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WOMEN'S MEETING : HELD IN THE TRADES HALL, 30 KERK STREET, JOHANNESBURG, ON THE 29TH MAY, 1955.

(This meeting commenced with the singing of Nkosi Sekelele Afrika).

CHAIRLADY : "Friends and fellow workers, we have met here this afternoon as mothers, as citizens and as women of the future, to discuss our plans and our demands that we are going to place before the forthcoming Congress of the People. You have noticed in the leaflets that we have sent out, that we are going to discuss the demands of the women. You know that on June the 25th and 26th we are having the great Congress of the People.

The Congress of the People is the organization that is going to decide the future of South Africa. It is the organization where the people are going to put forward their demands. You know that we have been putting forward our demands all the time. Every time we meet at a meeting we pass a resolution and every time we meet at a meeting we tell our followers what we want, but to this government such as we have in South Africa, all these demands we have put forward have been falling on futile ground.

Now we have decided that the South African people should come forward and put their demands as one man. Now the Congress of the people is coming and we are sending delegates from all over the country to represent the women of South Africa. You have often heard of the congresses that have gathered abroad, now you are going to hear of the Congress of the People that is to be held here in South Africa. And we as mothers, guided by the Federation of South African Women, are the people who should play the most important part in this Congress. If this Congress is to be a success we should make it so. If our demands have got to be met, we have to know what these demands are, ensure that they are put before Congress and work for the success of these demands, because we as mothers, have given birth to children, we who understand the future of our children, and it is we who must see that the future of our children is well assured.

So I call on you here today to make this Congress of the People a success. You will have noticed that we have speakers here to speak on the special demands of the women, because we feel that if we were to give everybody time to speak at a meeting like this, then we would have to sit here for two months and not have everybody to say what she wants or what they want. So we decided that we have women's organizations giving us their demands, and we compiled these demands, and we are going to discuss these demands at this meeting.

Now we ask everybody to give us their co-operation so that we should finish our work in good time this afternoon. Friends I want to ask that you should help us in getting out people who would be able to supply sleeping quarters. We have one or two who are prepared to do this, but we can't expect that they put up the whole meeting. So what we are going to do is we are going to have alternatives, one night in this quarter and the next night in the other, and I hope the women will come forward and offer their help. We are having our first speaker here who is going to speak to you on the demands that we as women are putting forward on schools and children. Miss Mary Mkisi ! "

(Shouts of Afrika Mayebuye !)

MARY MKISI : "I am to speak to you on what the chairlady has already told you about, what I have got to say to you.

On many occasions you will find that mothers should work, and there is nobody who look after her children. I want to tell this meeting that Nursery schools for free school children are also wanted. Because this thing is very important to demand, because every mother wants to have time for herself to look after her children, clean their homes and do other things as a housewife. I think mothers will agree with me on those demands.

One more important demand is birth control. As an African I think most of our African women look at this thing with very sad eyes. But I think it will not be wrong, because we have the difficulty of our birth control. You will find that I will have a child this year and the following year I have another one. That is very unfortunate. When I say birth control I do not mean a mother should say, I do not want children any more. You must have a space in between your children to regain weight, because once you have children every day it is ruining you own life. It is a bit difficult but I feel I must say this,

Last week we had our conference here when we had one of our officials coming from overseas. This official of ours told us that overseas, at all the places there are people who, when they have so many children, they get an honour for that children. That means that they try to see how many children they can have. Here in South Africa there is a big difference because the cost of living is very high. I think mothers will agree with me that they don't like to see their children running up and down the streets asking for a piece of bread from the Europeans. So I ask this conference to agree with me to send in birth control demands. That is the first demand - these are the several demands that I put to this house.

So, I think I will ask my friends.....who are at the conference today to speak about it".

CHAIRLADY : "Friends, your next demand put forward by the section leaders - I will tell you we are agreed. Due to the fact that we have a very long programme here we would give five minutes to discuss. I will call on you people to please not go to Randfontein to Park Station but to go straight to Park Station. Take five minutes and we have two or three people to take part in this discussion. Let us see by a show of your hands ? Nobody want to take part ? Yes..... "

SPEAKER : "Lady Chair, I would like to ask you a few questions regarding birth control. I am going to speak of the first demand, the main point and the most important thing is this birth control. Many women, if you are going to have a child this year and next year again have another child, don't forget that you have to carry this burden for nine months before you give birth to the child. And after giving birth to those child you still have to struggle to give the child the very few things, and on top of that you have to give clothing for the child, and then when you have finished with that you have another baby to deliver. Don't forget that life is very difficult throughout South Africa and we all have to work. I would like to know from you what £2.10.0, which your husbands earns, will help you to go and bring up a family. I think amongst those people birth control is the most important demand.

Probably our gentlemen friends here will be shocked when they hear we demand birth control, and yet we are only trying to help them. At least if we have this birth control we will be able to bring up our children properly. When a child is three or four years old, then you can have another one. There are many women who would like to work but because of this they cannot work, and if these conditions are improved they will be able to go and work every day. Thank you ".

CHAIRLADY : "Now can we please have somebody seconding that motion? Alright, can we just have your name, please ? Betty....."

(Shouts of Afrika Mayebuye !)

CHAIRLADY : "I will now call upon the next speaker to discuss the demand Thank you".

