

Usefl startng point: 1) End o decADE 2) Treatmnt o wmn is test o a society
Avalanche and volcano

1) THE AVALANCHE

AS is Ap systm, pursuing inexorable path across wmn's lives, crushing & destroyg.

'Reform' o Ap: Systm basd on absolute discrimin. cant b reformd, only scrappd
Pass laws nt relaxd. Superficial changes dont alter exploitation
Mass removals continue; & Af wmn still suffr chains o triple oppression:
as blks i racist society; as wmn in patriarchal society; as wkrs forever
confind to very bottom o ec. pile.

REMOVALS - 100,000 in 2 mln b/stns

More thn 3½ m. forcibly remvd since 1960, anothr 1.7 m undr threat. True dimensions
o uprootng diff to estimate. Bt vast majority removd in keepng wth Ap pln
dividng SA into 'white' areas (87%) & b/stans (13%)

Those who suffr most in ths relentless destruction o homes, communities, villages,
& settled peasnt life, are t wmn. & majority o those movd to b/stns are
womn, disabld, childrn, old, sick. Those mn who cn go to wk i t towns; bt wmn
prohibitd by law frm leavng areas. 70% o b/stn pop are womn, & 70% of all wmn
in rural areas, includng b/stns, are unemployd. Fr vast majority, no wk,
they exist on tiny pensions o old whn available & occasional paymnts frm towns.

Removls are violent & brutal process, part o mastr-pln to eliminate all nt
usefl to W economy - today's 'gas ovs.' So wmn sent to remote & inhospitable
areas where their powerlessness is compoundd by the frustration & aggression o
t men. Rape, child-wife- beatng.

Decade o wmn seen many forcd migrations i wrld, famine o war. But nowhere else
3 to 4 m. leadng settled lives, being torn up & thrown away.

'Superfluous appendages' - conditions form o genocide - childrn without ski8ls
or role models. Most horrific action o past decade.

MIGRANT LABOUR

Ap rests o migrant lbr, controlld by pass lws. Fr many, a more or less permanent separation o families. Fr blk wmn, means a particularly intese form o exploitation & opp. Heads of families.

Mig labr deeply disrups lives o SA wmn; makes it virtually illegal fr many Af wmn to live wth husbands, except fr 2 wks. Mockery o family life, impassable chasm Durg long periods o their youthfl, sexually active lives, husbnds & wives mst live apart. Fr many, a family unit is nevr formd.

DOMESTIC SERVICE.

Largest area o paid employmnt fr wmn i SA. $\frac{1}{4}$ o all employd wmn i 1980 were d.s.

DS are situatd at convergence o 3 lines along which social inequality is generatd: sex, class & racial division. Racial & sexual factors facilitate & intensify exploit.

Ideology o 'wmns palce' identifies domestic sphere as 'natural' fr wives & mothrsxB Blk d.s. fulfils female functions,,bt nt i own hse. Remain respons. fr own homes, bt at same time function i white househlds. Wages among lowest o any i SA Long hrs, little time off, no paid holidays

Yet strong self-image: Cock. CONTRADICTIONS.

Survival demands strength: children.

Wmn's Orgs: Church, Community, political.

Can't measure wmn's participation - in joint activities

2 THE VOLCANO - WOMEN IN A TIME O CONFRONTATION.

In contrast to bleak pix o w's lives undr crushng effect o ap avalanche, there is t volcano: tremends eruption o activity, org, & fiery militancy amng wmn o SA ~~durng~~ past 10 yrs.

Eruption spreads across whole age spectrum, frm schoolgirls to wmn i 70s & 80s. Militancy o young tt begn i 76 fully matchd by heroic militancy o old. True tt yth hve been radicalising their parents; bt wht is more true is tt parents hve inspird yth:

Martha Mahlangu. Sarah Mosololi (Go wll my son, I love u. I am proud o u bcos u are to die fr yr people) A. Silinga. Dora Tamana. Greta Ncapai, 72. W Mandela. A Sisulu (aftr 18 yrs, 7 childrn, persecutions) ~~Melrose~~

^{Prison, lives} ^{Ukweni Pastors}
Sacrifices: /Nyembe. Hogan. /Jabu Nzima, Ruth, Jeanette, Victoria Mxenge.

FEMINISM.

As i othr countries, wmn are concernd wth ?s o sexual oppression, male chauvinism, legal discrimination, divorce reform. Bt fight to change status is a political one, bcos without end to ap., no lib fr wmn.

B4 u cn speak o equal pay fr equal wk, u hve to speak o right to wk, to live & wk where u choose. B4 u cn speak o reformng divorce laws, u hve to spek o abolishing those laws tt create distortd & pervertd forms o family life - b/stns.

SA ~~lib~~ see personal lib as part o total lib.

Their activities as wmn may bcome submergd i ths general struggle. Bt if u examine things like Crossroads, rests o wmn's opp to apartheid laws.

3) YOUTH - AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

A chain of violence

50,000 mourners gathered i July fr joint funeral o 15 people shot by police.
8 died whn police fired teargas into cinema where 700 hd gathered fr night vigil
fr 4 killd by hand grenades

Duduz headmaster speakng o former pupils said 'What can I say to t people o
Duduza whose young are an endangered species?'

How yo~~o~~ung? Andries Raditsela, young t unionist, died o severe brain injuries
2 days aftr arrest.

T 4 killd at Duduz were teens, early 20s

7 killd i Aliwal Nth & 26 wounded whn police opened fire on funeral, mainly young

T Athlone ambulance - 11.16 & 20

2 students, 15 & 20, fled into hse when police dispersed students. Followd,
arrestd, 2 days latr bth dead.

* 900 shhool childrn arrestd by Brig Jan Coetzee 'We are crackng down. We wll nt
allw 5,000 stupid students to disregard law & order...raids aimd at all childrn
outside school premises' More thn 50 o childrn arrestd were 7 to 10

Johnny Mashiane (Bofgo 45) 15 - Bubbling - nw lies i bed, sedatd, space
Johannes Spogter died i police cell 2 days aftr arrest, wth injuries to
head & stomach. He was 12 yrs.

A boy awaitng trial, refusd bail, i jail fr 2 mths, Intimidatng police. 11 yrs old
25th Aug, 150 toddlers - 6 mths to 2 yrs - unconscious at Soweto's Entokozweni
Early Learng Centre aftr cops fired teargas canisters into bldg. Chaos, wth
screams, vomitng.

An endangered species.

- This yr, at least 77 childrn under 18 Killed i 19 younger thn 10,
" " 40 missing - in detention?

* 53 schoolchildrn, 10-20, in marathon public violence trial i hall:
accused: attendg illegal gathrg, disturbg peace, endangerg Public &
intimidatg police

4. WE APEAK OF VIOLENCE

Bo#tha/Mandela. ANC mst 'renounce' violence.

TV pix o whippngs, beatngs. In Thabong, young people hauld off streets, flogg'd wth sjamboks - 3 died frm injuries

Every day, one or 2 o 3 blks shot dead. Guardian i Aug: Toll rises as EEC ministrs arrive. At least 650 killd frm Sept 84 to 85. - Now near 800

Abductions & disappearances. Activists being pick'd off, shot or disappear'd & mutilsted, tortured bodies found latr.

