

P.O. Box 2706,

CAPE TOWN.

20th Feb., 1954.

Dear Hilda,

Dear Friend,

This is to inform you that at a meeting of our Women's Committee we decided to submit to you the letter convening the Conference, and to ask you to obtain as many signatures as possible from your Town and Province.

If you wish to suggest any changes to the enclosed letter, please do not hesitate to do so, and we will re-draft same if necessary.

When we have the signatures of many prominent women of all provinces, we propose to send this invitation to all women's organisations in South Africa.

We suggest that the Conference Agenda be as follows:-

- X) 1. Position of Women in South Africa, particularly position of African Women - Paper to be read by one of our African women friends from Johannesburg;
2. Position of Indian Women: Paper to be read by Fatima Meer of Durban;
- (X) 3. Women in China: by Walter Sisulu;
4. Women's struggle for Peace;
5. Charter for Women's Rights;
6. Resolutions;
7. Constitution;
8. General.

Please let me have your comments on this Agenda and any additions you wish to suggest.

We should contact women's organisations in other parts of the world and ask them to send fraternal greetings to our Conference.

For your information we are organising a mass meeting on Monday, 8th March, 1954, to celebrate the international women's day. For this purpose we are sending letters to organisations asking for fraternal speakers. Some of the speakers will be Dora Tamana, *Ray Alexander*, Francis Thaele and A. Salinga.

Awaiting your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

*Ray Alexander*

- (X) What about the Comrade who addressed the Peace Congress in August. Holby reported to us on her.
- (XI) Please discuss it with Walter.

P.S. Please reply to my letters  
I want to know whether  
you receive them and  
we must get on with the job

*Ray*

Beaufort West, 11/3/54

P.S. I have sent a number of appeals for my election campaign to Ruth (with Mrs Knell) will write to you first on my return to Ruth.

Dear Hilda,

Many thanks for your letter of 1st received on the 5th. We had a good meeting on Monday resolved to work for the Conference and a resolution & telegram to Eisenhower & Richard Robert Rosenberg.

Hilda on Monday 15th our Committee meeting and we will decide to issue the appeal & invitation for the Conference to be held on Saturday 17/4/54 at Johannesburg.

Please let me have at once the place & address for the Conference

(1) Names of women that are prepared to sign the invitation.

(2) Names & addresses of women's organisations to whom the invitation should be sent.

(3) Whether Walter has accepted the invitation to speak on China

Now my report to you: I have contacted

(a) Walnut Den Fed. (b) National Women's Assembly England, (c) Mrs Ransome Kuti Nigeria

(d) has undertaken to notify other affiliates and all messages are to reach us by the 12th of April. PTO

(2) Am having meetings with women all over and they are electing delegates undertaking to raise the money for fares. In view of the fact that Joburg want spend money on fares

I suggest you undertake paying for accommodation for delegate & accommodate them.

(3) You can prepare for at least 6 coloured women 10 African women I will work to more delegates and will let you know about other delegates as I receive reports from East London P.E. Umntata, Lady Frere Addelley Cape & Durban

Suggestions: I suggest Conference should last a day say Saturday but Sunday we should have a School i.e. lecture interchange of experience & coach people for the work to be undertaken. I suggest Saturday night entertainment and on Sunday an outing i.e. Show delegates living condition in Joburg etc.

If Bill becomes Act please arrange for some party  
I propose to come say on the 15th of  
I propose to meet the delegates. I propose to  
discuss with you & others regarding  
arrangements for delegates but please  
reply to this by Friday. Your  
Bill  
I propose to meet the delegates.  
I propose to discuss with you & others regarding  
arrangements for delegates but please  
reply to this by Friday. Your

Ask for copy of  
Constitution

FSAW

51

Convention - draws into Charles  
how to mobilize women  
for Convention  
Dear Hilda

16<sup>th</sup> March, 1954

PO Box 2678, CT.

Don't leave  
me Indian women, 'This morning early  
posted to you a letter.

Ask re  
"liberal"  
women  
& individuals  
I have dictated the circular  
letter of invitation and the  
agenda which is being  
translated, Please let me

① have by wire the signature  
to the invitation.

② Item 1 - is Ida

" 2 - left out

" 2. ③ - Walter

③ ④ - is you and some  
one else

4. ⑤ - Dox Tamana ✓  
myself

5 - Resolutions

6 - Constitution will  
be proposed by  
Gladys Smith

Mat. Council of African Women (Queenstown)

Individuals? in T.W's etc

Betty Spence.