SPEAKER : "I would like to put it to you friends that I am not against birth control, because I am one of the people whom it affects. As I am speaking here I have got eight children.

Afrika !

The demand for birth control came in because we knew that there were some people who are in this position. You know with

women it is legal that they should practise birth control, and their husbands agree to it. You have in the clinics what are called birth control methods that are applied, these things are not known to non-European people, but you can get advice given by special sisters of this section. Especially in Johannesburg, for instance at Fox Street atHouse on Thursday mornings at 10 o'clock, you can go there and get your advice on birth control. There are special sisters and doctors who advise you what to do, but you must agree that you are to careless to go there and get your advice.

Now I want to say that that is not a question affecting everybody. I must be quite frank about that, because some people tell us that children are our riches. That is the old African way of looking at children, that is all I have got, I will never own money, I will never own property, I will never own riches, and this is all I have. If they said these things about fifty years ago perhaps I would agree with them, but not today. Today if you have three children it is a problem how you are going to feed these children and educate these children, which is the most important feature about the children.

Now, when we look at our children in the streets here, hundreds of children, thousands of children running about naked, you ask yourself how much must a parent suffer for them and look what that child is facing today. Now, every woman who are interested in birth control can go to the clinic in which district that woemn lives. It is not the birth control that we are dealing with in our demands, but it will help you along, you go to the sister in charge of the clinic in the district in which you live and she will tell you how, what and where to get your advice. We should put forward those demands for something that would be legal even for Non-European women in the future".

CHAIRLADY : "Next speaker!"

SPEAKER : "Lady chair, I agree with some of these demands. On this question of birth control we cannot do it if our husbands want children what we can do we can ask them to give us a break".

(Shouts of Mayebuye Afrika !)

CHAIRLADY : "I am going to call the next speaker, please".

SPEAKER : "Here are too many unmarried women who have children before we can come to married women. We should instruct our children in this. All the children we have today are children from school children and children from our daughters, and married women can still try but a child cannot try because she does not know anything about it".

CHAIRLADY : "It seems to me that some of the speakers think that when

we speak of this very delicate matter here we are forcing the thing down their throats. We are not forcing anybody, we are speaking because there are other women who asked us to put forward these demands, there are women who think we shouldn't discuss this as it is too much for them. Now, if those women feel we shouldn't discuss it, well they can go. It is just a demand we are putting in and if any woman and her husband feel that they want to give their children a future, a secured future, they are the people who will go forward. I don't want anybody to go away and say we are forcing them. Those who accept it, O.K. ! those who feel it is against their consciences, very well. All we are doing is we are planning our future because the future in this is varied.

Now, the next question in this discussion - is the same lady continuing on African schools".

(Shouts of Afrika Mayebuye !)

SPEAKER : (Mary Mkisi ?) "This is the second demand that we women should include, in fact I think that before I say this I should thank our women for what they did in the past. In most places we had our womenfolk arrested, and most of our women have been astounded by the government because of what they did. I must commend them for this before I go on, and again I will make certain concessions concerning what they did.

Our Bantu Education must have the sole object of raising the education of the child. This old people and this old race are superior to all others. The fundamental aim of education says that education means the development of the social standing of the individual. Basical education to develop and cultivate the individual pupil. Any system purporting to the basis which ignores this does not educate. I think this gathering will agree with me that Bantu Education is something which should not exist in this part of Africa. (Shouts of Africa.) Because Bantu Education is existing nowhere, and Bantu Education has never existed, it only exists in the minds - in the minds of the Nationalist Government. Let us speak of Bantu Education as a thing and let me say that if we mothers of South Africa agree with this Bantu Education, it is a sin that we will have to answer before God. Let us fight this Bantu Education, let us destroy this Bantu Education before it destroys the future of our children.

Again I will agitate for the schools, school feeding and free milk for all children in daily schools. More nursery schools, primary schools and secondary schools. I want to appeal to the women that they should know that their children should have free sitting in school, because we are being informed now that the government is paying very high for the education of Bantu children.

I want...../6

I want to challenge the Nationalist Government for speaking a lie. The government is paying absolutely nothing for educating our African children. In the first place our Africans are being taken away to work for farmers and they are not getting paid for it, our Africans are paying tax every year, where, where, where on earth can a man claim to be paying for education for your child when your husband is still working hard to pay for that child, and there are ever so many differences in status that the government is making over the African people.

So I think this demand must be tabled. Special schools for handicapped children. I think parents will agree with me that there are ver so many African children who are lame, blind and can't talk, surely we don't see such things with Europeans, we only see it with Africans. Let us be united and fight against this and get special schools for helpless children.

When I say this, I think everybody will agree with me that in many areas we find that African children have nowhere to play. When I speak I do not only say this for the town people, I also say it for the rural areas. So this demand includes the rural areas as well as the towns.. This conference will participate and send this demand to the Congress.

Vocational training and apprenticeship facilities. I think every mother will go home and send in her own demands, we must also make our own demands. I think as a mother of the Transvaal African Women's League, I think I must convey this message to the Women. I ask the women in this hall to go about organising as many women as possible and tell those women to send in their demands to the conference that is to be held at Kliptown. I thank this gathering very much, as long as we make these demands and work as hard as possible to gain whatever they want. Let us fight for our peace, freedom, and the freedom of our voices". (Shouts of Mayebuye Afrika!)

