

P.O. Box 2706,
CAPE TOWN.
2nd Sept., 1954.

Dear Ida,

Thank you for your letter dated 24th Aug., received on the 30th. Our letters obviously crossed.

I was glad to hear that your A.N.C. women's section resolved to affiliate to our Federation. Please convey our great joy upon receiving this news, to your members.

re Constitution: I wish I could discuss the points more carefully with you. However, I shall try to do it to the best of my ability by letter.

You are not in favour of the clause in our constitution which lays down that individual women may become members of our organisation. I would like you to take the following points into consideration:-

- 1) Conditions in our country are not uniform. ~~Throughout the country.~~ Throughout the country we have different racial groups predominating in different areas. For example, in the Cape Western, the Cape Coloured are the predominating group. They do not belong to the A.N.C. nor do they have a political organisation. They belong to unions, churches, sports clubs and welfare bodies. If you exclude the possibility of individual women joining the Federation, you immediately cut them out completely.
- 2) In Natal there are many urban areas where Indians predominate, and the Indian women are as a rule not members of the Indian National Congress.
- 3) As far as the African women are concerned, it is a fact that many African women do not belong to the A.N.C. There are many parts of the country where the men do not encourage the women to join the A.N.C. And, to insist that the constitution should only provide for affiliated bodies, would exclude such women from being organised. After all, the A.N.C. does not debar the African women from belonging to their various church women's organisations and all kinds of professional recreational bodies. Why then must it single out our women's Federation?
- 4) Last but most important of all is the fact that our women's federation provides opportunities for women to come together as women to discuss their problems, to develop qualities of leadership, without male domination. I know that since we started to organise the women here in Cape Town our organisation has produced women leaders for S.A. Coloured People's Organisation and has recruited a number of African women in the A.N.C. who would otherwise not have worked in the A.N.C.

Our Charter, - our aims, - adopted at the Conference is very specific about us working in full co-operation and co-ordination in struggling for freedom. We must therefore not be narrow in our approach. We must have a women's federation to have affiliated bodies and individual members, and through our work, to encourage and develop women to do their work in struggling for full freedom in our country.

re Section 2 of our Constitution - Representation: The same applies. We should have delegates from branches as well as from affiliated organisations.

Please tell me what you think of these points and we can discuss them more fully.

We had a very good discussion on this matter on the 19th June, at our Conference, and the Constitution as submitted to you was adopted without any opposition from anybody.

I am enclosing herewith press statements on the Cape Provincial Council's resolution to adopt colour discrimination in the Cape Province.

With very best wishes,

Yours faithfully,

Ray

R. ALEXANDER
SECRETARY.

NB. Also that if individuals cannot be accepted, then persons like Ray + Hilda ^{+ Riea, etc}, who are banned from all progressive org^s & cannot attend meetings, would be excluded from the Federation, which is ~~not~~ not listed among organisations from which people are banned.

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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