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WOMEN'S RALLY 12 Aug 2 pm

Methodist Church Hall, Pritchard Str

WOMEN AGAINST BOTHA'S NEW DEAL



30 Fighting Years

THE PASS Laws are among the most hated and despised of all the Apartheid laws.

It was opposition to these laws that led to one of the biggest mass demonstrations in our history.

On that day, August 9, 1956, 20000 women marched to the government's headquarters — the Union Buildings in Pretoria. They demanded that pass laws be abolished.

The news of the protests spread to every corner of South Africa. They struck fear into the hearts of the apartheid rulers. But brought joy to the millions of people who suffered daily under the apartheid laws.

August 9 became known as National Womens Day and every year since then people have celebrated the day. And women's organisations today have been inspired by the courage and determination of those women.

But the 20000 women who came from all over the country did not arrive at the demonstration by chance. The day was successful because the women were organised and united.

This was through the efforts of all the womens organisations which were part of Fedsaw (the Federation of South African Women)

Fedsaw begins

Fedsaw was formed in 1954 at a time when women were facing more and more hardships.

In 1952 the government introduced a new law to force African women to carry passes.

At that time thousands of men and women were uniting in organisations to fight the government. They wanted to improve their conditions and express their political aspira-

tions.

Women were active in the Congress Alliance in the African National Congress Womens League, the Indian Congress, the Coloured Peoples Congress, and the Congress of Democrats.

Women also formed small organisations in different areas, like the Womens Food Committees, the Cape Housewives League, and were members of trade unions like the African Food and Canning Workers Union.

They came together in 1954 to form Fedsaw. Fedsaw was an umbrella body with these organisations affiliated to it. So the women members of the affiliated organisations were part of Fedsaw.

Women's Charter

From the start Fedsaw drew up the Women's Charter which put forward women's demands.

At a time when the Apartheid government was making laws to divide people along racial lines, Fedsaw was uniting women of all races.

Fedsaw aimed to strengthen womens sections of the Congress Movement, trade unions, and other organisations and to bring them together in joint activity.

It also aimed to work for the removal of race, class and sex discrimination, and to strive for a genuine South African democracy.

The biggest campaign run by Fedsaw was the anti-pass campaign. But it also took up other day to day problems of women in their different areas.

Some of these included:

- opposing rent, busfare and train increases
- fighting forced removals under the Group

Areas Act, in Cape Town, Sophiatown and in Natal.

●protesting against the Bantu Education Act, and helping run alternative schools until the government made this illegal.

●demanding better township facilities — better street lighting, proper toilets, creches and maternity homes.

No to passes

The laws to force African women to carry passes were passed in 1952, but because of massive resistance it was not enforced immediately.

Alot of the resistance to passes had been in the cities where Fedsaw and the ANCWL were the strongest. So the government started with the small towns and the farms, sending their pass units there from 1956.

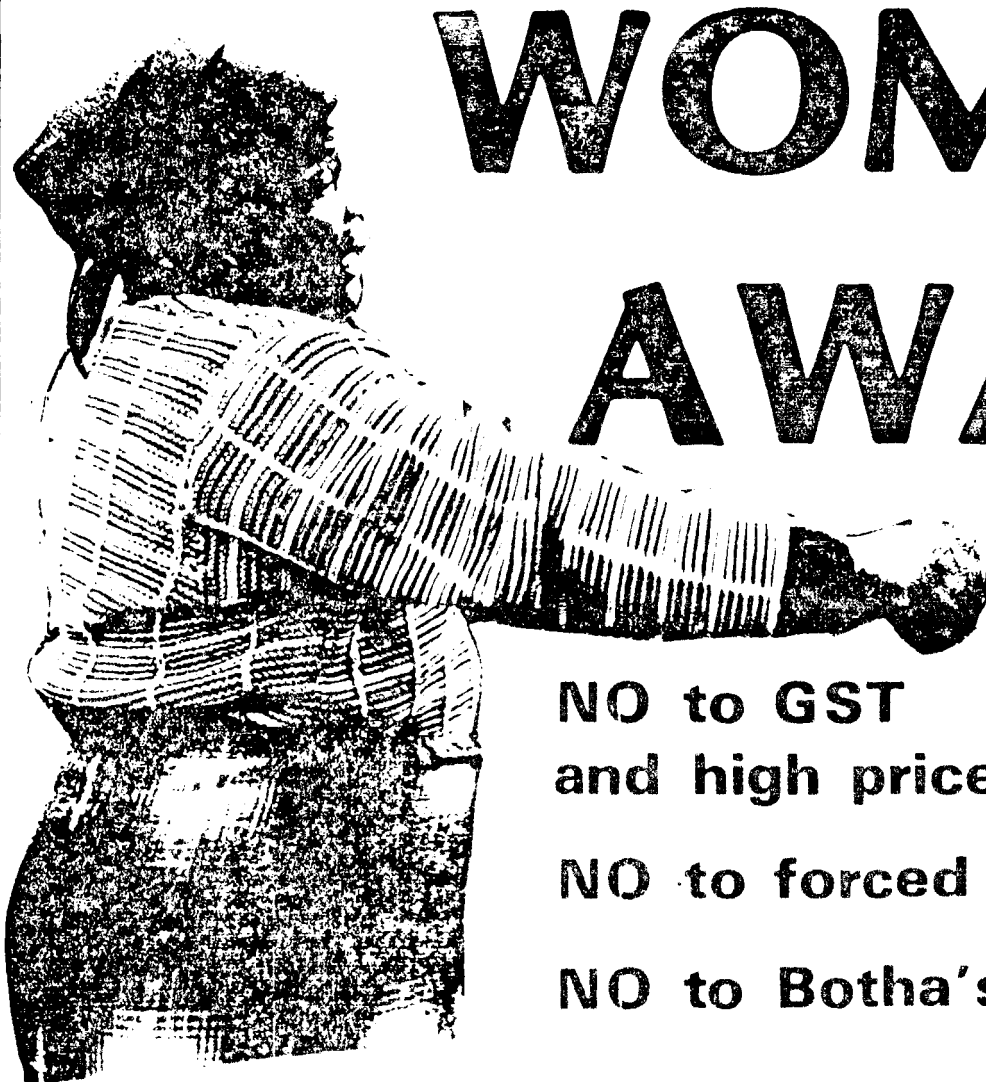
In 1957 sporadic and courageous resistance sprang up wherever the pass units went. Even in these smaller areas many of the women refused to take passes. Or they took passes and then burnt them, for example in Zeerust.

The womens resistance continued to the late fifties when the ANC also threw its weight behind the campaign.

From the start the government responded to the resistance by jailing people and trying to intimidate them. But in March 1960 at Sharpeville and Langa police opened fire and many people were killed. A state of emergency was declared and the ANC and the PAC were banned.

Fedsaw was not banned and continued to organise women, trying to set up small womens organisations. But after 1961 it could no longer function. Until today...

August 9th is National Women's Day



WOMEN AWAKE

**NO to GST
and high prices**

NO to forced removals

NO to Botha's new deal

WE CALL our women wherever you may be. In Soweto, Eldorado Park, Lenasia and the Vaal. In the cities, big towns, in rural and urban areas. We call women on the farms, in the factories and in the kitchens. In schools and hospitals, churches, mosques and temples.

We call women from Magopu to Driefontein and all areas under threat of removal.

Women we call you in all organisations to raise your voices high against Botha's New Deal.

A deal which will divide families, mother from child, African from Indian and Coloured. A deal which will force our coloured and Indian brothers to fight for Apartheid.

Why should brother be forced to fight brother?

PW Botha says this is the time for change in South Africa.

But we only see higher prices and General Sales Tax. We see the new tax laws which will force married women to pay more taxes.

We see no creches and playgrounds for our children.

Many women work in the kitchens of the rich people. They are paid the lowest wages because they are 'illegals'.

Every day thousands are hounded and arrested and locked up in jails for not carrying a dompas.

Women are sent back to the hardship and suffering of the 'homelands' where there is no work and no food. Where the children dying on the barren land. Because the government says there is no room for them in the land of their birth.

Now Koornhof's new bills will make these pass laws worse.

As wives and mothers it falls on us to make small wages stretch a long way. It

is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick.

Coloured and Indian women are being told to vote for Botha's Apartheid parliaments. We call on them to say NO to Botha's New Deal. We cannot forsake our African sisters.

We cannot be part of making Botha's plans work. We join the UDF in its campaign against the constitution.

Women of South Africa! Fedsaw is celebrating its 30th birthday. On August 9 we are celebrating National Womens Day — the day when 20000 women marched to Pretoria to demand the abolition of passes.

This year on August 9 we call women to unite and fight Botha's New Deal.

From Durban to Cape Town, from the Eastern Cape and the Border to the Transvaal the voice of women will be heard.

'We fight for our children'



■ Women's organisations are fighting high rents

VAAL WOMEN

'OUR women face problems of high prices and rents. There are no child care facilities in our area. We organise women around problems which affect them in their daily lives', said a member of the Vaal Womens Group.

Women in the Vaal area are organising women against high prices. They have started a grocery club. Each member pays a small amount each month.

The groceries are bought in bulk and are cheaper than in shops. In this way they are able to save on food bills.

The Vaal women hope to start a child minding scheme. Many women attend classes to learn to read and write.

'We also speak to women in other organisations, such as the churches. We work with the Vaal Civic Association. This is important because our problems are one.'

ZAKENI WOMEN

WOMEN from all areas in the Transvaal celebrated Fedsaw's 30th birthday in Mamelodi.

A brass band welcomed the women into the township. Mrs Nyembe, released from jail after 15 years was given a heroine's welcome.

This celebration was made possible by the hard work of the Zakeni Womens

TRANSVAAL WOMEN SPEAK OUT

Women in the Transvaal are joining hands again after many years of silence. From the distant corners of the highveld to the rich cities of Johannesburg, women are organising once again. Women, we need to organise ourselves to fight for our rights and the rights of all our people. On this page our women speak...



■ Women reject Botha's New Deal

Group. We say 'Makabongwe Amakosikazi'.

The Zakeni Womens Group started with five members. Today they are proud that their membership is growing — 43 women have joined the group.

The women in Pretoria are busy trying to organise women into one group, with members from Atteridgeville, Mabopane and Soshanguve.

CORONATIONVILLE NEWCLARE, BOSMONT, WOMEN

THIS group was launched in May this year. Its mandate is to coordinate womens issues. It is taking up of high rents, high hospital tariffs and drug abuse.

Presently they are involved with the Anti PC in making people aware of the evils of the new constitution and encouraging them not to vote for Botha's New Deal.

AZASO WOMEN

AZASO has been mobilising women students at the universities and the training colleges.

At Medunsa the womens group has about 80 members. They are educating women around issues like pass laws and influx control, about womens triple op-

pression, and that no struggle can be successful if women are still oppressed.

The women at Medunsa are medical students, so they are planning to do health care work in Winterveld. They held a jumble sale to help the needy there.

Women at Jurloop university have formed a womens group. They have taken up problems of living conditions on campus — poor accommodation and food and students' health.

They are also educating fellow students to be aware that the cleaners on campus are their mothers and should be treated as such.

They have also done good work for

Fedsaw, and held a welcoming rally for MaDorothy Nyembe when she was released from prison.

JOBURG WOMEN

SINCE 1980 white women have been meeting in small groups of between five and ten women.

Some of these groups are reading groups, other discussion groups and others write articles on women.

Occasionally they come together on an informal basis to exchange information on what the smaller groups have been doing and to discuss what womens groups are doing in other communities.



■ Women bear a big burden in the townships

LENASIA WOMEN

'WOMEN Against The Constitution' is a group of women in Lenasia who reject Botha's New Deal.

They are organising under the banner of the Transvaal Indian Congress. 'Our women are more than 50 percent of the population. We need to hear their voices in this campaign', said a TIC speaker at a meeting recently.

The Lenasia women are speaking to their neighbours and friends. They are speaking to pensioners. They are calling on Indian and Coloured womens not to vote for Botha's new parliaments.

RURAL WOMEN

'WE represent women in the bushes. We are forgotten as if we do not exist.'

'We are toiling hard on the farms of the rich farmers in Tzaneen in the Northern Transvaal. While we are toiling on the rich land, producing bananas, mangoes and avocados, our children are starving.'

'We wake up at four in the morning as if we are donkeys. But we get no pay.'

'Our husbands and the fathers of our children are working on the richest mines of our country. But their children are a pitiful sight. We are forced to look after our children alone.'

'Our women are oppressed by custom

and culture. By a system of exploitation of which they are not aware.'

These were the words of Tshepo Khumbane from Tzaneen.

Pietersburg women are organising vegetable clubs.

SOWETO WOMEN

SOWETO women protested against high prices and General Sales Tax.

'We don't want taxation without representation', said one of the placards.

The Soweto Womens Group was launched on July 1 this year. Mrs Sisulu called on women to be organised in Soweto.

Soweto women spoke of the many problems which they face — high rents and school fees, electricity and busfare increases, the arrest of husbands, fathers and children.

'Because of all these problems, womens are the first ones to take action. Women must be in the forefront of the struggle in our country', said Mrs Mlangeni, newly elected chairperson of the group.

The women have also held meetings on health, religion and nutrition. They have raised funds by holding cake and jumble sales. Now they are organising a bulk buying grocery club.

Mothers are worried about the education of their children. 'We must fight for the rights of our children', they say.

AE2

The Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) was launched at a conference on the 17th of April 1954. Over 200 enthusiastic delegates met 'to discuss women's problems and promote women's rights'. A Women's Charter, which set out basic demands for:- creches; equal opportunities for women; equal pay; maternity rights and benefits; and the removal of influx control and racial discrimination, was adopted.

1. Aims of FEDSAW

The conference set out the AIMS of FEDSAW as follows:-

- to create a broad-based, non-racial organisation, to unite women and work towards full liberation;
- to strengthen, build and bring together women's groups through joint campaigns;
- to organise women around day-to-day issues like rent and electricity increases; food price increases; removals; creches; township facilities; and bus fare increases;
- to link local demands of women to national struggles;
- to demand an equal role for women in society, and in the political struggle.

2. How did FEDSAW organise?

Women were thus organised at two levels: Firstly, to put forward 'women's demands' and, secondly, to play an active role in the national campaigns, like the Defiance Campaign).

FEDSAW encouraged women to participate in planning the Congress of the People in 1955. Women collected 'women's demands' for the Freedom Charter.

That year a 'Congress of Mothers' was organised to discuss ways in which women could implement the aims of the Freedom Charter.

FEDSAW's focus throughout its existence was on basic problems women experienced. There were protests against municipal beerhalls which stole a major source of income from women.

FEDSAW demanded proper accommodation for migrant workers, and played a major role in forming alternate schools during the boycotts of Bantu Education. The women organised for a better life for their children - and the success of the 'potato boycotts', to protest against exploitation of child labour on farms, was a strong demonstration of their organisational skill and determination.

FEDSAW spoke out against rent increases which posed an added burden for women, but the most energy and militancy was put into the Anti-Pass Campaigns of the 1950s. Since the government's attempts to introduce passes for women in 1952, FEDSAW led a concerted and organised campaign against what was seen as a threat to the safety of women, to employment in urban areas, and to the unity of families.

Women in the OFS marched to magistrates' offices to protest. In Zeerust and Winburg, they burnt their passes. In Johannesburg they courted arrest. Thousands of women - in urban and rural areas, in factories and communities - refused to take out passes. This massive show of solidarity

led to a march by women in 1955, and a demonstration at the Union Buildings by 20 000 women on the 9th of August 1956. On this historic day women were led by Rahima Moosa, Helen Joseph and Lillian Ngoyi and submitted thousands of petitions to Minister Strydom. The song they sang:

"Strydom, you have struck a rock;
You shall be killed"

lives on each year as our National Women's Day song.

The strength of FEDSAW arose from its focus on basic problems that affect women. And its ability to reach out to a wide network of women all over South Africa.

It is this struggle that we must carry forward - to realise the demands enshrined in the Women's Charter and the full equality of all women in all spheres of society.

3. How was FEDSAW structured?

Many women's groups existed all over the country. These groups were united under the umbrella of the Federation of South African Women. The women belonged to women's groups which fought the day-to-day struggles of women. But, most of the women came from the political organisations of that time, including some trade unions.

These were: the ANCWL, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats and the Coloured People's Congress. Women from the Food and Canning Workers Union joined in mass.

A National Executive was elected at the launching conference. And, in each province, a Regional Executive was set up.

In this way, the Federation of South African Women could draw on a network of women throughout the country.

AE3

PRESENTATION OF THE FEDERATION OF
SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN (FEDSAW)

1. Historical Background

The Federation of South African Women was formed in 1954 solely for the purpose of Uniting all existing Women's Organizations (then) to fight against the oppression and exploitation of women experienced by the Women of this Country. The African Women have always been victims of these oppressions, the manifold oppression experienced by women is worldwidely known and always condemned.

2. Activities of Fedsaw and the August 1976 March to Union Building.

In all its activities the FEDSAW has been fighting against pass laws, influx control laws, which are all instrumental to the division of family units, migratory labour, inferior education and food, and rent increments. We saw its strength through boycotts, such as bus boycotts and rent increases boycotts.

Throughout its activities the Fedsaw has shown the dynamism and strength that organized and united women wield. This was shown in the great march of 9th August 1956 by 20000 Fedsaw women to the Union Building against the introduction of passes for women.

Nevertheless Fedsaw was crippled by the banishment and bannings of its leadership. People like Lilian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph, Francis Baard and Dorothy Nyembe and many others.

3. Revival of FEDSAW in 1976

During the 1976 students uprisings it became evident to us that there was a need for a women's organisation that would voice out the grievances of our community as women.

There was a clear need for resistance against oppression that affected housewives directly, such as rent increments, food prices, so-called compulsory education and many other things. These were realized, and could only be overcome by the United Action of women in conjunction with other organizations.

With this in mind a few concerned women came together to try and reorganize themselves and the community. To do this we approached the old vanguards of FEDSAW to draw on their experiences and together fight against the evils of the apartheid system. We then formed a committee in Soweto and our main thrust was rent rises and education. In 1981 we successfully launched a rent boycott which culminated in a very big demonstration outside the U.B.C.

4. Expansion of the FEDSAW.

Subsequently women's groups have been formed in Kagiso, Tzaneen, Daveyton, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Turfloop, Medunsa and Glyn Thomas House.

In spite of our concerted effort to reorganize women we have often met with resistance from many women, particularly in the churches. The main reasons were fear of arrest and detention and because of the traditional attitude and teachings of our various churches, women turn to ascribe our difficulties to fate and the "will" of God. The Bible has always been looked at very literally but not contextually in relation to the demands of our situation.

It becomes therefore important for us, as women gathered here to commit ourselves into realizing that our problems as women are social problems that can be dealt with through collective action. Women at home, in churches, at the factory and in all different sectors are in fact a group in themselves, which could come together and fight this oppression.

5. Where to find us ?

Federation of South African Women
c/o Mrs. Greta Ncaphai
1833 Dube Village
P.O. Dube
1800

Territorio Amante ^{curado}
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Ms Cachalua 2213788

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THE WOMENS' CHARTER

PREAMBLE:

We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, Africans, Indians, Europeans and Coloureds, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women.

A SINGLE SOCIETY:

We women do not form a society separate from the men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both men and women. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.

WOMEN'S LOT:

We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers, it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. It is our lot to keep and care for the homes that are too small, broken and dirty to be kept clean. We know the burden of looking after children and our land when our husbands are away in the mines, on the farms and in towns earning our daily bread.

We know what it is to keep family life going in
POOR HOMES AND SHANTIES OR IN OVERCROWDED

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN:

We resolve to struggle for the removal of laws and customs that deny African women the right to own, inherit or alienate property.

WOMEN WHO LABOUR:

Thousands of African women, like Indian, Coloured and European women, are employed today in factories, homes, offices, shops, on farms and in professions such as nursing, teaching and the like. As unmarried women, widows or divorcees, they have to fend for themselves, often without assistance of the male relative. Many of them are responsible not only for their own livelihood, but also that of their children.

Large numbers of women today are in fact the sole breadwinners and heads of their families.

FOREVER MINORS:

Nevertheless, the laws and practices derived from earlier and different states of society are still applied to them. They are responsible for their own person and their children. Yet the law seeks to enforce upon them the status of a

OUR CROWDED APARTMENTS WE KNOW THE
BITTERNESS OF CHILDREN

taken to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training or jobs at a living wage.

POOR AND RICH:

These are evils that do not need to exist. They exist because the society in which we live is divided into poor and rich, into non-European and European. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. The women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination, and the evils of the colour-bar.

NATIONAL LIBERATION:

As members of the National Liberation Movement and trade unions, in and through our various organisations, we march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people.

NEED FOR EDUCATION:

We also recognise that large numbers of our women folk continue to be bound by traditional practices and conventions, and fail to realize that these have become obsolete and a brake on progress.

It is our intention to carry out a nation-wide programme of education that will bring home to the men and women of all national groups the realisation that freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as women are kept in bondage.

AN APPEAL:

We appeal to progressive organisations, to members of the great National Liberation Movement, to the trade unions, and working class organisations, to the churches, educational and welfare organisations, to progressive men and women who have the interest of our people at heart to join us in this great and noble endeavour.

1984 Year of the Women

AE5

**TSOGANG
BASADI
a khosikazi
VUKANI!**



Rev A E S
FEDSAW

24 October 1984

Phone: 29-1916/7

Dear Sir/Madam

FEDSAW invites you to attend a parents and students meeting in Soweto.

Venue: Roman Catholic Church, Phiri

Time: 13H00 (1 P.M)

Date: Sunday, 4 November 1984

Speakers: COSAS (Congress of S A Students) ✓
AZASO (Azanian Students' Organisation)
CIVIC
UDF (Unified Democratic Front) ✓
FEDSAW (Federation of S A Women) ✓
SABTA (S A Black Taxi Association)
UNIONS
CHURCH *Rev From JAAL*
SADWA (S A Domestic Workers Union) ✓

Thanking you and hoping you will attend.

Yours faithfully

J. Mlangeni

J MLANGENI
CHAIRPERSON

AE6

Rev "AEB"

THE FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN



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Why do we talk about the Federation ?

The purpose of this booklet is to give women a starting point for thinking about and discussing

- how we should organise
- how we can learn from the past
- how we can prepare for the future.

When the Federation was formed, there was a lot of discussion about its structure and about how it should work. There is always a lot of debate when new organisations are being formed. Many questions need to be asked by the people going into an organisation, Often it is useful to look at the problems other people have had in their organisations.

The Federation of South African Women is the organisation in which we have our roots. It is the organisation which established the tradition of women's organisation in the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa. It is the history of this organisation that has given us experience and pride as women in the struggle in South Africa. 9th August, National Women's Day, was achieved for us by the women of the Federation.

In this booklet on the Federation, we look at our roots. And we do this seriously in order to understand the conditions and difficulties of organising women at that time. We examine the problems, the strengths and victories, failures and weaknesses of the Federation. When we go deep into these problems, we do not want to be negative. We want to learn how to apply the gains of the past to the needs of the present.

We are trying to build up organisations in which everyone, all members, participate in the discussion and make the decisions. To do this we need to communicate ideas and start discussion as widely as possible. Many women today do not know about the Federation of South African Women. Many of us were too young, or were inactive in the 1950's. We wrote this booklet to change this and to tell people about the Federation and the women's struggle in the 1950's. We are asking questions about how women should organise now in 1982. But we do not have the answers to put forward. All the women of South Africa must work together to answer these questions. This is part of the struggle to form organisations and part of the fight for our demands.

paying as little as possible for bus and train fares. There were many struggles and the people demanded proper housing, and reasonable bus and train fares. For example, the people of Evaton and Alexandra boycotted buses when the fares were increased.

The Nationalist government's Apartheid policy was also designed to divide the oppressed people along racial lines. It did this to make the unity of the oppressed people in opposition to the government more difficult. The government divided the South African nation into small groups. The government tried to make a different 'deal' with each race group. They wanted each group to fight for its own separate interests.

The Nationalist government introduced laws to exclude the oppressed and exploited masses from all political organisation and from representative bodies. In 1951 Parliament passed the Bantu Authorities Act. This Act set up Tribal, Regional and Territorial Authorities with limited powers to control the lives of the African people. From 1951, the government tried to take the right to vote for Members of Parliament of their own choice away from the coloureds. But the opposition to this forced the government to try new ways. It finally won the battle in 1956, and took away the vote. In 1959 the government introduced a new law called the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act. This Act changed the reserve areas into 'homelands' with a separate government of its own. The government wanted African people to make their demands to their particular tribal government, and not to the central government. Meaningful political rights...

It is important to note that while the research and writing was done by a group of members mandated by the United Women's Organisation, the views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the organisation. This booklet has not yet been discussed by the branches. It has not been approved by the UWO Executive Council or by the Executive Committee.

The booklet is still to be read - by the UWO and by all interested people in South Africa. It is designed to get people talking about the important questions facing women who want to get organised. Above all, it is intended to encourage an interest in women's organisation and a pride in the Federation of South African Women.

How was the Federation the Federation ?

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The 1950's were a new period in South Africa. The Nationalist government came to power in 1948 and forced its Apartheid policy on the people of South Africa. This policy helped to give industry the cheap labour it needed to grow fast and to make big profits. Life was very hard for most people in South Africa after the Second World War. But it was particularly hard for the families of the workers. The women of these families struggled to make ends meet. It was harder for these people because the government tried to prevent the workers from demanding high wages, so that industry could make

their profits. The government also tried to save money by paying as little as possible for housing and transport for working people. There were many struggles in the 1950's when the people demanded proper housing, and reasonable bus and train fares. For example, the people of Evaton and Alexandra boycotted buses when the fares were increased.

The Nationalist government's Apartheid policy was also designed to divide the oppressed people along racial lines. It did this to make the unity of the oppressed people in opposition to the government more difficult. The government divided the South African nation into small groups. The government tried to make a different 'deal' with each race group. They wanted each group to fight for its own separate interests.

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PEOPLE ORGANISE AGAINST REPRESSION:

The people showed their opposition to the government more strongly in the 1950's than ever before. People came forward in their masses to build their organisations. Before the War, the leaders had been on their own. After the War, the leaders had the support of the masses. In their campaigns, people

showed that it was not just the leaders who wanted to protest. Thousands of people protested. One big and important struggle was the Defiance Campaign in 1952. Thousands of volunteers led by the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Indian Congress, defied unjust laws. For many women, this campaign was their first political experience. But they continued in the struggle after the Defiance Campaign ended.

At this time in South Africa, a number of other organisations were growing. The ways people were fighting their struggles were changing. The ANC had existed since 1912, but in 1949 in the Programme of Action, it adopted a new strategy. The South African Indian Congress had worked with the ANC from the Programme of Action. Together these two organisations had planned the Defiance Campaign. They mobilised people in large numbers around the calls for action. In 1953, people in various places felt the need for other organisations to draw unorganised people into the struggle alongside the ANC and South African Indian Congress. In Johannesburg, a group of white activists formed an organisation called the Congress of Democrats. They joined with the newly formed organisation, the Democratic League in Cape Town, to form the South African Congress of Democrats. It was small and based mainly in Johannesburg and Cape Town. There were a lot of questions that this organisation sorted out in these early years. Questions like: what was its role in the struggle? what was its relationship to the ANC? Also in 1953, but in the Western Cape, a group of people decided that they needed an organisation to work with the coloured people. Up till then the coloured people had no long term organisation. An organisation was started. One of the first things it did was to try to set up branches in other regions. Then at the end of 1953, these groups all came together. They formed the South African Coloured Peoples Organisation. This was later called the Coloured Peoples Congress or CPC.

In Europe in 1945, an organisation called the Women's International Democratic Federation was formed. The aims of the organisation were to fight for women's rights, for peace and for freedom. Some women in South Africa knew about this organisation and sent a delegate to the conferences in 1947, 1951 and 1953. These women saw that the Women's International Democratic Federation had made women a powerful force in many countries. They thought that South Africa needed a similar kind of women's organisation. They wanted a national women's organisation to draw together all the small women's organisations.

In all the different regions of South Africa, women had already formed organisations and were asking the question: why a women's organisation? In the Transvaal, the ANC Women's League was strong and well organised. There were also women outside of the Women's League who talked about organising women. In Natal, there was not really a women's organisation. But women in the ANC and Natal Indian Congress thought that a women's organisation was a good idea. In Port Elizabeth, a group of women from the trade unions and from the ANC met to talk about forming a women's organisation. One of the trade union organisers from Cape Town was at this meeting, and so contact was established between these two centres. In Cape Town, there were a number of small women's organisations like the Women's Food Committees and the Cape Housewives League. In the Western Cape, women were organised into the ANC and Food and Canning Workers Union as well. There were also women who had been active in the Communist Party. They all wanted a women's organisation.

The aims of the Federation.

THE UNITY OF ALL WOMEN:

It was in this climate of the growth of new organisations that the Federation of South African Women was formed. The ANC and SAIC had committed themselves to the struggle for national liberation. To the women who formed the Federation, liberation also meant freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex. The Women's Charter was adopted at the first conference of the Federation. The Charter reached out to 'Working Women of South Africa' and called for, '...solidarity in the struggle against apartheid, racism, sexism and capitalist exploitation'. It is clear that these women understood the demands made on them by the national liberation struggle. To work for freedom, they would have to fight against ideas that women should be inferior and passive. They had to show themselves capable of planned political action. Through this work they could liberate the whole of society.

At the first conference in 1954, women from organisations all over the country met. The majority of the women came from the ANC. One may ask why a national women's organisation was necessary when a women's organisation already existed, namely the ANC Women's League in the Transvaal. There were many women's organisations throughout the country which were independent of the ANC and had no political affiliations. There were religious groups, Mothers Unions, and the National Council of African Women. The answer to this question is that the leaders of the Federation saw the need to unite all women to prepare them for the struggles ahead. They wanted an organisation to unite women, non-racially.



Part of the crowd at the first conference of the Federation of South African Women.

The women who came from other political organisations had experienced prejudice against their activeness from their men colleagues. Often they found themselves making tea rather than taking part in discussions. They regarded this as an obstacle to progress. This was expressed in the Women's Charter as follows: '...The law has become an obstacle to the progress of women and therefore a brake on the whole society. This intolerable condition would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of a large section of our menfolk to

concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves...they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and in practice'

WHY A NATIONAL FEDERATION?

Even though the Federation took up these national issues, they did not often organise nationally co-ordinated campaigns. For example, the 1954 rent increases applied to all locations throughout the country. The Federation national executive called on women of all regions to take up the issue. But the women fought the rent increases only in Johannesburg and in Cape Town. There was no national co-ordination of the campaign. The women of each region decided how they would work in their area completely on their own.

