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ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN

NATIONAL CONGRESS

WOMENS' LEAGUE

HELD AT THE COMMUNAL HALL, ORLANDO

117

SATURDAY:

- 2.30. p.m. NATIONAL ANTHEM AND DEVOTIONS
- 2.45. p.m. CHAIRMAN' REMARKS
- 3. p.m. OFFICIAL OPENING OF CONFERENCE.
- 3.30.p.m. ELECTION OF COMMITTEES.
 - (1) Press.
 - (2) Credentials.
 - (3) Resolutions.
- 3.45. p.m. Presidential Address.
- 4.30. p.m. Report of Credential committees
- CLOSE SESSION
- 4.45. p.m. Executive Report.
- 5.45. p.m. ADJOUYRNMENT

SUNDAY

- 9.a.m. Discussion of Presential and Executive Report.
- 11. a.m. Rules and Regulations and Discussion.
- 1.p.m. ADJOURNMENT
- 2. p.m. RESOLUTIONS.

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OPENING ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMENS'
LEAGUE HELD AT THE COMMUNAL HALL, ORLANDO
ON THE 5TH & 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1959.

Dear Mothers and friends,

The Executive Committee of your league has invited me to open this historic Conference of Women of South Africa, which meets at a time when South Africa as a whole is on its feet.

On accepting this invitation I did so in the full knowledge of the vital importance of your Conference because it takes place at a time when the oppressed people of South Africa are conducting a militant political battle against exploitation and the evil of racial discrimination.

You will recall that the last Annual Conference of the African National Congress (National) held in December of last year decided to make 1959 the greatest Anti Pass Year in the history of our struggle for the removal of the oppressive pass system. As part and parcel of the Anti Pass campaign, the Durban conference decided to launch a campaign to raise 120,000 membership by the 26th June this year on the following basis that Transvaal raises 50,000, Cape 50,000 Natal 15,000 and the Free State 5,000. This task can only succeed if our organisational and propaganda machinery is sharpened; and our whole membership is inspired by the urgent need to implement the organisation task before us.

From evidence available so far it would appear that we have not as yet reached this target. One of the principal tasks of this conference, must be to devise ways and means to ensure that we reach the standard before the of the year.

I am confident that this objective would be achieved if the women of South Africa made up their minds to do so. The extension of passes to you and the whole question of passes for men constitutes a serious challenge and we must re-double our efforts to implement the Durban resolution to get rid of the pass menace during our life time. To enable us to accomplish this task it is necessary that we must close our ranks and be united. We must strive to draw in the womens' League, women in factories, house, and women in the country side. The organisation must not only be confined to the big cities, but must reach the country Dorps and Rural Villages. Branches of Womens' league must exist in town and country throughout South Africa. I cannot end this opening address without paying tribute to the brave and courageous struggle wages by the women of Natal against Bantu Authorities, forced labour in connection with Dipping tanks. This courage and devotion has roused the admiration, not only of the right thinking men and women of this country but throughout the world. I have all confidence that this courage and devotion inspire the whole liberatory movement.

Messrs speaker I declare this conference open.

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EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMENS' LEAGUE
HELD IN ORLANDO, JOHANNESBURG ON THE 5TH & 6TH
SEPTEMBER, 1959.

The speaker, delegates and friends,

In the name of our motherland, South Africa, I salute you all. On behalf of the Executive Committee of the African National Congress Womens' League, I have the pleasure of presenting to you the following report:-

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The following members were elected into the Executive Committee at the last Durban Conference:-

- | | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 1. L. Ngoyi | - | President General | (Tvl.) |
| 2. E. Mafekeng | - | Vice President General. | (Cape) |
| 3. B. Mashaba | - | Secretary General. | (Tvl.) |
| 4. F. Baard | - | Assistant Secretary General | (Cape) |
| 5. V. Bisset | - | Treasurer. | (Cape) |
| 6. M. Motlakoane | | Committee members | (O.F.S) |
| 7. D. Nyember | - | " | " (Natal) |
| 8. M. Mncadi | - | " | " " |
| 9. J. Sithole | - | " | " (Cape) |
| 10. J. Kuva | - | " | " " |
| 11. K. Mxakato | - | " | " (Tvl.) |
| 12. M. Tailor | - | " | " " |

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Attempts were made to arrange a meeting of the Executive Committee during the Easter week-end but because of lack of finance this meeting failed. On the 30th May, 1959 the National Executive arranged another meeting but could not form a quorum.

