

Cicero 'Freedom is participation in power'

Women

Florence Matomeka See notes speech
Womens Day Conway Hall Aug 9 68

ANC wms league - Double bind

- 1) WL recognition + wmn occupy inferior position to men in society, poss problems
- 2) Putt wmn in separate body perpetuates existg sexual divisions, reinforces wms role, W's work & so subtly undermines formal equality
Separate is not equal.

Religion is + sign of + oppressed
Creatures, + heart of a heartless world, just
as it is + spirit of an unspiritual situation
It is the opium of + people

Overcoming of illusions full use of our
active powers
Freeing oneself from illusions

I was always in love with life

Intelligence is largely a function of independence,
courage & alertness; stupidity is equally a result
of submission, fear & inner deadness.

Essential part of intelligence, is + ability to make
connections between consists in
factors not so far seen as related

→ People must be independent, adventurous
& in love with life

Recognising oneself as part of humanity, of living
according to a set of values in which + full experience of
love, justice, truth is + dominant goal of life

Strive for humility, one's identity with all human beings

X WORDS - Use of words - can be used without mean
meaning what they purport to mean - can be empty shells
& one can learn certain pol, relig ideas as one learns a
foreign language - Danger is confusing words with facts
Prevents + understands of reality →

It is not accidental that most creative men & women in the arts & sciences today with very few exceptions .. ~~share + conviction~~ stand on one side

Share + conviction of the need for international understanding

for need to end war

Realism about nuclear war - shelter programmes - all in big cities would be destroyed, within hours - shelters or not

The capacity for DISOBEDIENCE is as great a virtue as the capacity for obedience

Dis. was 1st act of freedom, the beginning of human history

Dare to say 'No' to the powers that be

OBED. most destructive - Israel, Rwanda

See p. 159

Respect + absolute in religion, & sought for it in the Party

9) Next few years - activities
Tus. develop ANU growing
1941 invasion ... -

8) Moscow trials
Betrayals
Sov German Pact
Party policy to war



~~6) Meetings, City Hall Steps~~

6) Meetings: City Hall Steps

7) No doubts in my mind. Years leads to war
Factors not understood. Religion etc
Results of collectivisation

9) My convictions rock solid
Scarcity wld be overcome
Exuberant years

Yet also time of Stalin takes power
... onto arts, doubts abt art & architecture
... incomplete. Impresor?

Didn't we know?

Denial. Trials Olga.

All parties corrupt - Not mine!

8) Non aggression Pact. Betrayals by west

9) Next few years. Tus, - ANU - activities 1941
UNFINISHED

LIST OF ^{Women} DETAINERS in First State of
Emergency

Myrtle Berman

Ann Heyman

Shulamith Muller

Violet Weinberg

Maryand Kalk

Self

Doubles

Dickie Rachman

Freda Goldblatt

Sarah Brown

Winnie Kramer

Molly Fischer

Cestande Cohen

Soma Bunting

Kay

Becky

Rica Hodgson

Betty du Toit

Yetta Baranblatt

Sheila Horvich

Helen Joseph

Hannah Stanten

Being a woman in men's organisations
(Times about picture - Patsy, + sec)

"Not one of us was going to get what we wanted
I had suspected this for years & now I believe ..."
"... + would certainly for us yet ..."

"... now we are dismissed & excluded from the most
primary of entitlements"

Rape - in war - Russia, Bosnia, Congo

a means of intimidation & control; people

Stigma - rejection by husbands

Not recognised as means of subjection

Not just - a form of persecution

X JCHG BMS Impromptu No 2

FORTY FIVE YEARS AGO

1. HOW AUG 9 BECAME WOMENS DAY

Wmn exluded from orthodox historiography. Bias, male historians
Example: A-P campaign most militant & successful of any. Yet E Roux.

FSAW formed in 54; DRUM poll: Shld W hve equal rights with Men?

101 out of 109, No. 'Let us give them courtesy bt no rights. They shld continue to carry passes fr they are harmlessly inferior; put on their bonnets everywhere, for it is a shame for W to go bareheaded.' This was less thn 50 yrs ago.