But if the Anti-Pass Campaign was the only national campaign, then why did women see the need for national organisation? Although it did not organise many national campaigns the Federation kept women of different regions in contact with one another. The Federation helped the women in the regions to see their problems as part of the people's problems. The Federation regional committees took up issues of national importance. Through the national conferences, women could learn about the problems of other areas, and about how women organised in other areas. There was a national conference in 1954. The Federation and the ANC Women's League had a joint conference in 1956 about the Anti-Pass Campaign. In August 1956, after the march to Pretoria, the Federation held its second conference. The last national conference was in 1961 after the banning of the Women's League. This discussion about how people organised in other areas is always an important part of any organisation. We can learn from the problems other people faced, and how they overcame these problems. A national Federation was important for another reason. Women in each region realised that they were not on their own. They were part of a nation-wide mass movement of women which was part of the liberation struggle.

The structure of the Federation

One of the most important things the women in the Federation had to decide on was the structure of their organisation. This was not a simple problem. It needed a lot of discussing and debating. Discussion took place at the first conference. But it needed more than that. After the conference women discussed the draft constitution and the structure in their organisations and amongst themselves.

From the beginning women from all over the country were part of the FSAW. After the first conference they knew that they wanted to form a national organisation. They knew then what their collective goals were. These were set out in the Women's Charter adopted at the first conference. They even had a pretty good idea of what sorts of issues they were likely to take up and organise around. Some of the questions the women had to ask themselves were: How would they work together to achieve their common goals? Should they work together as individuals, in groups, in areas or in separate organisations? Would the Federation have individual membership? Would it have branches in different areas? Would it have only organisations affiliated to it or would it have both individual membership and affiliated organisations? How would all the different areas fit into the organisation as a whole? Another question they had to look at was how women from the different race groups would fit into the structure. How would women in the rural areas where there were no organisations become part of the Federation and keep in contact with things happening in the cities? They wanted to find a way to encourage all the women that agreed with their aims to become part of the Federation in some way, regardless of their race.

WOMEN IN ORGANISATIONS

Many of the women who were involved in the Federation were already part of other political organisations. In 1954, when the Federation was formed it was only the ANC that had a women's section. Before 1954 the ANC Women's League only operated in the Transvaal. From December 1954 to 1956 the Women's League set up regional committees in the different

provinces and was growing fast. By 1956 the ANCWL was organised nationally. Other organisations such as the Congress of Democrats (COD), the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) didn't have their own women's sections.

Women were also organised in other types of women's organisations, e.g. the Cape Housewife's League, and in trade unions. Many of these women were keen to become part of a national women's organisation. Some women found that they could be in three different organisations at the same time. For example, a coloured woman working in a canning factory could be in the Federation, SACPO and the Food and Canning Workers Union at the same time. Many women had to work out if they could be active in more than one organisation at the same time.

The women had to decide on what kind of structure the Federation should have. Would membership of the Federation draw women away from other organisations? Different organisations may have different ideas about how to run a campaign. How would decision-making take place, with women scattered all over the country in different organisations? Many women were not in organisations at all. How would activities in the different areas be coordinated? How would women in the different areas be kept in contact with each other?

SECOND FEDERATION CONFERENCE:

Women from all over the country attended the second conference in 1956. Though most of the women were from the Transvaal. At this conference after long discussion, a constitution was adopted. It was seen 'as a working basis on which regions can be correctly constituted, on which women's organisations can be invited to affiliate and the work of the Federation can go forward' (FSAW A1). The ANC was the dominant organisation in the Congress Alliance. The ANCWL represented the largest and most organised women's organisation in the country. Some people felt that individual membership would lead to divided loyalties. They feared that it could lead to a situation where the Federation and the ANCWL competed for members, or that the Federation would draw women away from the ANCWL into a separate organisation.

So they gave up the idea of individual membership. They decided that it was better to concentrate on strengthening those women's organisations that already existed. They would also build new organisations, clubs, and societies which could affiliate to the Federation.

ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED TO THE FEDERATION

The women in the Federation also realised that it was only the ANC and the African women who had a strong women's organisation. A lot of women were completely unorganised. They were not part of any organisation. They tried to solve this problem in two ways:

- 1) In some of the areas women tried to set up new women's organisations that could affiliate to the Federation. This was done in Cape Town in 1956 when the Non-European Women's League was formed. The Non-European Women's League tried to draw in unorganised coloured women. This organisation affiliated to the Federation.
- 2) General organisations could also affiliate to the Federation. Women in the Food and Canning Workers Union, South African Coloured People's Organisation and the Congress of Democrats could all be part of the Federation because their organisation affiliated to it.

This meant that the Federation was a mixture of different organisations. The ANCWL was a nation-wide organisation open to africans only. COD and SACPO were also nation-wide and they were open to a particular race group. But they were not women's organisations. F&CWU was a nation-wide trade union. The Non-European Women's League and the Cape Housewife's League were women's organisations in Cape Town.

This mixture of different organisations was the Federation's strength in one sense and its weakness in another. Because it covered such a wide range of organisations in its affiliates, the Federation could draw on women from the factories, on the housewives and on women of all races to support its campaigns. The Federation could mobilise the masses of women around particular issues. An example of this was the march of 20 000 women to Pretoria on the 9th August 1956.

But women still often felt divided loyalties between their own organisations and the Federation. They were often not sure what organisation they were working for in any particular campaign. Meetings of the affiliate organisations and the Federation branches were often held together. For example in Paarl the Federation business was dealt with at the end of the F&CWU meetings.

CONFERENCES AND DECISION MAKING

The main policy decisions of the Federation occurred at the national and regional conferences. At the national conference women from different organisations and from all over the country would get together to discuss their grievances and to

report on activities in their areas. They would pass resolutions and plan activities for the future.

But decisions about activities had to be made far more often than at the conferences. National conferences were expensive at a time when most of the members and the organisation itself was poor and travelling was expensive and time-consuming. Conferences were quite difficult to organise. They had to be planned well in advance so that as many women as possible could attend. Organisations needed time to elect representatives. Most of the women who would attend were working women. They had to take a few days of work to travel and attend the conference. The national conferences were usually in Johannesburg, which made it difficult for women from the Cape to attend.

Regional conferences were also very important to discuss issues and make decisions and plans. Women from different organisations were invited to attend the regional conferences. Their organisations were invited to affiliate to the Federation. But in some areas the women in the Federation felt that they needed to strengthen organisation in their regions before they had a regional conference.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Because of the difficulty of having frequent conferences it was important for there to be a central decision making body within the Federation. This was the National Executive Committee of the Federation. This consisted of the National President, 4 National Vice-Presidents (one from each province), a treasurer and a general secretary, as well as a committee of 20 members. The majority of the committee members lived in the district of the Federation Head Office to form a working committee. They assisted the executive in their tasks. These were all elected by the women at the National Conference. The executive would work in the centre where the Federation Head Office was situated. This was first in Cape Town but moved to Johannesburg in 1956.

CONTACT AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

The different regions had regional executives and committees. These were supposed to be elected at the regional conferences. In some areas there were not enough women to be active on the committees so an election didn't really happen.

Contact between the regions and head office was emphasised. The regions were asked to write reports and send news. The Head Office could then let each region know what was

happening in other areas and coordinate activities. In the fifties many national issues were taken up by organisations. It was important for the Federation to be able to communicate with all the regions when a national issue was taken up. It seems that the communication wasn't always good. This was especially so after the Head Office moved to Johannesburg.

The NEC often sent out memoranda and circulars to the regions. The circulars called on the women in the different areas to support a particular campaign. Many of these campaigns originated from within the Congress Alliance. But they also came from discussion and grievances that the women had voiced at the conferences. The executive would discuss plans in greater detail and send their recommendations to the regional committees for discussion and action. For example, during the anti-pass campaign the NEC recommended to the regions that they form broad anti-pass committees with other organisations (even with those outside the Congress Alliance).

Recommendations of this kind were often taken up by the different regions in different ways. This depended on the specific conditions in the region, such as how strong the Federation was in that region, what other local campaigns they were involved in at the time and what other organisations existed in the area. For example, the Cape municipal vote was a big issue in the Cape and the Federation in the Cape was very active in the campaign. This was not so in the Transvaal and other provinces. The Transvaal were much more active in the Bantu Education campaign than the Cape was.

What issues did the Federation take up ?

When the Federation took up an issue, what did they want to gain? The Federation of South African Women took up the problems that made people's lives difficult because they were committed to improving the lives of the women in their affiliate organisations. But the organisation also wanted to draw the women into the national liberation struggle. The Federation knew that without the support of all the people in South Africa, freedom would never be won. Women made up half the population. Normally they did not take an active part in political organisation. The Federation wanted to increase the number of people to protest against oppression in South Africa. They took up issues which concerned women in order to mobilise them into this struggle.

What were the people's problems that the Federation was concerned about? We must remember that the Federation worked very closely with Congress Alliance organisation even though it was not officially on the National Consultative Committee. The Congress Alliance had a policy of 'Unity in Action', which meant that no campaigns were ever fought by only one organisation. All these Congress Alliance organisations joined forces to fight for an issue, and they tried to draw other organisations in as well. So decisions to take up an issue were not made only within the Federation structure. Organisations worked together to decide on these questions. To show this we can look at the Pass Campaign, Bantu Education Campaign and the Congress of the People.



1957 anti-pass demonstration in Johannesburg

PASSES FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

From 1950, the threat that african women must carry passes was a heavy burden for the women of South Africa. The men had carried passes for a long time. Women had seen how the men had suffered from the pass laws. Now they too had to carry passes. The ANC opposed passes for women from 1950 when the government first spoke of them. Opposition to the pass laws was central to the ANC policy. The people who were mobilised into the anti-pass campaigns from 1950 till 1960 demanded that the pass laws be abolished.

The Federation was important in the anti-pass campaigns. It took up the issue in most areas of South Africa where the pass unit issued passes. The pass campaigns continued throughout the late 1950's. For example, when the pass unit came to Cape Town, the women voiced their opposition. Many of the women refused to carry passes. In the late 1950's the anti-pass campaigns were the major activity of the Federation and the ANC Women's League. Mainly women were involved in the campaigns during the fifties.



Zeerust women protesting against passes in 1957.

The Anti-Pass Campaign was the only campaign that the Federation organised that was really a national campaign. The march of 20 000 women to the Union Buildings was the result of national organisation. The Federation tried to do two things. They organised women in each area not to take out passes, and co-ordinated the campaign on a national scale. In each area, women worked towards a march to the local Native Commissioner. They also prepared themselves towards sending a deputation to Pretoria. The Anti-Pass Campaign was the only campaign that the Federation took up in each region. This campaign brought women from the cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth together with women from the outlying areas like Zeerust and Winburg. This did not happen in other campaigns.

Why was the Anti-Pass Campaign a nationally co-ordinated campaign? The opposition to passes was, as we have said, especially important and more energy was put into it than into other campaigns. But there was another set of reasons why this campaign was fought nationally. The women of South Africa felt very strongly about the pass issue. They spontaneously showed their resistance to the issuing of passes. Even in areas where the Federation and the ANC Women's League had not been working, women opposed passes. This spontaneous militancy of the women pushed the organisations to take up the campaigns in all areas. The Federation and ANC Women's League also saw that the way that the state was issuing passes, going from one area to another, had to be stopped. In the late 1950's the pass unit went from place to place in South Africa to issue passes to women. One month the pass unit was in Winburg, the next month in Springs, the month after in Sophiatown. This travelling pass unit made it more difficult for women to see the wideness of the issue. The Federation saw the need for a national campaign to overcome these divisions. Through this national campaign, the isolated efforts of the women were brought together. At the same time, the full importance of the issue was brought out.

GROUP AREAS AND RESETTLEMENT

The Federation was also concerned about how the people were forced to move. During the 1950's the Nationalists tried to divide the areas that people lived in along racial lines. This was part of their policy to divide the people and to make unity amongst the oppressed people more difficult. The state worked differently in the different regions of South Africa. But the general problem that the Federation fought against was the same throughout the country, although in each area there were particular problems not found in other areas. For example, in Johannesburg, people were moved from Sophiatown, and there were the Western Areas removals. In Weenen in Natal, people were moved from the areas where they had lived for a long time and left in the veld without houses. In Cape Town, Africans were moved from houses in Blaauwlei, Retreat and from squatter communities in Windemere and Elsie's River, to an emergency camp in Nyanga.

RENT INCREASES

In the 1950's the State increased the rents in a sub-economic housing scheme in all the locations throughout the country. So workers had to pay more money for their houses. The Federation executive wrote to all its regional committees

and affiliates and called on them to take up the issue of the rent increases and the fight against them. This was a problem that affected the daily lives of the African members of the Federation. The organisation opposed the rent increases to fight for better living conditions for the people.

BANTU EDUCATION ACT CAMPAIGN

The Nationalist government strengthened the racial oppression in South Africa through its Apartheid policy. It brought racial oppression into all areas of people's lives. In 1953 Parliament introduced a new law - the Bantu Education Act. This Act put the control over what teachers taught african children in the hands of the government. It was designed to give these children an inferior education to equip them for the role that the government wanted them to play. The introduction of this Act was part of a broader control over education that the government was exercising. The ANC opposed the move to divide education along racial lines and to put it under the control of the government. The ANC's opposition to this move was expressed through a campaign led by the ANC Women's League. The Federation worked closely with the Women's League on this issue, although it only took up the campaign in certain areas.



1959 Cato Manor protests by women against beerhalls met with police repression.

BEERHALLS

The Federation of South African Women also took up the issue of the beerhalls in a number of regions. The government made it illegal to brew beer and to sell it from people's houses. This forced the people to buy beer from the Municipal Beerhall. The campaign against the beerhalls in Cato Manor in 1959 was a particularly militant one. The women marched on the beerhalls armed with sticks and chased the men out. The police tried to prevent the women from going to the beerhall and charged the women with batons. But the women's militancy eventually forced the Municipality to close the beerhall. Many people opposed the beerhalls in other areas as well. In Langa, starting in 1954, the people led by the ANC prevented the Cape Town City Council from building a beerhall for many years.

There were also many other campaigns that the Federation was involved in. For example in 1957, they worked with the Federation of South African Nurses and Midwives to oppose the Nursing Act of 1957. This Act introduced racial segregation into all aspects of the nursing profession. This campaign was taken up in a number of areas. The Federation also fought against bread price increases. For example, in 1961 a group of Federation women in the Western Cape and delegates from other women's organisations went to the Minister of Finance to oppose a proposed increase in the price of bread. The Federation was also involved in opposing train fare and bus fare increases in various places. In Cape Town, when the Municipality tried to introduce apartheid on the buses the Federation was involved in the campaign to oppose this move.

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

The affiliate organisations of the Federation and the Federation regional committees also took up basic community problems. They fought against bad street lighting, the lack of pedestrian crossings and the shortage of creches. The Federation worked for these kinds of improvements in the different areas, and showed women that the organisation could help them. The Federation then tried to draw these women into bigger campaigns and to raise their political consciousness. For example, in Blaauwlei, women worked together to set up a creche and then demanded a building from the City Council. The parents were all involved in the work at the creche and took decisions about the creche themselves. When the creche had been opened, the women still met to discuss their problems. Some Federation women went to talk to these women about the

Women's International Democratic Federation and about what women were doing in other countries. In this way they brought new ideas to the women of Blaauvlei, and the women saw that their struggle for their creche was part of a bigger struggle.

THE FEDERATION TOOK UP TWO KINDS OF ISSUES:

We have discussed some of the issues that the Federation took up. We can see that there were two kinds of issues:

- 1) Community problems that affected only one particular area. Here we mentioned the creche at Blaauvlei, but there was also the creche at Wynberg, and the campaign to get toilets at Nyanga Emergency Camp.
- 2) National problems that were a result of the policy of the South Africa state, like passes, Bantu Education and removals. We saw that these problems were often slightly different in each region.

How did the Federation organise ?

Now we need to ask how did the Federation of South African Women organise? How did they take up issues? How did they fight campaigns around these issues? When the Federation took up a community issue, they worked in their own area only. But they used many methods to fight for their demands. They used the same kind of methods in the local campaigns as they used when the Federation fought issues of national importance.

JOINT CAMPAIGNS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We said earlier that the Federation of South African Women was part of the Congress Alliance. They worked very closely with the other organisations that were part of the alliance. But the Federation also worked together in campaigns with organisations which were not part of the Congress Alliance. It was the policy of the Federation to work with as wide a range of organisations as possible. This policy was called the 'Unity in Action' policy. In the locations, the Federation worked with the Manyano women (1), religious groups, social clubs and the National Council of African Women. In the broader campaigns, they worked with their affiliate organisations and with other organisations that were not affiliated. For example, in the Anti-Pass Campaign in Cape Town after 1957, the Federation and the ANC Women's League worked with the National Council of Women, the Black Sash, Anglican Mothers' Union, the Quaker Service Fund, the South African

Institute of Race Relations, and other organisations. In 1954, the ANC and other organisations decided to call on the people of South Africa to bring forward their demands for freedom. They worked towards the Congress of the People in June 1955. This Congress drew up the Freedom Charter. The Federation worked with the other organisations in the campaign leading up to this representative gathering. After the Congress of the People, the organisations organised a campaign to tell the people about the Freedom Charter. And all the Congress Alliance organisations adopted the Freedom Charter. The Federation held a Congress of Mothers in the Transvaal and in the Western Cape to discuss the Charter.



Indian women have traditionally been kept in the background in political activity. In 1955 these Indian women broke through backward tradition when they attended the Congress of the People.

ORGANISING A CAMPAIGN

The Federation wanted to draw as many people as possible into the campaigns and to make the protests as big as possible. The Federation believed that mass support for demands would

force the government to do away with racial oppression. There were a lot of ways in which the Federation organised to take up issues. We can look at some of the campaigns to show the methods that the Federation used to organise.

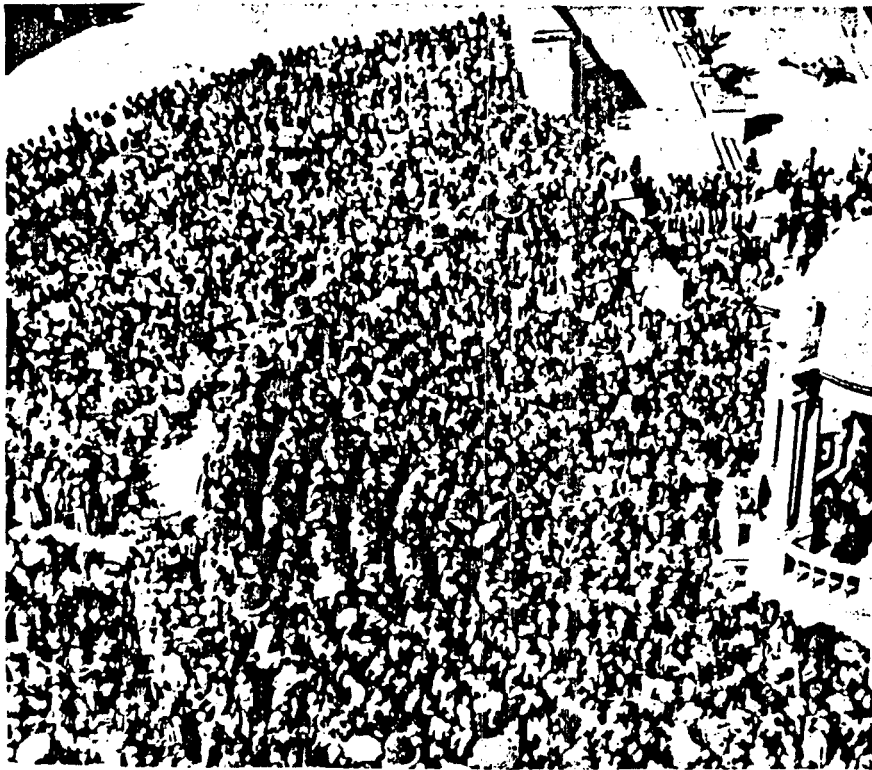
Before 1956, the Anti-Pass Campaign was not a national campaign. In each region, the Federation regional committee set themselves a goal. In the Transvaal, the women decided to march to the Union Buildings in October 1955. The leadership decided that this was an important way to show the women's opposition to the passes. The Transvaal was an area where the ANC was very strong at that time and the Federation, ANC and ANC Women's League worked very closely together.

In each township on the Reef, the Women's League women came together for a meeting with the Federation leaders. They discussed the march and each woman took pamphlets back to her own area. These women then went from door to door in their street talking about the pass laws and how women should oppose the passes. The each ANC woman invited a woman to hold a meeting in her house and to call the women of her street to that meeting.

At these house meetings, the members of the ANC Women's League distributed the pamphlets and asked women to sign a petition to the Prime Minister. They also told women about the march to the Union Buildings on 27 October 1955 to take these petitions to the Prime Minister. In this way, 2 000 women from the Reef townships were mobilised to march to see Strydom, the Prime Minister.

In 1956, the same methods were used to mobilise 20 000 women to take petitions to the Prime Minister. But this time the women came from all over South Africa. In each region, the Federation regional committees with the ANC Women's League and the affiliate organisations, used the same methods to tell women about the march. There were also area meetings organised in each region. In the Western Cape for example, the Federation held well-attended meetings in Langa, Elsies River, Blaauwlei, Stellenbosch and Worcester. Women at these meetings decided to march to the Native Affairs Commissioner in Salt River as well as to send delegates to Pretoria. They elected special committees to go door-to-door to collect names for the petition. A deputation of women from the Federation of South African Women and from South African Women and from affiliated organisations like the Food and Canning Workers Union, ANC Women's League, Congress of Democrats and South African Coloured People's

Organisation took the petition to Salt River. This deputation reported back to mass meetings held in all the areas after the protest march. On 2 September, there was an enormous mass rally on the Parade in Cape Town attended by women from all over the Western Cape. At this meeting the women planned the next stage of the campaign.



Twenty thousand women protesting against passes at the Union Buildings in 1956.

During the 1950's a newspaper called New Age was put together by members of the Congress Alliance. It came out every Thursday. New Age helped in the organisation of campaigns. Volunteers sold the newspaper on the streets and many people who were not members of the Congress Alliance organisations bought it. Organisations advertised meetings in this newspaper

and called on other organisations to join the campaigns. In the early 1950's Parliament had taken the vote away from the coloured people. This was part of the Apartheid policy of the government. Then in 1956, the Cape Provincial Administration decided to use the same system in Municipal elections. They decided to take the vote away from certain sections of the population. This affected the coloured women directly, because although they did not have a vote for Parliament, they had always been allowed to vote for City Councillors. The Federation organised a 'Defend the Municipal Vote' campaign. The Federation regional committee decided to call other organisations to a conference to plan united action. They wrote an article for New Age, the people's newspaper, and called on all organisations in the Western Cape to attend a 'Defend the Municipal Vote Conference' the next week. This conference elected an action committee from the people at the meeting to co-ordinate the campaign. One of the things that it did was to ask organisations to demand that Provincial Councillors oppose this racial segregation in municipal affairs. The committee also distributed pamphlets and organised mass meetings. In this way they showed the Cape Provincial Administration that the people of Cape Town did not want a segregated Cape Town City Council.

Federation women also used to talk to people on the crowded trains going home in the evenings, or at bus stops. Large crowds gathered around these women to hear what they said. Whenever people gathered together, members of the Federation and ANC Women's League spoke out about the campaigns and the struggle. Often in Cape Town, open air meetings took place on the Parade at lunch time. People went to the Parade during their lunch break and Federation women went there to talk to people who had little experience of political organisations (2).

The way that the Federation took up a campaign depended on what kind of issue it was. In the Anti-Pass Campaign, there were mass meetings, placard demonstrations at the pass units, petitions to the Native Commissioners and to the Prime Minister. When the government increased the rents in sub-economic housing the Federation used a number of approaches to oppose the increases. They held mass meetings, and the hundreds of people at those meetings urged the City Council to decrease the rents. The increases were also fought through the courts. In April 1955, the court confirmed that the new rents which the people of Langa were paying were illegal. The old rents were brought back.

WHO WERE THE WOMEN IN THE FEDERATION CAMPAIGNS?

Women who joined in the Congress Alliance campaigns were not necessarily members of any organisation. Some of them were not incorporated into the organisational decision-making processes. Other women did participate in the Federation's affiliate organisations in an ongoing sense. They went to conferences and continued to work for these organisations in later campaigns. The rank and file members of the Federation were in fact the rank and file members of the affiliate organisations.

Problems of the Federation .

BACKGROUND OF THE WOMEN

For many women who joined the affiliates of the Federation, this was their first experience in any political organisation. They brought with them enthusiasm, the will to work, and the awareness that something had to be done about their position as oppressed women. But they were inexperienced in political organisation. There were some women involved in these organisations who did have experience, awareness and organisational skills. This group made up the leadership of the Federation.

Having all the experienced people at the head of the organisation was not good in the long run. This made for a top-heavy organisation. It was the aim of the leadership to draw in women who had not been involved in other organisations. This they did in some areas. The women and the affiliate organisations gained as a result. But at the same time, the vast differences in background and experience were a problem. Some women found it easier to contribute than others. The organisational skills and benefits of political experience did not reach women who had just come into mass political organisation.

LACK OF ONGOING ORGANISATION

In the past, the nature of organisation among women was not planned. As issues arose, they were taken up. The women did not plan for a long-term organisation. An example was the Food Committees of the 1940's. There was a food shortage in the 1940's. Food vans took food to the poorer areas and sold

it at controlled prices. The shortage grew worse, and the more well-off women used the vans too. The people who controlled the vans gave first preference to white women. The other women were angry, and began to organise themselves. Each queue had a committee, which had weekly meetings. Representatives of the food committees formed a General Committee. This General Committee formed an Action Committee.

The leadership did try to use the food shortage to mobilise women on a long-term basis. This can be seen by the slogan of the time, 'Today We Fight for Food, Tomorrow for the Vote, And Then For Freedom For All'. However, when the issue itself had died down, long-term organisation was forgotten. The possibilities for long-term organisation were lost.

The Federation realised that ongoing organisation was necessary, but they had to deal with the fact that there was no tradition of ongoing organisation among women.

SEXIST ATTITUDES

Most men, even those in the forefront of popular organisations, still regarded the women as natural inferiors. They saw women as mothers and wives, and were against their direct political involvement. The women too had to break down their own ideas of themselves as slaves in their own homes. They had to realise that they could do things, that they could organise.

These were some of the problems of history and background with which the Federation started out.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Federation was linked to the Congress Alliance, and the Federation itself was an umbrella body consisting of a number of women's organisations. On both levels, the Federation had problems. The 'Unity in Action' policy of the Congress Alliance was a strength. It gave greater force to each issue. With each member organisation working, victory on an issue was nearer. However, it meant that the Federation, a relatively new organisation, had not enough time to build and strengthen itself. Many women were members of the ANC, the ANC Women's League and the Federation. Thus, when these bodies had work to do, and needed people to work, time and attention, the women were often busy in their own organisations.

THE FEDERAL STRUCTURE

The organisations of the Federation came from areas with different problems. Also, the areas were often far apart. This made it difficult to organise on a national scale.

Also, affiliates included different kinds of organisations. There were political organisations, housewife's organisations, trade unions and other women's organisations. Each of these organisations had its own special issues and problems.

RURAL AREAS

Activity was concentrated in the industrial and most densely-populated regions. It was difficult to organise the rural areas. In these areas tribal traditions were much more respected and practised than in the urban areas. It was harder for the women in these areas to realise that mothers and wives can also organise.

Workers on the farms in South Africa have always lacked organisation. For these reasons, the Federation found it difficult to organise the women in the rural areas.

STATE REPRESSION

Laws were passed which severely limited the activities of the organisations and individuals. In 1950 the Suppression of Communism Act was passed, which gave the Minister of Justice tight control over gatherings and over what individuals did. Banning orders and police harassment meant that many of the leaders could not work effectively. In 1953 a Public Safety Act was passed, which enabled the authorities to declare a state of emergency over all parts of the country. They could bring in emergency regulations and take any action that they thought was necessary. There were mass arrests, and people were imprisoned. People could suffer beatings, large fines or jail sentences if they 'disturbed the peace' or 'incited' anyone. This was in terms of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953.

They made it difficult for the popular organisations to function in cities. The Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952 meant that Africans could only live in urban areas under certain conditions. This disrupted political activity in the urban areas. Thousands of people were forced into the Reserves.

All these things caused problems for the Federation, especially when it came to:

- 1) representation at meetings and conferences,
- 2) open-air meetings and rallies,
- 3) movement from province to province.

DEMOCRACY

Democratic decision-making was a problem. Areas were far apart. Executive meetings were difficult to convene, because

of the distances members had to travel, and because of police harassment. Decisions taken in executive meetings were not always fully discussed in the affiliate organisations. This was because these organisations had their own matters to see to. Also the types of things one organisation was concerned about were often different from those another was concerned about. This sometimes led to undemocratic practices in the Federation.

The headquarters had to be in one place. This affected the flow of information to and from other areas. It also affected democracy in the organisation.

LACK OF FUNDS

Finance was a problem. The Federation, being a national body, needed finance for conferences, trips, campaigns, local and regional work. A lot of energy went into fund raising activities, but collection of subs was often not very well organised.

The problems of the Federation grew out of the conditions of the 1950's. But many of them are problems that any political organisation in South Africa may encounter in organising on a national scale.

Why was the Federation inactive in the 1960's ?

The structure of the Federation had a very strong effect on the way it developed. The events of the early sixties meant that the Federation had to reassess their organisation's future. But it was not the only factor that influenced the Federation at this time. And there were a number of reasons why by 1962 people heard very little of the Federation of South African Women.

THE EFFECT OF THE TREASON TRIAL ON THE FEDERATION

The early 1960's were a difficult time for the Federation of South African Women. But the Federation had already been weakened by the Treason Trial. 156 men and women were arrested in December 1956 and charged with high treason. The National President, National Secretary, National Vice-President from the Free State and three other members of the National Executive of the Federation were arrested. From 1957 to 1959, there was little chance for a national conference.

In 1959 the Federation postponed the idea of a national conference to provide for an opportunity for a full National Conference of the ANC Women's League. We have already said that the Federation was top-heavy - the leaders were too important in the organisation. Now, with the leaders in detention, the Federation was badly weakened.

SHARPEVILLE

In 1960 a number of organisations joined together in a mass anti-pass demonstration. Large crowds of people gathered at police stations and demanded to be arrested because they did not have their passes. They had decided to leave them at home. The police were taken aback by this mass defiance. In Sharpeville 69 people were shot dead by the police. In Langa, two people died when the police opened fire on the crowds. During the next week, in all the regions of South Africa, people showed their horror and opposition to the Sharpeville shootings. In Cape Town on 30 March, 30 000 people marched from Langa to Parliament. The government was threatened by the response of the people and acted fast. They declared a State of Emergency for five months throughout the country and detained many people. Then the State declared the ANC, ANC Women's League and Youth League, and the Pan African Congress illegal. This was a difficult time for all organisations. Many of the leaders were in jail. Meetings were illegal. The police increased their attack on organisations and on individuals.

