





Newspaper No. 3

and Canning Workers, the National Assembly of Women (London) and the Congress of Canadian Women. I

923 Gouyane St.

The Chairwoman then called upon Mrs. Fatima Seedat of Durban to speak on the Group Areas Act.

Verwysings No.

Mrs. Seedat pointed out that the African people, not only the Indians and Coloureds would suffer under the Group Areas Act. Wicked acts such as the removal of the Africans from the Western Areas of Johannesburg would be repeated all over the country as the government tried to eliminate "black spots". The most recent proclamation would uproot the Coloured and Indian people from Pageview, from Albertville where they had struggled to establish themselves, to own their own homes, to run their own businesses, to gain security for their old age, protection for their children. In Durban the attack would soon be made on all non white people and over 80,000 Africans, 60,000 Indians and 7,000 Coloureds would be removed, while only 3,500 Europeans would be affected.

Mrs. Seedat reminded Conference how the Indian people were threatened continuously with repatriation, with discriminatory laws. Just as the cry in America had been "Send the negroes back to Africa" so the cry in South Africa was "Send the Indians back to India", but the Indian people reply in the words of Douglas Frederick, the slave who fought against slavery, "We shall live, struggle and die here". In the Cape Province the Coloured and Malay people until now had lived peacefully amongst the white people, enjoying a little more privilege and freedom than non whites in other parts of the country, but now even this would be destroyed under the Group Areas Act. Mrs. Seedat called upon the women to stand together and play their part in the struggle against oppression, to build a mighty Federation of South African Women, to build a mighty South Africa, free from racial prejudice, for South Africa could no longer remain a lake of racialism in a rapidly changing world. She warned those who were expropriating land today that the people would restore the land again, when South Africa governs itself and the Freedom Charter becomes a reality. When women unite they become the strongest force. Even Strydom, the "lion of the north" came back from London to be the "lamb of the south" when he was faced by the women and refused to meet them.

The Chairwoman then called upon Miss Bertha Mashaba of Germiston to address the Conference on "The struggle against Passes".

Miss Mashaba outlined the history of the pass laws and refuted the claim of the Government that pass laws had been abolished. In 1952 the Native Laws Amendment Act had been passed stating that "All Natives, men women and children fell inside the provisions of the pass laws". Verwoerd had affirmed that passes would not be extended to African women "until they had been educated to realise it would be for their own benefit!" Yet in September 1955 he had announced that as from January 1st, 1956, African women would be issued with passes.

Miss Mashaba dwelt on the real meaning of the pass laws and their effect upon individuals, men women and children, their disruption of family life, the reduction of the African people to slavery. Already nearly a quarter of a million men went to jail every year only for contravening the pass laws, and if women carried passes their suffering would be even worse, for they would be torn away from their children and exposed to brutal treatment at the hands of the police.

Influx control had already brought suffering to many thousands of men, and now also to women. Annie Selinger, our women's leader, had been deported from Cape Town, although she had lived there for 18 years. Yet she had been convicted under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act and deported to the Butterworth district. There were many other examples, more and more as the days go by of inhuman suffering of women under the pass laws. She had seen for herself in Cape Town how women were arrested for not being in possession of residential permits. They were fined £4 or 40 days. Now the Municipalities had been given even more power under the Urban Areas Amendment Act - the power to banish Africans - the peoples leaders - from their homes.

Miss Mashaba asserted that it was clear to the African people that pass laws were not for identification but for controlling the labour and the movements of



. that we will obtain individual pledges from women that each woman will refuse to accept or carry a reference book;

. that we will organise women, through the Women's Federation, through the Women's League, through other organisations and through broad anti-pass committees where necessary, on a house by house and street by street basis;

. that we shall carry on this individual work, patiently explaining the meaning of pass laws, until we have won the vast majority of women of our land to active resistance;

. that this struggle, because it is not the private concern of African women alone, but of all women, and not of women alone, but of all people in our country, must be conducted not by one section or another; we will widen our campaign to include all racial groups, and we will continue this struggle by these means and whatever other means are possible until we have finally brought about the complete end to passes for women and men alike.

The resolution was seconded by Miss Bertha Mashaba and adopted unanimously and with acclamation.

4.30 p.m.

Conference adjourned till the following day.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12TH  
MORNING SESSION.