Vigilantes & Int Squads

+ Hereford P. 6.

SPEAKERS' WORKSHOP. April 11th 1981

1. PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

- . Response to need to have more ANC women who are prepared to speak in public
- . to assist overcome shyness, lack confidence, so some few always speak up.
- . help wmn express thmselves clearly, easily at mtgs, public & prvte
- . give u opp to spk, & thru ths overcome, discuss, difficulties.

W/S in 2 parts:

- A. Introduction, givng suggestions, ideas, abt preparation.
- B. Practical: each to spk. Make notes durg bth parts, 2nd part wll b followd by discussion, bth on individual spkrs, hw spoke, & on wht Ilva & I hve t say. Opn discussion, criticism, franknss wll help us lose intense self-consciousnss.

2. HOW WE WILL PROCEED.

Ilva wll spk - thn me, Thn each o u, fr abt 5 mins, cld b more or lss.

Shireen pt names down & we wll draw thm out one by one.

At end o aftrnoon, wnt u to appraise value o W/S, & if repeatd, wht form shld take, & hw to improve.

NO SINGLE CORRECT WAY: Like cookng. 100's wys to prepare dish wth same ingredients, bt some more tasty thn othrs.

Wht I say may b takn ovr by u - or thrown out.

3. DIFFERENT SPEECHES BT CERTAIN RULES

- * AAM-type mtgs - Universts, TU's, localities, wmn's & othr orgs - solidarity)
- * Pol discussions, lectures, etc. eg: AGM branch.

Obviously, dff approaches. Papr at Int Conf nt same as 10 mins on street cornr. Bt certain principles:

A. RESPECT FR AUDIENCE

Always prepare (doesnt mean cant gt to feet & spk ex tempori drg discussion). If U are spkr, nevr go along relyng on fact U knw subj & hve spkn on it b4.

Own experience. Dislike o last-min stand-ins. Almst nvr use exactly same spch, altho draw constantly on pst speeches (thick file)

TWO GOOD RSNS:

- * Constantly up-date, accordng to info & news
- * Always adapt to dff audiences.

4. YOUR TASK IS NOT A HARD ONE

Everyone excpt NF & Cttee o 10 are ag. Ap; doesnt mean they understnd it; bt evn Tories dont defnd it in princple.

Almst universlly i West U hve symp. audiences.

OUR BAPTISM: City Hll Steps on Sunday nights.

Fascist Nats, antisemites + police on their side.

Always fights. Pltform defence org by mn headd by SL Marcus Bros. Art ws to continue regardlss, keepng focus togthr.

Wrst part ws leavng meetg. Splitting up, Being pickd off. Wlkg on opp sides o road. Marshall Square. Estg: nevr on Sundays.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN: 7, 8 or more meetngs every night, inside & out (Max exosure. Toni still likes to go to bd early)

5. GAINING CONFIDENCE

A. NERVOUSNESS: Always nervs. Ordeal o waitng on pltform. recurrent anxiety dream.

Wht is imp is overcmng. Avoid nervs repetitive movmnts Like actng. Once 'on' knw yr part, spk frm heart, forgt nerves.

* Liaising with other speakers
* Flexibility: timing, taking out portion (always best)

7. INCIDENTALS

- * QUOTATIONS: Sep. ppr (numbrd in notes): Type out, read out, pt on side.
Bierski again: Membr o SB. Point is, U cn memorise if U wsh - unlikely anyone will check.
- * FIGURES: Please b VERY carefl. Absportion limitations o audience. Absolute basics, brought down to roundd off & dimplified.
eg. Gertrude on education: (see attachd) (A)
Hwvr, exceptions, as Archie:
Using one potent story v. many facts
- * GESTURES: Do wht is natural (avoidng anythng tt distracts)
Ruth at AGM.
- * DONT DRINK WATER. If throat ddry, suck sweet. Wtr makes drier & is distractng break. Drnk at end. (Hard wk)
- * USE O REPETITIONS: Invaluable fr rousng: (Attachd B)
- * DONT APOLOGISE: Downgrade yrself immediately - cmg late, nt hvng had time to prepare, or whtevr.
Wmn always ap. 'It's only me'.
- * STANDING: Authority. Sit only at intimate smll meetgs, sch as units. Differentiate yrself frm aud.
Also whn finish, seen as sch by sttng. (Applause)

8. WORDS ARE OUR WEAPONS

Dont fight only wth words - need crueller weapns. Bt fr solidarity wk, wds invaluable tools.
Wrds beautiful, magical. (Drng wr, makg aud cry)
All humn developmnt is built thru language, speech.
Bt wrds also 2-edgd: only effective whn yr own mind is clear
Language is anothr tool o rulng section:
To some extent, we are caught in semantic trap:
(quote Triumphs)
Also: 'government' (it gives legitimacy) 'minister'
- gives authority (by wht right? Yt mst b usd)
Wds usd by men to wmn's disadvantage - bt tt anothr subject.
'Non-Europeans' - distorts & excludes - we usd term without thinkg anythng of it until Blk Consc.
We wll all sometimes fll into these trps. Part o struggle is to take bck wht hs bn stoln frm t people, & ths is one aspect.
Whn U stand up to spk i public, U bcome mre thrb an individ.
U public rep. o our org. Org wll b judgd by aud. thru wht u say, & oftn hw U say it. Ths is why U mst learn to spk.

A.

G. ON EDUCATION

A 10 min speech on ap. generally. Boggd down thus:

She hd done hr homework, lookd up t statistics.

'A married Af teachr, male, gts R660 risng ovr 15 yrs to R1,060. A Colourd male gts R1,080 risng to R2,200

A white gets R1,920 risng in 12 yrs to £3,360

Whn we come to wmn, disc evn worse. Af wmn teachrs wth Highr primary Cert start at R336, risng in 9 yrs to R648. With matric cert, mget and so on

All tt needed saying was this:

The ratios between the top salaries for teachers with a degree are as follows:

If you take the Whites as 100, Coloureds get 65.5, male married Africans 53.2, single Africans 34 - that is, a third o W. salary fr same degrees - and black wmn, 31.

The pupil-teachr ration in W schools is: in blk schools X, plus double shifts.

B

Paying ourselves more than we earn. Wht does ths mean?

Are Barclays Bank investors payng thmselves mre thn they earn whn they declare profits up by 36% to 1,000 Million

Do Vestey's pay.....whn they salt away 500 m tt shld hve been edeclared fr tax?

Wht abt t Mastr-Butcher - Dewhurst? Does heetc.

Or are we talkg abt Joe Bloggs who chps meat at Dewhurst fr £37 a wk - is he payng.....

Or Mary Smith, sittng at check-out in Tesco on Sat. is her £25 a case o pa g hrself.....

WOMEN IN ORGANISATIONS. ANC SEMINAR 31/3/84

1) AMBIGUOUS TITLE - no one able to explain what meant:

Does it mean W operating within the whole orgs, such as ANC, AAM; or W in their separate orgs. Was I expected to deal with history of W in orgs or delineate Ws role in orgs?