Eleanor Howarden

-2-

FSAW

Please reply to my letter  
of 11th. Gladys, Hilda  
& Susie (Col. women)  
are trying to fix up their  
own accomodation  
will let you know as  
soon as possible about  
the other.

Yours Ray.

19/3/54

Dear Hilda,

Many, many thanks for your letter of 16<sup>th</sup> just received. I was about to phone you when the letter arrived, thanks for all the names.

Now, am sending to you 50 letters & 50 agendas under separate cover. Please send them out not only to Johburg but handle Trl, and if you know of people in the Free State get from Walter AN.C. Contacts. Am working here & P.E. with full support of AN.C.

It is truly going to be a fine Conference. So much enthusiasm for it next Tuesday am having 2 meetings 11 am at Nyanga Loc. & 2<sup>30</sup> pm at Lange purpose Conference, election of delegates & raising of fares. Retreat is in the swing and so are other organisations! P.E. is busy, Durban & E London, Beaufort West, de la Rive, Umata, Lady Frere etc. Will be able to tell you of all the names in a weeks time, wherever possible I urge them to get their own accomodation.

Gladys Smith and myself will come a few days prior to Conference so we will have an opportunity to discuss matters.

Re-outing - I had in mind Sophiatown etc - the removal plan. I suggest you organise 2 kinds and delegates can do as they please, I myself am using people to see how the other people live it is



2.

FSAW BTI

good education - in fact if we could combine an outing in the wealthy areas and the other and the comparison will make a mark on them.

Re your paper on Peace - that is an important paper and I suggest you do not spare in giving them a lot of information - women personalities for peace - perhaps you can have their photos, something about them and incidents.

Will write to you again early next week,

Yours Ray

P.S. please hand note to Bram.

FSAW

P.O.Box 2706, C.T.

16th March, 1954.

Dear Hilda,

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th received on the 13th on my return from De Aar. Could not reply earlier to you as I was at meetings Sat. & Sun. Last night we had our Wom. Fed. Com. meeting and resolved:

1. Your redraft of letter to be used plus an other few sentences
2. Do not approve of your change in agenda, as the letter of invitation specially speaks about women's rights and women's disabilities, the question of the women's role in the Nat. Lib. struggle must be woven in.
3. Your suggestion of Rad Singh will be followed up. am writing to-day to Durban and in view of Fatima's lack of response to our letters we are entitled to change
4. Charter ~~of~~ for Women's rights - that we want to discuss as we had discussions on it in C.T., Durban and East London, P.E. - you see, Hilda we have been working for this now for more than a year and we were held up n by the lack of response from your centre particularly, we feel that we should bring a draft on the Charter for Women's right which will become the centre for organisatio This Conference will cost us a lot of money and we cannot so easilly talk about an other conference shortly, we shall have to make it an annual affair.
5. Item 4 should remain as it is - of course in our paper we talk about the national struggle. The question is will ~~you~~ if someone else prepare the paper on it. Please arrange it and let me know, st that I can send out the Agenda The Charter for Women's Rights I will prepre and have it duplicated.

Now the position is that, later in the day we will send up to you the English & Xosa translation and you will do the ~~the~~ Sesutu translation. Am awaiting from you the names for signature

You will be pleased to hear that I received letters from Durban, P.E. & E.London. In capetown there is a great deal of interest and meetings are held all over to prepare for the conference.

Yours Ray

PS I posted to you a letter in De Aar in reply to your letter of 1st March

*[Faint blue ink scribbles and markings at the bottom of the page]*

# Committee

1. Money (for publicity, accommodation, food for delegates)

FSAW

4/17/42

Thursday.