2 CHANGING POSITION OF W IN SOCIETY

By 50s, Ws position in state of flux - fundamental changes in urban areas. Industry - greater mobility, independence, more able to organise. Conflict - changing economic conditions & static social customs.

Ever present class/Colour divide. White W - look to State.
B W - need radical change in very nature of State - no franchise,
Thus, from beginng - FSAW firmly linked to Nat Lib struggle

Impetus - PE W in TUs. Significant: Time h arrivd, fundamental in position of W in urban, - new consciousness to W.

3. FIRST MULTI RACIAL W ORGANISATION.

- i. Inspired by twin needs: rid W of laws and customs tt discriminated against thm; need to organise womn to play full part wth Men in changing nature of SA society.

From beginng, firmly linked to Nat Lib struggle - ANC WL.

- ii. INAUGRAL CONFERENCE - APRIL 54
Invitations to TUs, W's Orgs, Congresses.

Difficulties: long journeys, fares, care of kids, husband hostility.

Banners; mingling o B & W womn in Trades Hall itself radical departure.

AIR OF EXUBERANCE optimism & enthusiasm.
Set style tt pervaded all future confs: always joyous much singing. (HJ - Delegations arriving down street)

Men did catering.

4. THE AUG 9 DEMO

1955 - Tvl Wmn. Success.
More thn any othr issue, anti-pass campaign stirred enormous response. Most militant & sustained of all Congress campaigns.

DIFFICULTIES: Cost of fares. Railwys, buses, child care, husbands

Processions prohibited: singly, in silence, 20,000 wmn

filled amphitheatre. Petitions. 30 mins silence, singing Nkosi & new song - strike the women, you hve struck a rock.

Even W papers impressed: 'Blanket-clad native wmn confrontg gvt'

5. RECALL THE PAST - LESSONS FOR PRESENT

Fr many men, Ws achievemnts conflictd wth own deeply-rootd views on W- bth outside & within Congress. ALSO: subordination o W to M problem for many W in FSAW - saw themselves primarily as supportng Ms struggle, not innovtg.

These not only in past: Emphasis on 'mothers' in FSAW.

FSAW did hve radicalisng effect on W's perception o themselves & place in society. BUT - 'feminist' views threatened not only M - also W - responsibilites o decision-makng.

Accused o Western fem. Ideas - not understandg traditions. (polygamy? Wife-beatg?)

6. FULFILMENT OF CHARTER?

Yes, many of clauses. But lookng back, never cld hve enormity of todays changes - massive since 1994. CONSTITUION - mst advancd, guarantees Ws position. In H of A - young & old blk W, articulate, heading cttees - Cheryl - Frene, symbols of huge advances fr W.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES ARE SLOWER.

Rape, Aids exacerbatd by poverty - shanties, jobs. W today MUST fearlessly confront these problems - must change social attitudes tt cause rape, Aids - must empower W - vital step in changg attitudes o men.

Our advanced CONSTITUTION first step in empowrng W - Let this WOMENS DAY be more thn a memorial to the past - a re-affirmation to achieve in the future wht FSAW set out to do.

WOMEN'S POSITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. Equality for women in South Africa is enshrined in the Preamble and in Chapter 3 of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and it is also entrenched in the Constitutional Principles which are binding the Constitutional Assembly in its drafting of the final Constitution.
2. The new Government has recognised the role South African women played in the history of the country as well as their struggle for Equality, by declaring 9 August National Women's day. (a public holiday).
3. The Government has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on 15 December 1995.
4. The Government has also signed the following Conventions:-

- Convention on the Political Rights on Women on 29/01/93.
- Convention on the Nationality of the Married Women on 29/01/93.

and has given consent to:

- the Convention on the Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages on 29/01/93.

5. The South African Women were part of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in Beijing where the Platform for Action was adopted (see attached report).

By adopting this Platform for Action the South African Government has committed itself to implement the contents thereof.

The ratification of CEDAW is the first step towards in this direction.