However, felt that ambiguity raised at beginning of the question:

2) WHY FORM SEPARATE W ORGS?

NEGATIVE ASPECTS: become ghettos for W; segregate certain issues as being W issues, which inevitably, with the deep-seated antagonism towards W among many men, become 'inferior' issues.

Lead to W becoming reps of WS, not primarily of org as a whole; WS reps on committees & platforms are token reps.

By segregating Ws issues, we tend to confine questions of exploitation of W, or problems arising from W oppression to the W, to their specific bodies & sections, instead of these being regarded - as they should - as problems of the movement as a whole.

These are indeed dangers which arise from separating Ws problems in the form of separate sections or orgs, & one of the questions that must be discussed during the course of this seminar.

3) WOMEN HOLD UP HALF THE SKY.

A simple truth: the social & political revolution we visualise cannot come about without the full participation of W. But W DO NOT participate equally with men in orgs which is reflection of their subordinate position in society.

Part of the problem of obtaining fuller participation is concerned with attitudes they have grown up with; part are centred around the nature of Ws lives: it is, the care of home & children, not being able to leave children to go to meetings, the lack of creches - which should not be looked on as one more nuisance that W create, but as essential in the org to obtain better participation of W, & therefore the job of both W & men to organise; and Ws double burden of work, giving them less time; the fact that many W lack skills such as driving, even if a family car is available. And not least, the selfish & self-serving attitudes of many husbands.

To help overcome these barriers to greater participation, we need to organise W as W. The facilities of separate Ws orgs & sections are stepping stones towards a fuller contribution by the W. In these separate orgs W can learn to overcome their timidity in self-expression, & can make meeting arrangements better suited to the nature of their work.

4) ORG O W IS NOT A SIDE ISSUE

Nt something to think abt whn t main tasks are complete.
NOR IS IT A SEPARATE ISSUE.

There is deep psychological resistance by by men - & by many W too - to acc
accept tt t issue o Ws rights is central to t whole process o developmnt.
T point is: while W remain marginal to our struggle, whn they are nt seen
i t ranks o t leadership, whn they appear only as t one token W on public
platforms - or nt at all, as we hve seen at meetng aftr meetng; or are
permitted to occupy these public positions in greatr numbrs only fr Special
ws events; whn their wk is thought of as being mainly concernd as supporti-
ive, as backing up; or as fund-raisng, cake-bakng; or collectng napkns
& sanitary towels fr SAMAFCO - thn progress i our struggle -
right across t board - is stymied. Becos it is being held bck by half
t people. And inevitably they must drag bk t othr half wth thm.

All suffr whn there is failure to make connection between general
oppression undr apartheid, & Ws specific opp.

And we must draw t conclusion frm tt - tt we cantt adequately mobilise
against apartheid if we are nt prepared to fight against t specific
disabilites o W.

5) WOMENS ORGS IN SA

Ws subordinate position & their exclusion frm institutions o pol powr
means tt they tend to disappear frm pages o history. To some extent W
bcme invisible.

Howevr, SA W hve begun researchng history of pol struggle in a new
way, so tt nt only t wellrecorded incidents (13, 56) are writtn abt,
bt many struggles tt hve disappeard frm t records, sch as t day in
Potch i 1922 whn t W brought t whole town to a standstill.

Thn, when tracng history o Ws struggles & activities, we must constantly
remembr tt mch o Ws role is a general part o t whole history o tt time,
i t sense tt they participatd in orgs & campaigns o men & W.

WE FIND OUTSELVES, THEREFR, LOOKNG FR 3 SEPARATE THINGS:

one is t general activities & campaigns o t movemnt as a whole durg
a particular period, in which W played a part;

t second is is the specific campaigns organsd by W;

t third is t types o orgs tt t W creatd fr thmselves & fr their activities

Evidence of past, exclusion o W & m ANC until 43, show
how social attitudes are harder to change than pol attitudes.

Seminar
3

We have, o course, rejectd a fem whose only aim is to achieve euqal positions
wh men i existng society. AS we put it, we dont demand t right to b
exploitd equally wth men. We are nt strivng to be imprisond i t very
structures we seek to change.

Our fem is nt simply a struggle to end male chauvinsim or ensure equal
rights wth men; it is a commitmnt to eradicatng t ideology o domination
on all levels: sex, race, class; a commit to dhangg society.

So we come to t question: WHT IS IMPORTANCE O WS IN ORGS?
Wht is nature o thm to b i future?

Here I think there is t need fr a shift o emphasis. There is t dangr
o regardng t WS as separate, where t org shld b one, & ths leads to
confusion & over-lappng - eg, in sch areas as logistics & education.
We dont need ~~separate~~ WS education officer or cttee; we need t WS as
a whole to make relevant suggestions to those plannng t whole movemnts
education. It is true there are 2 facets to Ws education - one is to
try to educate thm to take more responsibility & leadership & play a more
prominent role in our org. Bt there is also t need to improve our wk
by educatng our men, fr many o u are extremely sexist i ideas & attitudes

Hence t WS has recently made some proposd changes i t way it shld work.
these hve nt yet been fully discussd, & I myself dont agree wth all t
proposals, bt memhrs must think very carefully abt issues raisd. Ha

Want to finish by readng u a speech made by a blk W i t 19th century.

QUOTE . 5

These are t words o a womn born to slavery, whose compassion & concern
extended to all oppressed. I feel very strongly today tt a cord binds
our W in SA, in Nyanga & Crossroads, to t W o Greenham Common, to t
W o El Salvador, Chile - all those who understand tt Ws full participation
i t struggle fr peace & freedm is t essential condition o our success.

- 6) EARLIEST POL ORG amng Af W ws Bantu Ws League, formd i 1913, a yr afr foundg o ANC. A remarkable pioneerng W, CM, founded t League, which cn be regarded as forerunnr o ANCWL, altho it wld b 35 more yrs b4 tt came into existence.

W in ANC were auxiliary memhrs only, without votng rights until 1943, whn they were admittd as fl1 memhrs. At t same conf, t need fr a WL ws acknowledged, bt it ws 48 b4 officially inaugratd.

T 43 ANC conf opend doors o ANC to W o equal footng wth men. T conf adoptd a policy o universl franchise & changd its constitution to provide fr t existence o a WL.

At t 54 ANC Nat conf, WL hd a few hrs to meet as a Ws section fr t 1st time. In 57 constituion o ANC ws amendd to accomodate t changes tt hd grown out o experiences & problms o t preceedng couple o yrs

T WL tk some yrs to build itself into an effective org, & i earlier yrs wk ws i t supportive capacity to men tt hs always been Ws role: caterng fr confs, providng accomm, fund-raisng.

There were many diff i steppng outside these limits. It ws hard enough to organise t men (Smuts suppression o Mine strike, 46) Ws diffs compundd by t fact tt they were economiclly more vulnerable & pol less secure thn t men; & t fact tt patriarchal ideology ws deeply entrenched i all strata o society; bth men & W i Congress were conditiond to accept t ;limitations o Ws role.

