

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS*

Background Note No. 8

April 1971

THE PRISONERS, THE BANNED AND
THE BANISHED - III

Mrs. Phyllis Naidoo

Mrs. Phyllis Naidoo of Durban, wife of a political prisoner and mother of three children, has been served in March with a "house arrest" order and other stringent restrictions. She suffers from a serious kidney complaint and her young son is an asthmatic.

Mrs. Naidoo is a final-year legal articulated clerk. Under the terms of the banning orders, she cannot enter a law court except as a witness in a criminal case, or as a plaintiff, defendant or witness in a civil action. She will not be able to continue her profession as it requires her to attend court regularly.

She is also under house arrest from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays, from 2 p.m. on Saturdays to 7 a.m. on Mondays and on all public holidays.

These orders are effective for five years.

Mrs. Naidoo had been under banning orders since 1966, but the new orders are more stringent and include the house arrest.

Under the so-called Suppression of Communism Act, the Minister of Justice is empowered to serve banning orders on anyone he suspects of furthering the aims of communism. There is no appeal against these arbitrary orders. These orders generally prohibit persons from attending "gatherings" of more than two persons and from communicating with any of hundreds of other banned persons. No statements by banned persons can be quoted.

The Rand Daily Mail (April 1), quoting a friend of the family, reported that Mrs. Naidoo suffers from a complicated kidney complaint. Doctors were considering removing one kidney last year, but delayed their decision after

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an operation. If she suffers a serious attack, she might die within an hour if she does not receive urgent medical attention.

Mrs. Naidoo lives with two of her three young children. Her son is prone to asthmatic attacks. The other child lives with her brother in Pietermaritzburg.

Her husband, Mr. M.D. Naidoo, an advocate, is serving a prison sentence on Robben Island.

Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi

Hundreds of outstanding leaders of the struggle against racism, imprisoned or banned in South Africa, are rarely mentioned in the press unless they are subjected to further trials or persecution. The press is prohibited from quoting any banned person - the list of those banned includes the entire leadership of the liberation movement, even those now deceased such as the late Chief Albert Lutuli - unless the statement is made in court during a trial.

Recently, the press referred to Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi, 52, to report that the Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg had granted a "relaxation" of the banning order: she was allowed to attend the funeral of her 87-year-old mother on April 4 and to receive mourners into her home in Orlando West.

Mrs. Ngoyi was an outstanding leader of the African National Congress until 1961 when she was prohibited by banning orders from all political activity.

She was President of the women's section of the ANC, a member of the South African Peace Council and an executive member of the Garment Workers' Union. She went to Switzerland in 1955 to represent the Federation of South African Women at the World Conference of Mothers in 1955.

Because of the banning orders (which restrict her to a one-mile radius of her home, she could not continue her employment as a garment worker. She takes in sewing and ekes out a living: her mother and at least two grandchildren were dependent on her for support.

Sechaba, organ of the African National Congress, wrote in August 1967:

"A skilled garment worker, Lilian Ngoyi had no political background or experience when she attended several African National Congress meetings during the Defiance Campaign of 1952. But the speeches she heard made sense and within days she was taking an active part in Congress work.

seat of the S.A. Women's Federation, making her one of the apartheid regime's prime targets.

"In the relative salad days of the 1950's - days when there were still loopholes in the laws of the police state which could be exploited - Lilian, as a women's leader and a member of the Peace Council in South Africa, was selected as a member of the two-women delegation to an international conference. By then she was so well-known as an opponent of racism that she had to be smuggled out of the country.

"While abroad she visited the sites of the Nazi extermination camps and returned with a renewed fervour for freedom for all in South Africa. The tour abroad had left a lasting impression on Lilian. There was much she had seen and heard and she wanted to shout it from the rooftops. She wanted to tell the people of the townships all about it. And she did, holding huge audiences spellbound for upwards of two or three hours at a time.

"She was known throughout the country and her moving oratory rallied thousands to the Congress banner. But her zeal made her a ready target for the white supremacists, and in 1956 she was arrested and charged in the mammoth South African Treason Trial. Four years later, when the trial eventually fizzled out with the final acquittals, Lilian, along with Helen Joseph, was the only woman trialist left.