CHAIRLADY : "Ladies, we can have one speaker to take part in this discussion. Now friends, my reason for saying there will be only one speaker for this measure is because I am convinced that we are all hundred percent in agreement with this question of Bantu Education, with one voice we can say it must be removed, we don't want it at all costs.

Now there is one important point I want to raise here, when we speak of the handicapped children - when we speak of handicapped children who are mentally deficient, you know you will have children in school who will remain in one standard for two or three years. Their development is slow and they can't grasp quickly, it is because something is wrong with those children. There is only one

thing...../7

thing in the African schools, you don't get written reports where you can see the progress your child is making. But with the Coloured and Indian people you get a little report so that you can judge if your child is really making progress at school or whether this child is merely crawling along. So you will find out right here that you have hundreds of Africans boys and girls, you know some of them have shortcomings.

Now that is what we are referring to when we are saying provision have to be made for these children. As a matter of fact if you have been in a Coloured peoples area today, there is a place, the office is called mental hygiene, where such people are taken to and cared for by those people. Some of these children are educated for a trade near the military camp at Potchefstroom, where such children are kept. Now, that is the demand we are sending in for those children. That (sit) is the first phase of our demands. I would like this house to vote on those demands we have put forward for the People's Charter. We are going to vote in blocks, those who are for, will vote, and those who are against will vote afterwards.

Now all those who are in favour of us sending in these demands to the Peoples Conference put up your right hands, high up, thank you, very well done.

Now, our next speaker Mr. Matlau, he is going to speak on land, farms and reserves. Ladies I have to explain that we had to ask one of our gentlemen friends to come and give us this demand, because we felt that we as women will not be able to give you the essence of hardships and grievances, and put the demand as it should be put, because we are not capable of having knowledge of that part of it. But in the near future we will be wable to do so because I am one of the women who say when we, the workers take over this country, the women will be driving tractors and they will be sharing the labour of the farms." (Shouts of Mayebuye Afrika !)

MATLAU : "Ladies and daughters, mothers and including sons of Afrika, I am asked to come here this afternoon, I suppose for the specific view of giving some of the demands. Some of those demands which I am going to start with are as follows :- The right of all people to own and work their own farms ; the development of all uncultivated land ; the fair distribution of land amongst all people ; the mechanisation of methods of food production ; the scientific improvement of land by irrigation and careful planning ; control of soil erosion and improvement of the soil, efficient orgaization for the distribuion and marketing of food, this I will end off by saying we demand sufficient food for all people.

As I said, lady chair, my first duty is to justify these demands. If you move out to the rural areas, you will be shocked at the./8

at the vast spaces of land, mainly farms which have been claimed by some Dutchman, you will find vast spaces, from one point to another measuring miles, and from that point to the next point in another direction more miles, and the man will say, this is my land. This piece of land has been my birth for hundreds of years, it has never been cultivated. This man only says, "Dit is my plaas, dit is my grond", that is the only silly thing in his head, - silly head.

Now, this sort of thing in South Africa, this feudal system, is so bad that you find a group of Africans working on this farm and given the smallest portion, and this one man owns the large piece of land. Certainly there are going to be difficulties there, because immediately you concentrate a group of people on a small portion of land incapable of maintaining them, naturally soil erosion must occur and the control between the feudal lord, his serfs, is that they will render services for certain periods of the year as a result that they are unable to produce sufficient food which would go to recover our economic progress in this country. We must examine of course the other related evils to this business. We must see quite clearly that when these people have been concentrated on a small piece of land and have been in contract between them and their lord, are such that they are unable to develop, then other social evils must come. These people must of necessity starve, these people must reduce their stock in order to be accommodated on that piece of land. The fields on which they plough must be reduced to such a measure as to accommodate a great number of people on a small piece of land. Of course they must exhaust the water supply on that small piece of land, necessarily vegetation itself on that piece of land must be destroyed, and when these people can't make a living on that piece of land, there must be immigration to town, and what happens when they come to town?

They must first of all be faced with that dangerous Nazi law, the Pass Law, and you will appreciate of course that with the abolition of pass laws in urban areas, so that when these people come from these areas where they can't make a living at all, they will come by way of Johannesburg to the town, so that, Lady Chair and daughters of Africa, I must say that if you have achieved the fair distribution of all lands amongst all people, then you will have achieved one of the things that will solve progress in this part of the country. That is one thing that perhaps we as people don't realise, that the government have organised co-operations for farmers, and the farmers are under the protection of the land bank. The government has made it a point not on an economic basis of developing the standard in this country, but of protecting the facilities for these Dutch farmers. They have brought about co-operation and land banks and various other organizations to look after these Dutchmen. And the

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And the irrigation systems and the improvement of the land, the intensifying of the improvement of the land is going on with the assistance of the government. And that the day we should be able to create a government in this country which government will build a programme not to a collected group, but to all the subjects living in this country, then we shall have achieved one of the greatest things that man should deserve in this country. You will then realise your responsibilities towards your fellow sufferers in the reserves, in the farms and in the various rural areas of this country, being in tremendously large number.

The last item here is, we demand sufficient food for all. Speaking to daughters and mothers, I am sure I am speaking to people who understand this demand very clearly. To demand food for everybody, I cannot imagine that of all the things that the workers demand, that there is anything which in fact will please God more than the demand that everybody should have sufficient food. I think in this demand lies one of those things, that the Congress of the People is really the torchlight which must ultimately bring peace and good relations between all races in this country". (Shouts of Mayebuye Afrika!)