Wideng o activities came i 50s, a reflection bth o t increasng activities & importance o ANC itself, & also thru Ws involvemnt i struggle against pass laws.

T org tt ws to play a key role i activisng W agäinst Pass lws ws W Fed, est 54. Bt t Fed did nt suddenly arise, as it were, out o nthg. It came abt as a result o a long process o pol activity i all sections, & o varied orgs among W.

In pre-war yrs, & up to 1950, apart frm ANC, W were growng to pol. maturity within t CP & thru t TUs. T TUs were to play a great part i educng W - still do, & wk o pioneer organisrs sch as Ray & B du Toit cnnt b over-estimtd. A whole genration o powerfl W leadrs grew out o TUs, wmn sch as E. Mafekeng. CP ws also strong pol traing ground fr W, & also injectd an important strand tt still runs thru our wk - t feelng o internationalism.

QUOTE 1.

Dr W.M. Eiselen, thn secretary fr Bantu Admin & Develpmnt:

"Recognition of the women's demonstrations on lines that have found favour among the whites, that is, where women already have a status altogether different to that of Bantu women, can at this stage only have a harmful and dangerous effect which can undermine the entire community structure."

QUOTE 2.

Eiselen: "Officials of the department have been instructed not to have discussions with the masses of women and their so-called leaders, but to make it clear to them that they will always be willing to have discussions with the recognised Bantu authorities, the tribal Chiefs, and responsible male members of this community."

7) POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS TT ACTIVSD WOMN.

Ws pol activity seems to fuse t personl wth t political.

FOOD CTTEES, at end o war, food shortages togethr wth hoardng & unfair distribution, causd W to organise thmselves.

Food cttees formd i 40s i Cape T & Jhbg attacked profiteerng, blk markt, hoardng, & establishd cooperative clubs i wkg clss areas fr distribution o veg & food. T organisng o food purchases at wholesale markts, t sortng, pricng, distribution i t coops, t direct attacks o food hoardrs, t organisng o deput to local authorities & othr protests - all these bcame traing grounds fr W.

HOUSING. Whn 'people overflowd' & set up shanties on stony Orlando hillside it ws t W who maintaind t camps, kept the communities togthr, kpet t protests going. Pimville, Crossroads - t tenacity & endurance o t W hs been t potent factor i these campaigns.

BUS STRIKE in Alex BANTU EDUCATION - drawng wth sticks i sand

All these were pol campaigns, bt meanwhile W maintained their Manyanos & Stokfels, their religious & community orgs, tt were vital i increasng their ability to survive t harsh conditions o Ap life.

Nt only i towns, but remote COUNTRY DISTRICTS W were involvd i anti-Ap struggles. Most bitter i Zeerust where issue o pss bks fud wth deep opp to Bantu Authorities & a revolt ag a stooge chief appointd by regime. Ws resistance bcame opn confrontation when W burnd passes.

These displys o militancy by traditionally subordinate tribal W hd a profound effect on men, white as well as blk. QUOTE 1.

And it ws i 59, a yr o mass wmn's action in Natal, tt Zulu W were present at t ANC conf & fr 1st time they broke an old taboo o Zulu W speakng i public. While Zeerust campaign hd tragic consequences, whn 2,000 W & childrn fled ovr bordr into Bech, t whole campaign ws part o a struggle tt strengthnd Ws role & orgs at tt time & subsequently. Men's absence (migratory labr) increasd burdn o responsibility o W. T violence o official reaction reflectd extent to which authorities felt threatened by pol action o t part o t W, a threat nt only to their male authority, bt also to their male assumptions. In these ways t revolt o t W i t countryside hd a significance beyond t imm issues tt ignited thm

QUOTE 2. ★

BEER HALLS. INDIAN PR. DEFIANCE CAMP (Lilian) - Fatima P. 82

(Actions largely politicisg wmn)

All great pol movemnts o H pened imposable without full participation o wmn (led by men)
Up to 1950, wmn were seen largely as supportive, as wives & mothers
& wmn largely acceptd this role — FSAW →

8) THE WOMENS FED. *broke new ground & placed W firmly i perspective o struggle fr lib as a whole.*

Apart frm t campaigns it ran & way i which it drew W into pol. org, Ws Fed made a major contribution to nat lib movemnt by bringing to fore wht we nw call Ws triple oppression & to point out tt only whn all 3 categories o exploitation & oppression hd been removd wld true lib b achievd. Colour, class, sex. *... unique feature: joint commitment to emancipation o W & to Nat Lib; multi racialism.*

A strong factor i establishing Ws Fed ws our sense o internationalism. W like RS & self wantd to link ourselves wth wrld movemnts fr peace & Ws rights. An imp part o our inaugural conf ws a speech & discussion o wrld peace, & t dangrs o rearmament & militarism.

Fed ws pioneering org, always stressg need to fight customs & conventions keeping W inferior, bt concedg priority to Nat Lib.
Nt givng history o Fed, which is invetibly associatd wth its greatest achievmnt, 56. Wht I am tryng to emphasise is t vital stream tt runs from t beginng to today; hence our need, nt always to b lookng bk, bt to knw & understand t history o W in organisations.

If u look at scene at home today as far as Ws orgs are concernd, u wll realise hw mch t Fed remains, its ideas shapng t nature o Ws politics today. *Revised. Robertson*

Frm bwginng, W Fed clearly indicatd its double objective o fightng fr freedm & lib fr all thru overthrow o Ap; & o fightng against Ws special disabilities. 56 Conf adoptd Chartr o Aims, t openg words o which declare:

'our aim o strivng fr t removal o all laws, regulations, conventions & customs tt discriminate against us as W.' Thirty yrs on, W who were nt born whn we draftd t Chartr are reprintg it, findg its aims o emancipatng W frm their special disabilities, o removng all social diffs tt hve effec o keepng W i a position o inferiority & subordination, as apt & relevant as whn t Chartr ws 1st framd.

T Fed ws central to t tremends mass movemnt o W against passes; & thrust to the forefrnt o pol scene W o exceptional gifts & strong personalities, who nt only provd thmselkves i t Ws org as able speakrs & organisers, bt at same time raised status o all W i natlib movement.

9) YEAR O WOMEN IS BOTH OPPORTUNITY & CHALLENGE.

Today, mch more attention paid to role o W i lib struggle thn ever b4. We are fortunate tt t lead i raisng status o W, recognition o Ws special rproblms, comes frm top o our org. *unfortunate it doesnt always permeate all levels*

QUOTE 3 and QUOTE 4

These to me are feminist ideas; fr feminism, i t SA context, is no more thn a recognition o Ws specific oppression & t need to change tt position.

Many o our memhrs, W as well as men, are afraid o t feminism inherent i t idea o a W section. They hve stood i their pla ces fr so long tt they are afraid to move. They equate our radical ideas wth those o diff types o fem, diff theories, arisng out o Western societies. *the*

BRISTOL AAM WOMEN UNDER APARTHEID. 14 Jan 86

End o decade - test by treatmnt o wmn - avalnch & volcano.

