level. In her speeches and activism she moved up and down different scales of mobilization, while at the same time, making it clear that African women needed to “show the world” what it meant to live under apartheid.

For Tamana and Ngoyi, the opportunity to make apartheid more internationally visible came through their links with the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). Both women were founding members of this multiracial organisation, established in April 1954, “To bring the women of South Africa together, to secure full equality of opportunity for all women, regardless of race, colour or creed: to remove social and legal and economic disabilities; [and] to work for the protection of the women and children of our land.”[[55]](#footnote-55) The emergence of FEDSAW speaks to both the militancy and leading role African women played in the anti-apartheid movement of the 1950s. The federation’s close ties to the ANC-WL, CPSA and broader Congress Alliance, meant the organization became a vital space where activists of different racial backgrounds could challenge, race, gender and class oppression.[[56]](#footnote-56) Significantly, FEDSAW also had a distinctly global outlook, working with the WIDF to forge transnational solidarities with women overseas.[[57]](#footnote-57) Made up of affiliate organizations in over sixty countries, the WIDF was a progressive feminist and anticolonial organization.[[58]](#footnote-58) FEDSAW’s desire to challenge racism and sexism internationally was most vividly demonstrated by their decision to send Tamana and Ngoyi to the WIDF’s World Congress of Mothers in July 1955. As has been documented elsewhere, this journey to Switzerland – and their subsequent travels throughout Europe, China, Mongolia and Russia that were also part of this trip – were politically transformative for both women. [[59]](#footnote-59) Their experiences of socialism and communism overseas enhanced their political education, while placing them at the centre of the geopolitics of the cold war and decolonization in ways that they both used to further refine their intellectual critiques of white settler rule at home.[[60]](#footnote-60) As such, Tamana and Ngoyi were vital African voices within a broader network of radical Black international feminists who argued that the concerns of women of colour were integral to the global struggle for self-determination and human rights in the mid-twentieth century.[[61]](#footnote-61)

This articulation of Black internationalism was personal and deeply felt. It was embodied through the physical experience of travel, the interactions with the people they met, and the scenes they witnessed. What they ate, where they slept, how they were looked after, all carried political meaning and resonated in ways that informed their Black international outlook. These political connections was reflected, too, in their bodies, as well as how they felt within themselves. Integral to all of this was how Tamana and Ngoyi compared and contrasted the ‘new worlds’ they were passing through with the realities of the conditions they experiences under the system of apartheid. Although their travels were carefully managed by WIDF affiliates, Tamana and Ngoyi both commented on the joy it brought them to witness the political alternatives to colonialism and apartheid. In Germany, Ngoyi explained that, “it was here where one evening I screamed at the top of my voice, to be taken as a human being in other countries, yet in the land of my birth dogs and cats are being welcomed into the society as human beings.”[[62]](#footnote-62) Seeing women working, operating machinery in farms and factories, running institutions, all of this inspired Ngoyi to think about what real political change would mean in South Africa. Remembering one of Tamana’s many bouts of ill-health that she experienced on their travels, Ngoyi noted how, in the Soviet Union, “Dorah had to get to hospital. She was admitted in the same ward with other women. How come, I asked myself?”[[63]](#footnote-63) The absence of a visible colour bar in the socialist/communist world was personally freeing, while also offering a social and political model could be used to question the ‘logic’ of apartheid.[[64]](#footnote-64) While it might seem trivial, Ngoyi’s passing observation that “When I left South Africa I was wearing size 36. But on my return a size 48,” further emphasises the embodied dimensions of the politics of Black internationalism. In Ngoyi’s most detailed surviving autobiographical reflection, she notes her need for larger clothes after returning from her travels on two occasions. Her clear shock at her physical change, resulting from her new found ability to access proper nourishment, vividly illustrated the deleterious effects apartheid had on the body and the health of the ‘Non-European’ population. As she added, “The food we ate was all so nice and we had our baths morning and evening. For instance the house I own here [in South Africa], has not a bathroom. We have to bathe in the bedrooms. Shame isn't it? At this modern century.[[65]](#footnote-65) South Africa was bound up with the old, crumbling empires of Europe. The apartheid regime was not at all modern, as it’s white supremacist architects regularly insisted. It was obsolete in the age of decolonization.

