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EMERGENCY

It was soon after this that the ANC was banned and a state of emergency declared by the government. The state went on a rampage, banning and detaining thousands of people. During this period Sactu remained unbanned and it continued to rally people together. The state finally clamped down on the unions and almost the entire leadership was banned. Billy was detained in 1961 and was later banned in early 1962.



Meeting of comrades, Billy and Curnick

COMRADES OF SUCH BRILLIANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE ARE FEW

AND VALUABLE. TODAY BILLY WILL SERVE AS A SYMBOL OF COURAGE, DEEP COMMITMENT

AND UNFAILING LOYALTY TO THE CREATION OF A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA BASED ON THE FREEDOM CHARTER, IN WHICH THE EXPLOITED WORKERS WILL TAKE THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE.

ROBBEN ISLAND

When the call was made in late 1961 for a change in strategy, Billy together with many courageous freedom fighters did no hesitate and joined the ranks of the newly launched Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) It was for his part in 15 acts of sabotage that Billy was sentenced to 20 years. He was charged and convicted with 17 other comrades. Among those that served long

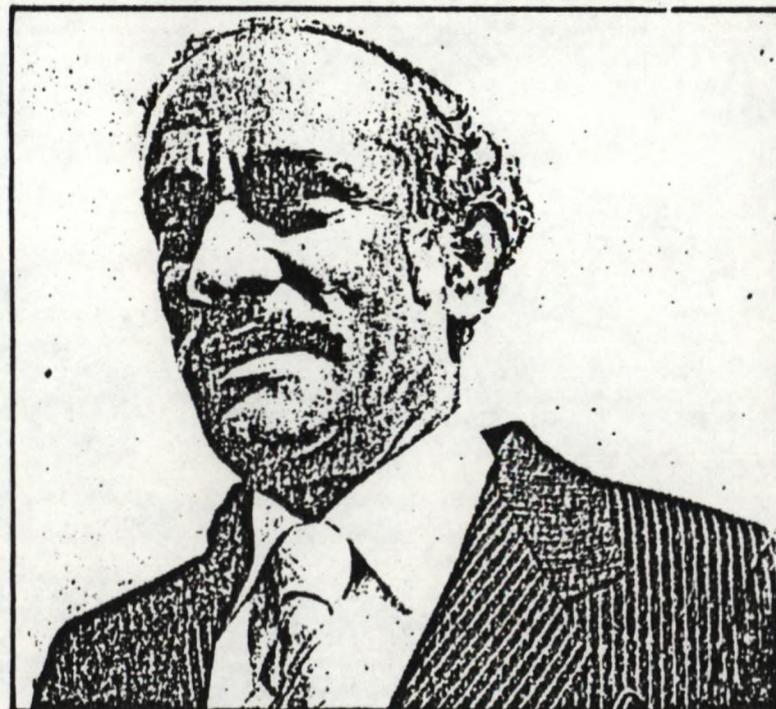
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WELCOME BACK COMRADE

BILLY NAIR

From 20 years on Robben Island



**workers leader,
peoples hero**

issued by NIC and AFCWU

Billy Nair has dedicated himself to the struggle for the liberation of all South Africans from oppression, the elimination of exploitation of workers and the creation of a truly non racial, democratic South Africa based on the Freedom Charter.

From the age of 17, Billy has been deeply involved in most of the major political events in the historic decade of the 1950's, until his arrest in 1963. He has become well-known for his sacrifices, courage, honesty and incredible hard work. He did not hesitate to commit his own life to the just cause of the workers and people of South Africa.

Billy was a trade union leader. He was a member of the national executive of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and was its Natal Secretary. He was an executive member of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and Secretary of the Youth Congress. He played a leading part in the joint programmes of the Indian and African National Congresses.

Billy was born in 1929 in Sydenham. He lived and studied in Durban. He studied for a book-keeping diploma at today's ML Sultan. He practised as a bookkeeper for only a short while, before joining Congress as an organiser. He married Elsie in 1961.

CONGRESS AND TRADE UNION ORGANISER

The 16 Passive Resistance Campaign inspired Billy to become politically active. The funeral of a passive resister, attended by over 10 000 people moved him. Soon af-

ter this he became a member of the Youth Congress and in 1951 became its secretary. In this period he worked at the Combined Dairies. He organised dairy workers into the Dairy Workers Union. He was then fired from his job. He became a full-time Congress organiser.



