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The Federation of South African Women protests against the present campaign of intimidation carried on by the police through the medium of the press and encouraged by the refusal of the Mayor of Johannesburg to see the representatives of the women who will present their protests at the City Hall on Thursday, November 27th

On the steps of the City Hall are inscribed the words "LEST WE FORGET". Lest we forget that men died for freedom and democracy. But the doors of the City Hall to which these steps lead are closed to the representatives of the many women who want to present their grievances to the Mayor.

To speak of "lawlessness" is deliberate and uncalled for intimidation, for the Federation of South African Women has made it clear to the Mayor that it is not the intention of the women to break any laws. The refusal of the Mayor to meet the women's representatives on Thursday has been received with deep regret but it is not the first time that the women have been met with such a refusal. On August 9th, 1956, 20,000 women of all races went to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against passes to the late Prime Minister. He refused to see them. But the women handed in their written protests at the Union Buildings. There were no loud shouts of illegality; no threats of dire punishment of law breakers; the police contented themselves by  
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stating that there would be no interference provided the women did not infringe the law, and the women presented their protests in dignity and discipline acclaimed throughout the land.

The issuing of reference books to African women has caused deep anger and resentment in Johannesburg. The role of the City Council and its officials appears dubious and against the interests of African women, who although they have no vote are nevertheless people of the City. Many women of other races support the African women in their indignation and all wish to protest to the Mayor. Since he has refused to meet their spokeswomen on Thursday, the women can do no more than leave their protests at the City Hall.

Is it a crime to hand in a protest? Or is it the exercise of the fundamental democratic right of any individual to protest against an evil? Where and how shall the people of this city protest if not to the Mayor? And if others come from other towns to add their voices to the protest - is that a crime? Who rules Johannesburg? The elected City Council or the Government appointed police?

These are questions which demand an answer - lest we forget.

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**FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963**

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