CHAIRLADY : "Friends, I wonder if we really need any discussion on this demand, I think we all are agreed that the conditions on the farms are such as we have heard here. Now, can I ask for somebody to propose and second these demands. Thank you, now can we have a vote please - all those in favour ? All those not in favour ? Now, may we have the last portion of your demands ?"

MATLAU : "Lady Chair, the last portion of my demands - more and better lands for the reserves ; schools for children living in the reserves, maternity, medical and social facilities in the reserves, shops and controlled prices in the reserves, planned agricultural development of the reserves ; the abolition of migratory labour which destroys our family life by removing our husbands, and destroying their health, by the conditions of their labour and the compounds which they live in. We say here that we demand that the reserves become food producing areas and not reservoirs for cheap labour. We demand the transfer of trust lands to the ownership of African people ; the abolition of convict farm labour ; the payment of minimum cash wages for all men and women working on farms ; the abolition of child labour on the farms ; free compulsory universal education for all children in rural areas ; the inclusion of farm workers in all industrial legislation. We demand these rights for all people in the rural areas.

Lady Chair, I am not going to keep your meeting long now. I am going to leave out a few items of the oppressive laws. I want to deal with the abolition of migratory labour which destroys our

life by removing our husbands. Lady Chair, I don't know whether the African people living in the urban areas, realise what we have been doing. I don't know - I don't know the extent to which the people living in the urban areas realise the effect of the items I was describing in the first instance on the family life, and the social life of the people in the reserves. The evil of sending to a family, where a man has got to leave his house for months if not years, it cannot be, it cannot be conceived. You cannot understand why these issues have got to affect only one race in this country, perhaps in the world, namely the African people.

This clearly shows what disregard the white people in this country - I am not including the sensible ones who are here with us of course - you cannot understand why they have not come to realise that these people are men who are married to their beloved wives, and that making them part with their wives for these lengths of time destroys the whole social structure of the community. And I want to impress you this afternoon until you realise fully that this is in fact compulsory labour, this migratory labour is labour where you are forced, only the forcing element of it does not come directly, you are brought into circumstances where you are bound, whether you like it or not, to migrate. And the tragedy of it all is that this system today is going down even to our children, its going even to our children, and that is why we demand the abolition of child labour on the farms. Now, I am going to come to my last point, and I'm coming to the most vital point in this country today. Schools for children living in the reserves. On this point I am bound to relate it with Bantu Education. I want to say that for years, for centuries the government has been collecting money from me, it has been collecting money from the next man, it has been collecting money from everybody, and that money has never, I don't know what portion of it has been in use for the education and development of the African children, I want this meeting to understand fully that we are bearing tremendous responsibilities over the people in the reserves, because comparatively there are no schools on the farms at all, comparatively speaking there are not schools at all, and even before the birth of these schools, Dr. Verwoerd has realised that there is sufficient trouble with those areas which have a slightly.....

I want to say again the words of some of the speakers on these various demands, that we, the parents of children, must be very guilt before God if we ever allow these children to have Bantu Education, we are guilty of an offence. I want to say to this meeting, that you have a duty to perform, namely, to spread education to the rural areas and the reserves, and to bring that into effect, the only way to help is to destroy Bantu Education here in the urban areas.

think it is my plain duty to inject every one of you here today with the spirit that is going to drive you to oppose Bantu Education, and not oppose it only, which is not enough, but to destroy it for good". (Shouts of Mayebuye!)

I must say therefore Lady Chair, that I feel that all these demands are properly set and material in nature and that this meeting should be advised to send them to the Congress of the People". (Shouts of Mayebuye Afrika !)

CHAIRLADY : "You have heard the demands, is there a seconder ? Lets put it to the vote. All those in favour ? Those abstaining ? Against?"

We thank Mr. Matlau for what he has said here this afternoon. Now ladies, I am supposed to be speaking to you on conditions of housing, everybody here in this hall can tell people outside what they want. Everybody here has an idea of the type of house she would like to live in, and therefore I feel that everybody sometimes discuss the prospects that some day I'll be able to live in a house like that .

Just recently you know, the City Council tried to raise the rent in the Johannesburg areas. They went on to say that if your earnings were so much you were to pay so much for your rent. They started off by giving forms to the tenants (tenants) in the Municipal townships, they went to the extent of including your child's earnings into that form, they went to the extent of asking if the wife was a breadwinner or not, whether she worked, whether she added to the family account.

Now, friends, we have a battle to fight, those of us who grow up in Johannesburg, you know that we live in town here. I lived in town and I moved out of town when I was five years old, and I moved to Sophiatown when it was still an empty vacant spot. In 1918 when I moved to Potchefstroom Sophiatown was still empty, there was absolutely no squatters to speak about, but by then the Council of Johannesburg has discovered that there must be an Orlando Township, that is Orlando East and they came from town and said those people in Doornfontein - now there you have a beautiful site outside there at Orlando East and if you live there for twenty years that house will automatically belong to you, it will be your house, it will be paid off and you will only pay rates. Don't forget friends, they moved us to Orlando, from Sophiatown people moved to Orlando. The next thing the government did was to build houses there, and these people could not take these houses as their own. We must do something to break this idea, they build two more blocks, making it bigger houses, giving them a sort of a bargain with water there, and they went to Orlando East people and said, you want a room for your son, you want a room for your daughter, look at those ideal houses and the rent is quite cheap, and...../12

and a bigger plot for gardening.