REPRESSION

In the early 1960's the State re-organised the Security police and the security laws. In the early 1950's security policemen sat in meetings openly taking notes. They raided offices and took organisations' documents. From 1960, the Security Police used new methods. They tapped telephones, and tape recorded meetings. They used new methods against people in detention. In the early 1950's the police could not detain people. They had to arrest you and charge you. In 1959 Parliament passed a new law so that they could detain people. But at first they could only hold people for twelve days. Then they changed the law to allow for longer detention - first 90 days, then 180 days. The police used detention to find out about organisations. The government also banished large numbers of leaders to far off places, miles away from the centres where they had organised.

Many of the leaders of the Federation were banned in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Many of the women were detained during the State of Emergency. We saw that the Federation was

a co-ordinating structure. It was made up of committees of leaders from the affiliate organisations. Many women were leaders of more than one organisation. So even if women were detained or banned because of their work in the Women's League, Congress of Democrats or in South African Congress of Trade Unions, this also affected the Federation.

LACK OF DECENTRALISATION

Why did the banning of the leaders affect the Federation so badly? What does this tell us about the way in which the organisation worked? It tells us something about the kind of democracy in the organisation. In the 1950's these organisations worked in such a way that most of the decisions were taken by the national leaders and passed down to regional leaders and so to the members. This kind of democracy did not help all the women in the organisation to take part in all the decisions. Not all the women in the affiliate organisations learnt the skills of leadership and administration. The Federation and Congress Alliance organisations did run training programmes for the leaders but most of the women who joined the campaigns did not learn these skills. In fact the elected leaders tended to hold the power in the organisation. The decisions as to what issue to take up came from the problems grassroots women were experiencing in their communities. These women were not necessarily involved in organisations. But the decisions about the organisation of campaigns were taken by the experienced leaders, both at a regional and national level. There was little decentralisation of decisions and of skills. The mass of the women in the organisation did not gain the experience necessary to carry on the work of the Federation.

BANNING OF THE ANC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

As we saw, the ANC Women's League was the biggest affiliate of the Federation. The State banned the Women's League with the other organisations on 25 March 1960. This meant that it could no longer operate as a legal organisation. The women who had been members of the Women's League could no longer be members of the Federation. At the end of 1960, the Federation Executive decided to set up small organisations to replace the Women's League. These organisations would affiliate to the Federation. They called on regional committees to set up women's groups. In the Transvaal 30 african women's clubs had affiliated to the Federation by October 1961. In the Western Cape there were 11 groups. In the Eastern Cape there were 5 women's groups and in the Free State only 1 group.

These groups affiliated to the Federation. In Natal 19 groups, some anti-pass committees and others Women's Clubs, affiliated to the organisation. But no organisations existed to unite all the african women anymore. Other women were still part of general political organisations like the Coloured People's Congress, Congress of Democrats and the South African Indian Congress. The african women did not even have this now. The Federation had more responsibility now because it was the only uniting link between these groups. Before 1960, most of the grassroots organising work that the Federation had been involved in, had been carried out by the ANC Women's League. Now, this work had to be done by the Federation regional committees. The Federation of South African Women was now the only national women's organisation to draw women into the national liberation struggle.

RE ASSESSMENT

At the 1961 National Conference, the Federation re-examined their position and assessed their organisational strength. They look forward with enthusiasm and determination. They adopted the following resolutions:

- * To assist in building women's groups and clubs that will affiliate to the Federation, and to guide and aid them in their area activities as much as possible;
- * to approach all women's organisations and groups for joint action on specific questions, to build unity of purpose and action among all women's organisations;
- * to assist the development of permanent organised groups among indian women;
- * to help develop women leaders in our own and other organisations by the holding of classes, lecture and discussion groups among women on both practical and political matters;
- * to build up a regular bulletin of news and activities issued by the Federation, as the basis for a progressive women's magazine in the future;
- * to increase the size and strength of our Federation by working among women of all races;
- * to strengthen and extend our association with individual women and with women's organisations in other parts of Africa and other countries, so that they learn more about us and we learn more about them, and through our friendly interchange of news and ideas, assist the spread of peace and understanding throughout the world.

But the Federation was not able to do this. It was not really active after 1961.

EFFECTS OF THE CHANGING CONDITIONS FOR ORGANISATION

With the changing conditions of the time, new methods of organising had to be found. One aspect of the changing conditions was the banning of the ANC Women's League. This was the major affiliate of the Federation. So with its banning, the affiliate structure could no longer work. Things had changed too much. They could not keep the Federation going by rebuilding one part. They would have to start again with a new structure suited to the new conditions.

Also at this time, there was a change in ANC policy. The emphasis moved from peaceful forms of political organisation to armed struggle. This had implications for the other organisations that had worked with the ANC in the Congress Alliance.

In the 1960's the State attempted to cripple organisation of the people permanently. In order to organise effectively leaders and members of organisations had to see that their activities did not attract the attention of the police. This made communication within the organisation difficult. It led to decisions being taken by the leadership without consulting the members. This was undemocratic and gave the leaders too much power. As a result, the organisation was weakened. It also meant that when the government removed these leaders, the rest of the organisation did not have the skills to carry on.

LESSONS FOR WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

In 1982, there are many lessons we can learn from the Federation of South African Women. It is because we too are fighting against oppression that we talk about the Federation. The Federation National Executive said in 1961: 'Thus we must continue to align ourselves with those who struggle for freedom; the true place of a women's organisation whose members are debarred from political rights is with those who struggle for those very rights.'

But the struggle for freedom in 1982 is very different from the struggles in the 1950's. Then there were six major national organisations that worked closely together and formed the Congress Alliance. This Alliance provided the leadership of the struggle. Today there are few national organisations. Organisations work together on particular issues, but there is no ongoing alliance. We need to ask the question: why are there so few national organisations? And why are the connections between organisations different?

In the 1960's the people's organisations were damaged by the State's repression. And it is only in the last few years

that people have built up organisations again. We saw that even by 1960 it was necessary to change the methods of organising. What new methods and structures do we need now? And what can be taken from the past? When we discuss the Federation of South African Women, we also need to understand why things are different today.

The Federation of South African Women was a child of its time. It was a federation open to affiliation by organisations only, because of the other organisations that existed and were growing at the time. For any organisation to really serve the needs of its members, it too must be a child of its time.

Footnotes

1. A Manyano is the women's organisation of a Christian Church. They are also sometimes called stokvels. They provided an arena in which women's problems were discussed, ranging from work difficulties to personal problems. The Manyanos functioned according to strict rules and codes of behaviour, and were organised along lines of a strict hierarchy. The fund raising function of the Manyanos was very important. Women in the Manyano would each pay a little every month into a fund. Each month all this money would then go to one of the members on a rotating basis. This meant that women had access to the amounts of money needed to pay for such things as education, hospital fees, debts, furniture costs, etc. Without this kind of system, many of these women would not have been able to afford such things.

2. Today we cannot hold open air meetings or gather people together on a street corner without breaking the law. In 1914, a new law, the Riotous Assemblies Act, was introduced. It has been amended a number of times since then. This Act gives the Minister of Justice the power to ban all open air meetings (except sports meetings) in a particular region. The ban is renewed by the Minister each year. This law has been enforced since 1976 in all the areas of South Africa and so we have to hold our meetings inside a building 'with four walls'.

175-70 SR13 †† R248-34 *

Nowhere does the Non-European get a square deal today. In every town there is segregation and discrimination against African, Coloureds and Indians. But there will be more discrimination, and greater injustices if, Olivier, the Administrator has his way.

R 72-14 Jk
R

European and Non-European citizens have lived together in the Cape for the past 300 years. The attacks upon this right is part of the Nationalists' apartheid cruelty to humiliate and force the Non-Europeans into a state of slavery in all spheres of public and private life.

We call upon you to join with us in a determined effort to defeat the Nationalists. Elect delegates to a

227-22

DEFEND THE MUNICIPAL VOTE CONFERENCE

R 54-10

to be held on

SATURDAY, 21st APRIL, 1956

in the

LIBRARY, CITY HALL

at 3 p.m.

See that your organisation, Church, and street is represented at this Conference.

Let the women show the way!

Mothers, do not allow your people to be dragged into the ditch of racial oppression, poverty and slavery!

**Rally to the defence of the Municipal Vote without
a colour bar**

**ORGANISE IN YOUR AREAS PROTEST MEETINGS: ELECT
DEPUTATIONS TO THE PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL
COUNCILLORS AND DEMAND HANDS OFF THE VOTE, DOWN
WITH THE COLOUR BAR, AWAY WITH SEGREGATION!!**

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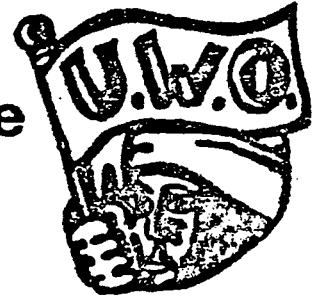
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AE7

Rev "AE 7"



United Nations Decade Of Women



Many of us have never heard of the UN Decade of Women. What did the women achieve over the last 10 years? What did the Decade of Women mean for us in South Africa?

At a conference hosted by the Federation of Cuban Women in November 1984, the Latin American and Caribbean women discussed the gains of the Decade. They agreed that we understand the problems that women suffer better. Now, women participate more actively in political and social movements. New laws have opened the way for women's progress. The women noted that democratic and dictatorial states differ in how they take responsibility for progress in health, education and employment. But they concluded that the Decade ends in a period of world economic crisis. National plans for development and for improving women's lives have failed. The root causes have led to growing social and political movements. The regimes have responded by increased militarisation of Latin America. The Latin American women said that in the inequality of the majority of women is linked to the international and national economic and political structures. So they will take the demand to extend the Decade of Women to the year 2 000 to the Nairobi conference in June this year.

Let us look at what happened in the Decade. The UN declared 1975 'International Women's Year'. They held a conference in Mexico. This conference decided it would take a Decade to build equality of women, so they chose the themes Women, Equality, Development and Peace for 1976-1985. In 1980, a second conference in Denmark added the themes health, education and employment.

The women at this conference took a stand on Apartheid in SA and Namibia. They pledged their support for the women's section of the national liberation movements; they supported the women in detention, political prisoners and those in exile. In May 1982, there was an International Conference in Women and Apartheid in Brussels. This conference sent a delegation of women to the European governments to

tell them of the lives of women under Apartheid. They asked the governments to provide material support for the liberation movement. We salute the contribution these women make to our struggle. But let us look at what we have done to improve the lives of our women- young women, old women, women workers, unemployed women, mothers, women in squatter camps and rural areas. How have we moved the women's struggle forward?

The UN has asked SA's women's organisations to send five delegates to the 1985 Conference in Nairobi. There will be workshops on rural women migrant women, refugee women, young women, older women. These South African women will represent all of the women in UDF - women from COSAS CAYCO, WCCA, all UDF affiliates. Can we say that we have really organised women? Are the problems of our women members really addressed in an organisational programme of action?

The UN Decade of Women focuses on women's inequality in health, education and employment. In 1975, 1980, and again this year, there are two conferences: one for official government reps to the UN and one for reps from other organisations in the countries. The government conference is mainly men. At the non-government conference, there is a range of women, all with different problems, who come together to find solutions. But there are many different women with different ideologies and different ways to solve women's problems. Domitila from Bolivia was angry when she had to listen to women talk about their personal lives. She said: "Those weren't my interests. And for me it was incomprehensible that so much money should be spent to discuss those things in the conference. Because I'd left my companero (husband) with the seven kids and him having to work in the mines everyday! I'd left my country to let people know what my homeland is like, how it suffers, how in Bolivia the charter of the United Nations isn't upheld." The UN campaign cannot change women's lives.

So why do we in SA take up this theme and other UN campaigns like IYY? The UN has called on organisations all over the world to build women's participation in all projects. We can learn from the struggles of women in other countries, and we can use this 1985 theme to assess our own struggle. Only 33 out of every 100 black women in SA have jobs. 57 out of every 100 African women starve in the homelands. Women's right to maternity leave and childcare are not recognised. Young girls are sexually harassed by their teachers. Young girls leave school early to look after the younger children. Half the women in SA cannot

read or write. Comrades we have a long way to go. The UN conferences, even extending the decade until the year 2000, will mean nothing, unless we fight for women's rights in every sphere.

It is not enough for us to say that the question of women should be looked at by women's organisations. It is a question that affects all our organisations because there are women in all our organisations. In the next year we'll be taking up a number of campaigns - IYY, Freedom Charter, Housing, Education Charter campaign. How can we organise women around these issues? How can we make these campaigns relevant to women all over? When we set our goals for these campaigns, we must aim to organise women. Every part of the programme of action for these campaigns must see how to overcome the problems that hold women back from participating. Let us make sure that we do not make a token week or big day for women in these campaigns, but that we look at the lives and demands of women all along the way.

Women's problems are the people's problems. In our struggle we lay the basis for a future society. We want women to be active and equal members of a free South Africa. We must start laying that basis now in all our organisations.

Tafel van Repo moleke (3)
1985-02-19
105161 G.S. van Wyk.

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THE SECRETARY

FESTRAWI

% CIBF

KNOUTSO HOUSE

BE WILLIERS STREET

JOHANNESBURG

2000

United Women's Organisation AET

P.O. Box 120
Athlone
7760



12 February 1985

Dear Comrades

We would like to wish you good year for 1985. We hope that your organisation will get stronger and stronger during this year of Freedom Charter.

At the moment UWO has taken up a rent campaign at New Crossroads. Women went to Western Cape Administration Board to protest against rent increase. The Board never replied to their demands. One hundred and sixty nine women were arrested, at the moment they are out on bail. The Board accused UDF of causing violence in the community whereas it started by peaceful demonstration. The New Crossroads women take forward our struggle against Community Councillors.

Comrades lets look forward.

Yours in the struggle

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Thozama Tsolo', is written above the typed name.

PP THOZAMA TSOLO
SECRETARY

Phakamani Makhosikazi

"AE 7"

Ixesha Lifikile

Amakhosikazi e U.W.O. ahlaba ikhwelo kubo bonke oomama nakuyo yonke imibutho yamakho sikazi ukuba ashukume abonakali se uvelwano kumakhosikazi angam angama 171 nangaphezulu ase New Crossroads athe avalelwa ngenxa yokukhalazela ukunyuka kwerente qho ngonyaka eNew Crossroads.

Le ntlekele ihle ngokusuka la magorhakazi abhinqe omfu tshane aqokelelane asinge e kwano Ntsumpa esithi adiniwe kukonyuka kwerente minyaka le. Endaweni yokuba baphendulwe koko babuke banikelwa kwi Community Councillors. La mabhulu ayazi ngokuphandle ukuba ezi Community Council lora azifunwa kuba zingono popi bamabhulu yaye athe amakhosikazi esahlangene avela la mabhulu ngevantyi ezili 15 baba ke njalo bayabanjwa. Awazange ale onke la magorhakazi koko asuka akhwela xa ewonke kwezovantyi zagcwala olunye uninzi lushiyeke ngase mva.

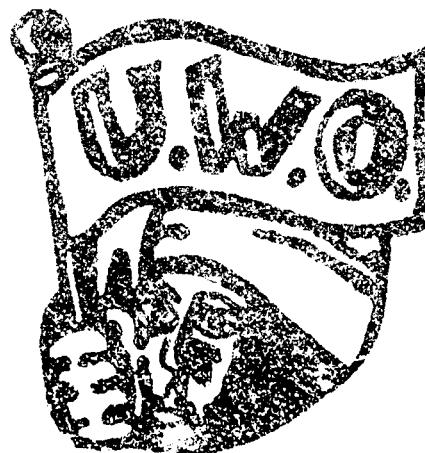
Kunjalo ke makhosikazi. La makhosikazi athiwe saa kuzo zonke ezindawo koma Mitchell 's Plain, Bishop Lavis nase Pollsmoor.

Ixesha libi bafazi, usana olunga khaliyo lufela embalekweni. Le yehla e New Crossroads ilambethe lonke. Yiyo lento ke sithi masime kunye ngoba isehla e New Cross roads nje oku kwangoku izakuhla kuthi ngomso.

Vukani makhosikazi, e Guguletu iyeniyuka irente ngoMarch kanti ke e K.T.C. kukho ingxaki yamabhakethe angathathwayo kodwa kubhatalwa irente roqo.

Kuthi bafazi ixesha lifikile ngo ngoku la mabhulu akadinwa kukuci kida igazi lomntu omnyama. Asazi ke xa sithule ukuba sakuthula de kube nini na.

Phakamani bafazi ixesha lifikile masikhumbule ukuba akukho sizwe esiyakukhululeka bengaphakamanga oo mama.



STAND UP WOMEN, THE TIME HAS COME

The women of U.W.O. are making a call (appeal) to all women and all women's organisations, to shake and show solidarity with the 171 or more women of New Crossroads, who are locked up for demonstrating/showing against the yearly rent increases in New Crossroads.

This incident happened when these brave women gathered and marched to the Superintendent to say we are tired of rent going up every year.

Instead of being replied there they were given over to the Community Council. These Boers know very well that these Community Councillors are not wanted because they are puppets of the Boers, and while the women were gathered the Boers came in 15 vans and they were arrested. The women did not resist, they got into the vans which were fined, and some women remained behind. Now women, such is it.

These women are scattered all over at Mitchell's Plain, Bishop Lavis and Pollsmoor.

The times are bad women, the child who does not cry dies strapped on the mother's back. The happenings in Crossroads affect all. That is why we say we must unite (stand together) for what is happening at Crossroads now, will happen to us tomorrow.

Wake up women, in Guguletu the rent goes up in March, while in K.T.C. there is the problem of the bucket system that is not attended to while rent is being paid.

To us women the time has come. These Boers do not get tired of sucking the black man's blood. If we remain silent, until when will it be.

Stand up women the time has come. Let us remember that no nation was ever liberated without its women standing up.

E. Mapashule
Pays

AE8

19

19/8/87
1/9/87

20

— 23/9/87
30/9/87

Ms. Cathala 22/9/88

Ms. Coehabre' 22/3/88

No (19) 19/8/87
11/9/87

THE UNITY WE NEED IS PEOPLE'S UNITY

WE NEED IT ALL WE NEED IT HERE WE NEED IT NOW!



The emancipation of women is not an act of charity, the result of humanitarian or compassionate attitude. The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity of the revolution, the guarantee of its continuity and the precondition of its victory. The main objective of the revolution is to destroy the system of exploitation and build a new society which releases the potentiality of human beings, reconciling them with labour and with nature. This is the context within which the question of women's emancipation arises.

Inkululeko yamakhosikazi akulona uwelo lwesimilo, noma isenzosokulunga. Inkululeko yamakhosikazi iyimfanelo esemqoka kakhulu emzabalazweni wankululeko. Injongo abalulekile yomzabalazo wesizwe kungu ku shabalalisa incindezelo ukuze kvakhiwe umphakathi onehlalo yobuntu, onekhono lokusebenzisana ngozwano kanye nokubuyisana. Konke lokhu kuyimbangela yokuba inkululeko yamakhosikazi iphakanyiswe.



Tokoloho ea mafumahadi ha se ketso ea ho ba le botho, kapa ditholwana tsa kutlo ea botho. Tokoloho ea bo-mme ke motheo wa tokoloho ea setshaba sohle, le ho fetoha ha mmuso, ka matla a 'lerumo'. Sepheo sa ho phetola mmuso, ke ho fedisa mekhoha ea ho sebedisoa hampe le batho ba bang; le ho hahisa setshaba seo se tla hlangang batho le ho ba lokolla bokgonang ba bona. Setshaba se setshaba, sana, se tshoanetse ho kopanya batho le mosebetsi le hlalo ka tsela e khahane. Potso ena ea tokoloho ya bo-mme le mafumahadi e hlala bohareng ba taba ena re'qheta ho bua ka eona.

ORGANISE FIGHT ON!

(20) 23/9/87
30/9/87

JANUARY 1985							JANUARIE						
SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT	SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
○ F.M. 7	☾ L.Q. 14	1	2	3	4	5							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12							
13	14	15	16	17	18	19							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26							
27	28	29	30	31	● N.M. 21	☾ F.Q. 29							

FEBRUARY 1985							FEBRUARIE						
SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT	SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
○ F.M. 5	☾ L.Q. 12	● N.M. 19	☾ F.Q. 28									1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
10	11	12	13	14	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23							
24	25	26	27	28									

JANUARY 23 1983 Call for a United Democratic Front

MARCH 1985							MAART						
SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT	SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
31	○ F.M. 7	☾ L.Q. 13	● N.M. 21	☾ F.Q. 29	1	2							
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MARCH 21 1960 Sharpeville Massacre



JULY 1985 JULIE

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28	29	30	31	☾ L.O. 10	● N.M. 18	☾ F.O. 25

AUGUST 1985 AUGUSTUS

SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
☾ L.O. 8	● N.M. 16	☾ F.O. 23	☾ F.M. 30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JULY 15 1984 Tumahole uprising
JULY 24 1983 Launch of W.Cape UDF

AUGUST 9 National Women's Day
AUGUST 20 1983 National launch of UDF

SEPTEMBER 1985 - SEPTEMBER

SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUE/DEES	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
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OCTOBER 1985 OKTOBER

SUN/SON	MON/MAAN	TUES/DINS	WED/WOENS	THURS/DON	FRI/VRY	SAT/SAT
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

SEPTEMBER 3, 1984 VAST upgrade line

SEPTEMBER 5, 1983 SAAND banned in Ciskei

OCTOBER 11 International Day of Solidarity with political prisoner

OCTOBER 15, 1983 Launch of Border UDF

AE9

WOMEN AGAINST PASS LAWS

When the full story of Africa's struggle for freedom is written, pride of place will go to the women who organised and struggled against South Africa's hated pass laws. And women will tell over and over again the story of how they went to Pretoria to protest to the Prime Minister himself — "I was there," they will say, "I was one of the women who went to Pretoria."

So Thursday, August 9th, 1956, blended into our history, will yet stand out as a rock, a monumental achievement by the most oppressed, suffering and downtrodden of our people — the women of South Africa.

THE IDEA THAT GREW.

It started a year before, in August, 1955, when the women of the Transvaal, gathered in Conference organised by the Federation of South African Women, made a simple suggestion. "The Government ignores our pleas, our

meetings, our resolutions," they said. "Let us go to Pretoria ourselves and protest to the Government against laws that oppress us."

While the women of the Transvaal began campaigning for their first protest to Pretoria, African women in Durban organised the first demonstration to the authorities. First two hundred, then a thousand women demonstrated to the Native Administration Department, pouring the "letters of privilege", fore-runners of passes. "We will never carry passes under any conditions!", they cried.

Then in October, 1955, the women of the Transvaal went to Pretoria — two thousand women of all races, to the very heart of Union Buildings, of the Government itself. To get there, they had to overcome innumerable obstacles; they had met with every possible official rebuff and refusal, with police interference and intimidation, withdrawal of transport and deception, to prevent them from going. They had overcome personal difficulties,

"I was there!" Twenty thousand women filled the Union Building Amphitheatre on August 9th, 1956. Here the women are still pouring in.
Photo: Pretoria News.

which are always so much greater for a woman than a man, and the result of their efforts was a demonstration that made headlines throughout South Africa, and was recorded and televised in other countries in the world. The dignity, discipline and quiet resolution and determination of the women impressed even those who did not understand the true meaning of their demonstration.

The protests grew. The next month, Cape Town women marched through the streets of their city, displaying their protests against passes and deportations; and before the end of 1955, the militant women of Durban were once again pounding on the door of the Native Administration Offices, declaring that they would not carry passes.

Early in 1956 the women of East London took up the cry against passes. "Oh, what a law! We are refusing totally!" said the memorandum they presented to the local Commission. A month later, Durban and Cape Town

were again protesting while in March, 1956, the women of Germiston led off Transvaal demonstrations once more with three hundred women, who, undeterred by extraordinary police threats of mass arrests, shooting of leaders, and most severe forms of intimidation, marched to their local offices, declaring "Even if the passes are printed in real gold we do not want them."

THE DECISION

It was in March, too, that the Transvaal women, meeting in Conference, decided to go to Pretoria once again. Two thousand women and men attended that Conference, and with one voice resolved to fight passes to the bitter end.

Meanwhile, the issue of passes — "reference books" — to women had begun. In the Free State town of Winburg, numerous women were tricked into taking the new books; many

were brought in by their employers from outlying farms, ignorant of what was happening; many were persuaded that the books were not passes, but permits that would permit them to move freely anywhere.

Within a week, hundreds of Winburg women marched silently to the Magistrate's Court, and burned the new pass books, prepared to face the consequences of such an action.

The following month — April — the women of Klerksdorp organised a mass protest, four hundred of them, to the Native Commissioner. Blocked by the police, the women sat in the road and demanded that the Native Commissioner come to them. He came. "If you force us to take passes, we shall burn them!", the women said.

In May, women demonstrated in Brakpan and Bethlehem — twelve hundred in Brakpan, and four hundred in the little town of Bethlehem. June saw the women of Johannesburg organising once again — this time, a thousand women from the Western Areas, and a few

days later four hundred domestic servants from the suburbs of Johannesburg. Orlando women marched, and women from Alexandra Township, and on June 23rd, one thousand women of the South Western Areas added their protest march and demand that pass laws be abolished.

In Pretoria, the women outstripped all other areas with a demonstration of four thousand women, blocking the streets outside the Native Commissioner's office.

So the demonstrations spread and grew. The Commissioners grumbled that all the women demonstrators said the same thing. In reply, they too, told the women the same story: that the reference books were for their own protection — not really passes at all. The women were not deceived.

Five hundred women of Venterspost protested next, handing in ten thousand signed protests. When policemen asked the names of women leaders in this demonstration, they replied: "Afrika is my name!" Two thousand women of Evaton marched seven miles to the

The dense mass of women in colourful dress stream upwards towards the Union Buildings. Those at the top turn back to watch the striking scene. Volunteers line each side. Reporters scribble their impressions.

Photo: Drum.

Native Commissioner's office: (the Commissioner said of this demonstration: "It never took place!" but ten thousand protest forms were left with him.)

In Port Elizabeth, two thousand working women gave up a day's wages to tell the Native Commissioner: "We shall not rest until we have won for our children the right to freedom, justice, security." Three hundred women in Kimberley defied continuous intimidation to make their protest against the passes.

Durban again, Queenstown, Cape Town, Cradock, East London, Grahamstown, Paarl — more and more women all over the country crying "We shall not rest until pass laws, permits and all laws restricting our freedom have been abolished." As the day of the second demonstration drew nearer, so the country-wide protests grew.

"STRIJDOM, YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK"

The night before the demonstration, women began assembling in Pretoria, and Lady Selborne location threw open its doors

to thousands. In the location Bantu Hall, and many other location halls, demonstrators came together in all-night "wakes" before The Day. Women's contingents had come from Bethlehem, Bloemfontein, Natal, Ermelo; from the Reef, from Kimberley, from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Worcester. Women gathered at "eve-of-protest" meetings along the Reef. Husbands took over indispensable household duties. Everything was keyed in readiness for the great day.

And finally, August 9th, 1956. While Premier Strijdom remained out of sight, twenty thousand women overflowed the amphitheatre of Union Buildings, rocking the Cabinet — and the country — to a realisation that AFRICAN WOMEN DO NOT WANT PASS BOOKS.

"Only a camera could record the richness of the scene: the gay headscarves; the Xhosa women in their ochre dresses; Indian women in bright saris; women from Bethlehem in the Free State wearing embroidered A.N.C. shawls; other delegates wearing skirts in black, gold and green; Coloured and European women: the Port Elizabeth

Women of all races are among the first to reach the top. At the front, left to right, the four leaders, Sophie Williams, Rahima Moosa, Lillian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph.

Photo: Drum.

delegation which had travelled in special railway carriages which had cost them £800; the volunteers in their green blouses who lined the route to the Union Buildings and then, as in a moving tapestry of vivid colour, took their places in the amphitheatre." *

The women burst into a new Zulu freedom song "Strijdom uthitta abafazi, uthinti imbo-kotho," which means "Strijdom, you've tampered with the women, you've knocked against a rock."

The Special (Security) Branch was present in full force, some detectives having travelled from coastal towns on the same trains as the demonstrators.

It took two and a half hours for the women to file through the Union Buildings gardens and enter the amphitheatre. Nine leaders, representing women of all races in South Africa, carried the huge piles of protest forms and entered the Buildings. There they were stopped by a commissionaire, who eventually let five of them through.

* P. Altman in "Fighting Talk".

city, expressing the bitter feeling of African women right through the country against the pass laws.

And throughout the country, the echoes of that demonstration resounded. The conservative "white press" commented on the impressive, moving dignity and discipline of the women. "Those women assembled in Pretoria in their thousands", stated the Argus editorial comment, "are still only a small reflection of the deep resentment that this unnecessary legislation has aroused. To ignore them and what they represent deepens stupidity into monumental folly."

AND NOW?

"The women's campaign has been a model of patient and peaceful organisation," wrote New Age. "What more can they do than they have done to make clear to the authorities what they want — or rather what they don't want? . . . Does Strijdom think, because he turns a deaf ear, that they will tamely give

Strijdom was not to be found, but the protest forms were left in his office.

When the five representatives returned, to report to the assembled women that the Prime Minister had refused to see them, the women rose to their feet, thumbs up in the "Afrika" salute, to stand for a full thirty minutes in absolute silence as a protest.

"Thirty minutes: It is nothing in time -- yet it is an eternity. Complete silence, except for the crying of babies. The sun was hot above; the magnificent lawns and gardens of the Union Buildings lay peacefully below. The women were immobile, graven images, their thumbs uplified . . . thirty quiet minutes . . . I was moved to tears . . ."

"The thirty minutes silence ended, and 20,000 voices, in magnificent four-part harmony, sang 'Nkosi sikilele'i Afrika' and 'Morrna Boloka.' The singing reached the sky and then I knew a moment of triumph. Nothing will defeat these women, these wives, these mothers." *

The singing of the women as they dispersed echoed across South Africa's capital

A commissionaire tried to refuse the delegation entry on the grounds that there were representatives of all races among them! "No Apartheid!" said Helen Joseph. Finally they were admitted.

Photo: Drums.

up the fight? RATHER WILL THEY INTENSIFY THEIR STRUGGLE TENFOLD.

And so Pretoria was not the end, but the beginning. Two days later, women at the second National Conference of the Federation of South African Women, resolved to take the struggle against pass laws to every woman throughout the land; to the isolated farms and country dorps; to villages and reserves; to obtain pledges of opposition to passes from women everywhere.