Billy with Poomania in '58

DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN - 1952

Billy was working closely with the Joint Planning Committee of the Defiance Campaign. He was among the first 21 persons to court imprisonment. He was part of the group led by Dr Monty Naicker, which broke the railway apartheid laws. He was jailed for 1 month. However most of his time was spent organising workers to join the 8 000-strong volunteers who were prepared to go to jail to show their rejection of apartheid laws..

BUILDING WORKER UNITY AND SACTU

While organising the Dairy Workers Union, Billy and Selbourne Maponya of the ANC organised Congress

ORGANISER STARTS

Committees in Factories, even those in the garment industry which were controlled by reactionaries. Later a progressive textile union was launched. This "baptism of fire" was Billy's introduction to trade unionism.

His dedication, discipline and ability to work tirelessly were put to the test in 1953. S.V. Reddy, Cassim Amra and George Ponnen, all leading trade unionists were banned. Billy was entrusted with the task of continuing their work in the 16 unions, which they were organising.

"We worked around the clock and battled to keep the unions going" Through this difficult period Billy learnt the skills of tough trade union work and went on to become a leader in the progressive trade union movement.

New labour legislation was being introduced in 1954. The progressive unions were being isolated and harassed by police. The workers lacked strong leadership. Under these conditions, SACTU was launched in March 1955. Billy was elected onto the National Executive and became the Natal secretary.

In its declaration, SACTU clearly stated its position. The economic struggle and the political one cannot be separated. It immediately affiliated to the newly launched Congress Alliance, which was made up of the ANC, Indian Congress, Coloured Peoples Congress and Congress of Democrats.



Women demand pound - a day CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

SACTU participated actively in the drawing up of the Freedom Charter. Billy spoke at the congress of the people where he motivated the clause, THE WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY SHALL BE SHARED BY ALL in which he called for the Nationalisation of all the mines and factories. For his part in the charter Billy was among the 156 leaders who were involved in the historic Treason Trial. Among those that were charged were, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Chief Lutuli, Helen Joseph and Archie Gumede.

MASS CAMPAIGNS

While the trial dragged on, Sactu Natal under Billy's guiding hand expanded. The massive pound a day campaign, the Womens demonstrations of 1959, contributed towards 17 000 new members joining Sactu. Sactu at this time



Demo's during treason trial

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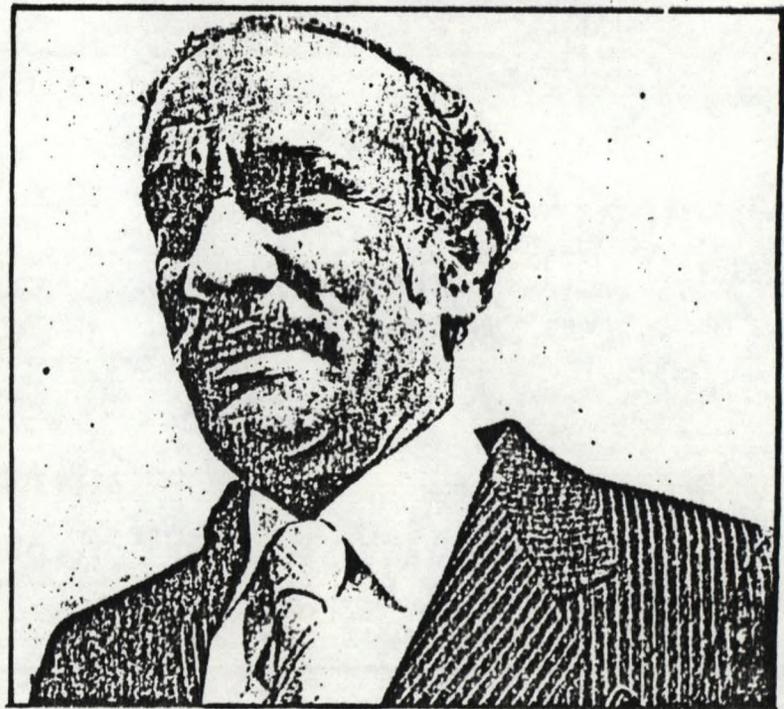
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