So the people fell for the joke and said, my son grows up and my daughter grows up, I can't have two rooms here I must get one of those. The poor people forget that if they lived in Orlando for the second year they had a claim on the Council, alright they decided there must be a much brighter house, given a much bigger one, they went and built West Street, and they said the whole idea of owning a single house in Orlando has fallen away.

Now what is happening to us now ? we live miles and miles out of town, the fare has been raised from time to time, today you are actually paying 17/6 for a single ticket. Today you are confronted with three different established places, today you are confronted with schools for your children. Some children all these years, not only since Bantu Education came into force, all these years have children been travelling from Orlando to some other area to get their education.

Now, what is the position in these houses ? In Orlando the houses have no bathrooms, no ceiling, no sewerage, no inside doors, only outside doors. There is no area in which you can say they have put a bathroom in the house with running water. At White City they decided to give us sewerage, at White City Orlando they made a bucket system. They started adding to those buildings recently, and they decided that those buckets must be full before they empty it. Now you can imagine what those places look like if somebody go there in the morning after those men have been there. The mother or the daughter has got to go and clean up.

Now, the position is this, now we have a drain system because there is sewerage, but they have no basins where to wash their(hands) dishes. At White City where we have got no basins, what we have to do now is to put a tin underneath and open the water to run in.

Now, there is Pretoria, what is going to happen to Lady Selborne now ? People are told to move out of town and we understand there are people who are paying three shillings a day for transport - a day to come into town and go back home. What has happened in Marabastad, what has happened in the Western Areas. Look at Meadowlands, where is Meadowlands ? If you just take a walk in that area and see how far they are sending those people. The people who are moving in now will have to get up three o'clock in the morning to get to work at eight. Now, I think it is time we should be able to live where we want to live, if we feel we want to live in the centre of town we must not be sent to Doornfontein. We want houses where you have the facilities of hot and cold water, and where you have your lavatory inside your house and you can go out any time of the night to your lavatory. We want lights, we want our townships properly lit up. Now, friends, you have the biggest power station in the country, you have in Orlando, but the people who smell...../13

smell the smoke of the power station have to live in darkness. Now I want these demands in houses to go into the Freedom Charter. If I want to live in Parktown and I have the money, I would go and live in my house there. (Shouts of Mayebuye.) You take some people from Cyrildene or Sunnyside and put them in Moroka, and see if they would like it. Now, do you agree with me that these demands on houses and on transport should go in ?"

AUDIENCE : "Agreed".

CHAIRLADY : "Our next speaker here will be Mrs. Joseph our Secretary".

HELEN JOSEPH : "Afrika !"

AUDIENCE : "Mayebuye!"

HELEN JOSEPH : "Lady Chair, friends and fellow women, I am going to be very short today because our time is going by quickly. I chose this set of demands because these are the things that I would like to see and these are the things I want to talk of.

These are the demands that the Coloured people when they get old, the Coloured people when they get sick, the Coloured people when they are well, these are the demand for the Coloured's freedom of speech and their right to vote. Today we are all workers here, all of us will one day be too old to work, some of us may one day be too sick too work, and what will happen to us then when we are too old and too sick ?

In this country the government makes provision for me, but it does not make provision for all the friends I see here before me. In every civilized country in the world the government makes provision for the people who are too old and too sick to work, but not in South Africa. Here the government makes provision for the white people, they can draw old age pension, they can draw sickness pension. The pensions are not high, they are £9 per month, but what do the African people draw, if and when they draw anything ? The pension is'nt even paid every month, on every two months, every three months, and how much is it ? A pound. A human person cannot live on that, and we as women demand that these things should be put right.

We demand that proper provision shall be made for all people who are too old or too sick to work. We demand also attention for us who are old and too sick to work and look after themselves, there should be proper places where the old people can be cared for, and these things we demand for all people because they exist for a few Europeans, not for all Europeans, they just exist for a few Europeans, they don't exist at all for the Indian people, and the Coloured people and the African people, and we demand that the State shall demand a proper medical service, doctors, nurses and medicines for all people in South Africa. We demand there shall be free...../14

free hospitals for all people in South Africa.

As I have said in every civilized country in the world these things are provided for people who are sick, and for people who must go to hospital. And we demand that our wages should be sufficient to meet the cost of living. We demand it because we are women and we know what it is like to have no money to buy food for the children. How many women like us here are forced to go out to work, to leave their children because the wages that their husbands earn are not enough to meet the cost of the food that they eat. In this country we talk about the cost of living allowance, but it doesn't meet the cost of living. So we demand that that cost of living shall be increased so that it meets the cost of living.

And we demand that all the African people as well as the people of other races shall be protected when there is unemployment. When the government started the unemployment insurance, all the people were included. Then the government said it is too difficult, it costs too much to cover all the African people, so although the African people has paid a thousand pounds into the unemployment insurance fund, they were then put out of it. Today only African people who earn more than £180 a year can belong to the unemployment insurance. But today that fund stands at £62,000,000 and still the African people are not all included. So we demand, and this is one of our strong demands, that all people be protected in times of unemployment.