Ngoyi’s account of her travels often returned to the issue of education. Her testimony makes clear that she was worried about her ‘academic credentials’ while she was overseas. Indeed, she noted that she had initially refused the opportunity to attend the World Congress of Mothers as she didn’t have enough education and “knowledge of the world”.[[66]](#footnote-66) Ultimately though, Ngoyi insisted that her knowledge of the struggle more than made up for her lack of formal education. Her travels seemed to empower her. As she noted of her time in Switzerland, she was amongst women who were “highly educated holding high degrees,” adding defiantly that, “here I am without profession, but armed tooth and nail with the sufferings of my people…”[[67]](#footnote-67) As she moved, Ngoyi realized that it was her lived experiences that made her an expert and that she was, in fact, ideally placed to articulate and translate the meaning of life under apartheid to the wider world. This, she argued, was part of a two-way exchange. Indicating that she too had learned a great deal from her time overseas, Ngoyi positioned her experiences at the World Congress of Mothers as a mutually beneficial learning experience that empowered both her as an individual and the people she was representing. As she noted, "This congress was a warm expression of the great friendship of women of the whole world. I shall not forget it as long as I live. And I will also make it a point to educate my people, to show them that united we shall stand, divided we shall fall.  AFRIKA! MAYIBUYE!”[[68]](#footnote-68)

Struggles with her health meant that Tamana was ultimately not able to attend the World Congress of Mothers as planned. While she was deeply disappointed to have missed out on proceedings, she did draft the address she was initially scheduled to deliver at the Congress. This document is invaluable in terms of providing a sense of the way in which she personally theorized the struggle against apartheid in South Africa as part of broader international movement for race and gender equality. Tamana framed her planned address at Lausanne through the lens of her lived experiences as they related to her family life and activism. This is reflected in the opening through lines of the address, where she navigates her role as both a witness and a translator for her international audience. As she made clear early on,

There's is much that I would like to tell you about my people and our struggle for freedom. I wish I could do so in my own language because I feel at home in it. But, I must speak to you in a language you can understand and I must tell you whatever I can in the little time that is left to me.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Tamana’s search for “home’ is significant. Here she is working out how to make herself understood across barriers of language and culture. Tellingly, she settles on a language of personal connection, noting, “Let me try to tell you a little about my country and I shall try [to] do so by talking about myself.”[[70]](#footnote-70) While she made clear that she traveled not “as a person alone but as a member of an oppressed people,” she nevertheless foregrounded her own experiences, frustrations, and struggles. Tamana insisted that her own life offered the best way of communication how Black South Africans were oppressed by and resisted apartheid. She outlined the need for a more personalised perspective by arguing that, “…although you know much about my country and have a warm feeling for my people, you cannot really feel the oppression as we feel it. Even when you read books about us, you cannot really understand what it is to be a black or brown person in South Africa.”[[71]](#footnote-71) In the rest of her address, Tamana foregrounded her life in Cape Town and the fate of her family in her two room “wood and iron” cottage “amongst the sand dunes” in Blouvlei. She describes how she has made a home and community on the outskirts of the city, while also emphasising the ways in which apartheid laws prevented her ability to move in and out of Cape Town while also casting doubt on her ability to remain in her home. Tamana went on to discuss education and work, stating that, “We African mothers are unhappy because our boys and girls are not allowed to become engineers, electricians, bricklayers, carpenters or do any kind of work that is skilled. The colour bar keeps us out.”[[72]](#footnote-72) She again embraced the language of motherhood to raise the racial discrepancy in wages in South Africa that worked to deny educational opportunities to African children. “To send our children to high school and University is expensive,” she pointed out, adding that,

We mothers will sacrifice much to make this possible, but it is very difficult because our wages are so small and education costs much money. Africans are paid only one fifth, or one sixth, or even one tenth what the white citizens get, and we cannot count on this money.[[73]](#footnote-73)

