

① **BBM-16.**

THE 4TH. ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE A.N.C.W.L. (T.V.L.) HELD IN THE MAVIS ISAACSON HALL, JABAVU ON THE 11th NOVEMBER 1956.

PROGRAMME.

1ST SESSION.

9.30. A.M. OPENING OF CONFERENCE.

- (a). National Anthem.
- (b). Prayer.
- (c). Chairman's remarks.

10.a.m. Official opening by Ad. D. Nokwe.

11.a.m. Fraternal Greetings.

11.30.a.m. Appointment of Committees.

- (a). Credentials Committee.
- (b). Resolutions Committee.
- (c). Press Committee and Recording Secretary.

Mrs Theo-Kumalo.

1. p.m. A D J O U R N M E N T.

2ND SESSION.

2.p.m. Presidential Address and Discussion.

2.45 p.m. Minutes and arising. *before adjournment.*

3.p.m. Credential Committee's report.

3.15. Executive Committee's report and discussion.

4.p.m. Financial report and discussion.

4.30.p.m. Resolutions.

5. p.m. Election of Office Bearers.

5.30.p.m. CLOSURE.

Bewysstuk No.

Gekry by *B. Mashaba*

Deur *B.S. M. M. M.*

Te *1316 G. van Lee*

Datum *11/11/56*

Verwysings No.

254

(1) B.B.M-15

Document No.
 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED
 BY MRS. LILLIAN NGOTI, THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE TRANSVAAL, AT THE MEWIS ISAACS HALL, JABAVALU, JOHANNESBURG, ON SUNDAY, THE 11TH NOVEMBER, 1956

By Mrs. M. ...
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 2/2/56

Mr. Speaker and my dear friends I hereby welcome you this Annual Conference of the African National Congress Women's League (Transvaal), on your behalf I send you warm greetings to the millions of women of all races throughout the length and breath of our country and I wish them success in their sacred struggle for justice, peace and freedom.

Although they are not present to take part in person, in the important discussion that will take place at this Conference, we know that they are with us in spirit and that they fully support our struggle against oppression and colour discrimination. To-day we have come together in order that we may take stock of our activities during the last twelve months; in order that we may examine our mistakes and achievements; our defeats and victories and in order that we discuss our present problems; check and remedy our weaknesses and make fresh plans for the future.

This is an important job and you as representatives of millions of women in our Province and as the most conscious and advanced fighters in our struggle, will be spirited to carry out your duties today with the dignity, seriousness and determination of people fully realise the sacredness of their mission and the heavy responsibility that lie on their shoulders.

The Presidential address delivered at the Annual Conference of the Transvaal Branch of the African National Congress in Pretoria last week as well as the executive Report, discussed several issues of vital importance to the Liberatory Movement. The savage attacks that are being made by the Nationalist Government on the democratic movement, the deportation of leaders, the disasterious effects of the Group Areas Act on the economic

and progress of the non-european people, the wholesale removals of vast numbers of Africans all over the Country, the urgent and vital need for a broad united front of the oppressive people and other democratic against the National/^{ist} Government, are all matters that are specifically dealt with at that conference and I suggest that you read the conference the report most carefully so that you should be fully informed on these matters. In the address I propose to deal very briefly with and to emphasise only those issues which primarily affect the African women.

The principal and most pressing task of the Womens' League at the present moment is to mobilise all the women of South Africa to fight against the extension of the passes to African women. Hardly any other South African Law has caused so much suffering and hardship to Africans as the pass laws. Hardly other measures has created so much suffering and racial friction and hostility between black and white. Any policeman may at any time demand to see your pass and failure to produce it for any reason means imprisonment or a fine. It makes it permissible to violate the sanctity and privacy of our homes. An African, sleeping peacefully in his house, may be woken up at night and asked to produce one and failure to do so may lead to his arrest and imprisonment even though he has committed no crime whatsoever. Before an African is issued with a railway ticket, especially when travelling from one province to another, he must produce his pass to the booking clerk. No trading licence may be given to an African unless his pass shows that he is lawfully resident in the area where he wants to trade. Attempts were made recently by marriage officers to refuse to solemnise African marriages unless a Reference book was produced. All sorts of restrictions are imposed upon Africans under the pass laws. For example in almost every municipal area Africans are not allowed to be in the streets after 11.p.m. unless they have a special pass from an employer. Under this system thousands of innocent and respectable Africans are arrested, flung into kwela-kwelas, detained in jail and cruelly illtreated.