And now I come perhaps to the most important of all our demands, that is, that no person in South Africa, be they man or woman, African, Coloured, Indian or European, shall be required to carry a pass of any sort. (Shouts of Mayebuye.)

Order ! Order !

It is going to come to all of us from this government, but I think that we are going to say that we, the workers of South Africa, will never carry passes. (Shouts of Mayebuye) And that is our demand, we the women of South Africa demand there shall be no more passes.

These are our demands, how do we get them? We get them first by the biggest demand of all, and that is the vote for all the people in South Africa. Every living person in South Africa who is old enough to think should vote, no matter what the colour of the skin may be. He is entitled to that fundamental human right to share in the government of the country. And so we, the women of South Africa, represented here at this meeting, demand these rights for all the people, all the people of Afrika. Afrika !"

AUDIENCE : "Mayebuye"

CHAIRLADY : "From your response I gather you are all in agreement with Mrs. Joseph. Is that so?"

AUDIENCE : "Yes".

CHAIRLADY : "Let us see by a show of your hands. Thank you.

Friends, before we come to a very important item I will ask Mrs. (Moosa - Vundhla) to speak and after that we shall come to the business of the congress". (Shouts of Afrika !)

MRS. (MOOSA-VUNDHLA) "Lady Chair, friends, I will be very brief because I know you are all in a hurry to go home. I'm going to read over the demands first and then I am going to speak to you on those demands.

We demand for all women in South Africa the right to vote, full opportunity in all spheres of work, equal pay for equal work, equal right for the guardianship of our children.

Now, friends, I am going to speak on these demands I have just put forward to you. We, the non-white women of South Africa have no say whatever in the government of our country. The population of South Africa is twelve million people of which two million are white, yet we have not got the vote which is a very important thing in our country because the vote decides the Government of the country. Yet we see it is only the white people who have got the vote and not the black people, we see in other countries that women play an important part in their countries where they officiate in State bodies, Provincial and Municipal bodies, and we also see in other countries such as Russia, if they feel like being an engine driver and they are capable of doing it, they get the job. During the war I read in the newspapers that a warship had a second officer who was a woman, but in our country they say that we as women are not capable of taking such a position.

Friends, as I was saying the vote is very important. The men and women in Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State have not got the franchise. But they still enjoy a little part of the franchise in the Cape, the Coloured men and women in Provincial bodies only. But I don't know for how long. As you know in Cape Town we had a Non-European woman to represent the people in the Council for a number of years and we have got Non-European doctors, nurses and teachers. If we are given the full opportunity we can prove to them that we are capable of doing all those things.

I would like to speak to you on the most important demand of all. Some day we may have to do with the Atomic and Hydrogen bombs. These maniacs do not know what it is to be a mother. As mothers we don't want to see life destroyed. We see today that they are out to have a third world war. These capitalists want war because it is for their own benefit. The women are the people who are asking to

asking to ban war because they are the people who suffer. We have seen the horrors which the atom bomb has done - has done to innocent people, to mothers, children and fathers in Hiroshima in Japan.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the days are past when we in South Africa can comfort ourselves with the story that war will not come to us. This is a very important question and you must remember this. South Africa is the main uranium producer for the American block, you all know that uranium is produced in South Africa, and uranium is used for the atom bomb.

In the event of a third world war places like London, if these centres should suffer an attack by the Atom bomb, the entire population will be wiped out and the rest of the country will face radiation, poison and starvation. It is for us in South Africa to unite ourselves with this great movement for peace in the world. Anyone who cares for the future of South Africa and the world will not stand aside. Afrika ! "

AUDIENCE : "Mayebuye! "

CHAIRLADY : "Now friends, this has been a very important portion of our demands. You know once in a year in the month of February the African people are always reminded of that.....that took six hundred of our sons. We as mothers has the right to say that no son or husband of mine will ever take part in any war. We do not want such memories, we do not want war. It does not matter whether you are African, Coloured or Indian. We have no a battle to fight but that is a battle for peace and not to kill other people. Do you agree with her that this is a demand that we all must put forward. Do you agree ?"

AUDIENCE : "Yes".

CHAIRLADY : "Thank you very much. Now ladies we are coming towards the final stages of our conference which is a very important stage of our conference. Now, friends we have come here together because we want to prepare for the Congress of the People. Now, we want to do this in the shortest space of time. We want to elect some delegates to the Congress of the People. We want ten delegates from this meeting. We have delegates here from Natalspruit, Boksburg, Benoni, Springs, Sophiatown, Brakpan, Orlando and Kliptown. Now, can you please give us the names of ten people that you would like to represent you at that congress.

Helen Joseph.

(Seboko) Orlando West No. 2.

(Mekwaye) -

Mrs. Price - Sophiatown.

Mrs. Pollo - Brakpan.

Mrs. Goi - Benoni.

Mary Thlatswayo - Natalspruit

Mrs. Moosa - Brakpan.

Pauline Makwe - Germiston.

(Other names inaudible.)

Now friends, we have agreed for ten names, we have twelve, now I think we should allow the twelve to stand because they merely represent all the areas that are represented in this hall. Is that agreed now?"

AUDIENCE : "Agreed".

CHAIRLADY : "Now, I want to show that you by your votes are giving these twelve people the mandate to go and put forward your demands at the Congress of the People, show your hands, please. Thank you.