For the women well understand that this is a bitter struggle, demanding everything they can give. They know now that there is no refuge for them in their homes; they cannot provide for their children by keeping quiet or "leaving it to the men." Poverty, hardship, insufficient food and clothes, inadequate housing, they have always known. Now they know, as well, that the laws of the country invade what homes they have, walk right into their kitchens, pervert the minds of their children, tear families asunder, demand that

Strijdom, we are knocking at your door! Laden down with thousands of protest forms, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophie Williams knock on the door of Prime Minister Strijdom's office.

Photo: Drums.

a man and his wife must live apart from each other in different areas, hound them day and night. They understand that they, as women, are essential in the struggle for a better life.

The road from Pretoria leads forward. The way will be bitter, but there is no turning

On December 5th 1956, after this pamphlet had been written, 19 women and 137 men — 156 people of all races from all over South Africa, were arrested before daybreak on a charge of High Treason. Amongst them are leading members of the Federation of South African Women; the National President, Lilian Ngoyi; National Secretary, Helen Joseph; National Vice-President Martha Motlakoana; and Executive Members Frances Baard and Bertha Mashaba.

While these women leaders sit in a courtroom, unable to work, the women of South Africa have not been idle, nor ceased their struggle against the hated pass laws.

In the Transvaal, two mass women's cam-

paions are under way. Half a million pledges are sought from women of all races that they will oppose the pass laws; hundreds of thousands of women will sign a protest against the Group Areas Act which will destroy the homes and livelihood of countless non-white families.

At a time when democratic action against the government becomes more and more difficult, these protests are gathering momentum through the united effort of the women of different races. This is the answer of the women of South Africa to apartheid and racialism. The Pretoria demonstration was but a beginning. The women will yet prove a rock against which oppression will founder.

Civil servants line the balconies overlooking the amphitheatre to watch the amazing scene when the women came to make their memorable protest.

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Civil servants line the balconies overlooking the amphitheatre to watch the amazing scene when the women came to make their memorable protest.

THE DEMAND OF THE WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF PASSES FOR WOMEN AND THE REPEAL OF THE PASS LAWS

We, the women of South Africa, have come here today. We represent and we speak on behalf of hundreds of thousands of women who could not be with us. But all over the country, at this moment, women are watching and thinking of us. Their hearts are with us.

We are women from every part of South Africa. We are women of every race, we come from the cities and the towns, from the reserves and the villages. We come as women united in our purpose to save the African women from the degradation of passes.

For hundreds of years the African people have suffered under the most bitter law of all — the pass law which has brought untold suffering to every African family.

Raids, arrests, loss of pay, long hours at the pass office, weeks in the cells awaiting trial, forced farm labour — this is what the pass laws have brought to African men. Punishment and misery — not for a crime, but for the lack of a pass.

We African women know too well the effect of this law upon our homes, our children. We, who are not African women, know how our sisters suffer.

Your Government proclaims aloud at home and abroad that the pass laws have been abolished, but we women know this is not true, for our husbands, our brothers, our sons are still being arrested, thousands every day, under these very pass laws. It is only the name that has changed. The "reference book" and the pass are one.

In March 1952, your Minister of Native Affairs denied in Parliament that a law would be introduced

which would force African women to carry passes. But in 1956 your Government is attempting to force passes upon the African women, and we are here today to protest against this insult to all women. For to us an insult to African women is an insult to all women.

We want to tell you what the pass would mean to an African woman, and we want you to know that whether you call it a reference book, an identity book, or by any other disguising name, to us it is a PASS. And it means just this:—

- That homes will be broken up when women are arrested under pass laws.
- That children will be left uncared for, helpless, and mothers will be torn from their babies for failure to produce a pass.
- That women and young girls will be exposed to humiliation and degradation at the hands of pass-searching policemen.
- That women will lose their right to move freely from one place to another.

In the name of women of South Africa, we say to you, each one of us, African, European, Indian, Coloured, that we are opposed to the pass system.

We, voters and voteless, call upon your Government not to issue passes to African women.

We shall not rest until ALL pass laws and all forms of permits restricting our freedom have been abolished.

We shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice, and security.

PRESENTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER —
AUGUST 9th 1956.

Pess M. Narobe **AE10**
Soweto

(20) 1879/87 pages 1(a) 1(c) — 7.

AZASO

Azanian Students Organisation



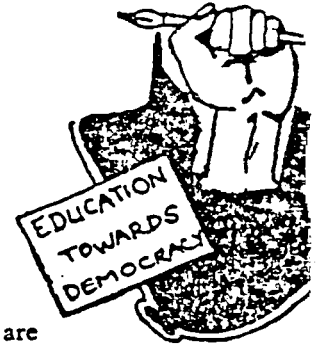
PAPERS FROM AZASO WOMENS CONFERENCE

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1. Working Programme.
2. Women in National Democratic Struggles - Sandy Afrika
3. Sexism and Education - Lesly Watson
4. Organising Women Students - Kamy Chetty



WOMENS WORKING PROGRAMME



OUR REALITY

South African society is characterised by capitalism. This means that the majority of people are economically exploited. Capitalism in South Africa is maintained and perpetuated through racial oppression, ie black people being denied the right to choose or vote for the type of government they want. This form of capitalism is known as racial capitalism.

Black women in South Africa suffer a triple oppression, ie race class and sex. The involvement of women in the economy has resulted in greater exploitation of women and the strengthening of economic power for the capitalist. In a capitalist society, women are used as reproducers of labour for the capitalist market. They are directly responsible for the rearing and maintenance of a healthy workforce for the labour market.

Exploitative society promotes the ideology, culture and education that serves its interests. The social oppression women suffer in South Africa though common to most societies, furthers the interests of the present status quo, because by keeping women in a state of subservience, it is ensuring that more than 50% of the population is kept in a state of bondage.

OUR APPROACH TO THE STRUGGLE

Our response to racial capitalism in South Africa is through the waging of struggle, on all fronts where there is any form of oppression and exploitation. Our approach is through the National Democratic Struggle. It is National because it involves all the people of South Africa. It is Democratic because it takes up the interests of the majority of the people in South Africa who are workers.

In addition we need to organise women as an oppressed sector around issues that directly affect them and to link this to the National Democratic Struggle.

WHY DO WE ORGANISE WOMEN STUDENTS?

The primary site of struggle for students is in the educational sphere. The content of the educational system and the way it is organised perpetuates sexism. Women have to be organised to challenge these specific problems. Because sexism cannot be eradicated from our society without fundamental change, women students need to be organised to play a role in the National Democratic Struggle.

Therefore our aims and objectives of Women's groups should be:-

1. To unite women students around issues which affect them.
2. To encourage women to participate in broader student struggles.
3. To develop confidence and provide training skills for women.
4. To fight sexist attitudes and practices on campus.

5. To expose the sexist nature of our education system.
6. To forge links with progressive women and other organisations outside campus.
7. To ensure the continuous participation of women in ongoing organisational work.

Methods of organising women students

Methods used to organise women must ensure we raise awareness, involve the maximum number of women and strengthen organisation.

We must understand the constituency that we are dealing with. There are certain social problems hindering the effective participation of women in struggle. Our methods must take cognisance of these facts and we must work from the level at which the students are.

1. It may be necessary to organise at an intermediate level at certain campuses eg social events, clubs etc.
2. We must identify and take up issues that appeal to the broader mass of women students. Issues may be:-
 - a) rape
 - b) contraception
 - c) expulsion of pregnant students
 - d) establishment of creches
 - e) hostel problems
 - f) curriculum problemsand others that may arise at the different campuses.
3. We can raise awareness by holding commemorative services, seminars and discussions.
4. To strengthen organisations, we need to develop organisational skills through training work, decentralisation of tasks and sharing of responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

While the organisation of women students may take place around different issues depending on specific conditions on different campuses, our ultimate objective is common - that of organising women students to take their rightful place in the National Democratic Struggle.

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WOMEN IN NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

1984 is an important year for women throughout the world. It marks the last year of the United Nations Death of Women, which began in 1974. In this period, and even before, women have struggled, together with their peoples, for food for all, health and child care facilities, higher wages, adequate housing peace and political rights. In countries as far apart as China, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Cuba, women have joined hands with these forces struggling for a world free of economic exploitation and political injustice.

1984 is also an important year for South African women. On 17 April this year, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Federation of S.A. women. Women students joined hands with working class women to celebrate this proud day in our history. The Federation was formed in 1954 unite women of all races and classes in the struggles for better living conditions for South Africa's working people, and for full political rights. Involving women in struggle on this basis, the Fed, thus articulated, not only the demands of women, but also the demands of all S.A.'s exploited and oppressed people. The Fed has been an important organisation in our history, since it is the organisation in which mass based women's struggle has its roots.

Many great and courageous leaders of our people's national liberation movement, were actively involved in the Fed. Among them are Lilian Ngoyi, Dora Tamana, Helen Joseph, Dorothy Nyembe, Albertina Sisulu, and too many others to mention. Today, these leaders continue to inspire women and working class people in the march towards freedom.

Why have women from all corners of the world seen the need to organise themselves? It must be said that the unmitigated violence of harsh regimes has not been felt by men alone, but in a special way by women and children. Not only have women had to endure their husbands, lovers and sons being tortured, maimed and killed in struggle; they themselves have been raped, and molested, and they have seen their children disappear into the hands of the enemy. Many women have given their lives in the struggle for liberation. But women have not accepted these injustices. They have refused to accept such pain and an ideological conditioning which teaches them to be passive and obedient. No! women have fought back.

Women played an active role in the Russian Revolution. In 1917, women textile workers in Petrograd were the first to go on strike. Their demands were simple - for bread, for peace, for justice. But the effects of their action were far reaching, and in October 1917, they were joined by all Russian workers in the final stage of the struggle to overthrow imperial Russia and its ruling classes.

Russia was the first revolution and women were there with the menfolk. In other revolutions too, women have played a leading role. In China, women participated actively in a cultural, political and economic overhaul of their society. In Nicaragua, women joined hands with all the people to overthrow the ruthless Somoza dictatorship. And so on....

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DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING.

Yet despite this agreement has not always been reached on the role of women in the struggle and the importance of the women's struggle. In Central America and particularly in Nicaragua, women have argued that the liberation of their country comes first, and that they have fought alongside their menfolk to raise human dignity, after which the elevation of women's status would be possible.

Others have argued that if women submerge their particular needs and demands to the struggle, then women are 'selling out' to men or to the revolution, and that if they don't have their vision of liberation, national liberation will not include the liberation of women.

Despite these problems and despite the fact that sexism is an ideology that is deeply entrenched and one which will be slowly obliterated, it is clear from examples of countries engaged in post liberation reconstruction that women who have fought for liberation are not content to revert to traditional roles. What is important however, both for women engaged in the struggle for national liberation, and for women engaged in reconstruction, is that because they are confronted by both the issues of national liberation and sexism, they need to work with and to gain support from other women. This is because women know best how they have been particularly exploited and oppressed, and women know best which issues most affect them and which need to be taken up - be they issues of literacy, education, child care, health care or violence. Women have extracted the women's content in the struggle around their everyday lives, whether they have felt national liberation must precede women's emancipation, whether they have felt the two must be worked for simultaneously, or whether they have felt sexism must be overcome firstly, so that women can take their rightful place in the national liberation movement.

The Federation of South African Women, e.g. believed that women had to relate their struggles around child care, etc, the broader struggle for freedom in South Africa. They believed that without national liberation, women could never be free and could at most achieve mechanical equality with men. Since women's oppression was rooted in the structure of South African society, e.g. the migrant labour system, structural employment and so on, it was necessary to eradicate these if any attempts at women's liberation were to be meaningful.

SOME QUESTIONS

The questions which women struggling in South Africa are asking, and around which the Federation of South African Women were organised, have been asked (and partly answered by women involved in struggles in other societies.)

- Around what issues should women be organised?
- How can women be organised to maximise gains for the national democratic liberation movement, whilst ensuring that women too are freed of sexual oppression?
- Is there a need for a separate or autonomous women's movement?
- What should be the relationship between the women's movement and the national democratic liberation movement - in other words, what is the relationship between women's struggle and the class struggle?

Before we try to answer any of these questions we need to understand what it is that characterises certain struggles which people wage as national democratic in method. Let us look briefly at South Africa and then at one or two societies.

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, all black people, who make up the vast majority of the population, are denied a vote, and are subject to the apartheid laws of the land, whatever their class position. Moreover, even the white South Africans, who have access to parliamentary mechanisms once every 5 years, are denied access to the most influential decision-making apparatus in the country. Any struggle for fundamental change must thus harness the energies of all who are oppressed, and all democratic whites,

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mobilising them in order to gain control of the decision-making apparatuses which govern their day-to-day lives.

But the above-mentioned process of national oppression must be seen in its proper relationship to the fundamental contradiction in our society - the exploitative economic relationship which exists between the capitalist class and the workers. Any struggle for fundamental change, if it is to involve the majority of the people, must take into account the interests of the majority of the people - the workers, in the case of South Africa.

Thus, for a struggle to be national democratic in character, it must at once unite all sectors and classes of people, for change, whilst at the same time projecting the interests of the workers of that society, as paramount.

In the South African context, the national democratic demands of the people are contemplated in the Freedom Charter, drawn up at the historic Congress of the People in 1955, after months of consultation with people from all walks of life about the kind of future S.A. they would like to live in. Today, the Freedom Charter remains a guiding beacon for those engaged in the national democratic struggle.

OTHER PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES

The national democratic struggles of other peoples have had similar features. On 19 July 1979, the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSNL) guerilla army marched into Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. Their victory hailed the downfall of Anastasio Somoza, the last in line of the Somoza family, which had ruled Nicaragua for 40 years. It also signified an overthrow of the power of the United States which, through support of rulers such as Somoza, had effectively controlled the country for over 100 years, and which continues to control other countries of the South American region, such as El Salvador.

What special features of the struggle of people of Nicaragua characterise it as national democratic in method? For over half a century the Somoza family had dictated to Nicaragua - with the aid and protection of the United States government. The family alone controlled a large chunk of the economy - nearly 1/3 of the country's arable land, the majority of the most profitable industries, the import and export trade, and transport. While Somoza's personal fortune approached 1000 million dollars, the vast majority of Nicaragua's people were illiterate, without adequate housing and shelter, and living on extremely low wages. It was these conditions which led to the mass organisation of people to change the conditions of their lives. Yet the Somoza regime also met with the disapproval of some of the members of the petty bourgeoisie, because the dictatorship stifled opposition, denying them effective decision-making powers. Thus, the national democratic struggle in Nicaragua incorporated peasants, workers and sections of the petty bourgeoisie, though, once again, the interests of the workers and peasants were regarded as paramount. The FSNL sought a complete restructuring of social relationships within the country, and replacement of the capitalist system by true democracy.

Let us take a brief look at the struggle of the people of Mozambique - also national democratic in character. In Mozambique, FRELIMO (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) was formed in 1962 out of 3 contending political organisations to unite all Mozambicans against Portuguese colonialism. The armed struggle was waged so as to eradicate the exploitative relations between the worker and peasant majority on the one hand, and the colonial bourgeoisie on the other. Because Mozambican petty bourgeois elements, with the exception of a tiny assimilated grouping, were treated almost as harshly by the colonial governments as the peasants and workers, and had no formal say in the government, they too had an interest in seeing the collapse of Portuguese colonialism. For this reason, they acted together with the workers and peasants within the

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boundaries of one political framework to alter the relations of production and power in Mozambican society.

And so on. The struggles of the people of China and Zimbabwe also saw the unity of workers, peasants and a revolutionary section of the petty bourgeoisie, struggling to replace feudalism and capitalism with a system of control in which the interests of the workers and peasants would be foremost in a nevertheless egalitarian society.

SO WHAT ABOUT WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE?

When trying to understand the above-mentioned struggles, it is important to pay special attention to the position of the majority of women, who, besides being naturally oppressed and economically exploited, are faced with the burden of sexual (social) oppression. It is important that we understand social oppression correctly. Samora Machel, president of FRELIMO, and of Mozambique, points out:

"The basis of the domination of women lies in the system of economic organisations of society, private ownership of the means of production, which necessarily leads to the exploitation of man by man. That means that, apart from the specific features of their situation, the contradiction between women and the social order, is in essence a contradiction between women and the exploitation of man by man, between women and the private ownership of the means of production. In other words, it is the same as the contradiction between the working masses and the exploitative social order."

If we examine women's positions before, during and after national democratic revolutions, we see that social oppression has not been caused by mere nastiness on the part of the men towards women, but has been founded on material (mainly economic but also political) imperatives.

POSITION OF WOMEN BEFORE THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

Prior to the struggle, all the countries under discussion, were heavily male dominated. Women were projected ideologically as homemakers, providing sexual pleasure to their husbands; children (especially sons) to bring wealth into the family, and unpaid domestic and agricultural labour. The subordinate positions had implications for women's location in the economy. It ensured that any agricultural or other economic surplus women produced, could easily be appropriated by certain menfolk, thus reinforcing class divisions within society.

WOMEN IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY CHINA

It is possibly true to say that women in pre-revolutionary China were among the most exploited and oppressed groups the world has ever seen. Women of the Chinese upper classes were cloistered throughout their lives, passing from the control of fathers to that of their husbands. They were housed behind high walls, never seeing the outside world. Peasants and working women were not so effectively cloistered, as their labour was necessary, but they were no less isolated or excluded. In an impoverished society subject to the ravages of drought, floods and famine, the birth of a girl child was often lamented and infanticide was a frequent occurrence. Another frequent occurrence was the sale of female children into slavery. Ideology also played the role of projecting women as weak and passive, and men as all things bright, strong, active and positive.

More horrific than all this, was the physical coercion to enforce women's passivity and compliance. This, in China took the form of foot-binding. Foot-binding was a cruel and inhuman practice which involved the breaking of a girl child's toes at the age of about 6 years. They were bent under her feet which

were then bound so that they remained small. Considered erotic and a sign of beauty, this deformation caused women to walk with a small, mincing gait, and the tiny bound foot was seen as a symbol of sexuality, submission and dependence. The practical consequence for women were that this handicap reinforced the condition of seclusion to which ideology subjected them, hampered their mobility and their ability to gain economic independence.

WOMEN IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY ZIMBABWE

In traditional Zimbabwe society, men wanted wives to bear them sons, so as to carry on the male lineage. Women who did not bear sons were looked upon with scorn. Marriages were arranged between the elders of the extended families, who determined which marriages would best suit their families' ends. Women were allowed no choice in the matter.

The imposition of colonial domination entrenched women's subordinate status. In fact, it distorted the traditional forms of women's subjection to meet the needs of capitalist accumulation. Women's status and rights with regard to marriage and family, which previously had been determined by customary law, became subject to the interpretation of settler officials. Though were regarded as majors in the eyes of the judicial system, women were seen as minors in perpetual bondage and tutelage to their guardians.

WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

In traditional South African society, women have played a vital role in the economic life of the village. In fact, women have provided most agricultural output, working long hours. Moreover, women's days have consisted not only in agricultural production but in also serving the needs of the family - cooking, washing and cleaning. Strict economic control has been exercised over women through the institution of lobola and, in political decision making, women have played only a minor role.

Traditionally, Indian women in South Africa too have been discriminated against - through forced marriages, and lives of domesticity, particularly.

Women in all these countries, and others, have not sat back and accepted these conditions. They have fought, both against social oppression and the practice of harsh ruling classes.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

Let us now go on to look at the role that women have played in the national democratic struggles of their countries. In China, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa, women have been drawn into freedom struggles. The way they have organised themselves has qualitatively affected the nature of the new states their people have tried to create.

WOMEN IN THE CHINESE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

Whilst the Russian Revolution focused on the proletariat as the main vehicle of struggle, conditions in China lead to a different perspective. Because of extremely repressive conditions in the towns, the thrust of the revolution took place in the countryside where a vicious form of feudalism brought peasant resentment to boiling point.

The main features of Chinese feudal society were that:

- a) peasants produced for themselves agricultural products and most of the handicrafts they needed. What the landlords and nobility exacted from peasants in the form of land rent was chiefly for private consumption and not for exchange. Nevertheless, the peasants worked long, hard hours under difficult conditions;

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- b) Women were oppressed, subjected both to the feudal authorities and to their menfolk. They worked hard in the fields, and also at home - cooking, cleaning and rearing children. Chinese feudal society lasted for 3000 years. It was not until the middle of the 19 century, with the foreign capital, that great changes took place in Chinese society. However, over the years, China's feudal society had developed a commodity economy and thus carried within it the seeds of capitalism. The Chinese feudal forces colluded with imperialism to arrest the development of Chinese capitalism, and women were actively involved in the struggle both to put an end to this and to bring about an entirely new and democratic order.

By the 1920's many women, mainly professionals and students were engaged in the struggle against foreign aggression. These women articulated demands that reflected their desire for social equality in Chinese society. They demanded equal job opportunities, equal pay and the end of foreign rule. However, these were not necessarily the demands of the present working class women who were struggling to eke out a living and whose demands included food, shelter and economic independence.

Some women within the Communist Party of China saw the need to articulate the demands of peasant and working class women, and to incorporate women into a struggle, not merely for mechanical equality with men, but for a society where there was no economic exploitation and national oppression. Their understanding reflected a deeper ideological difference between Chinese progressives and nationalists which led to a split in the Communist Party. Progressives in the CP began to take up issues which affect women. At first their approach was quite immature - they wore their hair loose and long, and dressed in pants, reflecting a new found confidence in their abilities. But this frightened off a lot of peasant women, and it became necessary for women activists to identify with the lifestyles of ordinary women. They encouraged a spirit of collectivity and organisation in women and even such ordinary activities such as embroidery and sewing were put to the use of revolution. Needed concepts of health and childcare, food provisions and work modes were put into practice, by involving men, women, and children on an equal basis, in building people's republic of China.

Women also became actively involved in the armed struggle. They were involved in espionage in engaging the enemy in struggle. Peasant women provided food, shelter and clothing to armed militants. } 20
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Women were thus involved at every stage in the struggle for liberation. This is not to suggest that women in China have no problems today. Attempts to put into practice new divorce and marriage laws have contradictions in them. Also men have not rid themselves entirely of sexist attitudes. However the picture of the coy, submissive women, so typically projected in the capitalist media, has been wiped of almost entirely from the Chinese soil, and women have been actively integrated in the process of reconstruction. This has ably been achieved through consistent struggle on the part of the women.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, on the position of women, Machel has this to say:

"The antagonistic contradiction is not between women and men, but between women and the social order, between all exploited people both men and women, and the social order. This contradiction can only be solved by revolution, because only revolution destroys the foundations of exploitative society and rebuilds society on new foundations, freeing the initiative of women, integrating them in society as responsible members and involving them in decision making.

Therefore, just as there can be no revolution without the liberation of women, the struggle for women's emancipation cannot succeed without the victory of the revolution."

The adoption of this position on the role of women in the struggle reflected the victory of progressive forces in FRELIMO, over the competing reactionary forces, who sought merely to replace white rulers with blacks, whilst leaving untouched, the exploitative foundations of Mozambican society. At the second congress of FRELIMO in 1968, the progressive lined triumph after long and fierce debate between the two tendencies.

FRELIMO's progressive attitudes were reflected in women's practical involvement in the struggle. Women provided food, initiated schools and rudimentary health schemes. They transported military equipment, spied and were involved in clandestine operations. In the struggle, traditional values and practices, e.g. polygamy and lobola were challenged, and the structures and regulations introduced in the liberated zones ensured that women had access to political and economic decision-making mechanisms.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, too, women played a vital role in the struggle for liberation. There, too, women broke out of their traditional roles and asserted themselves in armed struggle, organising and mobilising the masses of the people. The women's struggle was closely identified with the broader anti-colonialist struggle, as a statement by the ZANU Women's League suggests:

"We are fighting for socialism. We women of ZANU know that there will be no complete emancipation of women in any society other than a socialist society. We women, workers and peasants of Zimbabwe, are not going to tolerate any oppression and exploitation of man by man. It must be done away with by relentlessly waging the liberation war to the bitter end. Total liberation can only be brought about when there is social ownership of the means of production and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, women were involved in the revolution on a large scale, and saw their contribution as complementary to the struggle against the imperialist-backed Somoza regime. Said a female activist of the FSLN, Fatima Caldora:

"As we organised the first CDCs for the insurrection in Managua, so many husbands were frightened when they saw the degree of involvement of their wives. Terrified by women taking the initiative, fighting, organising. In so many households, the men were less committed than the women. And the woman, with her double oppression - oppressed by Somo-cismo, oppressed by machismo - had to make the choice between her husband and the revolution. It was extraordinary how many of them, thousands, opted for the revolution."

Women had played an important role in the anti-imperialist struggle, yet Nicaragua's record of national women's resistance is fairly young. AMPRONAC (the Association of Women Contradicting the National Problem) was born in September 1977. It relied on the notable strength of the working class women. However, many prominent middle class women were also active in its leadership. AMPRONAC retained a broad platform designed to attract women of different political persuasions and defined its aims as being:

- * to encourage the participation of women in the revolution of the country's problems
- * to defend the rights of Nicaraguan women in all sectors and all aspects - economic, political and social
- * to defend human rights in general.

Early AMPRONAC activities included hunger strikes, church occupations and protests at human rights violations. Yet the important part is not that these activities reflected the early dominance of bourgeoisie women, but rather that they came to represent the task which the women's movement, with its current strength and composition, could most effectively undertake. Actions like the occupation of the United Nations building in Managua, had enormous international repercussions against the dictatorship. The growing stature of the movement became more apparent towards the middle of 1978, as AMPRONAC worked more directly with the FSLN and more women joined the armed struggle. Thus, women's struggles became increasingly identified with the struggle for national liberation.

Women and the National Democratic Struggle in South Africa

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In South Africa, women have long been involved in the struggle for national liberation. This is because women have been affected in a particularly cruel manner by the government's apartheid laws and policies. The migrant labour system, introduced with the discovery of minerals in the 19th century, confined

African women to the reserves where they were expected to eke out a living for themselves, their children and old people. This provided a justification for bosses paying male workers the cost of reproducing only themselves and not their families. But the reserves were barren areas, and women were forced to seek work in the cities. Particularly after World War I, they occupied jobs in the informal sectors - i.e. they were domestic servants, washerwomen, prostitutes, etc.

World War II saw the growth of the manufacturing industry and an increase in job opportunities. Many African women found jobs in industry. Bosses were keen to employ them since they could be paid low wages. But, women's involvement in the economy had a politicising effect on them. Not only did they break out of the traditional positions they had held in the reserves, they also came into contact with the mass political and trade unions of the time. Women were increasingly organised, not only in trade unions and political organisations, but also in issues that affected their day to day lives, e.g. the food committees of the Western Cape, creche clubs, etc.

1948 saw the coming into power of the Nationalist Party, which immediately began implementing a series of harsh laws, which denied the freedom of speech and movement, e.g. the Suppression of Communism Act, the Group Areas Act and the "homelands" policy. Women resisted these along with their menfolk, and participated in 1952, in the Defence Campaign called by organisations within the Congress Movement. In 1951, the Federation of South African Women was formed to unite women of different races and classes against apartheid. The FSAW had an affiliated structure, and had, as its main affiliates, the ANC Women's League, the South African Congress of Democrats (COS), the South African Coloured People's Organisation (CPO), the Cape Housewives' League, the Non-European Women's League, and the Food and Canning Workers' Union.

Already, the Nationalist government had begun to talk about extending pass books to women. This was fiercely resisted by the women themselves, who saw passes as a curtailment of economic freedom and an infringement on human dignity.

Throughout the country, the affiliate organisation organised women against the pass laws and on 9 August, 1956, 20 000 women from all over South Africa gathered outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria, in protest against the pass laws, whilst their leaders went in to present a stack of petitions calling for their repeal to the Prime Minister. Their leaders found an empty office. But the women stood outside in solemn silence for 30 minutes then broke out into a song:

"Strijdom, you have tempered with the women,
You have struck a rock,
You have dislodged a boulder -
You will be crushed."

Today, 9 August is honoured each year as S.A. National Women's Day by all those involved in the national democratic struggle.

But the Federation was not without problems. Most crushing of these was the clampdown on organisations by the government in the 1960s. Since the Federation had drawn most of its leadership from the ANCWL, the banning of the ANC meant that the Federation lost this section of its membership. Also the banning and detentions of its leaders had serious effects. Although the Federation itself was never banned, these and other factors, e.g. financial problems, and the practical difficulties in running a massive national organisation meant that it collapsed in the 1960s. For a long time thereafter, there was not any form of national women's resistance.

In fact, in the 1960s saw the decline of all forms of mass-based activity - on the factory floor, in the schools, community and in political institutions. The Soweto uprisings of 1976 accelerated this process and by 1980, a strong network of democratic organisations had been built throughout the country, each seeking to relate its struggles to those on other sites. The period has also seen the growth of women's organisations. the FSAW, e.g. was revived in the Transvaal, and organised women around issues that affect them. The United Women's Organisation (UWO) was formed in the Cape. The UWO is engaged in the struggle for lower rents and food prices, better housing, adequate creches and schooling facilities. The UWO and FSAW also relate to the political struggle - e.g. they are both affiliated to the UDF.

In Natal, the newly-formed Natal Organisation of Women (NOW) also attempts to organise women around issues that affect them, e.g. the new taxation laws.

Even the seemingly small and insignificant women's groups, whose activities include sport, knitting and sewing are important. They provide women with skills confidence and allow them to break out of the sterility of their homes and to make new friends. However, for such organisations to have any significant impact on the South African social structure, they must, at some stage, relate their activities to the struggle against apartheid.

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN STUDENTS IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE

South African women students have a special responsibility to women engaged in the national democratic struggle. This is because their access to theoretical concepts and an understanding of women's experiences enables them to translate these into their implications for South African women and the S.A. liberation movement. Thus it is important for women students to identify with the struggles in their communities.

But women students, too, are discriminated against. They must fight against

social oppression in their lives. the dominant ideology in our society trains women to accept a subservient role in the family, and engenders in them, attitudes of passivity, obedience and shyness. At school and at home, women are channelled into practices and courses which fit in with these norms, e.g. at home women are taught cooking, baking and are expected to do domestic work, whilst being denied an understanding of how machines such as stoves and electrical circuits operate. At school, women are encouraged to do subjects like domestic science whilst men are encouraged to do science, maths and physics.

Women enter into university, socialised into accepting these values. There, they are subject to sexist attitudes of lectures and administration, and are the victims of social oppression by male students. On the repressive campuses, women are harshly controlled, being locked up at night in their hostels, being expelled if pregnant and often being forbidden to form women's groups. These actions must be seen as an attempt to exercise control over women, since freedom of movement and speech would enable them to challenge the authorities.