Tamana was particularly adept at communicating the real effects that these material inequalities had on ordinary Africans. Restrictions on mobility, poor wages, and a lack of employment opportunities contributed to a cycle of death and destruction. “Many children die the first year of life,” she commented, adding, “The death rate amongst our babies under one year is four times as high than amongst the white people. White people expect to live to 68 years but we can expect to live only to 44 years.”[[74]](#footnote-74) Embracing the politics of African motherhood at Lausanne represented an attempt to expose apartheid as a gendered system of racial control.[[75]](#footnote-75) By focusing on herself and the struggles she had personally experienced or witnessed, Tamana sought to make an important intersectional contribution to global anticolonial politics. Hers was a politics of Black internationalism that foregrounded the concerns, needs and political leadership of African women in order to tell an international audience everything they needed to know about South Africa – the material and ideological structures of apartheid, and the politics of the national liberation struggle.

**Conclusion**

Writing two years after she returned home from her travels, Dora Tamana was still assessing the geopolitics of the Cold War and decolonization. “When I came from overseas I wrote an article of how I tasted the new world and the new heaven in other countries,” she commented. Adding dryly, “I was born and raised with religion, and my question to the big men of the churches was this: When will Jesus Christ come to tell us about heaven?” Tamana’s time overseas seemed to have helped reorientate her faith. She proclaimed,

Today sputnik of the USSR is telling us about heaven and is going to tell us more. If we can fight for freedom in this country and do away with the imperialists, then we will have a new world and will eat the fruits of the earth before we die. Everybody will be educated and we shall know about the world and the heavens. It is time that the young people came forward. Oppressed people must raise up their heads. One pound a day must be our song. Mayibuye Afrika.[[76]](#footnote-76)

While she had joined the CPSA before she left for Europe in 1955, it is clear that this sojourn had a lasting effect on her intellectual thought and activism. Tamana and Ngoyi’s escape from the country to represent the women of South Africa at the World Congress of Mothers brought about interactions and experiences that fundamentally challenged Western imperial relationships, while simultaneously forging transnational exchanges that had the potential to inform the struggle against apartheid. This episode, and the linkages it brought about, offers a reminder of the Black international outlook of South African women.

Incorporating Tamana, Ngoyi and other South African women into histories of Black internationalism helps us further question the preeminent positions that are often afforded to North Americans in these networks. Furthermore, the ways in which both women navigated these diverse spaces speaks to their important role in internationalising the anti-apartheid movement. The skill in which Tamana and Ngoyi translated their experiences of race, gender and class oppression in South Africa to a global audience demonstrates how perceptions of the self, emotions, health and physicality were all integral to the practises of Black internationalism. Accounting for the personal and embodied character of these engagements also pushes us to be more attentive to the gender dynamics and hierarchies that informed these networks. By embracing a global politics of African motherhood, Ngoyi and Tamana evoked a politics of kinship and care that crossed borders and resonated with both the women’s movement and the politics of international communism. It was their hope that these interactions and relationships would practically, intellectually and emotionally contribute to the dismantling of the apartheid system.