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The pass laws is the basis and conerstone of the system of oppression and exploitation in this country. It is a device to ensure cheap labour for the mines and the farms. It is a badge of slavery in terms whereof all sorts of insults and humiliation may be committed on Africans by members of the ruling class. It is because of these reasons that the Congress has always regarded the pass laws as the principal target of the struggle for freedom. It is because of these reasons that African leaders, progressives, Liberals and even Government Commissioners have repeatedly condemned the system as the source of dangerous, explosive and racial tensions. It^{is} also because of this fact that the Congress has chosen the extension of the pass laws to African women as a major issue of national importance. The issue is perfectly clear; The Government has decided that we shall carry passes. Must we accept this deception? Definitely not! To do so, would be to expose the African Women to all the evils that we have referred to above. We would lose our honour, betray our comrades at Winburg, Lichtenburg and in numerous other tpwns and villages throughout the country where the daughters of Africa are putting up a glorious struggle in defence of their rights. When the rights of a people are taken away from them and even liberties are being crushed, the only way that is open to them is to mobilise the masses of the people affected to stand up and fight those injustices. The immediate issue facing us, therefore, is to organise all the various organisations of African women and individuals against this inhuman and wicked decision of the Government. ealy direct mass action will deter the Government and stop it from proceeding with its cruel laws. It is in recognition of these women of South Africa who have launched a National Campaign against the extention of the Pass Laws. Numerous local and Nationa demonstrations have already been staged with amazing success. In the face of numerous difficulties more than 50,000 women of all races from town and village took part in these demonstrations. The remarkable successes we have gained and

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victories that we have achieved so far and the extent in which the women have entered the campaign, reveal that the democratic forces in this country can stop and even defeat the forces of reaction if we work hard enough. We have made ^{an} excellent start. The historic Pretoria demonstrations of October last year including 30,000 women constitute an important landmark in our struggle against injustice and will remain the source of tremendous inspiration for many years to come. STRYDOM STOP AND THINK FOR YOU HAVE AROUSED THE WRATH OF THE WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA and that wrath might put you and your evil deeds out of action sooner than you expect.

In spite of the remarkable victories that we have won, there are still some serious weaknesses in our movement. 50,000 women is still a very small number in a population of 12½ million. More women must be brought into the anti-pass movement in order that the fight should be organised and concerted. The movement against the passes is still primarily centered in the big cities and sufficient work has not been done on the country dorps, on the farms and in the Reserves. In these places the organisations is comparatively weak and the Government has taken advantage of the situation and is busy issuing reference books. The aim is to isolate the stronger areas and thereafter to concentrate all its resources to crush opposition in the cities. We must immediately deal with this situation, I would suggest the appointment in each province of a number of full-time organisers who will visit various areas, talk to women, establish committees and bring out mass opposition to the scheme. We strongly condemn and reject the passes and we shall fight it with all the resources at our disposal to the bitter end, at the same time we must, as far as possible avoid reckless and isolated action. Action taken in one isolated place and without sufficient work being done and without proper co-ordination may be disastrous to the movement. It may give the Government the opportunity to concentrate all its resources in crushing resistance in that local place in the victimisation of the active fighters in that area and the crushing of resistance before it

begins in other areas. We must learn to place and to co-ordinate before hand so that we might strike fatal blows at the enemy when the time comes.