To overcome these problems, women students must organise themselves. Only through united action will effective strategies be devised. But it is important to note that all black students are oppressed - thus women must relate their struggles to the struggles of the broad masses of oppressed students, so that a complete overhaul of our education system can be reached. Even more important is the idea and historical fact that both men and women students relate their struggles to those of the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa, since only with the freedom of all people, will students be freed.

CONCLUSION

The challenges facing South African women are great. Women need to address the question of how to relate class struggle to the struggles against their social oppression. Yet abstract theories will not help us in answering these questions. Only by actively attempting to raise women's consciousness, by mobilising and organising them around issues that affect their day to day lives, will we be able to identify the links. Also, we must remember that our guiding principle is mass mobilisation, and we must take up issues that do not alienate women.

This is not as simple as it sounds. Women face many problems in becoming involved in organisations.

Very often, their viewpoints are not taken seriously, and they lack skills and confidence. Even for women who do want to get involved, there are problems - women have a double job - at the workplace, and in their kitchens.

Examination of the struggles of women in other countries has shown that course of struggles, women were able to assert themselves.

But even after liberation, these women still have a lot to strive for. South African women must take example both from our own historic and heroic women's organisations but also from women in other countries.

Through developing autonomous women's organisations, which nevertheless relate to the national democratic struggle, women will recognise their social oppression and also begin to relate it to the broader forces of national oppression and economic exploitation.

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SEXISM IN EDUCATION

BECAUSE WE'RE WOMEN

Because woman's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get the sack and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get bashed we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect community care for children we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and 'unfeminine', and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and for lots and lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement.

Anon

Up to now we have been viewing women's issues as a mere element of the national liberation struggle, as

- i. one of the problems we have to face in our struggle,
- ii. one of the sites of struggle amongst others - the factory floor, the universities, schools, colleges, the community.

When we view it in this way, we are presented with certain problems. When do we organise women? How does the organising of women fit in with students' struggle, workers' struggle?

At which stage can we concentrate on organising women? How do we do this in a way that doesn't detract from organising around the basic contradictions in our society? How best can we do this, so that our struggle is taken forward, and activists are developed in the best way possible?

When we see women's oppression, not only as an element of struggle, but as a phenomenon which existed before capitalist society developed, then we begin to see that the oppression and exploitation of women is one of the most basic forms of oppression in our society.

Women have been exploited and subservient even before the advent of capitalist society. Before any sector of humanity was exploited in a class-based society, women were oppressed.

Working class leadership in many countries where struggle has been waged, ^{have} stated most emphatically that the index of the emancipation of a nation is the extent to which its women are liberated.

Because education, both formal and informal is the most significant process of socialisation, it is important for us to understand how women are formed and moulded to serve the capitalist machine.

The foundation for the smooth running and reproduction of capitalist society, is the nuclear family (mother, father and children) where agents for the processes of capitalist production are fed, clothed and housed.

It is in the family that children are prepared for their role as future factory worker, bureaucrat, business manager, teacher, nurse, engineer or simply as future mother and reproducer of labour. The mother is the central figure in the family. She bears the children, looks after them, and she is responsible generally for seeing that the family functions well as a unit.

It becomes clear then, why it is necessary in every sphere of life to perpetuate the myth that it is the natural calling of women to get married, have babies and raise a family, it becomes clear why it is necessary for women to believe that they were born weak, subordinate, moulded to serve fathers and husbands; and why they should be happy in the background of humanity, and in the kitchen of the world.

In capitalist society division developed first and foremost on the grounds of sex - men as the shapers of history, the active agents, the force; and women as the passive, silent (but strong) support group. This is the basic framework within which we have to view divisions on the basis of class, and - in South Africa - of race.

To keep women in their subordinate position and men in their dominant position, society has to believe that there are fundamental differences in nature, temperament and inclination between men and women and that these differences have always been there and will always exist. The justifications and reasons given for the eternal differences range from religious to physical grounds.

Exploitation and oppression of women is necessary to keep the wheels of capitalism turning. If all women rebel against raising families, who is going to see to the maintenance of the steady flow of labour for the market? Capitalism needs mothers to nurture its labour until it is ready for the market.

This is why sexism is a vital tenet of capitalist ideology. A working definition of sexism includes the factors of discrimination, stereotyping and judgements of a person's ability, capabilities, personality and behaviour. And above all, prejudgements about the POTENTIAL of men and women.

At an early age, in the home, we learn that we have a defined role to play as a male or female. Girls play with dolls and tea sets, at being nurses. Boys play with guns and cars. When children play housie-housie together, the girls are, naturally, assigned the role of mother who cooks and cleans, and waits for father to return home at night.

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PAPER FROM AZASO GSC - DECEMBER 1983

For "AE"

ORGANISING WOMEN STUDENTS.

Womens Oppression

It is generally known that black women are triply oppressed i.e. class, race and sex. It is terms often used and quite loosely thrown around. But it is important not only to realize this, but to understand its implications in maintaining the oppression in its position of power.

The incorporation of women into the productive sphere has resulted in greater exploitation of women and the strengthening of economic power for the capitalist.

The social oppression women suffer, though common to most societies, furthers the interests of the present status quo. We must remember that exploitative society promotes the ideology, culture and education that serves its interests. Society will keep women in a state of subservience, because by doing so it is ensuring that more than 50% of the population is kept in a state of bondage.

The question arises as to why we need to organise women. The organisation of women is a fundamental necessity in the struggle for liberation. We need to organise all the oppressed and exploited people. That includes women and that is the whole basis of the National Democratic Struggle.

If we intend to eliminate the whole system of oppression and exploitation, then we are forced to liberate women. That is the type of society we envisage.

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN STUDENTS.

Let us look at the special problems facing women students.

Women students find themselves in a peculiar situation. Politically they suffer the same type of oppression as their male counterparts. Careerwise they are on par with males -- therefore they do not suffer the same type of oppression as would a working class woman. The main form of oppression they do suffer is social oppression. They experience it in their studies, their home, their social relationships and they even experience it in the political sphere - in meetings, student structures etc.

One problem that does affect them directly is that of maternity e.g. student nurses are fired if they fall pregnant. In Turfloop pregnant students were expelled. Students are not allowed maternity leave if they give birth, and there are few day care centres and creches for those students who have children.

Another special problem facing women students is the illusion that if they are career women, they lose to some degree their so called femininity. So it becomes important for them to hold onto that femininity - to be seen as the stereotyped female, while still having a career.

ORGANISATION OF WOMEN STUDENTS

Because of the special problems facing women students, it is important how we organise them and in what direction we take them. It is very easy to misdirect this type of struggle and waste a lot of energy and potential fighting battles that will not really solve any problem.

2.

Because women students experience mainly social oppression, it is easier to organise them around these issues. But there is a danger in this if you do not relate it to the broader struggle. Before I go any further, I think it is important to point out the different forms of feminism. It is rather a pedantic exercise, but I have found through experience that once it is clearly understood people can place the liberation of women in its correct perspective.

There are 5 main types of feminism.

1. Liberal feminism - it is the type that most people know and what immediately springs to mind when you talk about feminism. This is the type of feminism you find in most western worlds, where women call for equal rights of women, the same pay as men, the same status as men etc. So what they are calling for is equality with men, without challenging the status quo. So in actual fact the status quo is not changed, but men and women are given the same opportunities, the same rights, the same status. This type of feminism is especially prevalent in middle class housewives in America and Britain, who are bored and frustrated with their position in society.
2. Radical feminism - is an extreme form of feminism. Radical feminists identify the male as being the main enemy, and the cause of their oppression. The main thrust of their campaigns are anti-male, having slogans like women power and believing that women are superior. This type of feminism is commonly seen with university students.
3. Lesbian feminism - stems directly from radical feminism. Because of the anti-male feelings, women tend to shy away from relationships with males and instead tend towards lesbianism.
4. Socialist feminism - believes that the primary struggle is the struggle for national liberation and secondary to that is the struggle for women's liberation. We are not saying that one is more important than the other. What we are saying is that they are interdependable and one cannot succeed without the other.
5. Marxist feminism - similar to socialist feminism, but is on much more of a theoretical basis. Marxist feminism believes that women oppression is a result of capitalism. Therefore, if capitalism is overthrown, women's liberation can be achieved.

So, going back to the problems facing women students and the issues around which these students can be organised. I have mentioned that it is easier to organise women students around social oppression. The danger here is that if it is not related to the broader struggle, it can very easily tend towards radical feminism. And noting that university students are prone to becoming radical feminists, this must be avoided at all costs.

Other issues that women can be organised around are issues like:

1. Rape and sexual harassment.
2. Expulsion of pregnant students.
3. Establishment of creches.
4. Maternity leave etc.

But these issues in themselves are reformist. I cannot overstress the need to relate these struggles to the broader democratic struggle.

METHODS OF ORGANISING WOMEN STUDENTS.

Having looked at the issues around which we can organise women students, what then are the methods we should use to organise them. I want to divide this section into different categories and look at each one separately. I will look at campuses where there has been no organisation before, and campuses where there are women's groups. I will also look at resident students and day students.

Campuses where there is no women's group.

The first thing to do in this instance is to identify a woman activist, because this work needs to be done by a woman.

If there is an issue that can be identified, then this issue can be taken up and students mobilised around it. If there is no identifiable issue, then we have to start off at a real basic level. A survey can be carried out, asking women students what are the problems they experience, the need for women's group etc. Or a group of students can be called together to discuss common problems they all experience. You find in this situation, students will find it easier to talk, because then they know that they are not experiencing the problems alone e.g. like having to be home early, expected to do household chores yet still study, problems with parents and sibling etc.

From these discussions, the whole socialisation process can be discussed.

A group of activists can be identified and seminars and discussion groups can be held - these can pertain to women issues and issues on the broader struggle.

What is important is that we do not have only discussions and seminars, but that these students get involved in practical activities e.g. skills workshops can be held. These can be very simple, like basic layout skills, how to draw up a poster etc. or students can get involved in community work. Or you could ask the students to carry out a survey with the working women on campus (the cleaning women or the canteen workers) and ask them the problems they experience as working women.

As the group develops, these women must get involved in broader student activities, but at the same time women issues must be highlighted and these problems taken up.

Campuses where there are women's groups.

Here the task is slightly simpler. The problem here is how we draw in new people and yet still develop the activists already involved. This needs to be done on 2 levels. On the one level we need to take up issues that would appeal to the broader women students, and on the other level we need to organise activities which will develop women activists - this will include programmes on a more theoretical level e.g. education seminars, group discussions etc.

Again women activists should be encouraged to get involved in broader activities.

Resident students and day students.

Issues that res students can be organised around are things like time restrictions which can be a big problem for them.

What should be encouraged in the residences is that coffee clubs should be formed.

In these coffee clubs there can be informal discussions on problems, other issues etc.

Day students have always been a problem for both male and female students. I think what needs to be encouraged here is involvement in community issues and programmes must be encouraged during the day which these students can attend.

In organising students, we must identify the type of constituency we are dealing with. There are certain issues which students might shy away from e.g. in certain campuses, rape might be a mobilising issue, while in other campuses it might be a deterring factor. The same applies with contraception. An issue that might draw interest is a topic like make-up - why do students use it, or magazines like Fair Lady - the woman you want to be. What is important is that these discussions must be directed.

RELATIONSHIP WITH AZASO

This depends on the existing conditions on a particular campus. On some campuses the women's groups are overtly Azaso e.g. at Wits.

In other campuses, the women's groups do not want to be openly identified on campus. These groups either work alone or are covertly supportive of Azaso. At UNB and Howard College, the women's groups, though not affiliated to Azaso, have the women's organiser of Azaso chosen from the group.

I think that the relationship the women's group has with Azaso can be determined by that particular campus.

In conclusion, I just want to say that I have outlined briefly how women can be organised. There will be many other ways that women can be organised in different campuses. Those campuses can most easily identify these ways.

I will conclude with the words of Machel as to why and for what we organise women.

"Women must be mobilised for internal struggle and for mass struggle, and they must be organised. They will then be able to internalise the political line to start the offensive. They must be involved in the battle for political education of the next generation and in the battle for large scale mobilisation and organisation of the masses. Their commitment to the liberation struggle will then become concrete action, leading them to take part in making decisions affecting the country's future".

UDF phb

AE12

Mc Cachema '22/3/88

FEDSAW

Rev AE

Minutes of Meeting held at Khotso House on 6 October 1984.

15 Women representing Pretoria, Soweto, Johannesburg, Kagiso and Central, Riverlea, Coronationville, Bosmont and Noordgesig were present.

1.1. REPORT BACK ON WOMEN'S WEEK

It was generally felt that the Women's week activities were a success and that it had brought women together from all over the Transvaal. There was also a feeling that the speakers for the mass meeting were mainly women from Johannesburg and that future programmes should include speakers from other areas as well.

Interim committee meetings should also be rotated so that this group meets in different areas.

1.2. The women's week had also given rise to interest being awakened in the activities of FEDSAW amongst women.

2.1. REPORT BACK ON ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE IN GROUPS

2.1. In Kagiso the activities of the group were progressing steadily. However it was felt that women still needed to be presented with none threatening reasons for joining a women's group.

2.3. A new group had been established in Potchefstroom.

3.1. THE TRANSVAAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

3.2. It was agreed to postpone the conference until the 7, 8, and 9th of December.

3.3. Aneene was given the responsibility of finding a suitable venue — suggestions were made as follows:

- (1) Hammanskraal
- (2) Wilgerspruit
- (3) Glynn Thomas Students Hostel

3.4. Sister Bernard was asked to take a letter to the Catholic Bishop's Conference requesting some funds to cover costs of the conference. The Lutheran and Methodist Church would be approached for funds as well pending a decision from the Bishops.

Each group will be asked to raise some money independently to help with costs. It was proposed that each women's group contribute a minimum of R25.

3.5. A circular asking women to mention which issues they would like to have discussed at the conference is to be sent out immediately. NB It was strongly felt that the content of the conference should come from all the women.

3.6. 7 People were asked to work on a structure for the Transvaal using as their guide the FEDSAW National constitution. This proposed structure is to be presented at the next meeting. The people are:

- Helen Joseph
Albertina Sisulu
Jessie Duarte
Leila Patel
Aneen Dawber/or Joanne Yawich
Linda Rigny or Elaine Mohamed

OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED:

1. The situation in the Vaal.

Women's organisations are being asked to collect food and clothing which will be distributed through the UDF.

2. Women are asked to make personal contributions to assist family members of a FEDSAW member in the Vaal.

The following people will make visits to rural areas.

To Daggaskraal, Lumonoia & Driefontein:

Date of visit 13 & 14 October

**Amanda
Ma Greta
Cecelie
Joanne
Jessie
Leila**

To Leandra on 20 & 21 October:

**Ma Albertina
Ma Vesta
Ma Mlangeni
Ruth Mohlobi
Vumele**

To Magopa 28 & 29 October:

Jessie, Leila, Suzie, Ma Greta, Baby Esther, Joanne, Amanda & Cecelie

The next meeting will be held on the 3rd of November at 2 pm.

**Venue: Black Sash Offices
Khotso House**

All groups are encouraged to send their members, this a very important meeting.

For any questions you have, please phone:

**Amanda 8367111
Jessie 6425235
Leila 7162507**

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BEFORE 30 OCTOBER TO:

Jessie Duarte
P O Box 88125
NEWCLARE
2112

1. List the issues (topics) you want to be discussed at our Regional conference. Be specific please.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
10) _____

2. How many delegates should represent each group or can you suggest an alternative method for groups to be represented?

3. Please make suggestions of Speakers to address the conference.

Speakers Name	Topic
1) _____	_____
2) _____	_____
3) _____	_____
4) _____	_____
5) _____	_____

4. Please make suggestions of who should chair the conference.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

Should there be more than one person to chair?

5. Please indicate who from your group could act as translators if required.

AE13



FSAW: '54-'84

"WE STAND SHOULDER
TO SHOULDER
WITH OUR
MENFOLK IN A
COMMON STRUGGLE
AGAINST POVERTY
RACE AND CLASS
DISCRIMINATION"

FSAW
17 APRIL 1954
FEDERATION OF S.A.
WOMEN

women unite against
Botha's new deal "Bew A E 13"

c/o United Democratic Front
6th Floor Khotso-House
42 De Villiers Street
2001 Johannesburg

VVS/hc

2 August 1984

Terror Lekota
United Democratic Front

Dear Terror

Enclosed please find a brochure detailing the Focus Week on Women which speaks for itself.

This serves to confirm our telephonic invitation to you to address the rally on 12 August 1984 in the Methodist Central Hall at 2.00 p.m. It will be appreciated if you will speak on 'The UDF and the need for unity with special reference to Women'.

Thanking you
Yours in the struggle

Vesta Smith

Vesta Smith
RALLY COMMITTEE

AE14



The Federation of South African Women invites you/organisation to its focus week on women 9th Aug, to 12th August, 1984

The 9th August is National Women's Day. It is the day when we remember the struggles of our women, A day when we pay tribute to our women for their triumphs and their tears

This year, the Federation is celebrating its 30th Anniversary. And, we invite you to share in this very special celebration of a rich tradition of organisation of women to fight for our rights and the rights of all our people.

Aug 9. is women's day

program

Thursday Aug. 9

Women will organise programs in their local areas. We call on organisations to focus on women and their problems on this day.

Friday Aug. 10

Cultural program with the focus on women's culture and resistance.

Come and hear our women sing songs read poetry and act in plays which speak of our lives And, our hopes for a better life. Coffee ban.

Sunday Aug. 12

Women's rally against Botha's New Deal. Speakers will be Albertina, Sisulu, Amanda Kwadi and others. 2 pm, venue;

Make sure that you get our newsletter.

The Federation calls on all women to join us in making this program a success

Contact; JESSY TEL 837 8956
AFTER HOURS
ESTHER TEL 291916/7
OFFICE HOURS

we call our women...

We call our women where ever they may be.

In our communities, in our churches, mosques and temples.

We call our women on the farms, in town and country. In the trade unions and in all our organisations.

Women, let us raise our voices nigh against Botha's New Deal, A deal which will only bring hardship to our people. A deal which has brought us GST. A tax which will pay for Botha's Apartheid parliaments,

Let us say no to our sons and brother who will be forced to go and fight on the borders for Apartheid.

Our women and children are starving in the rural areas. Thousands are threatened with removals and resettlements. This new deal will not change anything.

On 9th Aug, 1956, 20,000 women marched to Pretoria to say no to passes for women. Thirty years later, Koornhof's bills will make the pass laws harsher.

women unite against

BOTHA'S NEW DEAL

Botha's New Deal

AE15



FSAW: '54-'84

"WE STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH OUR MENFOLK IN A COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY RACE AND CLASS DISCRIMINATION"

FSAW
17 APRIL 1954
FEDERATION OF S.A. WOMEN

women unite against Botha's new deal

Bas "AEIS"

4 September 1984

PRESS RELEASE ON 9 SEPTEMBER 1984 MEETING

FEDSAW is calling on all men, women and children to attend a civic meeting called by the Diepkloof Civic Association which will be held at Modisa-o-botse Church, Zone 4, Diepkloof on Sunday September 9, 1984 at 2 P.M

As mothers we are concerned about the plight of our children who are detained, shot, and those boycotting classes, and especially those families who are due for removal.

We also sympathize with all the Vaal Triangle families who have lost loved ones during the unrest in the area.

Meeting banned on 7-9 Sept. '84

we call our women

AE16



FSAW: '54-'84

"WE STAND SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH OUR MENFOLK IN A COMMON STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY RACE AND CLASS DISCRIMINATION"

FSAW
17 APRIL 1954
FEDERATION OF S.A. WOMEN

women unite against Botha's new deal

Botha 16.11

24 August 1984

PRESS RELEASE - 24 AUGUST 1984

On the eve of the Coloured elections, elections hated by most peace-loving South Africans of all races, the Nationalist government, like the cowards that they've repeatedly proved they are, detained UDF members and their affiliates.

We ~~FEDSAW~~ demands the immediate release of our husbands and brothers or the government should promptly charge them. The government's inhuman way of detaining people indefinitely is abhorred and rejected the world over.

The UDF is internationally acclaimed for its stand of openly opposing the tricameral parliament. Why then silence its leaders by detaining them, if Botha and his thugs are not scared?

Before the volcano erupts, we advise Mr Botha to release our leaders.

SECRETARY

Langa SKosana

we call our women

WDF *file*

AE17

(20)

2019/87



FSAW: '54-'84

"WE STAND SHOULDER
TO SHOULDER
WITH OUR
PEOPLE IN A
COMMON STRUGGLE
AGAINST POVERTY
RACE AND CLASS
DISCRIMINATION"

**FSAW
17 APRIL 1954**
FEDERATION OF S.A.
WOMEN

**women unite against
Botha's new deal**

Ben AE 1711

6th Floor, Khotso House
42 de Villiers Street
P O Box 10366
JOHANNESBURG 2000

14 August 1984

The Secretary
S W A P O Women's Group
c/o Namibian Council of
Churches
P O Box 41
WINDHOEK
Namibia

(20) 20/9/87

Dear Madam

We, the above organisation in South Africa, wish to communicate with you women in Namibia.

We (you and us) are fighting a common enemy. The same evil South African government we are fighting is the same crooked government that is oppressing you in Namibia. If we could forge links, meet and discuss ways of combating this parasite which is draining our beautiful black blood. This vampire needs to have a stake put through its evil heart. And that, dear comrades, will and can be done by nobody else for you, but yourselves.

NG

This government wants to divide us. Black white, brown and yellow people belong together. This government wants to deceive our Indian and Coloured youths into being conscripted once their parents have voted. These same youths will therefore have to go to the South African borders to fight their fellow Blacks brothers. Are you, as mothers, going to allow that to happen? Definitely NOT!

So women of Namibia, we wish to meet you and discuss this crucial issue.

LONG LIVE WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM!

LONG LIVE SWAPO!

LONG LIVE THE UDF!

Yours in the struggle,

ESTHER MALEKA
SECRETARY - SOWETO GROUP

we call our women

AE18



Rev "AE 18"
August 9:

**South Africa
Women's Day**

**WOMEN
AGAINST
APARTHEID**

"SOUTH AFRICA BELONGS TO US" 35 minute color
film on Women under Apartheid showing this
August 9th (Thursday) at 7:30pm in the
LEXINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY located on West
2nd street between Mill and Market street.

Open to the Public and no admission.
Sponsored by the FRIENDS OF AZANIA.

AE19

Revised AE 19

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT KHOTSO HOUSE ON SATURDAY 21st JULY, 1984 AT 10.00 am TO DISCUSS THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR AUGUST 9

CHAIRPERSON: Sister Bernard

MEMBERS OF PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR AUGUST 9: Aneene, Joanne, Dorcas, Yasmin Leila, Avril.

1. OPENING

Sister Bernard welcomed everybody and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. INTERIM CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Dorcas explained briefly how the Interim Committee had been set up at the conference in March and the work they had done so far - the Anniversary Rally in Mamelodi and the Workshop on the 23rd and 24th June.

At the workshop, a sub-committee had been set up to plan the program of action for August 9 based on the ideas that had come up in the workshop. This committee had then presented these ideas to the next co-ordinating committee meeting so that they could be taken back to the groups to be discussed. We were meeting today to look at the final program of action to discuss the program and make any changes that were felt necessary.

3. PROGRAM OF ACTION

Leila outlined the program.

3.1 Theme

The theme for August 9 was WOMEN UNITE AGAINST BOTHA'S NEW DEAL.

This theme had been chosen at the workshop.

Under this theme, women would come together and raise their voices against Botha's new deal. In doing this, they will be joining in with the national campaign against the new constitution and the Koornhof Bills.

Links between the new deal and the everyday problems of women will be drawn.

Some of the issues which have been suggested and which we will be taking up are: the plight of urban and rural women;

the high prices

the GST which is financing the new deal

lack of child care facilities

conscription

3.2 Focus week

From the workshop it had been suggested that we have a focus week running from Thursday the 9th August to Sunday the 12th August as our program for August 9th celebration.

3.3 Activities during the focus week

August 9th (Thursday): on this day the women wanted to have their own local meetings, where they could focus on different things. They could use these meetings to draw in new members and strengthen their own organisations in their areas. Some suggestions are for tea parties; prayer meetings, all night vigils, culture meetings.

August 10th (Friday): There will be a cultural evening focusing on "Women and Resistance" at Khotso House

August 11th (Sunday): There will be a Rally from 2 to 5 pm. It is thought to have this Rally in an area where Anti-PC is organising so that we can also use the Rally to pamphleteer a whole community.

3.4 Other activities:

If the program of action was acceptable to everyone, we would also need media and distribution work. The suggestions are that we have 2 posters: one a statement about our theme and one an advertisement for the Rally. We also need a Newsletter, stickers and T-shirts.

4. FINAL PLAN OF ACTION

After the program had been accepted, a breakdown of activities for each section was discussed.

4.1 Thursday, August 9th

1. Soweto Women's Group: Has not made a final decision about whether to hold a vigil or not. They will be discussing this at their meeting on Sunday
2. Vaal Women's Group: Is going to concentrate on women's groups in the churches. They have already spoken to some groups who seem keen on holding a prayer meeting.
3. Lenasia Women: They had planned to hold a mass meeting but because the TIC will be holding a mass meeting on the 5th they are going to have to reconsider this. They are going to have a pamphlet and will concentrate on housewives, maybe having meetings for housewives.
4. Johannesburg Women's Group: They will be holding a commemoration evening for the ad hoc women's group and for Jodac members where they will focus on August 9 and why we organise women in separate groups.
5. Alexandra Women's Group: will be having a tea party. They cannot have mass meetings because of problems with venues.
6. Women's Support Group: There is an idea to have a joint meeting with the women from Noordgesicht, Bosmont, Riverlea, Newclare but they have not yet discussed it.
7. Kagiso Women's Group: Haven't met to discuss it yet.
8. Westbury Women's Group: Haven't met to discuss it yet.
9. Noordgesicht: MaVesta explained that their group has not yet been launched. At the meeting they held to start the women's group, the meeting became a resident's meeting. At their next resident's meeting, they might launch the group if the women are keen to do so. If so, they might have a prayer meeting.
10. Azaso (BSS -Wits): They will probably have a mass meeting.

4.2 Friday night, August 10th

The cultural evening will be on "Women and Resistance"

Venue: Khotso House

Time: from 7 to 9.30 pm

Different women's groups were asked to come and do a play or read poetry or whatever the group wants to do.

Some people have been approached to do things:

Women are going to be reading poetry

Yasmin's group will be doing a play on the Constitution

Johannesburg women will be doing a play/puppet show on why women organise in separate groups

Fosatu women might come and do their play

Sheila Sisulu will speak on Women, Culture and Resistance

Afrapix will be doing a display on women

Traditional dancers from Soweto

Kuvangano from Soweto is coming

Jessica Sherman will be doing songs

Elaine Mohamed might read some of her poetry

The women's drama group from Johannesburg might do a play on the situation of women in South Africa

Mrs Naidoo from Laudium might be approached to write a script for a play for us

Some students who write poetry might also be approached

Contact person for the group organising this evening is Aneene.

Coffee and cake and anything else will also be sold to help raise funds.

Women's groups should bring their banners/posters, etc to the meeting.

4.3 Saturday's programme

Leila is the contact person for this sub-group

Each women's group is to give an indication of how many women they can

bring to this event.

The issues to be raised will be around Botha's new deal: conscription, GST finances the constitution; removals; passes and influx control
The success of this event depends on us.

4.4 Rally on Sunday, 12th August

This rally is the culminating point of the focus week

Venue: not yet finalised. The Central Methodist Church in town has been booked for the 12th but only as a last resort.

Aneene, Sister Bernard and Yassmin will work out the final details.

Starting time is 2.00 pm.

Contact person is Yassmin

Speakers: Alan Boesak (alternative Terror Lekota) on Unity, the UDF campaign in general and why women are important in the campaign.

Amanda on the day-to-day issues affecting women including GST, conscription and the general attack on our living standards

MaSisulu on the history of the Federation

Fathima Meer/ Priscilla Jana/Ella Ramgobin on the legal issues of the constitution and how it affects women

Virginia Engel or another union organiser on the plight of working women

Mrs Mosolodi on women in detention, the plight of families who have family members in exile, etc.

Sister Bernard and Vesta Smith are to be the joint chairpeople.

The other mothers of our Federation (such as MaGreta and Helen) will all be sitting on the stage and will be introduced to the people during the Rally.

There will also be messages of support and a resolution at the end of the Rally.

There was a suggestion that the group co-ordinating the rally should speak to other groups and the UDF about some of the speakers and get suggestions from them.

4.5 Media

The Newsletter will be coming out on next Wednesday night.

Aneene and Firoza are the contact people

It was also suggested that the media group contacts the groups in other areas to help with the media they need for local meetings, etc.

The Johannesburg Women's Group is going to be doing a mural showing women picketing which they will put up at the culture evening and the rally.

4.6 Distribution

Sister Bernard and Gail are the contact people

They are to contact all the groups and find out their requirements for posters, etc. and they are to ensure that the groups get the media.

4.7 Fund-raising

Lettie Nzima and Katija Cassim are the contact people for this group.

All groups are to try and contribute money and do fund-raising.

4.8 Press Conference

There will be a press conference on the 8th of August.

Koko and Shireen are the co-ordinators for this group.

The speakers will be MaGreta on removals, Amanda as Chair; MaVesta on Conscription and Baby or Bennie on the Constitution. There will also be a speaker on the history of the Fedsaw but this has not been finalised. They will also prepare a package stating our position which will be given to the press.

5. CLOSING

Sister Bernard closed the meeting by thanking everyone and Lettie said the closing prayer.