"The trial did not dampen her ardour and when a State of Emergency was proclaimed in 1960, Lilian was back in jail. She emerged only to be further harassed by banning orders and by the police.

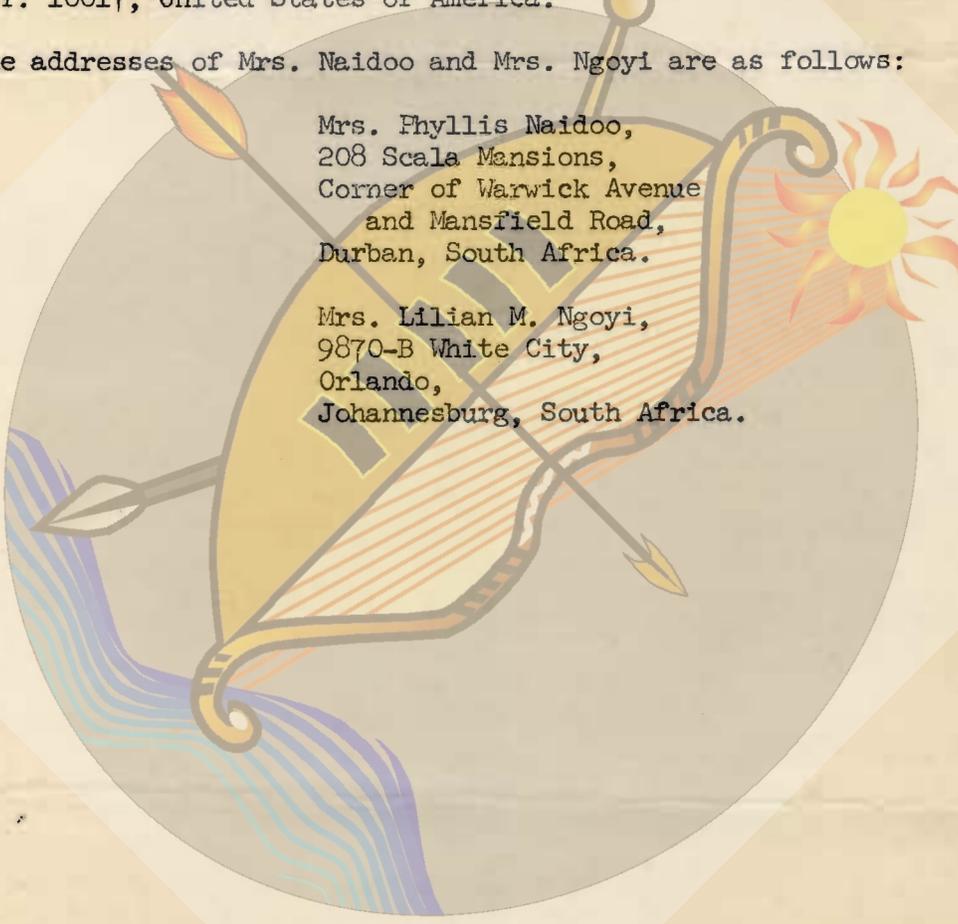
"A widow with two children and the sole support of her aging mother, she was finally restricted to Orlando township. Unable to work because of her bans, she does dressmaking at home to make ends meet. The apartheid regime has tried to obliterate the memory of Lilian Ngoyi from the minds of the many who heard, saw and respected her, but the memory of that gallant women's leader can never be wiped out."

Note: United Nations organs have repeatedly called on the South African Government to liberate all those subjected to imprisonment, banishment, banning orders or other restrictions for their opposition to apartheid. They have appealed to Governments, organizations and individuals to exert

their influence to persuade the South African Government to do so, and to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa or to voluntary agencies providing assistance to those subjected to persecution for their opposition to apartheid.

Letters of support to the demand for the release of prisoners and restrictees may be sent to H.E. Mr. Abdulrahim Abby Farah, Chairman, Special Committee on Apartheid, Room 3580, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States of America. Contributions may be sent to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States of America.

The addresses of Mrs. Naidoo and Mrs. Ngoyi are as follows:



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