To ensure the defeat of the nationalist Government we must work for greater unity amongst the African people and the broadest possible alliance embracing the congress movement, the non-Congressives and all these who oppose apartheid. The Manyano women, the national council of African women, the mothers welfare organisation, religious, sporting political and otherwise, should be invited to enter the campaign against the nationalist Government. In this way our movement will become a mighty movement for the defeat of the nationalist Government during our lifetime.

The Minister of Native affairs has announced that African women will in future be requested to pay poll-tax. This decision has three objects firstly :- it is intended to force the African Women to pay for the cost of Apartheid. Secondly it is intended to answer the attack on the nationalists by United party to the effect that the Nationalist are spending more money on africans. Than the U.P. ever spent. Thirdly and most important it is an election stunt on the part of the National ists. We will fight against this move.

We have in momentous times we have at a time when the oppressed people all our the world are rebelling against colonialism and oppression. We are going through a period when some of these people have bravely fought and won their independence. But there are also hours of serious danger. The imperialist, realising that their days are numbered, are becoming more desperate and restless. The unlawful aggression in Egypt by the English, French and Israelites armies is an act of aggression and brings the danger of fear very close to our shores. In such dangerous times it becomes the duty of the women of our country to put the question of peace on the address day. We stand for peace in Africa and the rest of the world. We stand for disarmament and the abolition of atomic weapons, we are against military blocks and pacts. We ask the Executive Committee of the "

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of the Congress to demand the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egypt, and the end of military operations which seek to end the independence of Egypt.

In my presidential address last year I suggested that a series of lectures should be prepared for women, this was and still is, an important matter because knowledge is power but due to the heavy problem of activities which we volunteer upon since then it was not possible to carry out this suggestion. Nevertheless, efforts are being made to make these lectures available and I hope to be able to report progress in due course.

It is fitting that I should close this address by rendering our heartiest congratulations to the brave daughters of Winburg who put up such a united and gallant fight against the passes early this year. It was in Winburg that the passes for women were introduced. It was also in this place that the direct action was taken for the first time against the passes for women. The whole of South Africa was impressed by the heroism of the women of Winburg. The reverses we suffered there were more than compensated by the historic Pretoria march of 20,000 women on August, the 9th this year. Strydom! your government now preach and practice colour discrimination, it can pass the most cruel and barbaric laws, it can deport leaders and break homes and families, but it will never stop the women of Africa in their forward march to

F R E E D O M D U R I N G O U R
L I F E T I M E .

To you daughters of Africa I say
" MALIBONGWE IGAMA LAMAKOSIKAZI "

MALIBONGWE.

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Ref: 127-16 deham
Bathurst
Blairgowrie

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MRS LILLIAN NGUYI IN GERMISTON
LOCATION ON SUNDAY: 13TH NOVEMBER, 1955

No. 12/56

Mrs. Speaker, Delegates and Friends,

On behalf of the AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE (TRANSVAAL) I welcome you to this Conference. Firstly, I want to thank all the delegates who have gathered here this morning from different parts of this province. Secondly, we are especially grateful to our friends, the women of Germiston, who have made the presentations for this Conference under particularly difficult conditions and yet completed them in record time. These preparations together with the wonderful kindness with which delegates have been received will enable us to do our work in a pleasant atmosphere. The women of Germiston can be sure of our appreciation. I greet with emotion this great gathering of women from different branches some of whom have come from afar to voice at this Conference their demands for fundamental human rights, to defend their children against oppressive laws of the Nationalist Government, to fight for peace and friendship amongst the various nations and races and to resist war and imperialism. What sacrifices you have made. What sacrifices you are willing to make even in future. What dangers faced some of you when, inspired by mother love for our country and fellow slaves, you made the journey to this conference. A hearty welcome to you all. I thank and salute not only you who are present here but the millions of women who you represent in the various branches from which you have come. I refer to those daughters of our country who undertook a variety of activities which resulted in the complete success of the regional and provincial conferences of the African National Congress. They have worked very hard to make this conference a success. When you consider that it is because this thorough job has been done in the various branches and districts and that, as I speak here, mothers young and old, rich and poor, are turning hopefully towards us, you will then understand the task we have set ourselves and the earnestness of our desire to carry it out successfully. In this difficult task we are encouraged by the warm support we receive from the Congresses of the various national groups in our country and from abroad.

