



What do Women Want?

Women - this is your chance to speak out - your needs, your wishes, your demands!

This public meeting is being held to give women a chance to put forward their demands for the FREEDOM CHARTER. What do women want to make South Africa a better land for their children and families? YOU must give the answer! Let YOUR voice be heard. The Demands will be discussed at the great Congress of the People.

SUNDAY 29th
MAY — 2 P.M.

TRADES HALL
KERK STREET

ALL WOMEN WELCOME!
Prominent Women Speakers

BRING YOUR DEMANDS FOR THE FREEDOM CHARTER!

Organised by the Federation of South African Women,
Box 10876, Jhbg.

FEDSAW

What do Women Want?

Women - this is your chance to speak out - your needs, your wishes, your demands!

This public meeting is being held to give women a chance to put forward their demands for the FREEDOM CHARTER. What do women want to make South Africa a better land? What do women demand for their children. YOU must give the answer! Let YOUR voice be heard. The Demands will be discussed at the great Congress of the People.

SUNDAY 29th

MAY - 2 P.M. 1955

TRADES HALL

KERK STREET

ALL WOMEN WELCOME!

Prominent Women Speakers

BRING YOUR DEMANDS FOR THE FREEDOM CHARTER!

Organised by The Federation of South African Women, Box 10376, Jhb. g.

cop

Kelangs FSAW Ea2

THE DEMANDS OF THE WOMEN OF SOUTH AFRICA

Presented by the Transvaal Region of the
FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

We women of South Africa have come not to beg or plead, but to ask for what is our right as women, as mothers, and as citizens of our country.

We are women of all races and colours. We are housewives, workers and professional women. Our backgrounds are varied. We come from homes in townships and suburbs, from shanties and from houses. We speak the many languages of our country and our educational and cultural backgrounds are varied.

Yet all of us have the same hopes, the same desires. We want the same things for ourselves, our children, our families. We are not divided by our differences, but united by our common needs. We have come together with common purpose and together we set forth these burning questions that affect us as women.

We believe that every child born in our country has a right to health and happiness. Every child should receive the food and care he needs to make him strong and healthy. Every child is entitled to education to the fullest extent of his abilities, to training as a useful member of society as a whole, not merely as a member of his racial group, and to the fullest utilisation of his training and capabilities in the field of productive work.

Our children have been denied the right to universal, free and compulsory education, and instead their minds are to be stunted and their potentialities destroyed through the evil of Bantu Education. We women are determined that Bantu Education must be withdrawn, and that all children of this country shall enjoy education in the fullest sense, education that includes the cultural riches of the whole world, the heritage of every child regardless of his racial group.

EDUCATION SHALL BE FREE, COMPULSORY, UNIVERSAL AND EQUAL FOR ALL CHILDREN.

Hundreds of thousands of our children are born into crowded and unhealthy slums. They die of preventable diseases before they can walk. They are physically stunted by lack of proper food. Too many of them grow up deprived of the full care of both parents as a result of the many evil laws and conditions that destroy family life and keep one, or both, parents away from home.

The essential requirement of true family life is that every family should have a decent home. We women condemn unreservedly the Group Areas Act and the many regulations that prevent us from living freely in proper housing estates and suburbs, that segregate us in ghettos and locations, that deprive us of the right and opportunity to own a home, to live where we choose.

We are opposed to the inhuman site-and-service schemes, by which hundreds of thousands of families will be condemned to live permanently in shacks and shanties, because the wages that our husbands and we ourselves can earn are too low for us to pay the price of a decent house. In the name of the children of South Africa, we demand proper homes.

ALL PEOPLE SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WHERE THEY CHOOSE, TO BE DECENTLY HOUSED AND TO BRING UP THEIR FAMILIES IN COMFORT AND SECURITY.

FENCED LOCATIONS AND GHETTOS SHALL BE ABOLISHED, AND THE LAWS WHICH BREAK UP FAMILIES SHALL BE REPEALED.