ACTIVITIES.

APRIL. No reports have been received by the National Executive from the Provinces, but the Executive Committee is able to say that in the Transvaal this day was a great success. This rally was attended by great numbers of women, members of congress and non-members of congress.

MAY. A mass Anti Pass Rally on the 31st May and a mass National Conference on 30th May, was organised by the congresses. The mass Anti pass rally which was to be held in Sophiatown and be addressed by the President General of the African National Congress and other national leaders was banned by the Chief Magistrate of Johannesburg and the President General Chief A.J. Luthuli was also banned a week before the said rally from attending gatherings for a period of 5 years and was also confined in the district of Stanger for five years. At this rally of the 31st May women who took part in the Antipass campaign were to be presented with certificates of merits by the President General. The mass national conference was held on both days 30th & 31st, at this
/conference.....

conference which was attended by big numbers of women from all centres a resolution was passed to protest against the cheap and convict farm labour by boycotting potatoes. The potatoe boycott was a mighty success in almost all Centres.

PASS CAMPAIGNS.

Women in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Zeerust, Sekhukhuneland, Balfour, Nelspruit, Standerton, Pietermaritzburg, Parys and many other places took a very militant stand against the issuing of passes to African women by organising mass demonstrations to the Native Commissioners, Supperindents and other Authorities concern. Among hundreds of women who took part in the pass campaign and other laws affecting the African people, many of them are still serving jail sentences and some are still waiting trial. The Sekhukhuneland women who took part in opposing the Bantu Authorities Act have now two of their leaders sentenced to death and are now waiting at retoria, some died whilst waiting trial and some gave birth and many children were left motherless.

JUNE. No specific reports have been received from the Provinces, thus the Executive Committee is unable to give a clear report of what took place in the other Centres.

June the 26th was declared by the congresses as a Day of selfdenial, the people were called upon noy to go to Cinemas, Beerhalls, and have no pleasures and were also called upon to do no shopping. This was followed by mass rallies in all the centres. In the Transvaal Certificates of merits mentioned above were presented to women who were present.

MEMBERSHIP.

The Executive is unable to give the correst membership of the African National Congress Womens' League because no such reports were received from the respective provinces indicating membership in their provinces, but since 1954 women have joined the African National Congress in great numbers.

9TH AUGUST 1959.

The third anniversary of the 1956 womens' protest to the late Prime Minister, in Pretoria organised by the Federation of South African Women and African National Congress Womens' League was celebrated in a form of mass prayers in almost all centres.

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN.

The Federation of South African Women which the African National Congress Womens' League is affiliated to, also played an important part in arousing the political consciousness of the African women, and also organised a number of demonstrations to the Native Commissioners and other authorities.

Lastly, delegates must take this message back to their provinces, that we have been placed in a number of difficulties in organising this conference because of lack of finace, infact the Executive Committee have no funds at all.

MAYIBUYE NGESIKATHI SETHU

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMENS' LEAGUE HELD IN
ORLANDO ON THE 5TH and 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1959.

Mr. Speaker Daughters of Africa & Friends,

On behalf of the Executive of the African National Congress Womens' League, I wish to welcome all the women who have assembled at this conference. I am aware of the difficulties which some of you had to overcome to be here today. This is the first conference of the African National Congress Womens' League which has been convened seperately from the National conference of the African National Congress. This is in itself an important step. I hope that the delegates who have come to this conference will discharge their duties and make this conference a credit to the liberation movement.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFERENCE.