CONTACT PEOPLE (COORDINATORS) AND PHONE NUMBERS

	Katija	837-6388	or	834-328	(fundraising)
Johannesburg:	Aneene	648-3980 (home)			(culture & newsletter)
	Feroza	838-5769 (home)			(newsletter)
	Gail	716-2589 (work)			(distribution)
	Leila	716-2507 (work)			(saturday)
	Shireen	838-2248 (home)	724-4441 (work)		(press conference)
	Koko	837-8156 (home)			(press conference)
Kagiso:	Sister Bernard	762-3503 (evenings)			(distribution)
	Lettie	762-5054 (home)			(fundraising)
Riverlea:	Yassmin	837-8956 (Home)	339-2741 (work)		(rally)

Other contacts on the planning committee:

Joanne 23-8405 (work) or 337-2436
Amanda 836-7112 (work)
Vesta 836-9831 (home)
Avril 648-7509 (home)
Bennie 930-1026 (home)
Baby 939-3242 (home)
Dorcas 016-35-1021 (home) or 016-31-2900 ext 303 (work)
Kona 012-804064 (home)

AE20

"AE 20"
Rylew "AER"

Report on Interim Committee discussions read to the members. The following was discussed:

Thursday 9 August 1984

Vaal - Church service

Lenz - small meeting & Prayer service

Jhb - Prayer

Soweto - Gumboot Dance to be confrimed with Mrs Sisulu

Alex - Tea Party

Coronationville - Joint prayer meeting

Kagiso -

Azaso - Mass meeting

Friday - Cultural Evening

The following is planned:

Drama on the Constitution

Jessica to sing

Sheila Sisulu to speak on women

Poetry by Khubangani from Soweto

(Mzwakhe)

Afrapix to have a display

Lona Basadi

Cake & Biscuit to be sold to raise funds - Approved by Soweto Branch

Puppet show by Jhb

Saturday - Rally @ 2.P.M

Speakers: T Lekota or

A Boesak - on UDF Campaign

A Sisulu on August 9th

A Kwadi on GST

Chair: Sister Bernard

Vesta Smith

The meeting closed at 4.35P.M Next meeting Sunday 29 July 1984

At the next meeting we should discuss about; Jumble sale and Raffle.

Saturday 11 August to be discussed further and branches will be advised on the decision.

AE21

CITY PRESS 20/11/84

FEDSAW Call for Black Churches
as a Support FORA TU' Campaign
against mass marking over the
Christmas.

'We do not want to enjoy we
are mourning with parents whose
children, husbands and wives were
killed in the recent County wide
unrests and those who are
detained. Those in exile. Because
of those reasons we cannot enjoy
so long as the people mentioned
are not with us.

We are requesting methods not to allow the need to go shopping, no Christmas clothing, no extravagant food buying, no parties and shebeens should close for the Christmas & New Year season.

I shebeens close to government

and the white owned beer
magnates won't get a share of
the people's money.

FEDSAW is still planning for
the events for the Christmas
and New Year's day

They should keep the money
for next year - they are not
certain about their hold stand
regarding their education

AE22

Beu^u AE 22''

07 December 1984

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT TO THE INAUGURAL CONFERENCE
OF THE ORGANISATION OF TRANSVAAL WOMEN

Comrades and Mothers

The UDF salutes you on this important occasion. At the launching of the UDF, we said that the extent to which women are organised is a barometer of the level of struggle as a whole. This occasion is sure to raise the level of struggle in the Transvaal.

More importantly, we are proud that our mothers have taken this huge step in a year which marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Federation of South African Women. Surely our mothers are building on our rich history to build our non-racial and democratic future.

FORWARD\$ WITH THE UNITY AND ORGANISATION OF WOMEN!

FORWARD! TO A PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT!

FORWARD EVER! BACKWARDS NEVER!

Amandla! Ngawethu!

Yours in the struggle,

TREVOR MANUEL
ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY

UDF Jhs.

AE23

20

23/9/87

Rev "A.E. 23"

Message of Support

The University of the North Women's Club bring revolutionary greetings to this long awaited rally in the Northern Transvaal. It is our belief that all ^{the} oppressed and exploited masses in the rural and urban areas must be galvanised for the liberation of all in a united non-racial S.A.

Long live the United Democratic Front
Forward with ^{the} year of Women
Forward with the struggle
AMANDLA!

UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH WOMEN'S CLUB

The University of the North Women's Club brings revolutionary greetings to the long-awaited rally in the Northern Transvaal. It is our belief that all the oppressed and exploited masses in the rural and urban areas must be galvanised for the liberation of all in a united non-racial South Africa.

20
23/9/87

Long Live the United Democratic Front!

Forward with the Year of the Women!

Forward with the struggle

AMANDLA!

AE24

RESOLUTION

Rev AE 24

PREAMBLE:

We, the women gathered here on the 13th day of May 1984 at Mamelodi, Pretoria, as wives and mothers, working women and housewives, black and white, say with one voice-

- * That the government's new constitution and Koornhof Bills is no solution to the problems of all the people in this country and,
- * that white domination and exploitation will continue
- * ~~that there~~ will be no end to the unequal distribution of the land, wealth and resources of our country
- * that the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act is an undemocratic constitution and that the Koornhof Bills will deprive more and more African people of their birthright.
- * that forced removals, the Group Areas Act and the Bantustans will remain
- * that the government is determined to break the unity of our people.
- * that the oppression and exploitation of women will continue. Women will suffer greater hardships under the Pass Laws, women will be divided from their children and families. Poverty and malnutrition will continue to destroy family life
- * that working women will remain the lowest paid and unskilled of all working people in this country, and that the brunt of apartheid will still be carried by our families.
- * That our people are faced daily with an attack on their living standards. Food, G.S.T., rents, hospital tariffs, transport costs are going up; while the government has stepped up its expenditure on defense.
- * that this constitution will force our coloured and Indian brothers, sons and friends to fight on the borders for apartheid.

Mindful of the attack on the unity and rights of our people, we, the women, on this the 30th anniversary of the Women's Federation pay tribute to: the strength and sacrifice of our women, we remember our women over many fighting and struggling years. We remember their triumph and their tears.

AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

- * Uniting and organising women wherever they are; on the farms; in the factories, urban and rural areas to fight for our rights.
- * To build and strengthen our local women's organisations
- * To stand firm and to mobilise our women against the government's new constitution and Koornhof Bills and to call on Coloured and Indian women to boycott the August elections.
- * To raise our voice high in the United Democratic Front.

We therefore appeal to all progressive organisations, trade unions, churches, community, students and religious organisations; to all progressive men and women who have the interest of our people at heart, to join us in meeting our commitments, which we have set for ourselves today.

WE THEREFORE PLEDGE TO STAND, SHOULDER TO SHOULDER, WITH OUR MEN, SPARING NEITHER STRENGTH NOR COURAGE IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE FOR A FREE NON-RACIAL AND DEMOCRATIC

W.D. Christie
AE25

N^o 19

14/8/87
27/8/87

Rev "AE25"

29 June 1984

The Secretary
Federation of Women of S A
SOWETO

Dear Comrades

RE: LAUNCH OF SOWETO WOMEN'S GROUP

The United Democratic Front sends you fraternal greetings on this occasion of the launch of your Soweto Women's Group.

The birth of this **embryo** may herald an era of the revival of the proud tradition of women struggle, and lay the foundation of the creation of a mass women's movement in our country. We therefore welcome this important development and hope that it will inspire and heighten our struggle thereby bringing our freedom closer.

Hopefully, the formation of the Soweto Women's Group will inspire women throughout the Transvaal to set in motion a process of building their own structures. Particularly at a time when the masses of women face a very crucial moment in their history - a moment characterised by determined onslaughts by the racist rulers of our country, calculated not only to deny them the right to dignity, but also to obliterate all vestiges of opposition by women. Devices such as the New Constitution and K Koornhof Bills are used by the state to divide women into ethnic and racial groups. This then, is a challenge to all of us men and women.

We draw the attention of this meeting to the massive fraud that is about to be perpetrated by the Nationalist Party government through an electoral process for the "Coloured" and "Indian" South Africans on August 22 and 28. This meeting must therefore allow time for discussion on practical forms of opposing and exposing this fraud. Our call for political rights for all must be loud and clear.

We of the United Democratic Front genuinely believe there cannot be a look of liberation with the emancipation of women. If we are to increase our assault on the Apartheid regime we must embrace within the movement all women who are willing and determined to fight for a NON-RACIAL DEMOCRATIC S A. We assert with confidence and pride that it is the emancipation of women that sets in motion the struggle for National independence and Democracy.

There is no doubt in our minds that the emergence of the Soweto Women's organisation, will intensify our assault on the edifice of Apartheid.

Our call to you is:-

Organize, mobilise for the establishment of a People's power.

Long Live the proud tradition of Women's resistance!

Long Live the Federation of South African Women!

Long Live the gallant Women of Soweto!

UDF UNITES! Apartheid Divides!

POPO MOLEFE
GENERAL SECRETARY

AE26

SUITE 618
ESCOVAL HOUSE
437 SMITH STREET
DURBAN 4001
SOUTH AFRICA

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SOUTH AFRICA

THE PRESS TRUST OF SOUTH AFRICA
(THIRD WORLD NEWS AGENCY)

November 6 1984

Rev AE 26''

WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUE
THE STRUGGLE INSPITE OF
PRETORIA'S REPRESSIVE POLICIES

By Ela Ramgobin

South Africa's women - the democratic and progressive forces - are organising themselves once again to shake off the yoke of oppression after many years of inactivity because of detentions, bannings and banishment.

The women activists are organising themselves into a host of womens' organisations throughout the country to tackle the every day problems that affect the lives of the more than 23-million black majority people.

They have established community-based organisations in townships in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, East London, Pietermaritzburg and other towns and cities in the country.

Some of the larger organisations include the United Womens' Organisation(UWO) of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth Womens' Organisation(PEWO), East London Womens' Organisation(ELWO), Natal Organisation of Women(NOW) and the revived Federation of South African Women(FEDSAW) in the towns and cities of the Transvaal province.

more two

Unlike the 1950s there are no national womens' organisations but the women activists have established a national co-ordinating committee to facilitate joint action.

The women activists organising the people now draw their inspiration from the struggle waged by women in the 1950s and 1960s. In those days women leaders of the calibre of the late Lilian Ngoyi, Sophie Williams, Mrs Rahima Moosa and Helen Joseph participated fully in the struggle of the black people.

The women also draw their courage and conviction from leaders such as Mrs Winnie Mandela, who is house-arrested and restricted to the small town of Brandfort in the Free State province of the country, and Mrs Albertina Sisulu, wife of the another life political prisoner, Mr Walter Sisulu.

The early history also records the militant struggles of Queen Nonesi of Tembuland against the British, and the Zeerust and Pondoland women who led revolts against the authorities in the 1950s.

Today - more than 35 years later - women have found that the many issues that affected their leaders are still the same.

They are still plagued by problems concerning childcare, high rents, an ever increasing cost of living, and other social, political and economic problems caused by the white minority government's apartheid policies.

In order to advance their goal for equality the women activists have drawn a common charter which reads:

more three

women three

"We march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people."

The significance of their involvement today - as it was 35 years ago - is the realisation that their struggle is a national liberation one.

They have recognised more than ever that they suffer because they are poor, because they are black and because they are women.

They clearly see that the low wages, poor living conditions, unequal and inferior education and the general lack of facilities are the result of the exploitative and oppressive society which discriminates against black people. The women are consciously fighting the ideological forces of exploitation and oppression by engaging in education programmes, by working out clearly the role of the mother and wife in the struggle and through the expression of the understanding that the liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for emancipation and the liberation of the people of the country.

Over the past few years the women have shown massive resilience in strong community organisations such as the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC), the Cape Association of Housing Action Committees (CAHAC), Port Elizabeth Federation of Community Organisation and many other community-based organisations throughout the country.

Women are playing a leading role in these organisations, in the campaigns against increased rents and housing problems encountered by the communities.

more four

women four

Women have marched and are continuing to march fearlessly to local authorities to make their demands for a better deal.

During this period many women emerged in the trade union front and participated actively in worker struggles. Many women are also taking leading roles in student organisations such as the Azanian Students Organisation(AZASO), National Union of South African Students(NUSAS), Congress of South African Students(COSAS) and the Azanian Students Movement(AZASM).

The women have also played a prominent role in the establishment of the United Democratic Front(UDF) in August 1983 and are continuing to play an active role in political organisations such as the UDF and the Azanian Peoples Organisation(AZAPO).

They have also actively participated in the campaigns against the new tri-racial constitution of the government of Mr P.W. Botha.

More recently the women have suffered extreme trials and tribulations when they participated in placard demonstrations against the detention of UDF and other political leaders in terms of Pretoria's detention without trial laws.

But the detentions, shootings, killings, baton charges, teargassing and house to house police and army searches have not deterred the women from continuing to participate in the struggle.

more five

women five

If anything, the women have come out much more militantly in protests against the harsh laws which have affected their husbands, their children, their brothers, mothers and sisters.

The women have discovered that no sacrifice is too great when their struggle is a just one.

Their determination for justice and liberation was succinctly demonstrated by Mrs Albertina Sisulu, wife of political prisoner Walter Sisulu and a president of the UDF, when she addressed a mass meeting in Durban recently. "We are not passive onlookers but active cadres in the struggle for freedom from injustice, poverty, hunger and want.

"We, the women, have realised that we have to work shoulder to shoulder with our men to rid ourselves not only of political oppression but also the social and economic evils that beset our people in their everyday lives today."

ends

FROM: PRESS TRUST OF SOUTH AFRICA THIRD WORLD NEWS AGENCY
NOVEMBER 6 1984.

AE27



**THE INTERIM
COMMITTEE**

**TVL
FEDERATION
OF WOMEN**

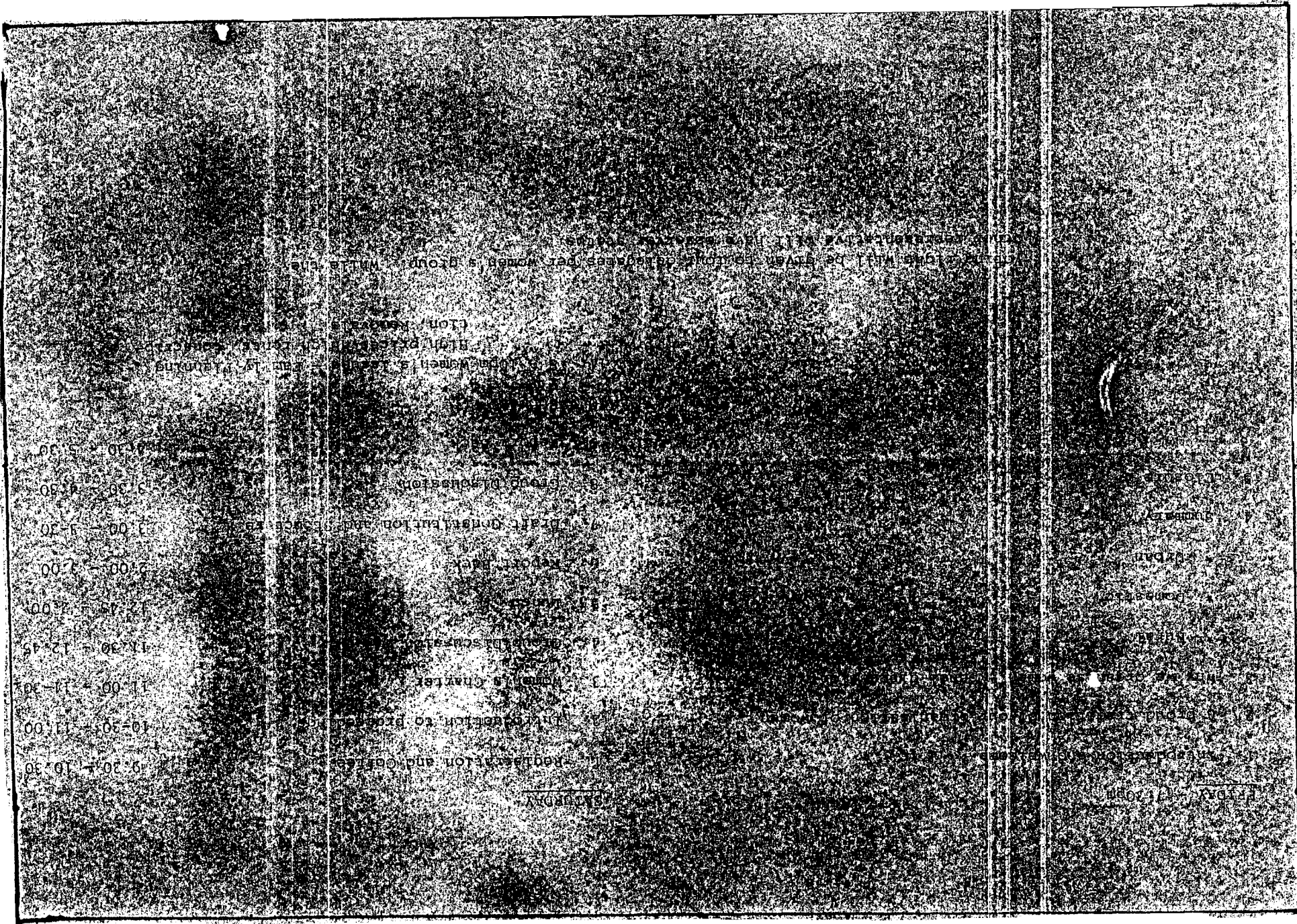
INVITES YOU

**TO ITS
LAUNCHING
CONFERENCE**

**FRIDAY-7 SUNDAY-9
(DEC)**

**JISWA CENTRE
LENASIA**





AE28



11 28
A E P.O. Box 120
Athlone
7760

Dear Comrades,

UWO is spearheading the commemoration of National Womens Day in the Western Cape. Nationally women are organising a focus week from 5-12 August, around the theme 'Women against forced removals and the elections'. We will picket on the streets throughout the Western Cape. We will pamphleteer factories and squatter camps. The week will end in a rally at Athlone Civic.

We come from a tradition of well organised women. In 1956, 20 000 women marched to Pretoria to declare their opposition to passes. Thousands more marched to their local 'Native Affairs' Offices. For 15 years, National Women's Day was hardly celebrated. Now, wherever women are organising, National Women's Day is a big event.

This year, we say 'Women reject the forced removals and the elections' But it is not enough to reject the hardships women suffer. We must organise to fight these actively. We must look at which women need to be organised and how we should organise them.

Black women are the most unemployed people. The bantustan system and influx control divides our families. The women in the bantustans are employed as slave labour - women are the source of the bosses super profits. In the urban areas, young women are fired when they become pregnant. When there is a recession, it is the women who are the first to be retrenched. The bosses say these women are housewives - they are not employed.

It is the duty of all democratic trade unions and womens organisations to defend a woman's right to work and to live where we can get a job. But we must demand more than this. What will happen to our children and families while we are at work?

We must organise to demand the right to bear our children with adequate health care for child and mother. We must demand that there are creche and child care centres for all working mothers. We claim paid maternity leave as our right, and we demand a guarantee that we can return to our same job.

In many of the clinics in our communities and at the factories, they use dangerous contraceptives. We demand our right to choose when we want to use birth control. It is our right to make this decision with full knowledge about what we are doing to our health. No boss can demand that we must use contraceptive before we can get a job. Motherhood is our right.

The time is past when women were at home all day. Now we too have to work to support our family. But the law and our attitudes hold us back. The law says that black women are minors, with their husbands or sons as guardians. The divorce laws does not apply to black women. Our husbands, brothers and sons expect the women of the house to do the housework. All this must change. The people shall share the work in the home.

We say it is the right of all people to organise into democratic organisations at their places of work, in the community. We say that women should take their place alongside their men in the struggle.

Women are brought up not to speak about political issues. We are told that is the men's business. We are told not to speak but to listen. It is the task of all democratic organisations to train women to participate fully in the work of the organisation and to arrange the organisation so that women can participate. There is work to be done if we want the right for women to organise not to be a hollow slogan.

The Labour Party thinks that they can fool our women into voting. But we know that our struggle as women is part of the struggle for a non-racial and democratic South Africa. Our demands for maternity leave, creches, equal pay for equal work, for prices we can afford are only milestones along the way to a South Africa where the people shall govern.

Comrades, the United Women's Organisation works hand in hand with other organisations. Within the UDF we hope to move the women's struggle and the struggle as a whole forward. Our task is to reach out to unorganised women and draw them into the democratic movement. The task of organising women is a task that confronts us all - the trade union movement, the student movement, the civic associations and the youth movement.

On National Women's Day 1984, we say for the whole world to hear that Botha's New Deal is no answer to our problems as women. The wages remain low and the prices and GST go up. There are no houses, security and comfort for South Africans. We can not live in peace and friendship when our sons are dragged into the army. We do not live in a democracy when the majority of our people are shunted off to the Bantustans.

UWO calls on comrades, men and women, to join us in the activities of the Focus Week:

MONDAY 6 AUGUST: blitz to squatter camps.
Please bring as much transport as possible.

TUESDAY 7 AUGUST: blitz to factories.
Please bring as much transport as possible.

THURSEDAY 9 AUGUST: Pickets.
Please bring as much transport as possible.

SUNDAY 12 AUGUST: Mass Rally Athlone Civic 2.00 - 5.00 pm
WOMEN AGAINST THE FORCED REMOVALS AND THE NEW DEAL.

Our office phone number is 691055 - please let us know if people are coming from your organisation or your region. Please phone if you need information or have suggestions. The office address is: 3 Hares Street, Mowbray, right next to the Mowbray bus terminus.

We hope to see you all in the National Womens Day Focus.

Yours in struggle,



T TSOLO
SECRETARY.

AE29

REPORT ON THE UNITY TALKS BETWEEN THE UNITED WOMEN'SORGANISATION AND THE WOMEN'S FRONT ORGANISATION

Rev AE 29/10

The UWO and WFO Executives met on 3 March 1984 to discuss the unity of the two organisations. The meeting was attended by UDF regional and national representatives.

The meeting agreed in principles to unite the two organisations and elected a Commission consisting of three UWO, three WFO, and one UDF(WC) representatives. The task of this Commission was to plan the stages by which unity could be built.

The first stage was for the Commission to visit plan joint meetings of UWO and WFO branches in all areas. The findings of the Commission was tabled and accepted by a joint meeting.

The second stage was working together on the successful Women's Rally in April. The third stage was a joint UWO/WFO workshop planned by the Commission. The aim of the workshop was to come up with a formula for the unity. The workshop was open to all members of the two organisations. It was attended by sixty UWO members from all branches except Stellenbosch and Worcester, and by ten WFO members from all branches. The members had an open mandate to participate in the discussion on the basis of branch discussion.

The workshop took two decisions:

1. to hold a joint conference early in June
2. to choose, by a show of hands at that joint conference, the name of the united organisation. The only two proposals to be put to the conference were 'United Women's Organisation' and 'Western Cape Women's Organisation'.

The meeting of UWO and WFO Executives on 30 May 1984, to plan the joint conference, was attended by the UDF National Secretary, Publicity Secretary and the Regional Secretary. The WFO raised a matter before proceeding with the agenda. They reported that they were mandated to get that meeting to decide to agree to go to the conference with one name before WFO was prepared to go a joint conference. The motivation for this was that WFO felt that it will be important to avoid conflict at the conference.

The meeting agreed that:

1. The jointly agreed on democratic procedure for deciding on the name could not be overthrown.

2. No Executive could agree to change the name of their organisation. This could only be done by the membership at a conference.

Women's Front Organisation agreed to the request made by the UDF National officials that they go back to their membership to re-discuss the matter and abide by a decision already taken. WFO agreed to treat the matter as urgent and to contact UWO as soon as they were ready to go to the joint conference.

The meeting supported the UWO request that they hold their own UWO conference so that their work could go forward. UWO had been functionally unconstitutional for three months by postponing their conference in the interest of unity. The doors were left open for WFO to attend that conference if they could resolve the matter with their membership by then. If this was possible, a joint conference would be held later at a time suitable to both organisations.

During July, in reply to UWO questions, the WFO said that they had not yet resolved the matter. Finally in the second week of August, the WFO replied to UWO that they had decided to keep to their earlier position that the decision on the name should be taken before the joint conference could take place.

This report was presented to and accepted by UDF GC Western Cape on Saturday 6 October. It was endorsed by the Executives of both UWO and WFO.

Signed on behalf of the UDF(WC) Executive, by:

19 October 1984

REPORT OF THE UWO/WFO COMMISSION ON VISITS TO BRANCHES

GIVEN TO THE JOINT UWO/WFO EXECUTIVES MEETING HELD ON 25.3.84

At the joint Executives meeting on 3 March, the Commission, consisting of 3 UWO, 3 WFO and the UDF WC regional secretary was given the task to build unity amongst the branches of the two organisations. They set up meetings in every area where either the organisations had branches. There were two aims of the visits. The Commission wanted to hear how the membership of both organisation felt about the unity. It also wanted to gather information about the structure and size of the two organisations so that the practical arrangements for unity could be made.

The following meetings were held:

10.3.84 KTC and New Crossroads branches: 16 UWO members, one apology from WFO.

11.3.84 Nyanga: 4 UWO, 19 WFO

13.3.84 Langa: 10 UWO

14.3.84 Worcester: 12 UWO

15.3.84 Gardens, Kensington, Observatory, Woodstock, Athlone, Claremont, Wynberg: 28 UWO, one UWO apology

18.3.84 Guguletu and Nyanga Extension: 24 UWO, 3 WFO

20.3.84 Paarl 23 UWO, 1 WFO

22.3.84 Stellenbosch 8 UWO

Total number of members seen: 125 UWO 23 WFO

All branches reported that they were happy about unity. The unity encouraged some older women who had sat down because of the split. The following questions were raised by the Commission members. The members accepted the answers.

Question 1. Are we going to have one organisation or two organisations which work together ?

Question 2. Are we going to have one name or two ?

Question 3. How are we going to work from now on ?

Question 4. How are the sub committees of the two organisations going to work ?

All of these four questions were referred to the joint workshop on 5 May so that the members of both organisations could decide.

Question 5. What about UWO conference ?

(The UWO agreed to postpone their conference from 3 April 1984 in the hope that it would be possible to hold a joint conference.)

Question 6. What happens to UWO branch activities ?

(Branches of both organisations were encouraged to continue their work.)

All of the branches were waited to know what the future stages of building unity were. The Commission proposed:

Stage 2: Joint work for the Federation Anniversary Rally

Stage 3: Joint membership workshop to discuss the structures of a front, federation and organisations and decide on the most useful structure.

The Commission puts that proposal to the meeting for discussion.

AE30

ICH
5/5/86

BoMAMA 20

IKHWEDO LITYALA MAKHOSIKAZI!

Bomama, makhosikazi, zintombi zohlanga oluntsundu ubizo luthi: Umanyano ngamandla. Lo ngunyaka eminyakeni, ngunyaka ongeze ufane ulibaluleke kwimbali yelizwe lakowethu. Lo ngunyaka wabafazi (THE YEAR OF WOMEN).

Makhosikazi kuwo lo nyaka umbutho wabomama iFederation of South African Women ibigcibe anashumi amathathu eminyaka iphila; kwakhona kuwo lo nyaka ziye zavuleka iingcango zentilongo laphuma igorhakazi uDorothy Nyembe owayesakuba edontsa iminyaka elishumi elinesihlanu entilongweni, futhi kuzo ezi ntsuku besikhumbula elolanga libaluleke kakhulu apho amaqhawekazi angamashumi amabini amawaka aphikisa lo mthetho wokuba abantu abasayi kumbaba bezizigqhu, bona bakwazi ukuba bahlangane phantsi kwalo ofisi ye Union Buildings ePitoli besithi "unotshe sidiniwe ngasapasi, sikubonile okwenzeke kuwo amadoda ethu ngenxa yala mapasi ngoko ke kuthi soze kwenzeke oko" loo mhla ke ngumhla we 9th ka Agasti.

Bomama, makhosikazi abafazi abantsundu ngabona baphila eyona ntlalo ibuhlungu phantsi kwalo ruhulumente wocalu-calulo. Abafazi abangabsebenzi bathi bayive kakhulu le dyokwe, isimo abasebenza phantsi kwaso sibuhlungu ukanti imivuzo isezantsi, bathi bephuma kuyo loo ndlela ibuhlungu yomqesha kube kufunekile ukuba aphinde azokuma ekhayeni lakhe elungiselela usapho. Zininzi nezinye izinto ezithi zisichaphazele singabafazi ngoko ke bomama ukhona umbutho wethu iUWO masiyijoyine silwe phantsi kwayo.

Abantwana bethu bayabulawa, amaxabiso okutya ayenyuka, iirente, iilokishi zethu zisebumnyameni kodwa kukho abantu abathu banele thina nditsho abanogogwana be-COMMUNITY COUNCIL" suka apho basi-bulalalle abantwana bethu njengaso esi sinelegu sehle apha kuKomani kodwa naye lowo usenzileyo akasindanga.

Bomama, bafazi masimanyane ukungevani okuphakathi kwethu maku-phele, utshaba lwethu lunye ngoko ke natni masibebanye sibe yimbumba.

WATHINT'ABAFAZI
WATHINT'IMP'KOTHO
UZAKUFA

Kuwo lo nyaka wabafazi bomama makucace icala, inxaxheba ethi ithatyathwe nganakhosikazi emzabalazweni ibaluleke kakhulu. Joyinani imibutho yabantu zikhona i-UDF neminye.

PHAMBILI NOMBUTHO WABOMAMA!
UMANYANO NGAMANDLA!!
PHAMBILI NOMHLA WE AUGUST 9th!!!
PHILA NGONAPHAKADE UWU!!!
VICORTY OR DEATH, WE SHALL WIN!!!!

A CALL TO WOMEN

Mothers, women, daughters of the Black nation the call says/is: Unity is strength. This is the year (great year). It is the year that must not be forgotten in the history of our country. This is the year of the women.

Women this year, the Federation of South African Women completes 30 years of existence; During this year doors of prison opened, the heroine Dorothy Nyembe came out. She had been imprisoned for 15 years. Again during these days we remember the important day on which 20 000 women protested against the carrying of passes. They managed to gather at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. They said "Never, we are tired of the passes, we have seen what happened to our husbands because of passes therefore, this cannot happen again". This day is the 9th of August.

Mothers, women, Black women we are suffering under this discriminatory Government. Working women feel the yoke heavily, the conditions under which they labour are painful yet the salaries are low. When they come from those conditions of employer they have to labour at her home preparing for the family. These are many things which affect us as women, therefore mothers UWO is our organisation, let us join it and fight under it.

Our children are getting killed, food prices are escalating, the rents, our township are in darkness, yet there are people who call themselves our representatives, I mean the dummy - of community council. From there they kill our children like a terrible thing that happened here in Queenstown but he/she who did it has not escaped.

Mothers, women let us unite, the misunderstandings amongst us must come to an end. We have a common enemy, therefore let us unite and be one.

You touched women,
You touched the rock,
You shall die.

Mothers in this year of the women let the stand be clear; the participation of women in our struggles is very important, join peoples organisations, the UDF and others are there.

Forward with Womens' Organisation!
Unity is strength!!
Forward with the occasion of August 9th!!!
Long live UWO!!!!
Victory or death, We shall win!!!

Mothers, Women, Daughters of the Black nation, the call is:
Unity is strenght. This year is a very important one out
of all the years. It is the year that cannot be easily
forgotten in the history of our country. This is the year
of Women.

Women! The Federation of South African Women will this year
be completing it's thirtieth year since it's establishment.
Again the prison doors went open this year when the hero,
Dorothy NYEMBE, completed her fifteen years sentence in pri-
son. Recently we also held an anniversary of the 9th August
on which 20 000 women marched to the offices of the Union
Building, Pretoria, in protest against the Pass laws.