Amongst us today are housewives, workers in factories and in offices. We must work for our homes and our families, must work to meet the cost of living, to supplement the earnings of our husbands, to support our children and our parents. Yet the right of the worker to organise freely to come together in trade unions, to fight together in unity for the just rewards of our labours, is denied to us, as it is denied to our menfolk; for we are split asunder into racial groups by legislation even in our trade unions. We women say here today, and we repeat for all the world to hear: "We are women, we are workers, we stand together." We shall unite in unflinching opposition to the legislation which seeks to destroy the trade union movement, to prevent the full organisation of the workers.

ALL WHO WORK SHALL BE FREE TO FORM TRADE UNIONS, TO ELECT THEIR OFFICERS AND TO MAKE WAGE AGREEMENTS WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

In our struggle today for human rights, for a free untrammelled future for all children of our country, we are hampered by the laws which seek to crush our efforts to remove our trusted leaders from their positions, to remove trade union officials, to banish our leaders to far off parts of South Africa. When we oppose injustice and racial hatred and speak out for the rights of our children, for peace and for freedom for them, we are accused of "treason", the privacy of our homes is invaded by police, we are subjected to searches and questionings. We are denied the fundamental human right to associate freely together, to organise. We protest to our utmost against these practices, sanctioned by legislation. But we want to say here today, all women together, that we shall not be intimidated, we shall not be daunted in our march forward together; we shall not fear the vicious penalties that may be inflicted upon us in our struggle.

THE LAW SHALL GUARANTEE TO ALL THEIR RIGHT TO SPEAK, TO ORGANISE, TO MEET TOGETHER.

Freedom of movement is denied to the vast majority of the people of South Africa; even the right freely to leave and to return to the country of our birth has been destroyed; passports are refused and have become the vested right of the government, to withhold or to grant, not the human right of the individual. The people of South Africa are becoming enclosed in a prison. Thus not only we ourselves, but our children also, are affected, for they are no longer free to seek higher education in other countries, to develop to their fullest by travel, by training in other lands.

ALL SHALL BE FREE TO TRAVEL WITHOUT RESTRICTION FROM COUNTRYSIDE TO TOWN, FROM PROVINCE TO PROVINCE, AND FROM SOUTH AFRICA ABROAD.

As women of all races, we protest against the "reclassification" of the Coloured people; we protest because we are all South Africans and we do not recognise the right of any official to ask a man or a woman what they are, to what racial group they belong. To such a question we reply "We are of the human race." We protest against this use of the Population Registration Act to attack and destroy families, to inflict inhuman suffering upon individuals.

As women of all races we protest against the vicious degradation of the Pass System, which we proclaim to be in full force today. Former pass laws may have been replaced by new laws, but the pass system ryles the lives of the African people today more cruelly than ever before. Daily our husbands, our brothers, our sons, are arrested, thrown into goal for some trivial unconscious infringement of these laws; call them what you will, they are to us the PASS LAWS which make us into slaves.

Today the threat to women is greater than ever before; African women are to be issued with passes and to be exposed to all the humiliations and indignities associated with the production of passes on demand. We who are not African women, stand today before you, together with our African sisters, to say that this is an affront to womanhood, that we women are firmly and unitedly opposed to this extension of the pass system. African women have never carried passes; to inflict this indignity upon them is an injustice that cries aloud for redress, that will shame South Africa at home and abroad.

PASS LAWS, PERMITS AND ALL OTHER LAWS RESTRICTING THESE FREEDOMS SHALL BE ABOLISHED.

As women we demand, therefore, the repeal of all legislation which aims at destroying our solidarity, which denies us human rights, which threatens the future of our children. In this legislation we include:

The Bantu Education Act. All Laws and Regulations relating to the pass system.
The Population Registration Act. The Departure from the Union Act.
The Industrial Conciliation Act Amendment Bill. The Natives Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act. The Criminal Laws Amendment Act. The Public Safety Act.
The Riotous Assemblies Act. The Suppression of Communism Act. The Group Areas Act.