1) CONDITIONS O WMNS LIVES

Av. is Ap, pursing inexorable path, crushng, destroyng

'Reform' - superficial changes dont alter exploitation: *Bank clerks, Marriages.*
Af wmn suffr triple opp: blks i racist society; wmn i patriarchal soc;
wkrs forever confind to bottom o ec. pile

REMOVALS - 3½ m since 1960, 1.7 m more undr threat.

True dimensions diff to estimate, bt vast numbrs uprootd
furtherance Ap: 'white' areas, blk. (Pop & land figures)

In relentlss destruction o homes, communities, villages, settled peasnt
life, wmn suffr most; maj o those removd are wmn & their dependants:
child, aged, disabled, sick.

Men who can, go to wk i towns; wmn prohibitd fr 2 decades frm leavng.
70% o B/sn pop are womn; & of wmn i rural areas, inclndg B/stns,
70% are unemployd.

Fr vast maj, no wk, exist o tiny pensions or occ. money frm men.

(22) Removls are violent, brutal process, part o mastr-pn to eliminate all nt
usefl to W ec. Wmn sent to remote & inhospitable areas where powerlessness
is compounded by frustration & agg. o men: rape, child-/wife-beatng.

Wmns decade seen many forcd migrations i wrld, famine, war. Nowhere else
3 to 4 m leadng settled lives, torn up & thrown away.

1x 'Superfluous app' - form o genocide; childrn without role models, family
Mst horrific action o past decade

MIGRANT LABOUR

Ap rests on ml, controlld by pass laws. Fr many, more or less permanent sep o families. Fr blk wmn, particularly intense form o expl. & opp.

Original reasns. 15 - procreative...

Ml deeply disrupts lives o SA wmn; makes it illegal fr many Af wmn to live wth husbnds, except 2 wks. Mockery o fam life, impassable chasm.

Durg long periods o ythfl, sex. active lives, husbnds & wives live apart Fr many, family unit nevr formd.

DOMESTIC SERVICE

Largst area paid empl frm wmn: $\frac{1}{4}$ o all employd i 80 were ds.

DS sit at convergence o 3 lines along whch social inequ. is generatd: sex, class, racial divison. Racial & sexual factrs facilitate & intesnify expl.

Ideology o 'Wmns place' identifies dom sphere as 'natural' fr wives & mothr. Blk d.s. fulfils female functions - nt i own hse, tho still resp fr own homes yt same time functions i W hsehlds. Wages lowest, longest hrs, little time off, no paid hols.

Yet strong self-image: Quote.

Contradictions.

The contrast between their subordinate existence & the necessity to achieve ind. status further sharpens edge of their disabilities.

Final contrast between depressed lives & ebullience of their def. Joyful spirit, songs & banter, irrepressible even in face of mass arrests, jail, removals. FSAW conf, sing

Slower to organise than men, less in numbers in lib movement & - not unique - rarely in leading positions - yet once roused women display greater courage & tenacity than men, militancy & capacity for self-sacrifice at its roots in their ultimate responsibility - towards children. Man closes door & is gone - women never.

FEMINISM: SA women recognise essence - that women suffer systematic social injustice because of sex - but for SA women the issue is not simply about lib of women - it is about lib itself. *Cannot dissociate FEM from pol struggle to change society*

5. THE INEXTRICABLE LINKS

For many months witnesses to horrifying, never-ending drama (until TV ban) Britain is central participant in unfolding tragedy of SA

Not neutral. On contrary, Brit capital responds for initiating many of distinctive features of SA economy (compounds, migratory labour, colour bar to skilled work, refusal to recruit black TU's)

Foreign investments, loans, credits & trade strengthen Apartheid regime. Apart from direct support - taxes, technology transfer, tech expertise, etc - economic links enable oil stockpiling & rest of armaments industry.

Brit firms make up wages of conscripts, the support war against Angola, Moz, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia (100,000 troops to 3 m pop) & occupation of townships.

Corporations whose installations are designated 'key points' must org & finance

LEOMINSTER WEA WOMEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP. 7/5/86 Women in SA

1883, Schreiners cry o frustration:

'But ths one thought stands - nevr goes - if I might but be one o those born i t future, then perhaps to be born a woman wll nt b to b born branded'

Why thn do wmn o 3rd wrld reject primacy o patriarchal oppression?

Part o problm is lack o info abt nature o wmn's struggles & pol activities

- * evn whn importnt i time & scale, ignord by reserachers
- * ths neglect itself a product o historians own (oftn unconscious) bias against wmn; & ths
- * reflects subordinate position o wmn

Wmn's history cannt i t end b study sep frm tt o men;

their specialisd studies & experiences mst b incorporatd into gen pol history

But it hs to b dug up to be incorporatd. Otherwise t writtn & oftn t visual story o t past excludes wmn.

WOMNS HISTORY IN SA IS RICH ONE

ANC, 1912. Politics man's domain 'Equal rights fr all civilisd men frm t Cape to t Zambesi' (Rhodes) - nt generic.

Bt i 1913 wmn burst onto public stage wth fierce campaign ag. pass laws - key issue, round which wld rally in future.

Provided mommentum fr Bantu Wmns League, aff to ANC foundd by ~~Charlotte~~ Maxeke, arose frm militancy & struggles o 1913, chain o events continued to 1920s, wth 100's wmn jailed.

In 1940's, specifically aftr war, wth resurgence o ANC & new militancy brought by yth, wmn's section changd into ANCWL, wmn full membs i 1943

All great pol movemnts o tt period impossible wthout fll participation o womn - food, squattr, bus, potatoes (led by Baduza, Mpanza, but) Right up to 1950's & beyond, ANC continued to see wmn primarily as mothrs & wives, & wmn largely acceptd this

FSAW broke new ground & placd wmn's movemnt firmly i perspective o t struggle fr lib as a whole

Unique features: its joint commitmnt to emancipation o wmn & t nat lib movemnt; & its multi-racialism, bringing unity o action as keynote o its truggle, as it is today.

Pioneerng org o wmn, always stressng need to fight customs & conventions which kept wmn inferior, bt conceded priority to nat lib movemnt (Charter, p 279) In ANC, still so today.

PASS LAW REMOVALS

Almst no blks i Western Cape wll benefit frm pls scrappng, bcos citizens o Ciskei & Transkei are nt SAfricans. Legal resources Centre says situatio fr Xhosa-speakers cld b evn worse, bcos nw subject to Aliens Act which provides fr mch heavier penalties thn old influx control laws. Abolition o influx control wiped out by fact tt Xhosa-speakrs are aliens

COST OF APARTEID

Ap cost SA more thn R56,000m in lost income last yr, & abt 12c in every rand tt ws spent by t state went towards maintaing segregation. Prof Michael Savage o U o CT said extremely conservative estai,tes indicatng tt nbetween 10 & 21% og annual budgt is devotd to financng Ap. SA =political systm givn birth to 13 Houses o Parl, & t Presidenmt's Council wth 1,720 membrs.