Mothers, Women, The black women are the most oppressed people
living in difficulty under the Government of the Apartheid
Policy. Women workers work hard for far lower wages and they
have to work again at home in preparation for their children.
There are so many other things that affect us (women), there-
fore mothers let us join the UWO and fight under it.

Our children are being killed. Prices of food commodities
and rents are up. Our locations are in darkness, but there are
people who call themselves representatives, i.e. "Community"
Instead they kill our children; for instance the
disaster which happened recently in Queenstown and the person
responsible will not survive.

Mothers, Women, we must unite. Animosity amongst us must come
to an end. Our enemy is only one and therefore we must unite.

Dare touch Women.
Dare touch Unity.
You will die.

This year of women is a very important one and our participa-
tion in the struggle is of utmost importance. Join organisa-
tions like UDF and others.

Forward with Women's organisations.
Unity is strenght !!
Forward with the day of the 9th August !!!
Long Live UWO !!!

Victory or Death, we shall win !!!!

~~SECRET~~
QUEENSTOWN

This patter was translated from Xhosa to English by me.

W. J. M. M. M.
SECRETARY D/W/OFP
QUEENSTOWN

AE31

Row "A" 31

WOMEN'S FRONT ORGANISATION



Women

WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE

The emergence of women's organisations in our country had demonstrated the power and strength of women in the struggle for liberation against oppression and exploitation. Women are becoming increasingly more active in the struggle of the people. They have risen to stand united against the pass laws, high rents, G.S.T., lack of Antenatal facilities and forced removals. The woman's place is no more in the kitchen.

Last year in November, the apartheid regime called upon people of Nyanga, Guguletu, Langa, Mbekweni and other areas to vote for the dummy community council and people did not go. What have they done since then? demolish our houses, asked money from the people to celebrate their apartheid victory and enforcing people to Khayelitsha by demolishing our shacks.

Housing!

This will still remain a crying need as long as we have no say in our country. The Women's Front Organisation called a residents meeting after people were issued with notices to demolish their back-yard shacks - in June. The people decided

WATHINTABAFAZI WATHINT IMBOKOTHO

AN ARGUMENT IN A PARTY

DR: I AM THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON BECAUSE
I CURE THE SICK PEOPLE AND MONITOR DURING LABOUR.

PROF: NO! REMEMBER I TAUGHT SO YOU COME
AFTER ME.

ENGINEER: WHAT WILL YOU BE WITHOUT MY
THEM.
SKILLS THE MACHINES, FAST CARS AND I REPAIR ^

PILOT: I FLY EVERYONE ALL OVER THE WORLD

MOTHER: DO YOU KNOW WHAT? I ALWAYS

THOUGHT YOU ALL KNOW WHO IS THE
MOST IMPORTANT PERSON LOOK TODAY

AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO A DOCTOR
PROF ENGINEER. MINE WORKER PILOT

STUDENT I AM AGAIN SLEEPING LATE
BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTIES SO YOU

ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE
NO ONE IS AN ISLAND OF ITS OWN.

MORE OVER WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS

TO PURSUE OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST

FORCES OF EVIL (OPPRESSORS & EXPLOITERS)

UNTIL WE CONTROL THE NATURE

MEDIA MEMBERS

1955

WOMEN'S DEMANDS

On Sunday May 29th, 1955, the women of South Africa were invited to a mass meeting to put forward their demands for the Freedom Charter, which was adopted at the Congress of the People at Kliptown on the 26th of June 1955. These were the demands of the women of South Africa.

WOMEN'S DEMANDS

WOMEN'S DEMANDS FOR THE FREEDOM CHARTER

Panel 1 (Top Left): THE BLESSING OF THE WOMEN'S CHARTER. **Panel 2 (Top Middle):** WE HELD A MEETING FROM ALL OVER SOUTH AFRICA MET TO TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THEY FACED AS WOMEN. THESE IDEAS WERE PUT INTO WOMEN'S CHARTER. WE LOOK AT THE MEMBERS OF THE CHARTER. **Panel 3 (Top Right):** MEN AND WOMEN FORM ONE SOCIETY. WHETHER THEY SHARE COMMON HANDSHIPS AND SUPPORTING... **Panel 4 (Far Right):** BUT! WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA WOMEN HAVE CERTAIN HANDSHIPS AS WOMEN.

Panel 5 (Row 2, Left): TO MAKE SMALL WAGES A LONG WAY... **Panel 6 (Row 2, Middle):** UNDOUBTING AND SAVING THE OVERLOOKED WOMEN. **Panel 7 (Row 2, Right):** WE FEEL THE LOSS OF OUR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE. WE WANT TO BE STRONGER. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO EARN OUR OWN MONEY. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN CHILDREN. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN FAMILIES.

Panel 8 (Row 3, Left): WE LOOK AFTER OUR CHILDREN AND LAND WHICH OUR MOTHERS AND FATHERS ARE. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN CHILDREN. **Panel 9 (Row 3, Middle):** MANY WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WORK. **Panel 10 (Row 3, Right):** WORK THERE! WORK THERE!

Panel 11 (Row 4, Left): WE MUST TEACH OUR CHILDREN THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE LAZY AND SHOULD BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE OF A FREE AND EQUAL SOCIETY. **Panel 12 (Row 4, Middle):** THESE STRUGGLES EXIST BECAUSE OUR SOCIETY IS BOUND UP WITH RACE, COLOR AND CLASS WITH PRIVILEGES AND A FEW ARE HONORED AS THE PRIVILEGES. **Panel 13 (Bottom Left):** WE CAN ONLY SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS IF WE STAND SHOULDERS TO SHOULDERS WITH OUR MENFOLK IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION... **Panel 14 (Bottom Right):** OUR MEN MUST BE ALLOWING OPPRESSION TO BRING HOME TO ALL MEN AND WOMEN THAT... ..FREEDOM CANNOT BE WON FOR THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE AS LONG AS WE WOMEN ARE KEPT IN BONDAGE...

WOMEN'S DEMANDS



NYANGA: PEOPLE WERE REPLIED BY TEARGAS

AE32

Lt Dreyer 25/6/86/1873
Mr Cathala 22/3/88



WOMEN AWAKE



**NO to GST
and high prices**

NO to forced removals

NO to Botha's new deal

WE CALL our women wherever you may be. In Soweto, Eldorado Park, Lenasia and the Vaal. In the cities and towns, in rural and urban areas. We call women on the farms, in the factories and in the kitchens. In schools and hospitals, churches, mosques and temples.

We call women from Magopa to Driefontein and all areas under threat of removal.

Women we call you in all organisations to raise your voices high against Botha's New Deal.

A deal which will divide families, mother from child, African from Indian and Coloured. A deal which will force our coloured and Indian brothers to fight for Apartheid.

Why should brother be forced to fight brother?

PW Botha says this is the time for change in South Africa.

But we only see higher prices and General Sales Tax. We see the new tax laws which will force married women to pay more taxes.

We see no creches and playgrounds for our children.

Many women work in the kitchens of the rich people. They are paid the lowest wages because they are 'illegals'.

Every day thousands are hounded and arrested and locked up in jails for not carrying a dompas.

Women are sent back to the hardship and suffering of the 'homelands' where there is no work and no food. Where the children dying on the barren land. Because the government says there is no room for them in the land of their birth.

Now Koornhof's new bills will make these pass laws worse.

As wives and mothers it falls on us to make small wages stretch a long way. It

is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick.

Coloured and Indian women are being told to vote for Botha's Apartheid parliaments. We call on them to say NO to Botha's New Deal. We cannot forsake our African sisters.

We cannot be part of making Botha's plans work. We join the UDF in its campaign against the constitution.

Women of South Africa! Fedsaw is celebrating its 30th birthday. On August 9 we are celebrating National Womens Day — the day when 20000 women marched to Pretoria to demand the abolition of passes.

This year on August 9 we call women to unite and fight Botha's New Deal.

From Durban to Cape Town, from the Eastern Cape and the Border to the Transvaal the voice of women will be heard.

'We fight for our children'



■ Women's organisations are fighting high rents

VAAL WOMEN

'OUR women face problems of high prices and rents. There are no child care facilities in our area. We organise women around problems which affect them in their daily lives', said a member of the Vaal Womens Group.

Women in the Vaal area are organising women against high prices. They have started a grocery club. Each member pays a small amount each month.

The groceries are bought in bulk and are cheaper than in shops. In this way they are able to save on food bills.

The Vaal women hope to start a child minding scheme. Many women attend classes to learn to read and write.

'We also speak to women in other organisations, such as the churches. We work with the Vaal Civic Association. This is important because our problems are one.'

ZAKENI WOMEN

WOMEN from all areas in the Transvaal celebrated Fedsaw's 30th birthday in Mamelodi.

A brass band welcomed the women into the township. Mrs Nyembe, released from jail after 15 years was given a heroine's welcome.

This celebration was made possible by the hard work of the Zakeni Womens

Group. We say 'Makabongwe Amakosikazi'.

The Zakeni Womens Group started with five members. Today they are proud that their membership is growing — 43 women have joined the group.

The women in Pretoria are busy trying to organise women into one group, with members from Atteridgeville, Mabopane and Soshanguve.

CORONATIONVILLE NEWCLARE, BOSMONT, WOMEN

THIS group was launched in May this year. Its mandate is to coordinate womens issues. It is taking up of high rents, high hospital tariffs and drug abuse.

Presently they are involved with the Anti PC in making people aware of the evils of the new constitution and encouraging them not to vote for Botha's New Deal.

AZASO WOMEN

AZASO has been mobilising women students at the universities and the training colleges.

At Medunsa the womens group has about 80 members. They are educating women around issues like pass laws and influx control, about womens triple op-

TRANSVAAL WOMEN SPEAK OUT

Women in the Transvaal are joining hands again after many years of silence. From the distant corners of the highveld to the rich cities of Johannesburg, women are organising once again. Women, we need to organise ourselves to fight for our rights and the rights of all our people. On this page our women speak...



■ Women reject Botha's New Deal

pression, and that no struggle can be successful if women are still oppressed.

The women at Medunsa are medical students, so they are planning to do health care work in Winterveld. They held a jumble sale to help the needy there.

Women at Furfloop university have formed a womens group. They have taken up problems of living conditions on campus — poor accomodation and food and students' health.

They are also educating fellow students to be aware that the cleaners on campus are their mothers and should be treated as such.

They have also done good work for

Fedsaw, and held a welcoming rally for MaDorothy Nyembe when she was released from prison.

JOBURG WOMEN

SINCE 1980 white women have been meeting in small groups of between five and ten women.

Some of these groups are reading groups, other discussion groups and others write articles on women.

Occasionally they come together on an informal basis to exchange information on what the smaller groups have been doing and to discuss what womens groups are doing in other communities.



■ Women bear a big burden in the townships

LENASIA WOMEN

'WOMEN Against The Constitution' is a group of women in Lenasia who reject Botha's New Deal.

They are organising under the banner of the Transvaal Indian Congress. 'Our women are more than 50 percent of the population. We need to hear their voices in this campaign', said a TIC speaker at a meeting recently.

The Lenasia women are speaking to their neighbours and friends. They are speaking to pensioners. They are calling on Indian and Coloured womens not to vote for Botha's new parliaments.

RURAL WOMEN

'WE represent women in the bushes. We are forgotten as if we do not exist.'

'We are toiling hard on the farms of the rich farmers in Izaneen in the Northern Transvaal. While we are toiling on the rich land, producing bananas, mangoes and avocados, our children are starving.'

'We wake up at four in the morning as if we are donkeys. But we get no pay.'

'Our husbands and the fathers of our children are working on the richest mines of our country. But their children are a pitiful sight. We are forced to look after our children alone.'

'Our women are oppressed by custom

and culture. By a system of exploitation of which they are not aware.'

These were the words of Tshepo Khumbane from Izaneen.

Pietersburg women are organising vegetable clubs.

SOWETO WOMEN

SOWETO women protested against high prices and General Sales Tax.

'We don't want taxation without representation', said one of the placards.

The Soweto Womens Group was launched on July 1 this year. Mrs Sisulu called on women to be organised in Soweto.

Soweto women spoke of the many problems which they face — high rents and school fees, electricity and bus-fare increases, the arrest of husbands, fathers and children.

'Because of all these problems, womens are the first ones to take action. Women must be in the forefront of the struggle in our country', said Mrs Mlangeni, newly elected chairperson of the group.

The women have also held meetings on health, religion and nutrition. They have raised funds by holding cake and jumble sales. Now they are organising a bulk buying grocery club.

Mothers are worried about the education of their children. 'We must fight for the rights of our children', they say.

WOMEN'S RALLY 12 Aug 2pm

Methodist Church
Hall, Pritchard Str

WOMEN AGAINST BOTHAS'S NEW DEAL



30 Fighting Years

THE PASS Laws are among the most hated and despised of all the Apartheid laws.

It was opposition to these laws that led to one of the biggest mass demonstrations in our history.

On that day, August 9, 1956, 20000 women marched to the government's headquarters — the Union Buildings in Pretoria. They demanded that pass laws be abolished.

The news of the protests spread to every corner of South Africa. They struck fear into the hearts of the apartheid rulers. But brought joy to the millions of people who suffered daily under the apartheid laws.

August 9 became known as National Womens Day and every year since then people have celebrated the day. And women's organisations today have been inspired by the courage and determination of those women.

But the 20000 women who came from all over the country did not arrive at the demonstration by chance. The day was successful because the women were organised and united.

This was through the efforts of all the womens organisations which were part of Fedsaw (the Federation of South African Women)

Fedsaw begins

Fedsaw was formed in 1954 at a time when women were facing more and more hardships.

In 1952 the government introduced a new law to force African women to carry passes.

At that time thousands of men and women were uniting in organisations to fight the government. They wanted to improve their conditions and express their political aspira-

tions.

Women were active in the Congress Alliance in the African National Congress Womens League, the Indian Congress, the Coloured Peoples Congress, and the Congress of Democrats.

Women also formed small organisations in different areas, like the Womens Food Committees, the Cape Housewives League, and were members of trade unions like the African Food and Canning Workers Union.

They came together in 1954 to form Fedsaw. Fedsaw was an umbrella body with these organisations affiliated to it. So the women members of the affiliated organisations were part of Fedsaw.

Women's Charter

From the start Fedsaw drew up the Women's Charter which put forward women's demands.

At a time when the Apartheid government was making laws to divide people along racial lines, Fedsaw was uniting women of all races.

Fedsaw aimed to strengthen womens sections of the Congress Movement, trade unions, and other organisations and to bring them together in joint activity.

It also aimed to work for the removal of race, class and sex discrimination, and to strive for a genuine South African democracy.

The biggest campaign run by Fedsaw was the anti-pass campaign. But it also took up other day to day problems of women in their different areas.

Some of these included:

- opposing rent, busfare and train increases
- fighting forced removals under the Group

Areas Act, in Cape Town, Sophiatown and in Natal.

●protesting against the Bantu Education Act, and helping run alternative schools until the government made this illegal.

●demanding better township facilities — better street lighting, proper toilets, creches and maternity homes.

No to passes

The laws to force African women to carry passes were passed in 1952, but because of massive resistance it was not enforced immediately.

A lot of the resistance to passes had been in the cities where Fedsaw and the ANCWL were the strongest. So the government started with the small towns and the farms, sending their pass units there from 1956.

In 1957 sporadic and courageous resistance sprang up wherever the pass units went. Even in these smaller areas many of the women refused to take passes. Or they took passes and then burnt them, for example in Zeerust.

The womens resistance continued to the late fifties when the ANC also threw its weight behind the campaign.

From the start the government responded to the resistance by jailing people and trying to intimidate them. But in March 1960 at Sharpeville and Langa police opened fire and many people were killed. A state of emergency was declared and the ANC and the PAC were banned.

Fedsaw was not banned and continued to organise women, trying to set up small womens organisations. But after 1961 it could no longer function. Until today...

August 9th is National Women's Day

Issued by Federation of South African Women, Khotso House, De Villiers St., JHB.

AE33

Row AE331

REPORT

THE STRUGGLE OF

WOMEN IN

SOUTH AFRICA

10th December 1983

METHODIST YOUTH CENTRE

(SOWETO)

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1. INTRODUCTION.

It was the first of its kind to be staged in Soweto although for the whole Reef Area. Women came from the West Rand and the East Rand and the Johannesburg area with its attached townships. Some men also joined in. Both women and men together. More than fifty (50) of them.

They were women of all walks of life and classes representatives of all various communities (Although restricted and limited by apartheid laws in the form of permits, etc.) Most of the women's groups were present. Even Youth Organizations, Civic Organizations, etc.

As reported in the December issue of "I.C.T. News" it was "a belated but a timely trigger to relieve the women of their years of anger and frustrations"

It was a "chance to articulate their world of pain and sufferingthe message...WE ARE THE MOST OPPRESSED IN ANY SOCIETY ONE CAN THINK OF IN THIS WORLD. IF IT IS AN OPPRESSIVE SOCIETY LIKE THE ONE IN SOUTH AFRICA THEN WE RECEIVE A DOUBLE SHARE"

2. RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS AT THE SEMINAR.

2.1 Opening Remarks:

The Rev. Bonganjalo Goba started the Seminar by prayer and Rev. Frank Chikane explained how the Seminar was planned, the invitation behind it and the willingness of the I.C.T. to facilitate programmes in this regard from which feminist theology can be developed and the link between women's struggle and the broad struggle for liberation in South Africa. He then welcomed participants to be free to do their thing.

2.2 Ms. Mosala addressed the meeting on the Theme: Women and Theology and the relevancy of the Bible on women's struggle. Reading the Bible and practicing it beyond the word. That is the interpretation must be in such a way that what ever importance the word contains must be done as relevant as it should be. It must not be abstract or said in a vacuum, it must not be a pie in the sky type of a thing. A slide was shown on the couple which is in love, making promises between each other. Both the parties are involved in mutual understanding. They share all that they love together as a family unit. It is therefore important for women to realise the love that God has for all human beings regardless of colour, race, sex or creed. It therefore becomes important for women to stand their grounds as women and they too should respond to their situations as it deems fit.

It seemed therefore that women are but their own oppressors. This implies that if women dont fight to free themselves from this self created cocoon of oppression, they will never make it for the broader struggle for liberation of the whole nation.

2.3 Rev. Constable on Re-reading the Bible: As a woman priest, Rev. Constable showed infact the practical reasons for women to get themselves involved, largely not for competition but for the simple reason: that they

too are able. Women should unconditionally accept their conditions. Make no excuses for being a woman.

Assert her position as an image of God. The Bible has always taught the women to love their husbands submissively, that should not be the case husbands should equally love their wives. Stress on involvement in action not only in words. Objective papers or Bible reading should reach more women in the church. Women have always shown passivity. Women don't go forward to challenge and take up whatever thing faces them. Then Rev. Constable stated how she has managed to overcome situations where she found herself leading male meetings.

She has been able to lead female congregations into realizing themselves, that they are able to do things on their own, able to do whatever work, and do it the best.

- 2.4 Sister Bernard. A paper covering the women in various countries (Internationally). She referred charter of women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international conventions on Human Rights. She also dealt with international solidarity with women in South Africa. It was important therefore for women in South Africa to do practically everything within their powers to fight for their liberation, and the liberation of man-kind in this country.

Women must be final judges of their destinations. Only if women are liberated will there be a just society. Know the oppressor and the liberal the latter meaning lesbian feminism of women fighting against men. - Which is largely a system maintained in the Western Countries. - This is not equivalent to the Third World Women's Liberation, which in fact stresses the freedom of women from exploitation, oppression and segregation on the bases of labour and sex.

2.5 QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. How do we handle problematic passages in scripture.
2. Is it possible to separate tradition, culture or custom from the word of God, both in church and society.
3. Crystallise the various levels of oppression of women in South Africa.

House broke into five groups to discuss all three questions.

2.6 REPORT BACK

After reports were discussed the following were noted:

- (1) Point arose, or a question which is most important which should be discussed by women and always not be forgotten, that is; Liberation of Women and their relationship with the struggle in broader perspective, the on going struggle of human justice and Democratic South Africa.

- (2) Women in the whole of the World are pledging solidarity with women in South Africa, what do women in South Africa do in order to fight this oppression to the bitter end.
- (3) Women should challenge the black theologian males and link the feminist struggle relevantly with theology.
- (4) Suggestions: Women should be able to name those oppressions, then decide what to do about them. Each at a time bring them to knowledge of men/husbands. Start strongly with the domestic and social problems.

2.7 Ms. Shange addressed the Seminar on "Self Identity and the liberation of self". She emphasised that women must discover who they are before they can be liberated. She called women not to be ashamed of themselves or be apathetic in the face of their oppression and never let themselves to be down trodden.

Women were called to confront God with their feelings about their oppression. That God created them. Question God about the degree of "Free Will" women have. "How free is this free will". She reminded the gathering of the plight of Mary, the mother of Jesus. That after she had conceived of the Holy Spirit Joseph wanted to leave her quietly. But the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said "This is the King".

She dealt with the images of women portrayed in the Bible and questioned those who portrayed them and their background. She also called on women to transform this image and build the right image of women and their role in the church.

She also dealt with the social system that dehumanize women and sexual oppression by men. Strategies have to be developed to dismantle these systems, structures and traditions.

Women must not fear emancipation but must claim their right in society.

2.8 PLENARY:

The house felt that a few things should be done.

1. More Seminars to be held.
2. Look into the purpose of the "Manyano"
3. Have enough reading material on the Bible, handouts on Bible's teaching.
4. A task force should be formed to create consistency.
5. Present Planning Committee should continue to work on this report.
6. Expand ourselves by contacting yet other women.

2.9 NAHES OF VOLUNTEERS.

1. Mrs. Valentia Khumalo
2. Ms Benny Monama
3. Mrs. Ohera Diseko
4. Ms. Ann Letseba
5. Ms. Lindi Myeza

2.10 PRESENTATIONS:

The following presentations were made:

FEDSAW	:	by Mrs. Mlangeni	(APPENDIX A)
DWEP	:	by Lolo Tabane	(APPENDIX B)
YWCA	:	by Mrs. Sepenya	(APPENDIX C)

3. PAPERS

The papers of Rev. M. Constable, Sister Bernard and Mrs. S. Moeala are reproduced here without editing, whilst Ms. I. Shang's address is summarized in the minutes from notes made by secretaries.

READING THE BIBLE ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

Madam Chairperson and my sisters in Christ. A little over a year ago I was invited to address a group of 600 women in Hong Kong on the suffering and hopes of church women in S.A. It is in the period of preparations that I became aware of this topical view of women as the suffering underdog, the flighty and irresponsible, the unclear, the vehicle for physical labour.

That women are universally delegated an inferior position is clear: That women are so utterly conditioned to accept this position is evident: That many women are satisfied to accept this position is obvious. But, the emerging intellectual homemaker, active social circles, the thinking working mother, is searching the scriptures for answers. She is feeling the pain of the bonds and is beginning to rear her head to assert her position as one created image of God.

Some of the actualities of oppression and suffering into which women are conditioned in church and society are as follows:

- (a) In the fact of their faith where some Christians even claim that God is anti-feminist. On the other hand there are feminists who insist that Christianity is anti-woman.
- (b) There is also the deminished gauge that society places on homemakers, or housewives' role as evidenced by the position of that role under the law and its practice within the customs of our people
- (c) There is the practice of inequality in salary, law, medicine and journalism.
- (d) There is the exploitation of housewives: society uses her as an unpaid labourer.
- (e) By marriage she is treated as a minor, classified as a child.
- (f) In South Africa she is even subjected (or will be in the near future) to a disadvantageous method of taxation with her husband.
- (g) Actually, she loses status when she gets married.

Yet, if we re-read the Bible with regard to women, some of the following facts emerge in interpretation: These facts have begun to emerge since the 1960's when research has been made into the rights of women.

1. The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5 likens the position of the woman and her husband to that of Christ and the church.

- (i) He was humble in acceptance of those who were to serve him. He even washed the face of his disciples.
- (ii) We read in Philipians 2 verse 8 - that Christ humbled himself
- (iii) When we read the book of the prophet Hosea, we learn about the submissive love of the prophet in his marriage to Gomer,

the harlot. We note Hosea's patience and faithfulness. To my understanding all this symbolized God's love for Israel.

- (iv) On reading Matt 16 verse 18 we learn that the church will be a moving force for good in this world, going forward so that the force of evil will not be able to stand or prevail. The church is not standing still, prophesying the status quo. It is a force moving against hatred and prejudice; against despair and poverty and fear. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a positive gospel; a gospel of compassion and caring, a gospel of the love of God.
2. A liberated woman is one who has expected the redemptive grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and who knows that she is a whole and a valuable person in the eyes of God. As a Christian that has been my liberation.
 3. The message of the entire Bible, and particularly the New Testament when viewed as a whole, is the love and grace of God manifested in Jesus Christ. The basis for Christian relationship, then is not the law, it is love, its not rigid formula, or a balance of power; it is Jesus Christ.
 4. To Biblical feminists mutual submission in marriage is accepted. (see Eph. 5 v 21+) wives have to submit to their husbands but husbands are required to love their wives just as Christ loved the church - "submissively" Christ gave up "equality with God" and chose to take on human form, submitting himself to death on the cross (Phil. 2: 6-8). He washed the feet of his disciples, and in one post-resurrection appearance he even prepared a meal for them (John 13: 3-17)
 5. The domination tradition in which I have grown up is one which has opened up all levels of church life to women which is based upon the priesthood of all believers - those who have chosen Christ the living stones, being built into spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (Ref. Peter 2: v.5).
 6. In several passages in the Gospel, the Love of God is compared with that of a mother, even greater (Matt 23 v. 37). O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,.... how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not.
 7. Someone had said that "At his darkest hour all of Jesus closest friends deserted him". "No thy did'nt", came the reply. The women did'nt desert him. (Women were first at the cradle and last at the cross; and also first at the resurrection. They were the ones who stood by as he did, and then went to tomb to anoint his body. It was a world in which a woman's word was held to be so worthless that it was not valid even in a court of law, and yet it was to a woman that Christ first revealed the greatest event in history: the resurrection.
 8. Why this special devotion for Jesus that is evidenced by women time and again throughout the gospel? because when others thought women to be unclean, Jesus saw through to their faith and declared them pure and spotless; when others thought women to be good for physical labour, Jesus saw them as three-dimensional thinking beings, when others saw women as flighty and irresponsible Jesus

saw them worthy of becoming great.

Even today, when women are not always valued as being full and whole human beings, what may be the most unusual appealing thing about Jesus is that he sees them as being just that.

9. Allow me briefly a word on the Matriarchs of the Bible:

(a) Deborah: who emerged as a judge in Israel, during the period of the judge. A woman determining right action for others, without a man helping her make weighty decisions.

Her courtroom - a palm tree (Chap. 4 -9 of the book of Judges.) A woman known for her perception and wisdom. She must have been a remarkable woman to rise to such a position of honour and respect, especially in a day when women were normally denominated by men. It was Deborah's leadership that resulted in a breaking of the bonds of oppression.

(b) In passing I would mention some more women whose achievements speak for themselves:
Sarah, mother of a great nation. God gave the promise to Sarah as well: In Genesis 17 v. 16 he says: "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations". We are entitled to affirm ourselves as the "daughters of Sarah".

(c) What about Rahab: woman of faith, harlot from Jericho who saw the greatness of God of Israel and aided his armies when they came into her land. (Joshua 2) She is mentioned twice in the New Testament as an example of great faith (Heb. 11 v. 31/James 2:v.25) and she is listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1.v. 5)

(d) Abigail (1 Sam25) - a woman of good understanding and of beautiful countenance, known for her courage, wisdom and diplomacy. Imagine confronting an approaching army that has first been insulted by her husband! She prevented untold bloodshed. The world could use a few more peacemakers like Abigail.

(e) There were others: Anna- Prophetess who worked in the Temple and one of the first persons to acclaim Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 24. 36-38) Esther, Jewess who was queen of Persia and who acted bravely to save her people from a plot to exterminate them: Joanna wife of Chuza who left her home to follow Jesus during his earthly ministry (Luke 8: 3) Phoebe a deaconess and minister in the early church (Rom: 16: 1-2)

These women are just a few illustrations of many women in the Bible: women who always did not fit the norm. We need to look at them, study them, get to know them, and identify with them. No, they were 'nt perfect, but considering the patriarchal society in which they lived, many of them lived amazingly liberated lives.

These women have much to offer us, and exist alongside the men in the Bible as great role models for our children and examples for ourselves. I am convinced that encouraging greater recognition of them will serve to strengthen the fellowship within the church and society. It will lead to heightened appreciation for the contributions that women can make among the men and to greater sense of worth and purpose among the women.

- 8 -

In today's world when women are not always valued as being full and whole human beings, what may be the most unusual appealing thing about Jesus is that he sees them as being. Most amazing is that in his eyes, regardless of the values with which the world may judge women, Jesus sees them as valued, important worthwhile individuals.

REV. M. CONSTABLE

WOMEN AND THEOLOGY.

Church history begins when a few women set out to pay their last respects to their dear dead friend Jesus. It begins when, contrary to all reason and all hope, a few women identify themselves with a national traitor and do what they consider to be right, what in their eyes equals quality of life, viz. loving one who has sacrificed his life, never abandoning him as dead. Church history begins when Jesus comes to them, greets them, lets them touch him just as he had touched and restored them in their lives. Church history begins when the women are told to share with the men this experience, this life they now comprehend, this life their hands have touched.

This story as told by Matthew is generally known as the Easter appearance of the women but never as the beginning of Church history. Officially, church history begins with the mission of the men apostles and, officially, we women are not present on that occasion. Right up to the present time many churches have traced their origin back to this apostolic succession. Almost all the leaders of the churches are male and depend mostly on males for their order and their ideas. In the process women's experiences of Jesus have been forgotten - Jesus as a friend who shares their life and is ever near them, a friend who offers them warmth and tenderness in their loneliness and powerlessness. The feminist movement in the western world has given many women the courage to discover themselves, to express again their own religious experiences, to read the Bible with fresh eyes and to rediscover their original and distinctive role in the gospel. So it must be understood that for them feminism is a movement deeply rooted in the gospel.

In the last 15 - 20 years many groups have discovered that God is on the side of patriarchy. It was not christianity that introduced patriarchy into the world. Patriarchy is a very ancient and widespread system of male domination. Christianity proved incapable of successfully opposing this system.

indeed.....

Indeed, quite early on, Christianity was already taken over by men and made to serve patriarchy. This had a crippling effect on its liberating potential, as has been perceived by theologians of hope, liberation theologians and political theologians in other contexts when they discussed the captivity of the church.