Now friends, I want to make this announcement to the delegates that had been elected, that accommodation and food will be supplied, but delegates who are accommodated, if they want to have their morning tea, they will have to pay for their morning tea, but otherwise food will be provided for everybody. Is that understood?"

AUDIENCE : "Yes".

SPEAKER : "Chairlady, I have got a friend here Mr. Mashina who has come from Bushbuckridge and he wish to say something".

CHAIRLADY : "Alright, just wait a bit then we will take your message. Now, I have one last speaker for two seconds, and also that is Mrs. Moswabile".

MRS. MOSWABILE : (Speaking in Native interpreted into English)

"Afrika".

AUDIENCE : "Mayebuye!"

MRS. MOSWABILE : "All the speakers have shown you what we need. What I want to speak to you about, it does not help us to say quite a lot of things and yet we don't do it, it does not help us to say we are going to do this and we don't do it. It does not help us to do this work and yet we have not got any money. If we really mean what we say we will do something about it.

I want to give you a little example of what is going on. You all saw what the Europeans did on Wednesday, they showed by their actions that they did not want that law. I am asking you ladies here today to do your work. All these things need money. This conference has no money, I therefore ask you for money, even these demands will not come to you if you have no money. Women I am appealing to you, you also try and show the white people that you are also women, I want you to give money now, we are going to ask you for money. You are being asked to raise money in order to make this Congress a success. We appeal to you that when you get to your homes, also try and raise money. Make it your duty to walk into every house and tell them about this. Because what we are going to do is not just for you and me, but it is for these people in every house. We cannot just speak about this and yet there is no money. That is all we ask you, whatever you give will be welcome".

(Singing while collection is being taken).

CHAIRLADY : "I will now give Mr. Mashina a few minutes to speak".

MASHINA : (Speaking in Native interpreted into English.)

I have come here to tell you about what is happening where I come from, but I am not representing anybody I have just come here. There is another farm there.....
(Not interpreted further - speaker carrying on in native.)

(Singing of Nkosi Sekelele Afrika.)

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AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE.

Ref 50/507/5
Ea 2.5
G. 462(9)

Chr. :- Mrs. Shandu.
Sec. :- E. Mhlakwane. (Mrs)
Speaker. :- Mrs. E. Mkusa.
Men :- 12.
Women :- 400.
Date and Time :- 26/10/55 11.20am.
Object :- Passes for Women.
Advertisement :- Verbal.

Chairlady opened the meeting and said:- The object of this meeting is a sad one so we decided to call this meeting so that you must all hear for yourselves. Today the Govt want us to carry passes. but the first one will be called privilege pass, then another one for identity, so I think this touches our hearts and does not agree with we women. This is your change to voice out your views Noyitombi Dlamini) This is a very serious matter which demand our serious reaction now we are to carry Dom pass, which I think you all do not like, few weeks back we had a meeting with local authorities ~~wik~~ but they denied that women will carry passes but only a privilege pass, but even then we do not want that, because it will eventually lead to another pass.

UNKNOWN N/FEMALE :- Let me tell you of one thing that this privilege pass is a gate way to carrying of Dom pass (ref book) during the last war our sons went to the war and we were promised all good things but non of such were given us instead this is the answer. so I object to any pass for women.

N/FEMALE (Mrs) NGCOBO I say I will not carry any pass, so I suggest that we all refuse to carry it.

UNKNOWN N/FEMALE said If we are to carry any pass who will pay for it. We are women under our husbands so there is no need for us to carry any pass.

UNKNOWN N/F. more than this pass law for women, we have another trouble when the local Govt took over this place we were promised a better living but now we are being forced to carry passes. I think it is white women who suggested this kind of passes so we are here to object ~~agxxxxxx~~ to this.

NOYINTOMBI DLAMINI I stand to ask you whether you agree to carrying of passes? answer :- No. unanimously.

VICTORIA TOBA I stand to say from now I will not carry any pass whatsoever.

RODAH NKWAYAMA:- I object to this Dom pass although some women are in favour of this for they say their children are wondering in towns.

FLORA MDLALOSE I also object to carrying of passes by women.

MRS MKIZE W

H. OSTRITCH. I stand to say do you like to carry Dom pass. unanimously No. then said we are in hard times few weeks we met one official of the local Govt who tried to explain to us that this privilege pass is a good thing because you will more privilege than others, but I dare say this is only a plan by the two Govts to appress us how are we to carry this Dom pass? what purpose does it serve? I say. it means nothing but alavery. Now the main thing that we must do is to collect money in order to defend ourselves from such an Act now the Committee will meet and decide how this money will be kept and used.

DOROTHY NYEMBE said:- to all daughters of Africa I am greatful to be present to tell this that these two Governments are one in this
~~suboplar~~ Plan/.....

plan of passes for women people from the age of 16 upwards everyone will have to carry passes, there is a feeble excuse that there will be a privilege pass which will help the resident, I say that is not true, this pass mean deportation to you and it will start from women workers in towns, all Europeans will ask for this pass, and if you have no such there would be work for you. I say we would rather die then to carry it, what is more we will be victims of the Police Force who will be authorised to demand such and failing to produce you will have to comply with his desires.

MRS. E. MHLAKWANE :- I see the danger of these passes we will have different children from different men of the Police Force should we allow ourselves to carry passes so if you love your husband object to it.