My dear,

1. Wrote a long letter to Helen and will now reply to both your letters dated 17th March and 21st March, both of which I received on Wednesday. ( I understand from Sonia that the women had your letters for me for some days.) I was anxious not having had a reply to my letters. Why did my letter of 11th reach you only on the 18th? Is that address O.K? Am very sorry to hear that you are having difficulties. Please tell me what they are. Can I help?
2. Am glad about your March 8th. The resolutions are fine.
3. Re the reports: a very good idea to bring out (a) it is good material (we put in hard work to produce it) and can help in our organising work, so please go ahead with it. Always remember to put in an appeal to affiliate to us and our address, extracts of our charter and our constitution. So do all as you suggest.
4. Are you doing something with the other material I sent up to you?
5. Re Congress of Mothers regional conf: I fully agree. But must make full use of Congress of the People, and I suggest you discuss it with the organisers to have a special session of women.
6. Now about our organisation: Since I started on the individual women helping them to do their work, it is hard work but the results are excellent in many ways. Annie recruited 160 women to the ANC, at last Sunday's regional ANC conference. I agreed and authorised Annie to form ANC women's leagues which will affiliate to us. Other women formed women's welfare organisation - also will affiliate to us. What we need now is material for them to sell and which will unite them together with other women in our Federation. So you see how urgent it is for us to have material, as our people that are not banned are new, we must give them material to enable them to put forward things in the correct way although in their own way. I so wish we could work in a team, but we are so far away from one another. However, I think we can do it.

Am so glad you have not been banned. How I wish they would have not banned me. I have many plans in my head for our work, and hope from the middle of next month to get a friend who will be able to keep things in her place and work with me, so I should not be burdened with keeping papers, addresses and letters, and she will do the open work

H's report is excellent - have read it and immediately handed it over for our other comm. members to read, so by Sunday night everybody will have read it and will be able to discuss all matters.

Write soon.

Sat. day. 28/3/54

Dear Hilda,

Many, many thanks for your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup>. All invitations are out. All names that you gave me were placed on the letter, so I am sure when you duplicated you completed the list. As we go on, we are receiving more and more women who are interested in the conference.

Your idea about having a leaflet duplicated on the Conference is very good and am looking forward to see your copy. You are right - that the letters are not enough one must follow it up with meetings and discussions. We are having difficulties in finding an Indian women's org. in CT.

The item on Indian women is not dropped but owing to Fatima not having replied in time I could not put on her name on the agenda. Fatima Meer will now speak under the item 1. In fact I also suggested to Fatima to get someone to speak on the position of women in India - past & present. [By the way she raised objections to Walter's talk on the women in China, I argued out that point with her and am sure she will be satisfied.] I fully agree with all the remarks you made about our Indian men friends.

During our recent visit to Durban we had long discussions on the same point.

It is quite in order to send invitation to ~~the~~ individual women - we must make this conference a broad one - we have no reason to fear anyone our ideas for such an organisation is long overdue so get as many women as you can. I have sent invitations to many NCUW branches in addition to their head-office.

By the way Gladys Smith and myself are leaving on the 13/4/54 at 10am and due to arrive in Johannesburg on the 14/4/54 at 3pm. I have asked Annie Ketkin to accommodate me, do not worry so much about myself but Gladys does not know anyone in Johannesburg, she incidentally will be useful to make contact with Coloured women. She will have a letter from SACPO she is on their executive Committee, there is now a branch of Sacpo in Johannesburg and she will look them up.

yours Ray,

PS I noticed that I had written to you about Fatima did not see your footnote.

Will send you names of delegates for accommodation as I receive the information.

Re Constitution the stencil has been destroyed so I will send you a copy and you will make more copies.



FSAW

Will you please ask Betty du Toit to write a special letter to K. Goonan and get her enthusiastic about the Conference so she could attend and be useful. Hilda - who will open the Conference? Please discuss and find someone suitable.

P.O. Box 2706, CAPE TOWN.

30th March, 1954.

Dear Hilda,

I wrote to you on Sunday, but I now have more news. We had a very good meeting last night, attended by women from many different areas, and the interest and enthusiasm for the conference is beyond expectations.

To-date, the following have elected delegates:-

ORGANISATION.

DELEGATE.

AFRICAN FOOD & CANNING WORKERS, WORCESTER <i>Branch</i>	MABEL JONES.
RETREAT WOMENS' VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION. DO.	MRS. ESTHER NOSE. DORA TAMANE.
MYANGA WOMENS' VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION.	MRS. ALBERTINA GWENKANE. <i>~ Eunice Razana</i>
LANGA WOMENS' VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION.(N.B)	3 DELEGATES.
CAPE HOUSEWIVES LEAGUE. CAPE TOWN.	GLADYS SMITH.
GUARDIAN XMAS CLUB.	SUSIE WHITE.
GUARDIAN CLOTHING CLUB.	HETTY MCCLOUD.
CAPE HOUSEWIVES LEAGUE. PORT ELIZABETH. DO.	CHRISSIE JASSON. C. DAMONS.