FORCED REMOVALS

At least 4 m blk people movd into B/stns btween 51 & 80 (Stellenbosch U study) 'white areas in all 4 provinces shed blks.'

UNEMPLOYMENT

At least 80% o blks btween 18 & 26 hve nevr hd permanent employmnt. (Star 27.8.86)

villages & settled life are wemn, & those movd to Bantustns are womn, ~~whimix~~ childrn, old, disabld. Wmn may nt leave reserves. 70% o B/stn pop are wmn, & ~~all~~ of wmn i rural areas, 70% unemployd. No wk, they exist o tiny pensions whn available.

Removls are violent & brutal process, wmn sent to remote & inhospitable areas wehre their powerlessness is compounded by t frustration & agression o t men. Wife, child beatng, rape.

DOMESTIC SERVICE. Largest area paid empl fr wmn. $\frac{1}{4}$ o all employd wmn ds.

DS sits at convergence o 3 lines along which social inequality is generatd. sex, class, racial division. Ideology o 'wmns place' identtifies dom sphere as 'natural' fr wives & mothrs. Blk d.s. fulfils female functions - bt nt in own house. Wages lowest, longest hrs, little time off, etc.

Bologna. Women 87

(1)

1. CONTRADICTIONS

- x In what I say (E AM!)
- x In Wms lives
- x In Comparison with yr lives

YET MUCH U WILL RELATE TO

2 3 STRANDS

3. fold oppression P. 7

3 Strands interlace:

Blk Wmn cant change conditions o life without fighting ag.: e.g. Mig labor, pass laws, lack of land, access to education - i.e. Ap.

To fight male domination, must fight basis o B/strands; to maintain family life must become protagonists ag. Ap laws (Mig Lbr)

3. BOTTOM O PILE

'Adjuncts'. 'Sojourners'.

Removals: effects on wmn & children

Alienation. No wk. dependency. Destruction of orgs & communities. Powerlessness

Violence. rape. Strangers, survival, harsh environment

→ A. BANTUSTANS

(2)

5 m Wmn

Disabilities in virtually every facet of life

Bound by interlaced customary & common law, can't escape

Perpetual minors. Land hunger. No jobs

Loneliness, poverty, old, disabled.

5. WORK

Ag labor one of main forms.

Domestic WK. Exclusion from laws, insurance.

'Border' industries

Yet wmn strong in TU's

6 RESISTANCE

2 Aspects: x in total struggle
x in own orgs & methods

All wmn (CONTRA) never occupied position

of silent subservience: 1913-56

FSAW double objective: overthrow Ap

...x and disabilities

2 nt separate. Bt 2nd gives pass of
all wmn actg together

1987; Charter adopted by those unborn
ZEERUST. 20 - 200 patiently undr trees
"we are here". 233 filld yard,
Singg. - 400

BOYCOTTS. Alex. White wmn.

Pass - men payg

AFTER 76 - changed struggle.

Women in Soweto. Crossroads.

Detentions: jails: deaths. 103

VOICE O WMN 110

⑦ WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED from

- x Western feminists
- x Socialist countries
- x Lib struggles, eg ALGERIA

CONTRADICTIONS,

- x Wmn head families
- x Militancy. Confidence
- || Between status & deprivation v.
strength & defiance

BUT U MUST LEARN FROM US: (4)

x Struggle to lib womn is pol org
116 last para
then 117 2nd para

Lib o womn nt simply matter o amendg
laws or changg male attitudes

INSTEAD: to destroy whole basis o
racial exploitation, fr men & womn
Absolute Conditions 117

* Askd u to come discuss questions affectng yr live here at Maz. Low status o wmn, bk seat.

1) AN UNNATURAL SITUATION

All provided - no necessity to wk or struggle Bt at same time, confined, no real contact wth anyone outside Mz. No choice - to buy shoes or go to disco.

2) YOU DID NOT CHOOSE TO COME HERE

Came at age whn nt free to choose. Parents left SA, or sent u here from SA Bt life i SA unknown to u - pol struggles remote Boring - nt yr concern, no reality.

3) YET SA POLITICS IS YOUR CONCERN

Will u go to SA to take bck seat ?Be pssive? Divorcd frm life there as well? Wait fr love & marriage? Hseholds headed by wmn: urbn, 35% Rural, up to 60% Wht ths means ~~AND~~

4) WOMEN IN SA ALWAYS ESSENTIAL PART OF STRUGGLE

In fact play pivotal role. Bcause nt usually seen in leadrshp, assumd they are nt there. Let me tell u abt some:

FOOD CTTEES: SQUATTERS MOVEMENT: BUS BOYCOTT (Wmn pulld yths off): POTATO BOYCOTT: BANTU EDUCATION. & today: in forefrnt o rent, consumr boyctts.

5) WE LIVE IN MALE-DOMINATED SOCIETY

Reasns complex, bt same i mst countries. (Shd stud ths) So wmn taught to take bk seat, to b passive supportive, if open mths, laughed at. Outcome is u think u are inferior. Colonialism.

Why women are inferior in SA

1. Colonial
2. Sexual discrimination in laws

Gladys - Regime itself puts
women bk - place in the
Kitchen

Tell themselves women must
depend on men
on our shoulders

S + L, Me, T



6) RACIALISM & SEXISM LINKD TOGETHR:

Gt to undrstnd t ntve - nt like us.

Dont expect wmn to reasn like we do - nt like us -

havent same brains (truth is, bettr)

~~Wxxxxxxpxxxxxxpxxxxxxpxxxxxxp~~

Next step is to 'protect' wmn - kleep thm out o poltcs

Chador - & Moslem womn justify it.

If u believe racialism is wrong, founded on false ideas, so u mst also blieve sexism wrong & false.

7) WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Dreamng o gettng away? Wxsnt things here to change?

Whtever it is, u mst equip yrselves fr change. Nthng

happns unless u make it.
Boredom is t worst evil i life

Wmn are very powerfl. Wman usually hve greatr sense o responsibility. Dont sit waitng fr someone to make u pregnant. Let's hear frm u now, u hve yr chance to speak.

Dont think wht u hve to say is foolish or unimportat
It's these unimportnt things tt count.

AUGUST 9 1989 at DAKAWA

This day came into being bcos o FEDSAW
Wmn singg. Trades Hall on Sundays

1. FEDSAW didnt spring frm nothng. Wmn i orgs frm
begng o century; frm 1913 on reveald militancy &
ind. far i advance o their social & legal status.

2. EARLY YEARS

Bantu Ws League, 1913, 1 yr aftr ANC which at time
wantd vote fr all civilisd MEN. C. Maxeke, advncd
W i ANC auxiliary membrs only, no votng rights
until 43, whn admittd full membrs & policy of
universal franchise.

ANC Ws League built slowly; wk ws supportive capaci-
ty to mn - Ws role, caterng, accomm, fund raisng.

Bth men & W i Congress conditiond to accept
limitations o Ws role, reflectng status i society.

Est o W League hd 2 sides: recognition tt W occupy
inferior position & have special problms; bt by
puttng W i separate body perpetuates sexual divisio
reinforces wht is Ws wk, Ws role & divorces those
problm frm t men, part o problm. Separate is nt
equal.