WORLD PEACE.

I need not tell you that the feeling of women, especially mothers, against war for the defence of peace is universal. One need only be a mother to imagine what the consequences of war would be to the family and children. We are living at a momentous period in world history. The Bandung Conference, which brought together representatives from 29 countries of Africa and Asia worked out principals of peaceful agreement which everyone can see are valid for all continents. One Will is receiving new affirmation every day — the Will of millions of men and women who no longer accept the dangerous policy of resorting to war in order to settle conflicts between nations. At this conference, thanks to the ability and skill of the oppressed people of South Africa, we were represented by two heroes who have devoted their lives to fighting in justice and the exile of apartheid, Moses Kotane and Maulvi Cachalia. These are the worthy Sons of our Soil who most ably expressed the voice of the real South Africa in the Africa Asia Conference.

The Transvaal Mothers' Conference which was held in the Trades Hall on Sunday the 11th July, 1955, was another important occasion for the women of the province. This conference was called in support of the World Mothers Conference held in Switzerland in June, 1955 when mothers of 79 countries gathered together in Lausanne to defend their children against war. They emphasised their hatred of atomic war. They said such war would end humanity. I am pleased to say that amongst these 79 countries our country was also represented by Gladys Smith, a Coloured delegate from Cape Town and myself. I told about our miserable living conditions and of our difficulties. I assured them that in spite of these difficulties the fight for our rights was going on. I declared that the South African women also hated war and that they would stand together shoulder to shoulder with the women of the world to work for disarmament and for peace and friendship amongst the nations.

Whilst these historic events are taking place in Asia and Europe, the Nationalists in our country are busy destroying land and crushing the peoples' organisations. We see with anxiety that immense material wealth, energy and the labour of our men and sons devoted to building roads instead of schools for our children.

We see enormous sums being sunk in the upkeep of the police instead of paying teachers to educate our children to become scientists, doctors, and nurses, and instead of building sanatoriums for workers who suffer from tuberculosis and other diseases. The slender financial resources of a family are drained still further by increasingly heavy taxation. The overwhelming majority of our people are starving. We demand that the wealth of our country should be used in such a way as to ensure enough meat and bread for all irrespective of colour or creed. Only in this way will oppression and exploitation be abolished. The great need which has brought us here as mother, young and old, is the imperative necessity, beyond all others, to take up the defence of those rights which women have always cherished. Our maternal love has taught all of us the price of the life we give. It helps us to realise the spark of life which can shoot forth a flame for centuries. Like other mothers who sacrificed their lives in order to build their countries, we must take a pledge as asked by our beloved President Luthuli and resolve to go forward inspite of all difficulties. Who, better than mothers, can arouse public opinion against the crimes that are going on? We must oppose a repetition of these crimes. The idea that all children are equal, be they white, yellow or black, and that they have the same rights and that all should receive the protection of the State, becomes more natural everyday to us mothers in every continent. We, the African women, as part and parcel of the A.N.C. salute with joy and expectation, the South Africa of the future born of the Freedom Charter which was adopted at the historic Congress of the People in Kliptown on the 25th and 26th June, 1955. The fundamental principle of the Charter is: the people shall govern. Under the Charter the minority will not be permitted to rule the majority. Even Strijdom acknowledged this fundamental principle just the other day. Commenting on the Women's protest march to Pretoria on the 27th October, 1955, he said the minority could not govern the majority. The Charter embodies the future of our country. It does not matter what difficulties are in our way, the Charter is to us the Ten Commandments of the future South Africa. The people shall govern.

