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Memorandum ~~to~~ on Federation of SA Women  
Campaign #6

Cb221

# PASSES for WOMEN!



THE PASS SYSTEM daily destroys our family life. Our husbands, our fathers, our sons, are thrown into gaol under this degrading system. We wait in vain for them to return to their homes.

Now we women are told that we, too, will have to carry passes. We, too, will be exposed to the pass raids, the pick-up, the search, the cells, while our children will be left alone and helpless.

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS OF AFRICA! DO YOU WANT THIS TO HAPPEN TO YOU? The Pass system is NOT made to help us, it is NOT for our protection. The new books are passes, just as same as the men must carry. Passes make it impossible for us to move around freely.

Now the new "LOCATION IN THE SKY" Act is going to force African men and women domestic workers to leave their rooms in blocks of flats, and find a place to live in the already over-crowded locations. This means they must travel to and from work every day - and day by day will be called on to show their passes to the police, to be arrested if they forget to carry them.

IN DURBAN, in Germiston, and other places, many women have already demonstrated against the Pass Laws. They have spoken out against Pass Laws. Now the women of Johannesburg are going to the Native Commissioner in Fordsburg to tell him what they think of the Pass Laws. On Thursday, June 7th, hundreds of women will demonstrate. Join them! Join the protest! You, too, must say "We don't want passes!"

SIGN UP TO JOIN THE JOHANNESBURG PROTEST ON WEDNE 7th, 1956.

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Issued by the Federation of S.A. Women & the A.N.C. Women's League. Box 10876, Jhbg.

TO THE NATIVE COMMISSIONER FOR JOHANNESBURG

We, the women of Johannesburg, who are living and working here, have come here today, to present to you, the Native Commissioner, our objections to the extension of the pass system to African women. You are the representative of the Government which intends to compel African women to carry passes and we call upon you, in your official capacity, to listen to our objections, to receive our protests and to forward them to the Minister of Native Affairs.

WE OBJECT TO THE PASS SYSTEM because it makes slaves of the African people, because it denies us the right to move about freely, to sell our labour freely. Under the pass system our men are exposed to merciless treatment at the hands of the police, to the lowest depth of humiliation in pass raids, the hardships of prison for the lack of a signature on a reference book. Our young sons are thrown into jail to associate with criminals. Our husbands and fathers are taken from us without warning, not for a crime, but for the lack of a pass. We wait in vain for their return home at night.

WE REJECT TOTALLY THE STATEMENT BY DR. VERWOERD THAT THE PASS LAWS HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED. The old form of pass has been replaced by a reference book. That is all. Our menfolk are still being arrested, thousands every day, under the pass laws.

WE SAY THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE. THE PASS LAWS HAVE NOT BEEN ABOLISHED.

Today we, the African women are threatened by the Government which you represent. The Minister of Native Affairs has said that African women shall be issued with identity books. WE SAY THAT THESE IDENTITY BOOKS ARE PASSES. We say that we and our daughters will be exposed to even worse degradation and hardships than our men.

AS WOMEN AND MOTHERS WE PROTEST AGAINST THIS INHUMAN PROCEDURE. We dread the breaking up of our homes when we too may be arrested under the pass laws. We fear for our children who will be left uncared for, helpless. What is to become of our tiny children, our babies, dependent upon their mothers' milk, if we are to be torn from them for failing to produce a pass? Must we subject our young daughters to intimidation and humiliation at the hands of the police? WE CALL UPON YOU TO TAKE HEED OF OUR PROTEST, TO MAKE KNOWN TO THE MINISTER OF NATIVE AFFAIRS THE DEEP RESENTMENT OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN.

IN THE NAME OF THE AFRICAN WOMEN OF JOHANNESBURG, we who have come here today, say to you, each one of us, that WE ARE OPPOSED TO PASSES FOR WOMEN. WE REGARD PASSES FOR WOMEN AS AN INSULT TO HUMAN DIGNITY.

WE SHALL NOT REST UNTIL WE HAVE WON FOR OUR CHILDREN THEIR RIGHT TO FREEDOM AND SECURITY.

WE CALL UPON THE MINISTER OF NATIVE AFFAIRS TO CEASE THE ISSUING OF PASSES FOR AFRICAN WOMEN.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

7TH JUNE, 1956.



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