The African National Congress Womens' League meets after the 1958 annual conference of the African National Congress which took important decisions. The first important organizational decision taken by conference was the membership target which should have been fulfilled by June the 26th this year with the exception of Natal it is unfortunate that the indications are that the other Provinces have not fulfilled their targets. If the Provinces had fulfilled their targets this would have been a clear indication of the strength of the organization. It is the duty of the women who constitute half of the membership of the African National Congress to see to it that the targets are fulfilled in their own areas, by actively participating in house to house campaign, women can inspire their branches by working hardest recruitment of membership. The annual conference of the African National Congress also decided to make 1959 the greatest antipass year although no specific form of action was decided upon the struggle against passes is on the decision of conference should not be misunderstood. It does not mean that 1959 will be the year when the pass system will be defeated.

In fact the mass antipass conference which was held in Johannesburg made a penetrating study of our struggle against passes and I recommend that, the report should be studied by our women through-out the Country making 1959 the greatest Anti-pass year. It really means that the Anti-pass struggle must be propagated and intensified. The aims and objects of the pass system should be clearly and carefully explained because this system is being extended to us. Women must be in the fore front of the struggle.

Review of the Womens' struggle against passes. We can truly be proud of the high degree of courage and militancy displayed by our women -folk in Winburg, Balfour, Standerton, Zeerust, Pietersberg, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg. and various other Centres through-out the Country staged stirring battles against the extension of passes to African women. There have been arrests, imprisonment, deportations and other forms of persecution. These have not frightened the women and the struggle still goes on. Women in Sekhukhuneland who faught side by side with their men folk some have given birth in jail, some died leaving newly born babies. And ofcourse some at this very moment are sentenced to death. One has a child a of 4 years, the other woman has three children, one is Eleven years and 8, and the last one is 5years. These children should not starve nor be naked when we are alive. We should bare in mind the fact that in a struggle like the one we have embarked upon we shall have to secrifise, the road to freedom is no bread and butter.

WOMEN IN NATAL

We must salute the gallant women in Natal in their courageous fight against oppression, in no less than twenty three places Urban and Rural areas demonstrations largely by women have taken place against Influx Control, Low Wages, Unemployment, Beer Hall, Bantu Authorities, The government must take full responsibility of what has happened in Natal. There are also lives lost.

It is important that women through out the Country should always bare in mind that the method of struggle of the African National Congress are non-violence these are forms of struggle which have been tried and tested through out the reach of history of the African National Congress. Weakness must be eliminated. In order that we should consolidate the gains we have made and make our movement go forward from strides which it has already taken, it is important that we should examine our organisation al view to eliminate and rectify weakness with them.

What are the weakness? It is important to understand that the struggle against passes is controlled direct by the African National Congress. The struggle of the women is merely part of the general struggle of the African people. Naturally nothing must be done to curb the initiative of the women at the same time women must discuss each stage of the campaign of the mother body. The impression seems to be gaining ground that the women are courageous and militant whilst the men frightened and timed this idea is harmful to the internal disputes and harmony where now should exist.

ORGANIZATIONS. Whilst there has been splendid harmony from the women throughout the Country we must admit that our organization is still poorly organised on the Branch, Provincial and Nationally in all the Areas.

In Durban for instance except Durban and Pietermaritzburg there were no branches of our Organization this is an urgent problem which must be remedied. Without a properly organized womens' League it would be impossible to consolidate the magnificent spiriy demonstrated by the women and instead the women might be demoralized. It is important to realize that we require funds for the employment of a full-time personal in order that our organization should meet the duties which the present situation has imposed on us.

