

Transcript – Oscar Mpetha and Themba Mpetha talking about womens march

[rough edit]

Speaker 1 – Oscar Mpetha (dad)

Yeah. Yeah. Well, the National Party came into power in 1948, and the rise of that racist organisation to power was a massive assault to women. Because it demanded that that they will, they will have to be restrictions, on their families and on the on men should not have their wives around the city. They should leave their wives in the in the rural areas. And and then there was a constant monitoring of who was around Cape Town. They used to pass laws there and to monitor was coming in and out, was staying and and and the harassment that came that came on with that.

So the biggest target group, hence we speak of the triple oppression of women, then it was it was the women who played the grant of the rise of the National Party. That the other parties were not racist, they were racist. It's just that it was a formalisation now of a blatant. Formalisation of the women's oppression.

So when they moved from life like coming to live in Cape Town near. The the, the, the. Far away from the West Coast and lived in in, in, in in new location. Obviously my grandmother, being a very strong willed person. Pushed her into the political struggle because the the treatment of women and the evictions from their own homes and for such a strong willed person, she couldn't sit back. She had to. They formed at first the. They are called. Nyanga vigilance groups. It was, yeah, the women groups called Nyanga vigilance groups. Some some of them were in Langa and some of them were were were, in all, most of these they established in most of these townships as part of defending women from the assault. Of the state. And they're called his younger and they're called the vigilance group for women. She was a.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

The same group that. Yes, why mention that?

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

No, you didn't mention it. You didn't mention it. Ohh she she mentioned the FEDSAW that she was quite active in in in the formation of FEDSAW. The Federation of South African Women.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

Yeah, like before that.

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

Ohh, they were vigilance groups. They were called younger Nyanga vigilance groups. That was that was that. It gave birth to now a national, a National Federation of of South African Women.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

That gave birth to FEDSAW. Did not want about father to be part of.

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

Ohh yes yes, since the formation of the ANC women are not allowed as part of the ANC. Hence they, they, they, they, the likes of of my grandmother felt it that they, they, they they will, they will fight their own struggle. They will form their own organisation, they'll go it alone. Hence the formation of

FEDSAW. She represented the Western Cape. The whole of the the Western Cape in in the march there was two marches in 1956 women matches in 1956 against the pass laws. She represented the Western Cape in in the first March. That March was organised by women from Transvaal. Gauteng now, is was Transvaal then. It was, it was very successful. They went in there very successfully, matched she she was part of the march into in into the first. March then it was it is not taking that look. Why don't you do a national March? We don't. We get all the women of South Africa to come and to send to Pretoria.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

Yeah, that was the 1956 one.

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

That was 1956. Yes. Then she also attended that March. She then they came back, all of them as delegates and mobilised women to to send to Pretoria, to demand that the the pass laws should be should be abandoned, should be abolished and and it became a long struggle. But they were only abolished when when in the change of the regime. But they were the first people were they were they were the creating the the the plants. They were in the receiving end of the pass laws as women of South Africa.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

You see. We must demonstrate in [unknown]. It's not the Johannesburg women. Who brought up the march?

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

It was a suggestion from the national the other women, one of them they must first, and they are joined by the Johannesburg women were must and and were joined by the others. Then the decision was taken by the No, No, no. We all want to participate. We want to be in a bigger March and they went to. They yeah, they went to recruit other women and and they got on trains. And I think by the time she was pregnant with you, when she went to Pretoria.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

1956.

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

Or you're young or not that very young.

Speaker 2 – Themba Mpetha (grand uncle)

I was very young

Speaker 1 - Oscar Mpetha (dad)

OK, OK.