*Mashaba Mashaba*  
*Sturges*  
*2.23*  
*5/12/48*

Conference opened at 10.45 a.m. Mrs. Ruth Matsone took the Chair until the arrival of Mrs. Ngoyi.

Mrs. Helen Joseph, Secretary of the Transvaal Region of the Federation, spoke on the work of the Federation of South African Women. She spoke of the recent racialistic legislation and the present regime of intensified oppression, but pointed to the emergence of women in unity and organisation. In South Africa as in all countries of the world women were beginning to take their rightful place as equal partners of men and were no longer content to be slaves and servants. The whole position of women was changing as women played their part in the production of the wealth of the country, and women were deeply concerned with the injustice and oppression existing in South Africa today. As women go forward the need for women's organisations arises, but in South Africa women are divided by the colour bar. White women have been organising for 50 years in South Africa but they have been organising themselves - the N.C.W., Vroue Federasie, Black Sash, etc. Because of the colour bar women had failed to come together as women. But in 1954 at the first National Conference the Federation of South African Women had been formed to unite women of all races in the common struggle. (The aims and objects of the Federation as set out in the draft constitution were read). Mrs. Joseph explained that it had been realised from the outset that any womens organisation that stood outside the struggle for national liberation would stand apart from the mass of women. The Federation had therefore tried to bring together the women of all races in their organisations on the basis of federation, not to establish a new competitive organisation which would seek to draw women away from the Congresses. At the first National Conference the National President, Vice President and Executive Committee had been elected, but as a progressive women's federation which refused to accept the colour bar, the Federation had been the target of banning orders by the Nationalist Government and had lost many officials and members of the National and Regional Executives. Nevertheless, as women had been removed others had come forward to take their places and the attacks of the Government had failed to destroy the Federation.

The establishment and development of the Federation had reached different levels in the regions and the machinery of affiliation had been slow, as organisations had hesitated and waited to see how the Federation had developed. The following organisations had already affiliated: the South African Coloured People's Organisation, the South African Congress of Democrats, \* the African National Congress Women's League, the Food and Canning Workers' Union, the Cape Housewives League and the League of Non-European women.

In the Cape Western Region the Federation has initiated campaigns on many issues; women have agitated for and obtained creches, street lighting, telephone booths and controlled street crossings in non European areas. Today the Cape women are campaigning vigorously against the removal of Coloured voters from the Municipal Voters Roll. A Cape Western Regional Committee has recently been formed which will campaign actively and seek to draw in other women's organisations. In the Cape Eastern Region, S.A.C.P.O. and A.N.C. women have worked closely together and have formed a Regional Committee of the Federation. Two women's Conferences have been held, one on Bantu Education and the other on Passes for women. In Natal progress has been slow but a Working Committee of the Federation has been set up and work will be done amongst the Indian women through the formation of study circles.

The Transvaal Region has been outstandingly active. The Regional Committee was formed soon after the 1954 Conference and has worked in full co-operation with the Congress Movement. Together with the A.N.C. Women's League, the Federation organised accommodation for 1,000 delegates to the Congress of the People. A conference of women was held to draw up the demands of women for incorporation into the Freedom Charter. After the Congress of the People, the Federation convened the Transvaal Congress of mothers held in support of the World Congress of Mothers. This was the first Conference to adopt the Freedom Charter. On October 29th, 1955 the Transvaal Region organised the historic protest of 2,000 women of all races to Pretoria to demand the repeal of oppressive and unjust legislation. A mass conference on passes for women was held on March 11th, 1956, attended by nearly 2,000 people, at which the decision was taken to organise a second mass demonstration to Pretoria. This demonstration was organised on a national scale and culminated in the vast protest of August 9th when 10,000 women went to Pretoria to protest to the Prime Minister against passes. Through the Federation's Regional Committees women were organised in the large centres of the Union, and Coloured, European and Indian women joined their African sisters in this unsurpassed demonstration, which has made such an impact on South Africa. The Transvaal Region has organised other conferences and meetings, including a conference in 1954 on the threatened rent increases in African and Coloured townships and a mass meeting on International Women's Day in 1955. Leaflets on various subjects have been produced and two pamphlets have been issued, one on Children in South Africa and the other (together with the A.N.C. Women's League) on passes for African women. The Transvaal Region issued press statements on all matters of national and regional interest. An impressive exhibition of photographs depicting the life of women in many lands has been displayed at several conferences.