1. WIDF, Manifesto of the World Congress of Mothers, Lausanne, July 1955. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. McGregor, “Opposing Colonialism,” 925–44, Gradskova, “Women’s International Democratic Federation,” 270–278; Women’s International Democratic Federation, *That They May Live: African Women Arise* WIDF, 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. WIDF, ‘World Congress of Mothers - Documents. Lausanne, July 7th to 10th, 1955.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. African delegates came from Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia. The Nigerian delegation was prevented from travelling. While women’s organisations from French Guinea, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and, French Sudan responded to the call but were not able to attend the conference. See, WIDF, Lausanne…At The World Congress of Mothers.’ (1955). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Lilian Ngoyi, “My Knees Shook, and I Realised What an Honour to My People It Was When I Presided Over A Meeting Of Mothers From 66 Nations,” *New Age*, August 25, 1955. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Naomi Shapiro, “‘I Tasted A New World And Won Confidence For Our Future’: Says Dora Tamana, African Woman Leader on Her Return Home from Overseas,” *New Age*, September 1, 1955, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. WIDF, Lausanne…At The World Congress of Mothers.’ (1955), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. WIDF, Lausanne…At The World Congress of Mothers.’ (1955), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Michael O West, William G Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkins, *From Toussaint to Tupac : The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Monique Bedasse et al., “AHR Conversation: Black Internationalism,” *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 5 (December, 2020), 1729; Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (April 1, 2000), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Brandon R. Byrd, “Black Internationalism from Berlin to Black Lives Matter,” in *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2020), 549. Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (April 1, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. My own research has been guilty of this. While I have tried to foreground the Black international vision of Africans in my work, I have done this by focusing narrowly on African engagements with Black America, see: Nicholas Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans and Apartheid, 1945–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Brandon R. Byrd, “Black Internationalism from Berlin to Black Lives Matter,” in *A Companion to U.S. Foreign Relations* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2020), 548-549. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019); Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), especially introduction; Patricia de Santana Pinho, “Decentering the United States in the Studies of Blackness in Brazil,” *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* 20, no. 59 (2006), 37-50; Quito Swan, *Pasifika Black: Oceania, Anti-Colonialism, and the African World* (New York: NYU Press, 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Monique Bedasse et al., “AHR Conversation: Black Internationalism,” *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 5 (December 29, 2020), 1704. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Laura Chrisman, “Rethinking Black Atlanticism,” *The Black Scholar* 30, no. 3–4 (September 1, 2000), 14-16; Laura Chrisman, *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism* (Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 90-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Su Lin Lewis, “Decolonising the History of Internationalism: Transnational Activism across the South,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, October 16, 2023, 1–25. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Significantly, recent work by scholars such as Keisha Blain, Carole Boyce Davies, Ashley Farmer, Tiffany Florvill, Imaobong Umoren and others has emphasised the vital cross-border contributions that Black women have made to decolonial politics. Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018)); Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Duke University Press, 2007); Farmer, *Remaking Black Power*; Florvil, *Mobilizing Black Germany*; Joseph-Gabriel, *Reimagining Liberation*; Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Blain and Gill, *To Turn the Whole World Over*, 11; Farmer, “Black Women’s Internationalism: A New Frontier in Intellectual History,” 632. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Erik S. McDuffie, “‘For Full Freedom of . . . Colored Women in Africa, Asia, and in These United States . . .’: Black Women Radicals and the Practice of a Black Women’s International,” *Palimpsest* 1, no. 1 (April 1, 2012): 1–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Iris Berger, “Ngoyi, Lilian,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, February 28, 2020; Dawne Y. Curry, *Social Justice at Apartheid’s Dawn: African Women Intellectuals and the Quest to Save the Nation* (Springer International Publishing, 2022); Meghan Healy-Clancy, “The Daughters of Africa and Transatlantic Racial Kinship: Cecilia Lilian Tshabalala and the Women’s Club Movement, 1912-1943,” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 59, no. 4 (2014): 481–99; Meghan Healy-Clancy, “The Family Politics of the Federation of South African Women: A History of Public Motherhood in Women’s Antiracist Activism,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42, no. 4 (May 19, 2017): 843–66; Emma Elinor Lundin, “‘Now Is the Time!’ The Importance of International Spaces for Women’s Activism within the ANC, 1960–1976,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 0, no. 0 (April 29, 2019): 1–18; Holly Y. McGee, *Radical Antiapartheid Internationalism and Exile: The Life of Elizabeth Mafeking* (Routledge, 2019); Rachel Sandwell, “South African Women and the Politics of Peace in the 1950s,” *South African Historical Journal* 75, no. 1–2 (April 3, 2023): 47–72; Rachel Sandwell, “The Travels of Florence Mophosho: The African National Congress and Left Internationalism, 1948–1985,” *Journal of Women’s History* 30, no. 4 (December 8, 2018): 84–108. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Thozama April, “Charlotte Maxeke: A Celebrated and Neglected Figure in History,” in *One Hundred Years of the ANC*, ed. Arianna Lissoni et al., Debating Liberation Histories Today (Wits University Press, 2012), 97–110; Claire Cooke, “Forlorn Daughters? The Role of Social Motherhood in Transnational African Methodist Episcopal Missionary Women Networks, 1900–1940s,” *Safundi* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 36–54; Zubeida Jaffer, *Beauty of the Heart: The Life and Times of Charlotte Mannya Maxeke* (Bloemfontein: Sun Press, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Selina Makana, “Owning Her Rightful Place: The Intellectual and Activist Life of Charlotte Manye Maxeke,” *Gender & History* 31, no. 2 (2019): 445. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Dawne Y. Curry, “‘What Is It That We Call the Nation’: Cecilia Lillian Tshabalala’s Definition, Diagnosis, and Prognosis of the Nation in a Segregated South Africa,” *Safundi* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 55–76; Meghan Healy-Clancy, “The Daughters of Africa and Transatlantic Racial Kinship: Cecilia Lilian Tshabalala and the Women’s Club Movement, 1912-1943,” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 59, no. 4 (2014): 481–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Healy-Clancy, “The Daughters of Africa and Transatlantic Racial Kinship,” 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Frieda Matthews Interview, November 26, 1981, Gaborone, Botswana. SAIRR Oral History - AD1722, Historical Papers, University of Witwatersrand. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Frieda Bokwe Matthews, *Remembrances* (Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1995), 23-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Matthews, *Remembrances*, 50; Matthews, *Freedom for My* People, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Nicholas Grant, “Crossing the Black Atlantic: The Global Antiapartheid Movement and the Racial Politics of the Cold War,” *Radical History Review* 2014, no. 119 (Spring, 2014), 83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. A Special Correspondent, “S.A. and US Govts. Tried To Bully Prof. Matthews: Frightened of Revelations Before United Nations,” *Advance*, December 4, 1952. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Matthews, *Remembrances*, 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Holly Y. McGee, *Radical Antiapartheid Internationalism and Exile : The Life of Elizabeth Mafeking* (Routledge, 2019), 112; Holly Y. McGee, “Before the Window Closed: Internationalism, Crossing Borders, and Reaching out to Sisters across the Seas,” *Safundi* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 77–92. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Holly Y. McGee, *Radical Antiapartheid Internationalism and Exile : The Life of Elizabeth Mafeking* (Routledge, 2019), 124-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Rachel Sandwell, “Building a state in exile: women in the African National Congress, 1960-1990” (McGill University, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Rachel Sandwell, “The Travels of Florence Mophosho: The African National Congress and Left Internationalism, 1948–1985,” *Journal of Women’s History* 30, no. 4 (December 8, 2018): 84–108; Emma Elinor Lundin, “‘Now Is the Time!’ The Importance of International Spaces for Women’s Activism within the ANC, 1960–1976,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 0, no. (April 29, 2019), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Rachel Sandwell, “Building a state in exile: women in the African National Congress, 1960-1990” (McGill University, 2014), 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Here I’m thinking of figures such as Noni Jabavu, Magdelana Resha, Josie Palmer, Gertrude Shope, Kate Molale, Adelaide Tambo, Blanche LaGuma, Barbara Masekela. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. For scholarship on the politics of motherhood and resistance in South Africa, see: Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, “Mothers of the Nation: A Comparative Analysis of Nation, Race and Motherhood in Afrikaner Nationalism and the African National Congress,” in *Woman-Nation-State*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, and Jo Campling (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1989), 58–78; Nomboniso Gasa, *Women in South African History: They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007); Shireen Hassim, *Women’s Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* (Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Meghan Healy-Clancy, “The Family Politics of the Federation of South African Women: A History of Public Motherhood in Women’s Antiracist Activism,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42, no. 4 (May, 2017): 843–66,; Zine Magubane, “Attitudes towards Feminism among Women in the ANC, 1950–1990: A Theoretical Re-Interpretation,” *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* 4 (2010): 1980–90; Cherryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, 2nd Revised edition (David Philip, Publishers, 1991); Julia Wells, “Maternal Politics in Organizing Black South African Women: The Historical Lessons,” in *Sisterhood, Feminisms, and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, ed. Obioma Nnaemeka (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1998).. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Tiffany N. Florvil’s thinking on Black internationalism and “affective kinship” has influenced my thinking here, *Mobilizing Black Germany: Afro-German Women and the Making of a Transnational Movement* (University of Illinois Press, 2020), 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Dawne Y. Curry, *Social Justice at Apartheid’s Dawn: African Women Intellectuals and the Quest to Save the Nation* (Springer International Publishing, 2022), 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. For work that offers an overview of the conditions faced by rural Africans in the early twentieth century, see: Edward Cavanagh, “Settler Colonialism in South Africa: Land, Labour and Transformation, 1880-2015,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Edward Cavanagh, 1st edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 293-296; Curry, *Social Justice at Apartheid’s Dawn*, chapter 2; William Beinart and Peter Delius, “The Historical Context and Legacy of the Natives Land Act of 1913,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 40, no. 4 (July 4, 2014): 667–88; Robert Edgar, “The Prophet Motive: Enoch Mgijima, the Israelites, and the Background to the Bullhoek Massacre,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (1982): 401–22, [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Edgar, “The Prophet Motive,” 401–22; Edgar, *The Finger of God*. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Rosalynde Ainslie, “Dora Tamana.” *Spare Rib*, September 1975, 10; Dora Tamana, Letter to Ray Simons, 2-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. “Hamba Kahle - Dora Tamana,” *Sechaba*, October 1983, 30-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ainslie, “Dora Tamana,” 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Rosenthal, *They Fought for Freedom*, 15, Fortescue, 487-490. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Scanlon, 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. “Creche on the Cape Flats,” *Guardian*, February 2, 1950; Scanlon, 175-177. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ainslie, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Helen Scanlon, *Representation and Reality: Portraits of Women’s Lives in the Western Cape 1948 - 1976* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), 169-182. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Iris Berger, “Ngoyi, Lilian,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, February 28, 2020; Barbara Caine, “The Trials and Tribulations of a Black Woman Leader: Lilian Ngoyi and the South African Liberation Struggle,” in *Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (London: Routledge, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. FEDSAW, “Report of Conference on Increased Rentals in Municipal Sub-Economic Housing Schemes. Trades Hall, Sunday 14th November 1954,” c 1954, File Ba4.1.4 - Correspondence, Federation of South African Women Records, Historical Papers, University of Witwatersrand (Collection Number: AD1137), [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Hilda Bernstein and Ray Alexander, “Draft Constitution: Federation of South African Women,” 1954, Federation of South African Women Records, Historical Papers, William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand, Aa1, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Pam Brooks, “‘But Once They Are Organised, You Can Never Stop Them,’” 84–97; Gasa, 207-229; Healy-Clancy, “The Family Politics of the Federation of South African Women,” 843–866; Magubane, 1980–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Joseph, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. McGregor, “Opposing Colonialism,” 925–44, Gradskova, “Women’s International Democratic Federation,” 270–278; Women’s International Democratic Federation, *That They May Live: African Women Arise* WIDF, 1954. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Iris Berger, “Ngoyi, Lilian,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, February 28, 2020; Barbara Caine, “The Trials and Tribulations of a Black Woman Leader: Lilian Ngoyi and the South African Liberation Struggle,” in *Women’s Activism:Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (London: Routledge, 2012); Meghan Healy-Clancy, “The Family Politics of the Federation of South African Women: A History of Public Motherhood in Women’s Antiracist Activism,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42, no. 4 (May 19, 2017): 843–66; Nicholas Grant, “Dora Tamana: Travel, Home and the Transnational Politics of African Motherhood,” *Safundi*, (April 10, 2023): 1–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. de Haan, “Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women’s Organisations,” 547–573; Gradskova, 270–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism,* 2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Lilian Ngoyi, “Typescript of the Draft Autobiography,” nd, A2, A2551 Lillian Ngoyi Papers, Historical Papers, University of Witwatersrand, 10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. On the power of imagination and fantasy in ant-apartheid narratives, see: Rachel Sandwell, “Fantasy States: Nationalism, Intimacy, and Transgression in South African Women’s Political Memoirs,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 47, no. 3 (March 2022): 765–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Lilian Ngoyi, “Typescript of the Draft Autobiography,” nd, A2, A2551 Lillian Ngoyi Papers, Historical Papers, University of Witwatersrand, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid, 12-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Lilian Ngoyi, “My Knees Shook, and I Realised What an Honour to My People It Was When I Presided Over A Meeting Of Mothers From 66 Nations,” *New Age*, August 25, 1955. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Dora Tamana, “Dora Tamana Speech: WIDF Conference,” Jack and Ray Simons Papers. Folder R9.3.2., 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Healy-Clancy, “Women and Apartheid.” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
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