

FSAW C62,6.2

DELEGATION TO NATIVE COMMISSIONER - MARCH 5TH, 1959.

- I. Evils of pass laws.
- II. Opposition of women (a) 1912 - 1918
(b) 1955 - 1957
(c) 1958
- III. On February 10th 1959, Mr. Mentz the Deputy Minister of Native Affairs admitted in Parliament that it is not an offence for an African woman not to be in possession of a reference book.
- IV. But yet the following has taken place:
- (a) Letters were sent to European housewives which deliberately made them think that passes were compulsory and thus they compelled their servants to go to the Pass Offices.
 - (b) As a result of this thousands of domestic servants took passes and today they are ashamed.
 - (c) At the railway stations, booking clerks ask for reference books before giving tickets.
 - (d) Houses in Meadowlands are not given unless the husband and also the wife produces a reference book.
 - (e) When women go to register at the Labour Bureau they are asked for a reference book.
 - (f) The police went around telling domestic servants that they would get higher wages if they took reference books and that their employers would be fined £50 if the servants did not have a reference book.
 - (g) In some suburbs of Johannesburg, in Turffontein and other places, African women are stopped in the street and asked for passes, and then taken to the police station to get passes.
- V. Under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act, no African can remain in an urban area for more than 72 hours (3 days) unless
- (a) He was born and lives there permanently.
 - (b) He has worked for one employer for 10 years or lived there continuously and lawfully for 15 years.
 - (c) He or she is the wife, unmarried daughter or child of a person in (a) or (b).
 - (d) Special permission has been granted and this is only during the time he is employed or for 14 days to look for work.
- VI. Under Section 9, an African can be classed as a 'vagrant' and put out, if he cannot show "visible means of earning a livelihood".
- VII. The Native Labour Regulations have been put into effect and we are told that they apply to women. These Regulations are issued by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development and covers the establishment of Labour Bureaux. It is on account of this that the City Council is issuing work permits and yet you say that you do not understand our reference to the "employment permit system"

QUESTIONS. What We Women Want to Know.

1. Will the Native Commissioner, through his employment officer, decide for us where we shall work or what work we shall do?
2. Have we no right to decide for ourselves?
3. If we don't register for work now, shall we be sent to labour on farms or to work colonies?
4. If this is not so, what will happen if we don't register?
5. If we are arrested, after a fixed date has been proclaimed, for not having a pass, will we also be sent to farms to labour? (Officials have told our representatives that this will be so. We want to know from the Native Commissioner.)
6. Are we, domestic servants, entitled to confinement leave? On pay or without pay? For how long?
7. Under the Native Labour Regulations will we lose our right to remain in the town if we are off on confinement?
8. If we lose our jobs because we are pregnant we cannot get other jobs in 14 days. What will happen to us? Will we be put out of the town?
9. Does Section 5 (i) of Chapter 5 of the Native Labour Regulations apply to girls leaving school? (Women are supposed to pay tax now.)
10. Shall we be forced to have a Medical Examination under Section 14 of Chapter 5? Will we be forced to be examined by a male doctor? Will we have to take off our clothes for this examination?
11. Will a widow or an unmarried woman be forced to work all her life or will she be sent back to the farm when she is sick or old.
12. What happens if she has no place to go to?
13. Why are African women to be forced to have a male guardian? Are women of other races compelled to have guardians?
14. African washerwomen and daily domestic servants work for more than one employer. How will this be arranged with labour bureaux and work permits - or even reference books. Who will be the employer?
15. As women we may be called away to a sick child or relative; shall we then lose our right to be in the town?
16. Many African women have been deserted by their husbands and so are no longer the wife or daughter of a man employed in the town. Must we then lose our right to be here?

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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