POST WAR YEARS - INCREASNG ACTIVITIES

W org, or particpatd i, many campaigns - FOOD CTTEE
TU's; BUS STRIKE (men pulld off; female soldiarity
across colour line) SQUATTER MOVEMNT; BEER BREWNG
BANTU ED & CULTURAL CLUBS; Indian W in PR
campaign; DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN - today's defiance hs
precedent (Tutu) as also BOYCOTTS (Potatoes)
All great pol movemnts o 50's imposs without full
participation o wmn - bt alwys led by men.

4. 17th APRIL 54 - JOYFUL ENTHUSIASM.

Festive occasion - singg & dancg alwys feature o
FSAW mtgs. FDSA W broke new ground - 1st non-racial
Ws org; placd W firmly i perspctive o struggle
as a whole. Brought to fore Ws triple oppression.
Leads wmn: Sisulu, Baard, Motamela, Nyembe, Nkhana, Ngoyi
Unique features: joint commitmnt to emancipation
o W, and to Nat Lib. Multiracialism strong elemnt.
Alwys pioneerng org, stressd need to fight customs
tt kept W inferior. Quote 1, p. 2, re Drum

Quote 2, p.3.

85 Headed by W: 367, Af households urban
47, B/stans
59% rural areas o B/stans

5. MANY CAMPAIGNS & MARCH O 20,000

Bt Thurs, 9 Aug 56, blended into our history wll
yet stand out as monumentl achievemnt by t most
oppressd, sufferng & downtrodden o our people -
t W o SA.

Hw anti-pss protests grew across country. East Ldn:
oh wht a law! We are refung totally! Germiston -
evn if printd i real gold; Ventrspost, 500 W -
/Afrika is my name! Winburg: pss burng; Brakpan
1200; Bethlehem 400; & 400 domestic servnts i JHbg.
In PE, 2000 workng W gve up days wages to tell
Ntve Comm We shll nt rest untl laws restrictng
freedm are abloshd.

Describe scene.

Treasn trial (Ngoyi, Joseph etc) Thn banng o ANC
i 60 cut off Ws League. Decline whn all leads
bandd & restrictd.

6. REVIVAL

FEDTRAW, problms o org Nat org. Bt remarkable degree
o unity in aims amng diverse numbr o Ws orgs -
WArepression - new alliance includes FEDTRAW,
Blok Sash (a shift i position) Wmn fr Peace,

YWCA & W involvd i student, TU & church orgs,
statemnt o March 8 calling fr solidarity ag oppress
aftr 1000 days o S o E

Nearly 900 white mothrs o SA conscripts
protestd ag military service i Feb, W against War
held press conferences i many areas. FEDTRAW said
it ws encourgd by brave & open stand.

7. WOMEN IN THE FRONT LINE.

W hve bcome increasingly pol conscios, orgs
more pol, strongr aims, more united.
Wmn are bannd, detaind, imprisond.

A young wmn 5 mths p0regnat tear-gassd i cell
Long yrs i jail: Nyembe, Hogan, Pastoor, Caesarina
Modise Motamela died shortly aftr release
Long yrs restrictd: Ngoyi bannd 61, 19 yrs b4 died
Moodley, bannd 63, died 79; Mafeking, banishd;
Sisulu restrictd fr 18 yrs. Also Winnie despite
errors - imprisond, banishd, bannd.

MURDERED: Ruth, Jabu Nzima (wth husbnd) Jeanette,
Mxenge, Dulcie.

MOTHERS: Mahlangu: Sarah Mosololi (Go well, my son, I'm
proud o u bcos u are to die fr yr people. I love u
Molaise's mothr - a warrior.

8 WHAT WE MUST DO

A woman's 6 mountains:

1. Colonial structures;
- 2 Traditional - feudl or tribl;
3. Backwardne4ss (30% Af wmn hve NO ed at all,
11% only to Std 1: 41% illiterate);
4. Men;
- 5 Colour
- & 6: HERSELF.

Men & W conditiond to their specific roles, so men, &
resent it if u question thm, they feel threatened-
But so do t W very oftn - they hve absorbd their
own colonialim, they prefer t comfort o conformity

Within our own org, aftr years o struggle, in broad principle recognition hs been given to Ws special needs & t necessity o organsg W. But there is still mch ambivalence. While W are appointd as Chief Reps i importnt countries, it sometimes seems it hs scarcely penetratd rank & file.

Change depends not on the W - but on all of us. On ths day must pledge ourselves to fight t segregation o Ws issues i our org - they are men's issues as well. We say make space fr t womn, draw into positions o responsibility & decision makg.

Wht are we doing here? We are preparng ourselves

* for t reconstruction o a new society i SA.

When tt time comes, W o SA will sing new songs o hope & triumph, & when tt time comes, then t sound o their singing will echo round t world.

* fr democratic, unitary, non-racist, non sexist state

THE DAY OF THE WOMEN

Hilda Bernstein

Women's participation in South Africa's struggle for liberation is as old as the struggle itself. From the time that South Africa was formally constituted as a nation the activities of women have taken place on two levels: first, ~~since~~ women are half of the ~~population~~, as part of the struggle of the whole population; and secondly, through specific women's organisations. This struggle on two levels continues in the present.

"CRIES OF FREEDOM", produced by the Catholic Institute for International Relations, describes how women have been a vital force, bringing renewed vigour to the tradition of resistance which has survived decades of repression.

"In urban squatter camps and rural villages, women have been key participants in mobilising against mass evictions and forced removal of communities. Domestic workers have come together to fight against the long hours and pitiful pay which makes them the most exploited sector of South African workers. . . In the communities the fight against apartheid includes rent boycotts in protest against racially based municipal councils. Consumer boycotts of white-owned business are designed to put pressure on the business sector to take a stand against apartheid. These actions depend on the decisive support of women, who in many cases are the heads of households."

In schools and universities the girls and young women take part in actions demanding democratic control of education. And in white communities, women campaign against military conscription, revealing the role of the armed forces in

maintaining and enforcing apartheid.

While women suffer the same penalties as men for their political activism (3,050 were detained without trial under the State of Emergency in 1987 alone) women still comprise a small percentage of the total detained in the crackdown against anti-apartheid organisations. This is because while women are active 'on the ground', in the rank and file of mass organisations, they are still poorly represented in leadership positions. "This incomplete representation of women in the structures of resistance," writes CRIES OF FREEDOM, "has been acknowledged and challenged by women who support the United Democratic Front (UDF) . . . The UDF and the trade union federation COSATU have taken up the challenge of encouraging 'the maximum participation of women'".

It is obvious that in coming months and years women such as Albertina Sisulu will increasingly be seen in the leadership of the mass democratic movement.

The ways in which women have organised specifically among themselves have been ~~very~~ diverse, very often founded on a local or community basis; organisations that aim to give mutual assistance in the difficult lives women lead, self-help clubs, church societies, as well as those directed at specific political issues, from 1913 when, in their campaign against the pass laws, finding that deputations and petitions had failed, the women "threw off their shawls and took the law into their own hands." On that occasion, 600 women in Bloemfontein marched to the municipal offices demanding to see the Mayor, and depositing a bag containing their passes at the feet of the Deputy-Mayor, telling him they would buy no more.

