

SPEAKERS' NOTES ON WOMEN & PASSES

These notes must be read together with

1. Women in Chains.
2. Strydom, you Have Struck a Rock!

Women in Chains will give you full information about the pass laws and struggle of the African women in 1913. It also explains very clearly what the pass means to men and what it will mean to women. Keep your copy of Women in Chains very carefully and if you have lost yours, make means to get hold of one somehow, for this booklet is out of print.

Strydom, you have Struck a Rock not only gives you inspiring pictures of the historic Pretoria protest, but also is the story of the nation-wide womens' resistance to passes from the time of the first Pretoria protest in October 1955 to that great day on August 1957.

Resistance of women to passes: You will find attached to these notes several pages of information about the womens' resistance to passes after the Pretoria protest.

It is important to make women realise that the Pretoria protest was not the end, but only a step in the resistance of women, and that the widespread resistance to the issuing of passes is to a very large extent the result of that great protest.

Issuing of Passes: Information is also supplied with these notes about the various places where passes have been issued up the end of 1957. Verwoerd claims that 600,000 women have been issued with passes - but he does not say where. In July 1957 he claimed 300,000 - now he claims that in six months this number has been doubled. It is important that women should know that hundreds of thousands of women in the country areas and the small towns and drops have indeed been tricked into taking passes. If Verwoerd's figure is correct then nearly 20% of African women in the Union have taken passes - that is one woman in every five women throughout the country. But it must be pointed out also that where women are organised, that is in the large towns and cities, Verwoerd has not dared yet to send his pass units.

VERWOERD'S ATTACK ON WOMEN IN THE TOWNS AND CITIES

This is what Verwoerd is doing -

- I. Women in urban locations are being compelled to take out "permits" for residence as in Langa and many of the other locations, or for work as in Springs. These permits are in fact passes and will lead to the reference book and Verwoerd hopes to get the women used to the permits so that they will not oppose passes later.
- II. Nurses are being compelled to produce their identity numbers so that they can be registered.

Nurses in Danger: These identity numbers can only be obtained by taking out a reference book, for the African men and women do not have any other numbers. It is a vicious

attack upon the nurses, for they are faced with a dreadful choice; if they take the pass and produce their numbers and are registered, they have saved their careers but they have lost their freedom, and what is more, they have betrayed their own fellow nurses and all African women. It must be the task of non nursing women to rally to the side of the nurses and show their solidarity openly, so that the nurses who are in the forefront now of Verwoerd's attack, will not feel exposed and isolated. Verwoerd hopes that nurses will take the passes and that then other women in the towns and cities, who resist now, will follow the example of the nurses.

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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