N.B. I do not think the Langa women will be able to raise sufficient money for three delegates.

Delegates are still being elected in other Trade Unions and other organisations, and as the names come in, I will let you have them. All delegates will need accomodation.

From Durban, there are three Indian and three African delegates. The three African delegates will require accomodation.

As yet, I have had no replies from Beaufort West, Worcester, Umtata, East London and Lady Frere.

I am enclosing a copy of the Constitution. We will do the Xosa translation and duplicating - will you do the English duplicating?

With best wishes, Ray. (she will bring her baby with)

Have just seen Advance News on conference - very good write up and no exception of who are important women - I gave the whole letter and all signatures - will discuss it with them.

C.T. Textile Union elected Mrs Egehof  
Af. F. C.W. Paarl Branch Mrs Elizabeth



FSAW

P.O. Box 2706,  
CAPE TOWN.

3rd April, 1954.

Dear Hilda,

Further to my previous letter, I now have to inform you that the Cape Provincial Executive Committee of the A.N.C. have decided to circulate all A.N.C. Branches to take part in the Conference. Robert Matji phoned me last night and gave me this information.

He also told me that we can expect a large number of delegates from the Cape Province, and he raised the question of permit for these delegates. In view of Section 10 of the Native Urban Areas Act, they will be able to stay for 72 Hours, without permits, and we want them to stay for only 48 hours, i.e. Saturday and Sunday. We will just have to take a chance and not worry about the permits, for, if permits were applied for, Saturday would be spent at the Pass Office, and not at the Conference.

However, we will have to pay the closest attention to the following:-

- (a) That delegates are picked up and taken to their accomodation by car.
- (b) That they are transported by car from their accomodation to all gatherings, so that there is as little chance as possible of their being picked up.

It appears to me that the Conference is going to be much larger than we visualised, which is a good omen for the future, of our work, and shows how badly needed is such an organisation. We will therefore have to mobilise enough support in Johannesburg to accomodate the delegates.

Please tell the Advance Office that I have given their address to a number of delegates for communication with us.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Ray

5/4/54

Dear Hilda,

Your letter of 1st just received. Many thanks for giving so much thought to the Conference. I am so glad that you are doing it, as my time is more than eaten up with the election work.

1. Now, am enjoying your arrangement that two men are to do the catering - excellent idea - a taste of real emancipation for both men & women!
2. Re Chairmen for sessions and that I should open Conference - all agreed to. Also the suggestion that delegates must be given time to discuss, exchange ideas of our work, you will remember I suggested in one of my first letters to you that it should be done on Sunday morning together with some talk on the work, I know agree that it should all be done on Saturday afternoon when Charter & Peace are discussed.

Re accommodation for myself - thank you  
 so much for inviting me to stay with you  
 which I accept wholeheartedly as it  
 solves a number of problems for me.  
 So, please meet us on Wednesday  
 afternoon 14/4/54. We leave with the 10 am  
 train of the 13<sup>th</sup> are due in Lohburg  
 at 3<sup>15</sup> pm but you know what the SRR is  
 so please check the time of arrival from  
 your end.

There will be more delegates that I first  
 visualised. I sent up to you a list of delegates  
 on ~~Wednesday~~ <sup>Saturday</sup>. To-day I received report that  
 FCIM Panel elected 2 Col. & FCIM Wellington  
 one.

Re decoration of Hall - We must get  
 slogans such as "Mothers do not give  
 birth to their children so that they may  
 be killed by Atom bombs"

"Children cannot defend themselves, it  
 is up to us - mothers to give the children  
 the joy of living!"

"The right to life, the right to health, the right to democratic education and teaching for all the children of the world";

~~Down~~ "Away with the Bantu Education Act"

"Away with the Commission on Coloured Education"

"Hands off the Western <sup>Native areas</sup> Townships"

"The Vote for all men & women over 18 - African Coloured Indian & Europeans irrespective of educational and property qualifications"

"The right to stand for election to sit in Parliament and other elected bodies"

Free & equal compulsory education

Free Health services for all the people

These and other slogans on 1936, Native Lab. Settlement of disputes Act and on Kenya - and of course

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**FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963**

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