EMELIA KAMABENG :- I say passes of any kind are for men not for women therefore I see no reason why I should carry one, so I will not carry it.

MISS FLORENCE MKIZE said:- Now I am convinced that the majority of you present here do not like passes. therefore I appeal to you to join our Congress the A.N.C. not the Bantu national Congress I therefore advise you not to follow the latter congress

A. NENE Chrl. I am thankful for the opportunity given me in this meeting, but I stand to say we of the A.N.C. are opposed to anything that is a paper or pass of any kind for both men and women. In fact there will be no difference between your passes and ours they say all races will carry same but since we men carried the reference book, I have seen no Europeans Coloured or Indian being demanded by Police for any ref. book ? so that is why I say there will be difference with regard to privilege pass I say once a women is married I see no need for having a privilege pass I therefore greatly sympathise with you, more over this system is an indirect way for deporting your sons back to farms only, they know that you have no homes in farms but in towns so they want to provide farmers with cheap labourers.

P. MNGADI said, Firstly I must thank the presence of all our women folk to object to carrying of passes for should you agree to such you will be making things more difficult for us, remember we are all christians, how much do you like it when going to church and you meet a Policeman and demand pass from you and instead of going to church you go to gaol so I say, you must be determined and refuse anything that is a pass for you.

meeting closed at 1.35pm.

N/D/SQT. P. ZULU.

Members of the African National Congress present in this meeting were:-

| | | |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| Henrietta Ostritch | -- | filed |
| Dorothy Nyembe. | -- | filed |
| Florence Mkize. | -- | filed |
| Amon Nene. | -- | filed |
| Pastor Mngadi | -- | filed |
| Noyintombi Dlamini. | -- | |

Sir,

Particulars of the following women will follow soon as possible thus :- (Mrs) Shandu. Mrs. E. Mhlakwane. Mrs. E. Mkuma (but did not speak.)

The meeting was poorly controlled and made it difficult to obtain names of other women who spoke in the meeting.

M.R. 69

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Ex 2.5

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE A.N.N.C.

held in Durban, 19th December, 1954.

Present were the members of the Natal League, The Cape, the Free State and the Transvaal with the honour of Mr. Tshunungwa, National Organiser for African National Congress.

Mrs. L Ngoyi, President of the Transvaal Province Presided over the meeting.

In her opening remarks the Chairlady said ; "We have been given a few hours by the National Conference to meet as the women's Section to discuss the following items:

(i). Problems affecting us as women and

(ii) The reason why we were put in the Programme of the Conference.

She then asked Miss I Mntwana, Former President of the Women's Section, Transvaal, to lead the house on the question of the Women's Section in the Programme.

Miss Mntwana: ~~then~~ " I had been requested early this year as the then President of the Transvaal, ~~by the President General through the Secretary General~~ to make preparations for the Nationalization of the Women's Section. I then took steps towards that end, which resulted in the Women's Section being included in the Conference Programme.

After some discussion on this question, the house agreed upon having a National Conference the following year.

At this juncture, the Chair lady, called upon Mr Tshunungwa to explain to the house what Congress is.

Mr Tshunungwa explained fully what Congress is, and stated the reasons why Women were needed in the Organisation.

"The time has passed when the women are to remain in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{assistance} Kitchen", he said "we have realised that without their ~~help~~ ^{assistance} we shall never obtain Freedom in our Lifetime!. The women must stand together with their menfolk, in the struggle for the Liberation of the African People.

He further stated that there are certain issues that could be fought better by women than by men, i.e. the Bantu Education Act.

He pointed out that women must prepare themselves for the National Conference of the women.

Their tasks are as follows:-

Organise women into Congress, form Branches in the Provinces and have Provincial Executives in the areas where there are none, such as the Cape, the Free State and Natal.

He said he was in agreement with those members who suggested setting up a Committee to prepare for the Conference.

After he had left the meeting the house agreed upon electing a Committee, ~~which was then formed.~~

This Committee consisted of Seventeen members which were divided into four Groups, each group for the different Provinces.

M.R. 69. (2)

He further appointed Mrs Ngoyi as Convener of the Conference.

BANTU EDUCATION.

The Chairlady on leading the house on Bantu Education, said that this Act was more dangerous than any of the oppressive laws passed by the Nationalist Government upon the African people, in that it is ~~int~~ intended to dwarf the minds of the children, thus rendering them proper and willing slaves.

"We can not bare children for Dr. Verwoerd to do what he likes with them " she said.

After a lengthy discussion on this issue, the house agreed upon the withdrawal of the children from the Government schools as from the 1st April, 1955 when this Act shall begin.

This was endorsing the decision taken by the National Conference of the African National Congress.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL WORKING COMMITTEE.

Transvaal.

Mrs. L. Ngoyi, Mrs. E. Motingwa, Miss I Mntwana, Mrs C. Kraai, and Miss V. Mngoma.

Cape.

Mrs Mahambehlala, Mrs. Makani, Mrs Sakwe,

Free State.

Mrs Mohlakwana, Mrs Titus, Mrs Mafora, Mrs Motaung.

Natal.

Mrs G. Kuzwayo, Miss Mkize, Mrs Shabane, and Mrs G. Chonco.

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RECORDS RELATING TO THE 'TREASON TRIAL' (REGINA vs F. ADAMS AND OTHERS ON CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON, ETC.), 1956 1961

TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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