The Federation of South African Women may be proud of its achievements in the first 2½ years of its existence but we must also examine our failures and our shortcomings. The Federation has not succeeded in winning the support or even the interest of women's organisations outside the Congress movement and the progressive trades unions. A small impact has been made on Coloured and Indian women but we have failed to make any serious impact on European women, even in the progressive movement. This must be the task of the Federation in the coming years - to win the support of women of all races, to unite them in our common struggle as women.

Conference would be asked to adopt the Constitution, to elect a National President and office bearers, to elect the National Executive. It would be their task to develop the Federation of South African Women, to make it the greatest women's organisation in South Africa.

The Report of the Federation was adopted.

Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi then took the Chair and reported that the reception to the delegates held in Orlando the previous night had been invaded by a gang of hooligans resulting in fighting. Several people had been injured and it was remarkable that it was the attackers who had caused the trouble who had been taken by the police in ambulances to the hospital while the people who were there lawfully were left unattended. The hall had been damaged and many windows broken. It was suspected that this attack had been organised deliberately to smash the reception.

The Chairwoman then called upon the Secretary to read the Draft Constitution, and after a few clauses had been read, Miss Joan Anderson asked for permission to move a resolution. She stated that the organisations and groups which constituted the

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Federation had not had sufficient time or opportunity to circulate the draft constitution for consideration and discussion by the general membership and moved that the adoption of a Constitution be postponed either for six months or until the next National Conference. This resolution was seconded by Miss Avril Chait.

Mrs. Joseph replied that the draft constitution had been circulated to organisations more than 12 months ago, and if these organisations had failed to discuss the constitution or circulate it, this must be laid at the door of those organisations. This, however, should not be allowed to hold up the development of the Federation of South African Women. A national conference could be achieved only at long intervals. It was the second time that a draft constitution had been placed before a national conference of the Federation of South African Women. If the constitution were adopted today there would be provision for amendments at the next National Conference. Mrs. Joseph moved a counter resolution that seeing all organisations had had ample time and opportunity during the past twelve months to circulate and discuss the draft constitution, it should be discussed and adopted as amended at this conference. The counter resolution was seconded by Miss Bertha Mashaba.

Several delegates spoke from the floor, stating that they had not seen the draft constitution and would prefer to take it back to their regions and branches for discussion before adoption. Other delegates felt that this would hold back the development of the Federation and urged that the draft constitution be discussed, amended and adopted at this Conference.

Conference appeared to be divided on this matter and after many expressions of opinion Mrs. Joseph offered to withdraw the counter resolution on the grounds that there would not be sufficient time left to discuss the draft constitution. Conference refused to allow the counter resolution to be withdrawn and the resolution and counter resolution were put to the vote. Conference decided by 291 votes to 79 that the draft constitution be discussed and adopted as amended at this Conference.

The Chairwoman then called upon Mrs. Joseph to read each clause of the draft constitution. The proceedings of the Conference from this point were conducted in three languages, English, Sesuto and Xhosa. Amendments were proposed and adopted by the Conference.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

1. Name. As in draft constitution.

2. Aims and Objects. As in draft constitution but Clause (b) para (3) to read -

"Better living conditions, including proper homes, compulsory, free and universal education".

3. Membership

Clause (a) to read "The Federation shall be open to organisations or organised groups of women".

Clause (b) to read "The National Executive Committee may accept any organisations, branches of organisations or organised groups of women as affiliated members of the Federation".

Clause (c) as in draft constitution.

4. Administration

Clause (a) to read "The highest body of the Federation is the National Conference".

Clause (b) to read "Representation at National Conference shall be one delegate for every 25 members of affiliated organisations or organised groups of women."

Clause (c) as in draft constitution.

Clause (d) to read: "National Conference shall be held annually if possible."

Clause (e) as in draft constitution.

#### 5. National Executive Committee

Clause (a) to read "The N.E.C. shall consist of a president, 4 Vice Presidents, Treasurer, General Secretary and 20 other members, to be elected at the National Conference."

Clause (b) to read "The N.E.C. shall meet not less than twice a year. The quorum for the N.E.C. shall be not less than 7 members of the Committee including officials."

Clause (c) to read "In electing the National Executive Committee not less than 7 members must be elected who reside within 20 miles of the headquarters of the Federation."

Clause (d) as in draft constitution.