Women's organisations have always operated within the framework of the political resistance movements, because of the women's clear understanding that the reforms they need

are dependent upon a restructuring of the state itself. This is one of the reasons that women's participation and initiatives often disappear subsequently from written history. It is easy to see the role of women in activities directed specifically among women, but it is not so easy to see the pivotal role they have played in the general activities of the largely male-led organisations. Yet women have emerged as primary catalysts for protest and challengers of the apartheid regime. And with all the disabilities and devastating effects of apartheid on their status and their lives, they have never lost sight of the fact that meaningful change for women cannot be forthcoming through reform but only through the total destruction of apartheid. It is this that has led to the women's struggle being subsumed into the general struggle and thus in the past the crucial role played by women had not been widely recognised. Women, for instance, were active in Mahatma Gandhi's early campaigns against discriminatory laws, and 40 years later were among those who defied racial laws and offered themselves up for arrest in their thousands. In the 1950's women formed themselves into the first organisation to draw women of different groups into one body with clear aims embodied in a Charter of Women's Aims. This was the Federation of South African women (FEDSAW) that set out, at its first conference in 1954, its double objective of fighting for freedom and liberation for all through the overthrow of apartheid, and of fighting against women's special disabilities. The Charter proclaimed FEDSAW's aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations and customs that discriminate against women, but emphasised that women do not form a separate society from

men and that they joined with them in the struggle to remove all social evils and obstacles to progress. It was FEDSAW that organised a nation-wide campaign against the extension of the pass laws to women, culminating in the historic demonstration at the seat of the government in Pretoria, when 20,000 women gathered to present their hundreds of thousands of petitions against the pass laws. This was on August 9th, 1956, and that is why this has been designated Women's Day in South Africa, and celebrated as such ever since.

FEDSAW was never declared an illegal organisation, but bans and restraints on all who attempted to organise or speak on behalf of the women led to its decline in the 1960's. With the upsurge of revolt, particularly among young people, in the 1970's, women re-formed themselves into political organisations under the same or different names. In the Transvaal it was the Federation of Transvaal Women, but attempts to form a united national organisation have been repeatedly thwarted by the imposition of Emergency rules, and thus today the most active women's organisations are formed on a regional basis.

These organisations reflect not only the harsh conditions under apartheid today, but also the changing status of women in society as a whole/and the extent to which they have advanced in their understanding of their own political role.

At the conference of the National Assembly for Women in SA held a few months ago, women listened to a church minister, Roxanne Jordaan, describing the nature of South African society as based on economic exploitation and oppression, so that women were still in the shackles of inequalities based on gender, race and class. Women, she said, had to determine their own vision of their emancipation, without losing sight of their quest for freedom within the national struggle for

liberation. Women could [redacted]
[redacted] (not be liberated without the liberation of
society as a whole. "Our struggle is not solely for the
emancipation of women, or to enhance our position in the
economic world, or to make ourselves equal with men, but to
dismantle the structures of apartheid in order that we move
forward to a transformed society, freed of the inequalities
based on race, class, creed and gender." Women's fight was
against oppression in their homes by the men, but they had to
identify exploitive apartheid structures which enslave men
and women. "Men also need to be liberated from the psychological
oppression of fear to understand the urgency of the women's
struggle. The women's struggle is a struggle for the realisation
of the full potential of all people." She described women's
fight for the right to vote. "It is not a struggle to free
ourselves from caring for our children but a battle to
redefine the productive role of women. It is not a struggle
to take over male structures and replant them in our lives
and organisations, but to transform such structures to be
free of any kind of sex discrimination . . . Liberation is
not not a commodity that can be bought or which will be
given to those who are oppressed, for no government abdicates
power as an act of charity."

The remarkable degree of unity in aims among a diverse
number of women's organisations today is exemplified in WAR
Women Against Repression, a new alliance of women's organisations.
These include FEDTRAW, the Black Sash, Women for Peace,
YWCA, and women involved in student, trade union and church
organisations. They issued a joint statement on International
Women's Day this year calling for a period of solidarity
against oppression after 1000 days of the State of Emergency.

[redacted]

They held an all-night vigil and a 24-hour hunger strike to demand an end to the Emergency. WAR's long-term objectives are not only to coordinate the activities of anti-apartheid women's organisations, but to unite as many women as possible and to raise the voice of women in the struggle against apartheid.

Women feel particularly strongly about the State of Emergency because of the constant anxiety and responsibility that they feel towards their children. Many mothers have been detained; and so many young sons and daughters. In some cases women are pregnant when they are detained, and if they do not miscarry they must carry their pregnancy to term, often under intolerable conditions. "Women have been beaten and tortured while already in poor health resulting from pregnancy without adequate care, food, medical attention and exercise. Women have had to give birth under prison conditions."

(CRIES OF FREEDOM) Many miscarry as a result of assault, torture, lack of medical care or the stress of detention. Too often the conditions under which the women are held are horrific, and one case alone can show what the women must suffer. An 18-year-old woman was detained and interrogated when she was five months pregnant. When her cellmates demanded her release, they were all tear-gassed in the cell. She became quite ill from this; ultimately gave birth in the prison hospital but was not allowed to receive clothes for the baby or see family visitors. After the baby became ill and was hospitalised, she was released but given a restriction order. Women who have given birth in detention must either keep their infants with them in appalling conditions, or have their children taken from them. Separation from the

children when mothers are detained creates traumatic situations. In one case four children aged 15, 13, 11 and 7 were left alone when their mother was detained and were not told that she had been detained. She was detained for two

years. The eldest child told the others their mother would never have abandoned them, and that she must have died.

Joyce Mashamba has not lived with her husband for 13 years, when the youngest child was 1 year old. In 1976 they were both imprisoned, for 5 and 10 years. When George was released, his wife Joyce was again arrested and in detention. When she was released, she was confined to Pietersburg, while her husband lives in Johannesburg.

But the detention of women and their families has revealed the extent to which women are determined to resist, to organise, to struggle. They have become increasingly politically conscious, and they have sought and found ways to re-organise when restrictions operate against them and their activities. Women of different races, segregated into different areas, separated by apartheid laws that harass and divide them, are finding more and more common ground to oppose the political oppression, the conscription of white sons into the army; to oppose removals, unjust rents, rising living costs. Their organisations have become increasingly politically orientated, stronger in aims, more militant in activities. Generally, women's organisations are stronger now and more united.

However, women's issues generally still seem to have a low priority in the mass democratic movement. "Non-racialism and democracy are accepted principles of the struggle, yet not non-sexism," states one woman leader. By pressing their specific claims, women's organisations can be accused of being divisive. But feminism, as defined by progressive women's organisations does not present a threat to the unity of the mass democratic movement. It is, rather, a recognition of the fact that women are the most oppressed sector of the community and need their own organisations to help them

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