To-day women are once again setting out to discover life, to enliven all that has been dead, to know Jesus as the one he once was for them. They are seeking to liberate themselves from the patriarchal domination in which their thinking was done for them as well as for others who were not fully adult. They want to free themselves from being treated like children, to be free from the tutelage which denies them any say at all, or allows them only a limited say, in society. They no longer want to accept the values imparted by the patriarchal world system - either for themselves or for their children or for society as a whole.

WHAT DO WOMEN WANT? I would like to take a little time to consider this question, for many people even in the church are afraid of women. Men are afraid of women who could cause their traditional roles to become insecure. There is a fear of any kind of radicalism which supposedly is not in harmony with the love of Christ. What women want is a new community in which those with power begin to listen to those without power. A community where there are opportunities for the powerless to express themselves and get organized. A community in which power is redistributed and those in power learn to give their power - for the sake of justice. They are able to stand up for all this passionately and credibly because they have first hand experience of what it is like to be treated like children, to be in tutelage, without rights, to live a life second class to that of the man, to give life but to be allowed to fashion it only within a limited domestic circle and not in society as a whole.

What women want is a whole life, one which embraces body, soul, and spirit, no longer compartmentalized into private and public spheres; a life, moreover, which fills us with a trust and hope transcending biological death.

This may seem a huge and impossible utopian programme. Essentially it is simply taking seriously what we read in the prophet Isaiah's visions of peace and in a part of what the apostle Paul once recognised in a flash of inspiration - namely, that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female.

It is also the old vision of the women which we find in the song of Merriam, one of the oldest passages in the Bible : Trust in the God who has thrown horse and rider (today we may say sex and domination) into the sea.

This feminine tradition, which is found in many women's songs - of Hannah, of Deborah, Judith and Mary's magnificent - and which has always been with us, makes us keenly aware of what is happening in the world and what is going on within ourselves, in our bodies, in our souls, and in our spirit.

Women on the way to discover life

Women in a church which is firmly in masculine hands.

In which direction lies the way?

Certainly away from a patriarchy in which women have been oppressed, silenced, and unable to speak for themselves. Away too from the church with patriarchal structures. Away from a god who was always tied to patriarchy. For many women, even among us, this decision has still to be made.

Men who wish to discover life for themselves and in community with women must shake off the pressure of patriarchy, as they would some nightmare and eliminate these suppressions of true life, they acquired during their socialisation stage, so as to become full human beings. Patriarchy cuts the man into two halves. It splits him into a subject, (consisting of reason and will) and an object (consisting of heart, feelings and physical needs). He is to identify himself with the former and keep his distance from the latter. This isolates the male and brings about a certain self-hatred. This division in the male is reflected and takes an aggressive form in the male subjugation and domination of the supposedly "frail", "emotional" women. In this manner both men and women are crippled as you all know that oppression of any kind/form has two sides and it destroys humanity on these two sides - the oppressed person is robbed of humanity and the oppressor becomes an inhuman monster. The apparent difference is only that one suffers in consequence, whereas the other appears to feel fine. On both sides, however, liberation from oppression is badly needed.

Women to-day, therefore, should lead the way to a new community of women and men. We need to discover what our life is - our life as women, our life in solidarity with women in the world who suffer all kinds of discrimination, our spiritual life, our life as christian women, a life we want to take hold of, feel endure, change - we have constantly come into collision with the barriers of our christian tradition: our faith is the faith of the "FATHERS" our religious testimonies are derived from a Bible edited by the patriarchs obviously to the exclusion of any female participation.

Can Christian tradition offer us any help to extricate ourselves from this halved life? Where do the sources and motivations exist for this in terms of our identity? What christian tradition can accompany and support us on the way to wholeness? What christian tradition can also help the man to be "whole" and give him an identity other than that of a patriarch?

A new community can only mature and bear fruit if women remain autonomous human beings. The contribution they can make to the community will not be a vital and lively one unless they retain their singularity, specificity and distinctiveness as women. The life women have been looking for and have now rediscovered will only become everyone's common concern if they continue to make it their cause. Many women in the church will find this particularly hard to accept, for they have got used to sacrificing themselves readily, taking a back seat, it has become almost second nature to accept that this is their christian life style. Men find it hard because they have got used to working with women who are always eager to help and because of the power that goes with man's official position in the church, men have turned the cause of Jesus into a patriarchy of love. We have to relearn what loving means; we must have a love which makes others mature instead of smothering them or glorifying them, a love which creates an area in which there is no domination.

BERNADETTE I. MOSALA

ROLE OF WOMEN IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES (INTERNATIONALLY)

"Womens' emancipation is therefore rebuilding society on new foundations, freeing the initiative of women, integrating them into decision-making and giving birth to the new humanity".

INTRODUCTION

This is an historical moment in the life of concerned women in Southern Africa. I am sure that we will look back and all say that such are the things that made it possible for us to achieve what we have. It is a commitment on our part to engage ourselves and other concerned women in all spheres of life in the struggle for the liberation of women.

We are meeting together in this context for the first time to pool our ideas and efforts and to work out a strategy for the emancipation of women in our concrete situation.

The specific historical context that gives this seminar its importance and significance can be assessed in three ways:

- a) The oppression has gone on for too long for many of us not to avoid being involved in ending it.
- b) We have not seriously looked at oppression as it crushes women and also, how we as women, perceive our oppression.
- c) We are called to involve ourselves in the liberation struggle in order that all struggles against oppression may succeed.

Although our primary concern is the local situation, we must also pay attention to the important role that is played by international solidarity in all struggles. (E.g. Concrete example: The struggle of the exploited people and the solidarity of people who want to build a new society is a decision to create favourable conditions for the final liberation of all peoples). For this reason it has always been an important condition for liberation movements to have an international spirit. It is, therefore, our duty to acquire that spirit. But I would like to emphasise this point: We must be the final judges of our situation, and what it needs for change. This means that we must make serious critical analysis of our situation to enable us to accept only that which is useful to us. We must discover the underlying principles in the strategies and tactics that are employed by other groups. Having discovered these principles, we can then identify our friends, and join hands with them in our struggle.

However, the struggle, locally and internationally, will not be complete without the liberation of women. Internationally, a just society means one thing, viz., we as women must also be liberated. We as women have a different perception of the struggle and its root causes. Oppression affects us in a different way. We know who the liberals are and who are our vicious oppressors. They, at times, may be different from the oppressors of men.

The fact that we are oppressed specifically as women has been recognised even by the U.N. In 1967 the U.N. declared the equality of women and men. This ties up with the other Declarations such as the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international Covenants on Human Rights.

In spite of what I have been saying about the importance of international solidarity, international spirit, etc., we must bear in mind that within that context there are major differences i.e. first, second and third worlds. E.G.

- The first world has created the two worlds, in econo-socio and political terms. In creating them (1st, 2nd world) it has enslaved us. In other words it has not created, but it also maintains a system that oppresses us.
- To the liberal it is a matter of fact and there is nothing wrong with it, and therefore, no real need for change is called for. But we must recognise this creation for what it really is, - oppressive, a hindrance to the liberation of humanity.

If there are differences such as mentioned above, it therefore means that the struggle of the women in these different worlds cannot be the same. (I would though, to affirm that we are working for total liberation of all human beings - men, women of the three worlds). Furthermore, some women in some parts of the world have already organised themselves and can point to some small gains, whereas in other parts, including ourselves, women still have to organise themselves. For that reason I would like to ask you not to make any comparisons between others and ourselves. I make this request, not from any fear that such comparisons might bring humiliation upon the women of the third world as the reasons and the differences are clear.

I shall now focus on the basis of women's alienation in the third world:

- a) The system of exploitation;
- b) the ideological and cultural mechanisms of domination;
- c) the nature of antagonism;
- d) the concrete steps that can be taken.

a) The system of exploitation

This is the starting point. To speak of the emancipation of women is to openly admit that we are oppressed and exploited. It is important to understand the basis of that oppression and exploitation. The oppression of women is the result of our exploitation; oppression in society is always the result of imposed exploitation.

Colonialism invaded and occupied presentday third world countries for the purpose of exploiting their wealth and labour. In order to exploit them, in order to quell their resistance to exploitation and prevent them from rebelling, the system of oppression was introduced.

- (i) Institutionalised oppression, which has manifested its force over the centuries through the courts, the police, the armed forces, imprisonment, torture and massacres, designed to dismantle cultures and to annihilate the sense of justice and criticism.
- (ii) Spiritual oppression: through superstition and ignorance, designed to destroy the spirit of creative initiative, to reduce the individual to passivity and make her/him accept their exploitative position.

Concrete example: There are a cluster of values embodied in this persuasive oppression, of which without the internalisation of them, this system cannot work. These values are: financial

profits rather than human needs, aggressive individualism rather than integral humanism, competition rather than harmonious co-operation, hierarchic discipline rather than co-ordinated participation, consumerism rather than asceticism, etc.

Persuasive oppression through value-creating bodies such as school/church.

Humiliation and contempt came into being in the process since he who exploits and oppresses tends to humiliate and despise his victims - regarding them as inherently inferior beings. Then racism appeared as the supreme form of humiliation and contempt - on land issues, being dispossessed and displaced - people become pariahs in the land of their birth.

The mechanism of women's alienation is identical to the mechanism of the alienation of the colonised man in the colonial society, of the worker in a capitalist society. From the moment early man started to produce more than he consumed, the material foundations were laid for the emergence of a stratum in society which would appropriate the fruits of the majority's labour. This appropriation of the product of the masses' labour by a handful of people in society is the essence of the system of the exploitation of man by man and the crux of the antagonistic contradiction which has divided society for centuries. This tendency led to a bureaucratic dictatorship as collective responsibility was doomed to this day. The unleashing of this exploitative process, women as a whole - like men - were subjected to the domination of the privileged strata.

Women are also producers, and workers, but with special characteristics. To possess women is to possess workers, i.e. unpaid workers, whose entire labour power can be appropriated by the husband who is the lord and master, without resistance. In an agrarian economy, marrying a woman was the assurance of great wealth. Hence the important part played by polygamy in the rural areas of a primitive agrarian economy.

Society, realising that women are a source of wealth, demanded that a price be paid for them, thus the bride-price - LOBOLA - was born. The woman is bought and inherited just like material goods, or sources of wealth. But what is more important is that compared to the slave, who is also a source of wealth and an unpaid worker, the woman offers her owner two added advantages. She is a source of pleasure and above all, she produces other workers; she produces new sources of wealth. This last aspect is particularly significant. Society grants the husband the right to repudiate his wife and demand the repayment of the lobola should she prove barren. It can also be noted that in many societies mindful of the value of the labour power of the women's children, it is a current practice for children to continue to belong to the mother's clan or family, if the lobola - the purchase price for this wealth is not paid, thus bringing an excessive emphasis on women's fertility and the transformation of the man-woman relationship into the mere act of pro-creation.

A particular situation also emerged. Owing to this control over the masses, the exploiter acquired vast riches, vast estates, large herds of cattle, gold and jewels and so on. Yet despite his wealth he was still mortal like other men. The question of inheritance became crucial. Women are then producers of heirs.

It is therefore clear that the exploitation of women and their consequent oppression starts in the system of private ownership of the means of production, in the system of exploitation of man

(b) The ideological and cultural mechanisms of domination.

A society based on private ownership of the means of production, on the exploitation of man creates and imposes the ideology and culture which uphold its value and ensure its survival.

The economic exploitation of women, their transformation into mere producers with no rights, at the service of their owners - whether husband or father, factory owner, farmer, etc., required the establishment of a corresponding ideology and culture, together with an educational system to pass them on. Obviously, this is not something which happens all at once, but a process developed and refined over thousands of years of the society's existence.

- (i) Obscurity was the beginning of the process. A generally practised principle was to keep women in ignorance or give them only an essential minimum of education. Even today illiteracy is higher among women, they are a minority in schools, colleges, and universities, but are conversely the majority of the population.
- (ii) Science was man's monopoly in the developed civilisations of the past as in present capitalist societies of today. Women were to be kept out of science, prevented from discovering the society they had created, thus could never change it. Obscurity and ignorance go hand in hand with superstition and give rise to passivity and fear.

All superstitions find their most fertile soil among women, because they are submerged in the greatest ignorance and obscurity. In societies some rites and ceremonies are the main vehicles for the transmission of society's concept of women's inferiority, and their subservience to men. It is here too that countless myths and superstitions are propagated with the express intention of destroying women's sense of initiative and reducing them to lethargy.

- (iii) Family education itself emphasises and reinforces women's inferiority. From infancy the girl is brought up differently from the boy and a feeling of subservience instilled into her. None of this is surprising. Exploitative society promotes the ideology, culture and education that serve its interests. It has done so with women and men of the third world. All are deliberately kept in ignorance, obscurity and superstition with a view to making them resigned to their position, of instilling in them an attitude of passivity and servility. Racism comes in to the woman and call her an inferior human being by virtue of her sex. Women are creatures of short ideas (in real terms, women never achieve adulthood).

The process of alienation reaches its peak when the exploited person, reduced to total passivity, is no longer capable of imagining that the possibility of liberation exists and in turn becomes a tool for the propagation of the ideology of resignation and passivity. It must be recognised that the centuries-old subjugation of women has to a great extent reduced them to a passive state, which prevents them from even understanding their condition. The enemy that lives in the mind is the toughest to destroy, for it demands a radical change of values, attitudes and behaviour.

(c) The nature of antagonism

It is important to understand correctly the nature of the contradictions involved, for only after understanding them will we be in a position to define the target of our attack and plan the appropriate strategy and tactics for our struggle. We have seen that the basis of the domination of women lies in the system of economic organisation of society, private ownership of the means of production which necessarily leads to the exploitation of person by person. In other words, it is the same as the contradiction between the working masses and the exploitative social order.

We must be clear on this point. The antagonistic contradiction is not between women and men, but between women and the social order, between all exploited people, both women and men, and the social order. The fact that they are exploited explains why they are not involved in all planning and decision-making tasks in society, why they are excluded

from working out the concepts which govern the economic, social, cultural and political life, even when their interests are directly affected and can make worthwhile endeavours. This is the main feature of the contradiction: their exclusion from the sphere of decision-making in society. Women's emancipation is therefore rebuilding society on new foundation, freeing the initiative of women, integrating them in decision-making, giving birth to the new humanity. Apart from the antagonistic contradiction between women and the social order, other contradictions of a secondary nature also arise between women and men as a kind of reflex.

The marriage system, marital authority based solely on sex, the frequent brutality of the husband and his consistent refusal to treat his wife as an equal, are sources of friction and contradiction. If not corrected, these secondary contradictions may become more acute and produce more serious consequences such as divorce, etc. However serious they may be, these factors do not alter the nature of the contradiction.

It is important to stress this aspect, because we now see an ideological offensive taking place particularly in the capitalist world, in the guise of a woman's liberation struggle. This ideological offensive is an offensive by capitalism to confuse women, divert their attention from the real target. The aim seems to divert the attention, first of women, secondly of men from the issue which is an oppressive social order. The result is that men on one hand and women on the other are engaged in a futile battle. Bear in mind that, I have said that some of these women's struggles come from secondary contradictions. The fight for women's emancipation demands, initially, the clarification of our ideas. Clarification is imperative due to the incorrect ideas about the emancipation of women.

a) Those who see emancipation as mechanical equality between men and women. This means that women and men do exactly the same tasks, mechanically dividing their household duties, e.g., if I wash dishes today, you must wash them tomorrow. This says, we must have same right regardless of the objective and subjective conditions. This mechanical concept of the liberation of women leads to complaints and attitudes which utterly distort the meaning of women's emancipation.

What seems to be an emancipated woman in this mould is the one who drinks, smokes, wears trousers and mini-skirts, who indulges in sexual promiscuity, who refuses to have children, etc.

b) Others associate emancipation with the accumulation of diplomas, and particularly university degrees, which are regarded as certificates of emancipation. Yet others think that emancipation consists of achieving a certain economic, social and cultural level. All these are wrong and superficial concepts. Not one of them either gets to the heart of the problem of the women's oppression.

The question is then, what is the underlying crisis which is embodied in the above pseudo concepts (false ideas) of women's emancipation?

We see small manifestations of this offensive appearing among us. Here and there we hear women grumbling about men, as if the cause of their exploitation lies in the difference between the sexes, as if men were sadistic monsters who derive pleasure from the oppression of women; maybe some of them are. Men and women are products and victims of the exploitative society which has created and formed them. It is essentially against this society that men and women should fight united. Just as there can be no change without the liberation of women the struggle for women's emancipation cannot succeed without the victory of the men's liberation.

Concretely we should do the following:

- 1) We as women must clarify the wrong ideas about the women's emancipation by intelligently analysing the basis of social, economic, cultural and political levels, locally and internationally.
- 2) Destroy the myths of tribalism and regionalism to combat ignorance and superstition, which oppress us psychologically and deprive us of initiative.
- 3) Mobilise international public opinion in favour of our struggle and to express solidarity as South African women and people with the liberation struggle of the women and peoples of the whole world.
- 4) The last aspect is that of the relationship between men and women, which has been based on the alleged superiority of man over woman, aimed at satisfying the male ego.

Our women's emancipation in practice must destroy the exploitative society, advance the internal struggle, destroy our wrong ideas and release our critical sense and creative initiative. In other words, our commitment to the struggle will then be concrete action, leading us to take part in making decisions affecting our country's future. In this way, women will gradually attain all levels of planning, decision-making and implementation in organising the affairs of children, in schools, factories, hospitals; the armed forces, diplomacy, art, science, culture and so on.

CONCLUSION

Women must unite. Unity is the main weapon of the struggle, and its driving force. United women are called "to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer.1:10). We must be also aware that the pursuit of this call will mean: "Kings, officials, the priest and the people will be against you." (Jer. 1:18-19).

SISTER M. BERNARD

4. NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS.

- 4.1 Rev. M. Constable: Pastor of the Congregational Church in Coronationville and past President of the church.
- 4.2 Mrs. B. Mosala: Director of Home and Family Life of the South African Council of Churches.
- 4.3 Sister M. Bernard: National Field Organizer of Justice and Reconciliation, Catholic Church.
- 4.4 Ms. T. Shange: National Field Worker of Justice and Reconciliation, Catholic Church.

PRESENTATION OF THE FEDERATION OF
SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN (FEDSAM)

1. Historical Background

The Federation of South African Women was formed in 1954 solely for the purpose of Uniting all existing Women's Organizations (then) to fight against the oppression and exploitation of women experienced by the Women of this Country. The African Women have always been victims of these oppressions, the manifold oppression experienced by women is worldwidely known and always condemned.

2. Activities of Fedsew and the August 1976 March to Union Building.

In all its activities the FEDSAM has been fighting against pass laws, influx control laws, which are all instrumental to the division of family units, migratory labour, inferior education and food, and rent increments. We saw its strength through boycotts, such as bus boycotts and rent increases boycotts.

Throughout its activities the Fedsew has shown the dynamism and strength that organized and united women wield. This was shown in the great march of 9th August 1956 by 20000 Fedsew women to the Union Building against the introduction of passes for women.

Nevertheless Fedsew was crippled by the banishment and bannings of its leadership. People like Lillian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu, Helen Joseph, Francis Beard and Dorothy Nyembe and many others.

3. Revival of FEDSAM in 1976

During the 1976 students uprisings it became evident to us that there was a need for a women's organisation that would voice out the grievances of our community as women.

There was a clear need for resistance against oppression that affected housewives directly, such as rent increments, food prices, so-called compulsory education and many other things. These were realized, and could only be overcome by the United Action of women in conjunction with other organizations.

With this in mind a few concerned women came together to try and reorganize themselves and the community. To do this we approached the old vanguards of FEDSAW to draw on their experiences and together fight against the evils of the apartheid system. We then formed a committee in Soweto and our main thrust was rent rises and education. In 1981 we successfully launched a rent boycott which culminated in a very big demonstration outside the U.B.C.

4. Expansion of the FEDSAW.

Subsequently women's groups have been formed in Kagiso, Izaneen, Daveyton, Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Turfloop, Medunsa and Glyn Thomas House.

In spite of our concerted effort to reorganize women we have often met with resistance from many women, particularly in the churches. The main reasons have been fear of arrest and detention and because of the traditional attitude and teachings of our various churches, women turn to ascribe our difficulties to fate and the "will" of God. The Bible has always been looked at very literally but not contextually in relation to the demands of our situation.

It becomes therefore important for us, as women gathered here to commit ourselves into realizing that our problems as women are social problems that can be dealt with through collective action. Women at home, in churches, at the factory and in all different sectors are in fact a group in themselves, which could come together and fight this oppression.

5. Where to find us ?

Federation of South African Women
c/o Mrs. Greta Ncapai
1833 Dube Village
P.O. Dube
1800

A REPRESENTATION OF THE YWCA'S DOMESTIC CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE TRANSVAAL
AFFILIATED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFILIATED Y.W.C.A.

A Brief History

The YWCA was started in Great Britain in 1855 by Mrs Emma Roberts and Lady Hinneford.

The World YWCA was formed in 1894 by the National Associations of Great Britain, U.S.A., Sweden and Norway.

South Africa

The YWCA began in Cape Town in 1886 and was for many years an exclusive white women's organisation.

Transvaal

The multiracial content of the YWCA came much later when Mrs Madie-Hall Xuma had the foresight to merge the black Zenzele clubs which were operating in the Transvaal with the YWCAs of Durban and Port Elizabeth, which were originally European. Zenzele YWCA of the Transvaal was founded in Sophiatown on the 20th March 1941.

At present there are six Associations:

1. The YWCA of the C.F.C. and Northern Cape.
2. The YWCA of the Transvaal.
3. The Natal-Durban YWCA.
4. The Port Elizabeth and Eastern Cape YWCA.
5. The YWCA of the Transkei.
6. The YWCA of the Ciskei.

All these Associations are affiliated to the South African Council of World Affiliated YWCA, which in turn is affiliated to the World YWCA. This Council celebrated its 50th Anniversary in July 1933.

Who Are We?

The YWCA serves the Community, without distinction of Race, Nationality, or Religion.

The YWCA is

- An Ecumenical Movement,
- A Women's Movement,
- A World-wide Movement - we work in 86 Countries.

MEMBERSHIP is open to women of all races, nationalities and creeds.

- We stimulate in members a sense of citizenship based on Christian teaching
- Take action as agreed by full members as a non-party organisation, in questions affecting women and girls
- We co-operate with such other National and International Organisations as may further the policy of the Association.

The YWCA is a Volunteer Organisation.
World YWCA means World Fellowship.

To be a member of the YWCA means being a vital part of a World Movement which brings together women of all races and ages; uniting their strengths to achieve a World of Peace with Freedom, Dignity and Justice.

What We Do

We bring people together in

- Fellowship
- Leadership Training Courses and
- Human Relationship Courses
- We have informal classes in Art, Folk-Dancing, Physical Fitness
- Skills training for Economic Development

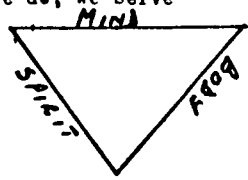
In the field of education we stress the importance of:

- Creative and responsible citizenship - accompanied by independence and self-reliance
- Women's Rights
- Literacy, Nutrition, Family Planning and Handicraft, especially in the rural areas
- Discussion, Conferences, Panels, and Seminars.

We have two Community Centres one in Johannesburg and one in Diepsfontein.

Every year we organise the World Week of Prayer.

In all that we do, we serve



(Future Plans

We are going to organise

- Courses to promote understanding between parents and children.
- Promote good communication between the races
- As a Women's Movement we hope to stimulate discussion amongst, and create new knowledge for women.

We will try to change the life of women in the field of:

- Education
- Public Life
- The Church and Work
- Economic Independence.

Share your time and leisure with us and work with us on projects of common interest.

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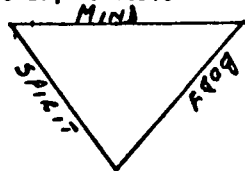
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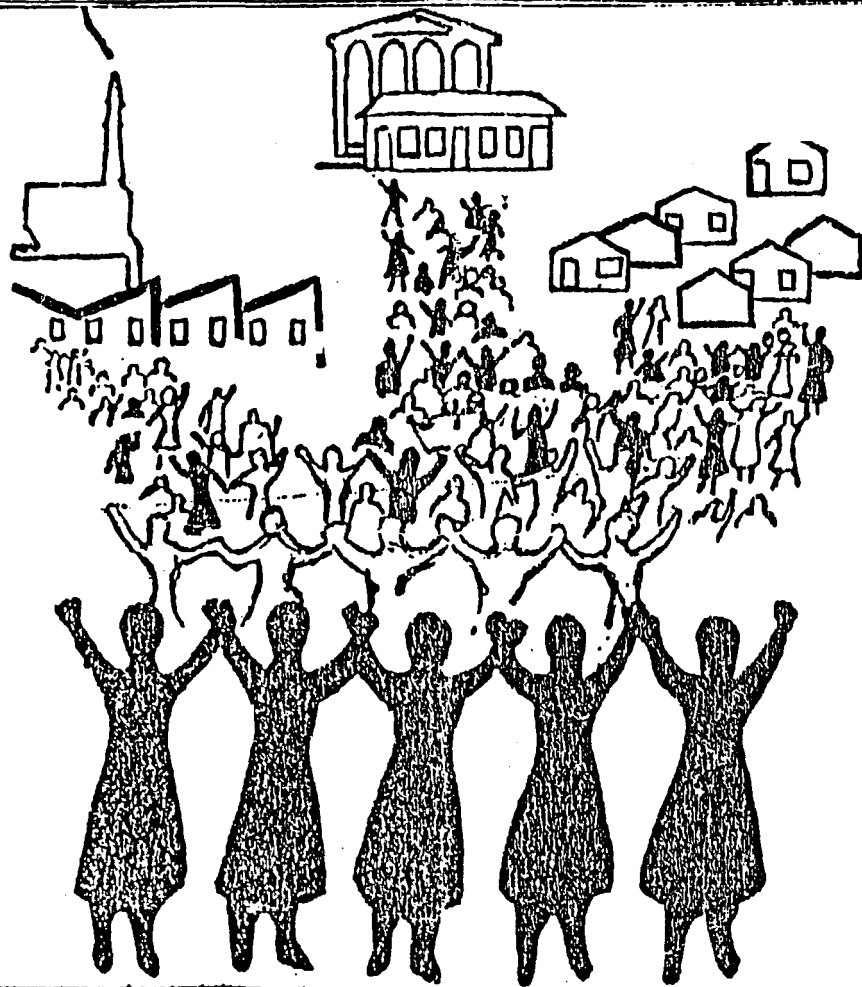
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- Economic Independence.

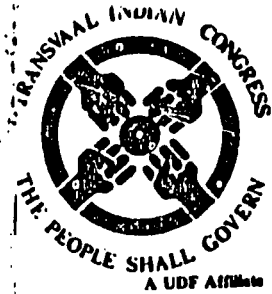
Share your time and leisure with us and work with us on projects of common interest.

AE34

WOMEN UNITE!



National Women's Day
August 9



WOMEN AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION

Dear Friend

Rev AE 34

Twenty eight years ago today, women from all over the country united to demonstrate to the world that South African women were not prepared to sit back and allow the evils of apartheid to take root and grow. Twenty thousand women, of all racial groups, showed once and for all that women would refuse to accept the oppressive system. We all know of and remember their courageous march to Pretoria to show their hatred for the Pass Laws.

Now we have the New Constitution, which does no more than to give Apartheid a new face. Are we going to allow ourselves to be duped into accepting this farce? As mothers, wives, sisters and friends, going to sit back and allow our loved ones to defend that evil and ugly thing called Apartheid - that which goes against our moral and religious beliefs? Can we find it in our hearts to condone Apartheid, in any form?

Apartheid has brought us nothing but heartache. High rents increased GST, no houses, forced removals, inadequate and inferior education - These plague us constantly - New Deal or not, these will not leave us .

We have to show our opposition to this - to share our problems with one another. We have to unite, as mothers, sisters, wives and friends - we are the backbone and strength of our community. We cannot sit back and allow conscription and all the other evils. We have to make a stand;

Women against the constitution is a group of women who want to share their thoughts and problems with other women. We would like to extend an invitation to you and your friends to join us on Thursday evening, 9 August 1984, for a few hours of poetry, songs and discussions

We look forward to meeting you.

Yours in the struggle
Women against the Constitution.

WOMEN AGAINST THE CONSTITUTION

extend an invitation to

Date: Thursday, 9 August 1984

Time 8pm

Venue Jiswa Centre, Suikerbos Street
Lenasia.

Refreshments will be served.

We cannot pay the high rent

We cannot pay the increased GST

Our children have to go to gutter schools

There are no creches for our children

We do not want our children to die for apartheid

Let us share our problems

Let us solve them together

Women, Unite

To fight for our rights

Women's Charter

(This document was drawn up in 1956 at a meeting of the Women's Federation of South Africa.)

We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, Africans, Indians, European and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.

We women do not form a society separate from the men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress. Within this common society, however, are laws and practices that discriminate against women. While we struggle against the social evils that affect men and women alike, we are determined to struggle no less purposefully against the things that work to the disadvantage of our sex.

This organisation is formed for the purpose of uniting women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic and social disabilities. We shall strive for the following :

- * The right to vote without restriction or discrimination
- * For the development of every child through free compulsory education for all, for the protection of mother and child
- * The right to full employment opportunities
- * Equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children
- * For the removal of all laws that restrict free movement or the right of free association
- * To build and strengthen women's sections in the national liberation movement
- * To co-operate with all other organisations that have

AF1

WE NOTE with concern the support of the Thatcher and Reagan administrations for the South African Government's Constitutional Proposals.

WE KNOW that the U.S. government is through its policy of constructive engagements really only furthering its own economic interests in our country at the expense of the well-being of our people.

This unashamed greed and callous support for this unpopular and undemocratic government by the U.S. cannot stop us in our march toward freedom, this government cannot crush our resistance.

We know that the U.S. policy in our country is not an isolated intervention but part of international action to protect their privileges and investments.

We note with profound concern and anger the

- * interventions in Chad and El Salvador to stop the struggles from maturing to victory
- * and in Nicaragua to destabilise and overthrow the legitimate government of the peoples republic in Nicaragua
- * and in Palestine to aid the massacre of the democratic struggle of that people for control over their government and land under the leadership of the P.L.O.

WE BELIEVE

- 1) that all foreign governments must recognise the right of other people to live in a non-racial democratic country;
- 2) that those who claim to believe in the noble ideals of democracy have the obligation to support the just struggles of the S.A. people.

NOW THEREFORE, this first National Conference of the UDF held at Rocklands, Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town on 20 August 1983

RESOLVES

- 1) to demand the immediate end to the U.S.-British Governments' support for the South African Government;
- 2) to reject the policy of constructive engagement and demands the immediate end to any support for the S.A. Government.