Clause (v) to read: "The N.E.C. shall have the power to establish regional committees in any area, define the areas of jurisdiction of regions, and do all other things as in the opinion of the N.E.C. are in the interests of the Federation and its affiliated organisations."

Clause (vi) As in draft constitution.

Clause (vii) As in draft constitution.

#### 6. Head Office. As in draft constitution.

#### 7. Finance

Clause (i) As in draft constitution.

Clause (ii) As in draft constitution.

Clause (iii) to read: "The Treasurer shall present a financial report quarterly to the N.E.C."

Clause (iv) to read: "Regions shall pay a proportion of their income to the N.E.C. as decided by the N.E.C. in consultation with the region."

Clause (v) to read: "Statements of income and expenditure shall be prepared quarterly by each Regional Treasurer and a copy submitted to the N.E.C."

Clause (vi) to read: "Balance sheets and statements of income and expenditure shall be prepared by the General Secretary and each Regional Secretary in respect of each year ended 30th of June."

#### 8. Regional Committees

Clause (i) to read "The N.E.C. may establish Regional Committees in any area."



Clause (ii) to read: "The N.E.C. may approve working rules for Regions."

9. Amendments

To read: "Any of the provisions of the Constitution may be repealed, amended or added to in any manner by a majority decision of the next National Conference. Two months notice of such amendment must first be given to all regions and all affiliated bodies."

10. Expulsion

Clause (i) to read "The Federation shall have the right to expel any affiliated organisation or to take other disciplinary measures against any affiliated organisation which violates the principles policy and programme of the Federation."

Clause (ii) to read "Any such affiliated organisation may appeal against the decision of the Federation and such appeal shall be considered at the next National Conference."

11. Dissolution. As in draft constitution.

12. General. As in draft constitution.

Mrs. Joseph proposed, seconded by Mrs. M. Resha THAT THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AS AMENDED BE ADOPTED. AGREED UNANIMOUSLY.

VENUE OF HEADQUARTERS

Conference decided that the Headquarters of the Federation until the next National Conference should be in Johannesburg.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <u>National President</u>       | Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi.  |
| <u>National Treasurer</u>       | Mrs. Rahima Moosa.  |
| <u>General Secretary</u>        | Mrs. Helen Joseph.  |
| <u>National Vice Presidents</u> | Mrs. Lily Diedericks (Capo)<br>Mrs. Mula Kwane (O.F.S.)<br>Mrs. Fatima Seedat (Natal)<br>Mrs. Marcelle Goldberg (Transvaal) |

National Executive Committee

Miss Martha Machaba, Mrs. Magdalen Resha, Mrs. Albertina Sisulu, Mrs. Ruth Matsoane, Miss Lily Madoo, Mrs. Katie White, Mrs. Qirane, Mrs. Vuyilura Bissett, Miss Katie Moss, Mrs. Frances Beard, Mrs. Florence Ikize, Miss Barbara Cooper, Mrs. Mary Moodley, Mrs. Hilda Shezi, Miss Elizabeth Andreia, Mrs. Nellie Jubelisa, Mrs. Motsabi, Mrs. Blaauw, Mrs. Edna Polo, Mrs. Hilda Malani.

RESOLUTION

Mrs. Rahima Moosa proposed, seconded by Mrs. Frances Beard the following resolution:-

THE FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

We welcome the great advances made by the Federation of South African Women, and congratulate all those women who have contributed so much to advance the organisation of women in the past two years.

We are pledged to fight on behalf of the rights of women and children of all races, and we pledge ourselves anew to play an even more active part in securing true justice and happiness in our country.

We are determined to resist all attempts of the government to divide us on racial lines. We know that what affects one section of the women affects women as a whole; we are as one body, we feel each other's sufferings and oppression, each of us can only breathe freely when the rights and happiness for which we fight are enjoyed by all.

We know that a Conference such as this is a severe blow to the government, to its apartheid policies; we know how they hate to see women of different races meeting in harmony and friendship. Therefore we make this pledge: we shall not be divided! we will resist the attempts of all disruptionists to set us apart! we will preserve our principles of working together, until these principles are the accepted laws and customs of our land. ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Conference closed at 6 p.m.

Bewysstuk No. ....  
 Gelyk by *Manna Madala Larua*  
 Datum *15 September*  
 Tye *923*  
 Plaas *Wynburg*  
 Verspreidings No. *572/86*

**Collection Number: AD1812**

**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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