

Obituary

On December 19, 1985, the murderous agents of the Pretoria regime massacred our comrades and Lesotho nationals in Maseru. One of the people who was butchered that day was Nomkhosi Mini, known to many as Mary Thabethe or Rally. She was a cultural worker of unflagging determination, a founder member of the Amandla Cultural Ensemble.

Nomkhosi Mini, also known as Mary Thabethe, was born in Port Elizabeth on July 16, 1958. With her death in December 1985, the ANC and the youth of our organisation lost a real fighter who had dedicated all her young life to the overthrow of the apartheid system. She had yearned to see People's Power in her lifetime.

She began school at the age of seven at Kama Lower Primary School where she did her sub-level education. From here she went to New Brighton Higher Primary School where she did her Standard Three to Standard Six. After passing Standard Six, she went to Cowan High School and completed her Junior Certificate level.

At the time she was doing her Form IV in 1977, student uprisings had spread through the length and breadth of South Africa. She was arrested for participating in a student demonstration against Bantu Education, together with several other students. They were taken to New Brighton Police Station in Land Rovers where they were brutalised by police through the liberal use of batons and sjamboks. She described her treatment there, how they were beaten "as if we were dogs." They were deprived of sleep for days on end and given the water treatment. She was singled out for brutal treatment because the police interrogators were certain that she was "hiding" the truth. They were released after six gruelling days.

She was a member of the South African Students Movement (SASM) which was banned in 1977. She was detained under the draconian and all-embracing Suppression of Terrorism Act (Section Two). She was



MARY THABETHE

interned for fourteen days. After she was released, she hid from place to place until she found a way out into exile.

Around mid-1978, she joined the ANC. She was aided by Mangaliso Matyobeni, her boyfriend, into exile. They both arrived safely in Swaziland from where they proceeded to Mozambique. From here she proceeded to Angola where she joined Amandla Cultural Ensemble in 1979.

Just before she joined Amandla, the organisation saw in her a true fighter, devoted, dedicated and selfless to the cause of the liberation struggle. She was amongst comrades who went for political education abroad. She came back and became

both politically and culturally active in the ranks of our movement. When called upon by the movement to perform her tasks in Amandla Cultural Ensemble, she did that without question or doubt. Within the Ensemble, the organisation once again called upon her to take charge of the political affairs of our women's section. She was also the political spokesperson of this section.

As one comrade in Amandla describes her: "She was more than a comrade. She was a sister and a friend to all of us. Politically, she was more than the word *good*." The other actor and dancer who happens to have participated closely with her in the show says: "In all the missions we undertook since 1980, we managed to score victories, thanks to the political maturity of comrades in the calibre of Mary."

Nomkhosi Mini impressed everyone with her industriousness. She prided herself in doing all sorts of work. To her there were no divisions. Brave to a fault, she once confided to one member of Amandla and said: "My turn will come. I will be amongst those to go first and the last to leave — and no bullet will be on my back."

This is how Vuyisile Mini's daughter was. She never succumbed to police bribery and intimidation. She withstood police torture the way her father, Vuyisile Mini, did. As Mini had sung for freedom to the gallows, so had Nomkhosi to her death.

The ANC is honoured to have had such a cadre in its ranks.

AMANDLA!
LONG LIVE NOMKHOSI!