6. The Government and the NGOs are involved in reporting-back conferences and workshops as well as awareness campaigns throughout the country. Efforts to reach the most remote areas with information on the rights of women has become a priority for the line function departments and women's organisations in the country.
7. The Commission on the Gender Equality Bill, provided for in the Constitution, is amongst measures scheduled to be debated by Parliament before the Easter recess. The establishment of this Commission will facilitate the establishment of other organs of the National Machinery for Women. (National Machinery refers to coordinated structures, policies, strategies and programmes aimed at enhancing the status of women and advancing gender equality).

The functions of this Commission will be " to conduct research on women, advise Government on gender policies and programmes and act as a gender watchdog and pressure group on Government and NGOs "

8. The Government and the NGOs are involved in reporting-back conferences and workshops as well as awareness campaigns throughout the country. Efforts, via all available media, to reach the most remote areas with information on the rights of women has become a priority for the line function departments and women's organisations in the country.

9. At the same time women are working tirelessly, lobbying and pressurising the Government to live up to its promises. Women are aware that the rights enshrined in the Constitution and commitments made in Beijing will remain paper guarantees unless effective mechanisms of enforcement and implementation are established and they are taking the initiative.

Inside South Africa the traditions, the policies and the experience of the FSAW are alive and influential. The conditions are harsher, the reprisals for opposing apartheid far more terrible, than when the FSAW was founded thirty-five years ago. Women now find new ways to organise, within the limitations of the suppressive regime, and of underground organisation and violent conflict.

Thirty-five years ago at their founding conference, we women stood under the proud banner: GREETINGS TO WOMEN OF ALL LANDS. That spirit of internationalism, of crossing barriers of nationalism, of race, of religion, still inspires the women's movements. With all their difficulties, women still manage to meet - sometimes openly, sometimes clandestinely - on Women's Day, August 9. They put up banners ~~xx~~ stating: Women Unite! They stand under the banner of the Federation of South African Women. They recognise that the FSAW was the first women's organisation to reject the colour-consciousness that had permeated other women's organisations. 'No woman can be free while her sister is in chains', claimed one FSAW document; while the FSAW's commitment to the national liberation movement reflected the understanding and priorities of the majority of South African women.

(2) 'It is a struggle which can never be forgotten, women having a unity, black and white', stated Florence Mkhize, a leading FSAW member; and Lilian Ngoyi, who was President of the FSAW, declared: 'Freedom does not come walking toward you - it must be won.'

On this thirty-fifth anniversary, South African women appeal to women of all lands: Our struggle against racism and injustice, against discrimination and oppression, is your struggle as well. As we have striven for unity, we call on you, too, to unite with us.

Cherryl Walker wrote: 'The legacy of the FSAW is one of an open-hearted belief in a free and non-racial society. It is one of optimism that such a society will be attained - and of a dogged commitment to the struggle it involves'.

Tired? We do not know what it means to be tired. We cannot rest until we have fulfilled our aims.

Ends

As this pamphlet was going to press, an advertisement appeared in the progressive South African weekly paper, the Weekly Mail. It was headed: WOMEN AGAINST REPRESSION (WAR) - 1000 Days of State of Emergency.

'On March 7', the advertisement stated, 'we will have lived through 1000 days of a State of Emergency. We have lived through intensive repression, detention, divisions of families and deaths.

THIS SITUATION IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. It is time to set the truth free'

The advertisement called on all peace-loving people to fast from 7th March to the 8th, and to attend a vigil of 24 hours. And it said 'Women from Fedtraw (Federation of Transvaal Women), Black Sash, Nusas Women's Group (National Union of South African Students), Women for Peace, YWCA, YCS (SACC (South African Council of Churches) BSS Women's Group (Women from Cosatu unions (Congress of South African Trade Unions) and Bowa (have joined hands to stand against repression.'

So thirty-five years on, the FSAW's belief that there were issues that can unite women across the lines of colour, religion, and political and social divides, is exemplified in this call. And organisations that once would not associate with the FSAW are compelled by the nature of the violence and oppression imposed on all to recognise the need for women to act together. 'The legacy of the FSAW' wrote Walker, 'is one of an open-hearted belief in a free and non-racial society. It is one of optimism that such a society will be attained - and of a dogged commitment to the struggle that it involves. It is a legacy of hope and courage.' That courage is greater today than it has ever been, and that hope closer to realisation.

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