BANTU EDUCATION.

One of the most important questions facing us today is that of Bantu Education and we must treat it with all the seriousness that it deserves. We should ask ourselves these questions: Can a backward and reactionary Government, such as we have, be interested in the welfare and advancement of African children? If the Nationalists are genuinely interested in the advancement of our children why is it that there is no compulsory education for them? Why have the Nationalists decided to give our children Bantu Education and not a universal and progressive education? It is perfectly clear that the real purpose of Bantu Education is to retard the mental development of the African child and to make it a perpetual slave of the white man. This is a violation of our Charter which declares that all people shall be equal before the law. It would therefore be criminal for us to accept Bantu Education because to do so would be accepting inferiority. We shall oppose Bantu Education and save our children from slavery and collaboration.

PASS LAWS.

You all know that the Nationalist Government has decided that as from January, 1956, African women will carry passes. Naturally, we have decided to join battle with Verwoerd on this issue and I say without the slightest hesitation that we shall defeat the Government. Remember that in 1913, the Provincial of the Orange Free State gave power to its municipalities to apply the pass laws to African women in that Province. African women fought back immediately. They deliberately refused to carry them and in Bloemfontein, Winburg and Senekal hundreds elected imprisonment rather than accept this insult and humiliation. The jails became so full that the authorities became powerless. For many years these courageous daughter of Africa, ably led and assisted by the African National Congress, carried on the battle until the authorities were forced to withdraw the passes. This victory was won by women almost 40 years ago. We in 1955 with better organisation and more friends and allies within our country and abroad are obliged to fight the pass laws to the bitter end. The 27th of October, 1955, on which date almost 2,000 women of all races marched to Pretoria in protest against the passes and other oppressive laws has pointed the way. Through many difficulties and inspite of the greatest intimidation, we began the struggle against Verwoerd's pass laws and we shall not rest until we are victorious. On this day I saw the future South Africa unfolding before my eyes. Let us live the unity of mothers.

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THE REMOVAL OF THE WESTERN AREAS.

The success of the Campaign against the removal of the Western Areas is now a matter of common knowledge, so much so that the Government was forced to mobilise 2,000 police to effect the removal of 150 families. We demand freehold rights and we shall continue for the realisation of this demand until it is granted.

LECTURES.

It is of utmost importance that all women in the A.N.C. receive political education. You cannot become a soldier if you have not learnt the art and theory of fighting. These lectures will be provided in various languages.

LABOUR (SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES) ACT.

This Act is now being extended to the African women in the industries, especially in the Garment industries, where the African women have enjoyed the status of an employee. This Act, now will deny the African woman the rights of an employee, that is, to form themselves into Trade Unions, etc.

Thanks to the formation of the South African Congress of Trade Unions which is the only answer to the Government's Apartheid evils, the formation of this Congress of Trade Unions in 1955 was the idea of all democracy loving South Africans, and its doors are open to trade unionists of all races.

RENTS.

The Women played a significant role in upsetting the ideas of the powers that be in trying to increase the rents of the already overburdened African in the locations, this through the courageous and militant stand by the women made these mean actions of the authorities to misfire. Particular mention should be made of the Brakpan women who succeeded in closing down the beer halls at the time.

DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is one of the primary requirements for a sound organisation. This must be maintained. In fact, example must be set by leaders and general members by refraining from irresponsible gossip and by paying attention to seemingly minor obligations such as paying our dues regularly, attending meetings regularly, and learning to keep time.

Our duty as women and members of the African National Congress is to keep the standard of our organisation on a high level.

ALL TOGETHER, MY SISTERS, ALL TOGETHER!

SHELTERED BEHIND THIS MIGHTY SHIELD LIFE ITSELF FIGHTS!

IT WILL TRIUMPH!

AFRIKA MAYIBUYE!

FREEDOM IN OUR LIFE-TIME!

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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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