CRIME. As mothers we are shocked by the rapid growth of crime in particular the violence committed by our children. It has become impossible to walk about with safety at night and life is particularly unsafe for our young daughters. Although we know the fundamental growth of crime in our community, we as mothers can if we make up our minds stop this rapid growth of violence and crime it must be one of our tasks given our priority that we should return to our homes and make them safe. With the assistance of our men.

CONDITIONS IN ZEERUST. Let us remeber our courageous sisters of Zeerust who are suffering the atrocities of banishments resulting as you know rom their determined o position against the extension of passes to them. They have endeavoured to gain refuge, in the Bachuanaland protectorate but through half hearted help of some chiefs their plight has worsened they are only able to get on e meal per day some times non. One of these women is serving a 7 year prison sentence. They want to come back to their originally homes in Zeerust they are prevented from doing so by the chiefs with the assistance of the authorities, I am informed that inspite of their sufferings they are determined to oppose the extension of passes to them to the bitterest end. This friends is a serious state of affairs affecting our organisation, we are required to render every assistance at our command by forming welfare committees to hold them.

ECONOMIC BOYCOTT.

It is important that the Nationalist Products Boycott is intensified. The success of the potatoe boycott was due to the sacrifice of the house women depriving themselves and their families the usual menu.

TRADE UNIONS.

The African National Congress has called upon the people to make 1959 the end of poverty wages. It has declared before all in authority, bosses, the government, the employers, that workers need a pound a day to live like human beings.

We are pleased to report that women have taken this call to heart. They have taken action for one pound per day. In January 300 women at H. Jones & Co. the Johannesburg Jam factory struck work for higher wages. The women of Natal went on deputations to demand a pound a day and by doing so they brought the attention of the whole

world to the misery of the people.

Chief Luthuli has said every

congressite must be a trade unionist if he or she is to be a good congress worker. Let us back up his call, and join Trade unions form committees where we work and ask the South African Congress of Trade Unions to help us win higher wages. What we want is one pound a day victory now, now, now,

In conclusion let our struggle go forward ever and backward never.

FORWARD TO A MILIYENT 1959.

AFRICA! AFRICA! AFRICA!

M A Y I E U Y E .

"AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS."

TRANSVAAL.

Phone 33-4069
P.O. Box 9207.

31, Bezuidenhout St.,
Ferreirastown,
JOHANNESBURG.
3 Sept., 1959.

The General Secretary,
A.N.C. Women's League,
JOHANNESBURG.

Daughter of Africa,

The Transvaal Provincial Executive, on behalf of the people of the Transvaal, extends its warmest greetings to the 4th Annual Conference of the A.N.C.W.L.

Women in all walks of life all over the world have through the decades fought courageously alongside the forces of democracy and justice. Our womenfolk in S.A. have been no exception. Of great significance has been their undaunted stand against the evil pass system and in particular its extension to their ranks. We, of the Transvaal noted with great admiration and appreciation their determined struggle towards the end of last year when thousands of women filed into the jails to show their opposition. This will go down in history as one of the important landmarks during our grim struggle.

The Transvaal Executive wishes, however, to remind our mothers and sisters that there is still a long and protracted struggle ahead of us. The enemy we are facing is stubborn and is forging ahead with ruthless determination in implementing its devilish apartheid policies. We have no doubt that this Conference will re-dedicate the womenfolk in the noble cause of the Freedom struggle and will as its first task work for the mobilization of all women behind the Congress movement.

Let us remember that our UNITY will steer us faster along the road to Freedom and democracy. May your deliberations meet with the success they deserve.

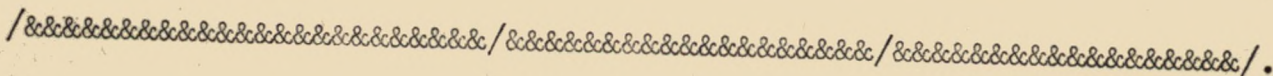
" M A Y I B U Y E I A F R I C A . "

Yours for Freedom,

J. J. HADEBE.

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS TRANSVAAL.



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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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