We speak from our hearts as mothers, as women. Life cannot be stopped. We must love and marry and find a home. We must bear children in hope and in pain; we must love them as part of ourselves, we must help them to grow, we must endure all the longings and sufferings of motherhood. Because of this we are made strong, to come here, to speak for our children, to strive for their future.

We, the voters and the voteless, call upon you, the Ministers responsible for these Acts, and upon the Government and the electorate of South Africa, to hearken to the protest of the women, for we shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security.

LILLIAN NGOYI, Acting Chairman; HELEN JOSEPH, Hon. Secretary; RAHIMA MOOSA,
SOPHIE WILLIAMS, Executive Committee Members, Federation of S.A. Women, (Tvl Region)

FSAW

WHAT WOMEN DEMAND

WE DEMAND Four months maternity leave on full pay for working mothers.
Properly staffed and equipped maternity homes, ante-natal clinics, and child welfare centres in all towns and villages, and in the reserves and rural areas.
Day nurseries for the children of working mothers.
Nursery schools for the pre-school children.
Birth control Clinics.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL MOTHERS OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Compulsory, free and universal education from the primary school to the University.
Adequate school feeding and free milk for all children in day nurseries, nursery schools, and primary and secondary schools.
Special schools for handicapped children.
Play centres and cultural centres for school children.
Property equipped playgrounds and sportsfields.
Vocational training and apprenticeship facilities.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL CHILDREN OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Proper houses at rents not more than 10% of the earnings of the head of the household.
Indoor sanitation, water supply and proper lighting in our homes.
The right to own our own homes and the land on which we build them.
The right to live where we choose.
Housing loan schemes at low rates of interest.
Lighting in our streets.
Properly made roads and storm water drainage.
Adequate public transport facilities.
Parks and recreation centres.
Sportsfields and swimming pools.
Public conveniences.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Better shopping facilities, particularly in the non-European townships.
More dairies, and full supplies of pasteurised whole milk.
Mobile vegetable markets.
Subsidization of all protective foods: Bread, Meal, Meat, Milk, Vegetables and Fruit.
Controlled prices for all essential commodities: Food, Basic Clothing, Fuel.
Fair rationing of essential foods and fuel when in short supply.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL PEOPLE IN ALL PLACES.

WE DEMAND The right of ALL people to own and work their own farms.
The development of all uncultivated land.
The fair distribution of land amongst ALL people.
The mechanisation of methods of food production.
The scientific improvement of land by:
a. Irrigation and intensive farming.
b. Control of soil erosion and improvement of the soil.
c. supply of seed to all people producing from the land.
Efficient organisation of the distribution and marketing of food.

WE DEMAND SUFFICIENT FOOD FOR ALL PEOPLE.

WE DEMAND More and better land for the reserves.
Schools for children living in the reserves.
Maternity, medical and social services in the reserves.
Shops and controlled prices in the reserves.
Planned agricultural development of the reserves.
The abolition of migratory labour which destroys our family life by removing our husbands and which destroys their health through the conditions of their labour and the compound system.

WE DEMAND THAT THE RESERVES BECOME FOOD PRODUCING AREAS AND NOT RESERVOIRS OF CHEAP LABOUR.

WE DEMAND The transfer of trust farms to the ownership of the African people.
The abolition of convict farm labour.
The payment of minimum cash wages for all men and women working on farms.
The abolition of child labour on the farms.
The abolition of the 'tot' system.
Free compulsory universal education for all children in rural areas.
Paid holidays for all farm workers.
The inclusion of farm workers in all industrial legislation.

WE DEMAND THESE RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THE RURAL AREAS.

WE DEMAND That equal family allowances and old age pensions be paid for people of ALL races.
Homes and proper care for ALL aged and sick people
National medical services for ALL sick people.
Adequate and equal hospital services for ALL people.
Increased cost of living allowances adequate to meet the rising cost of living.
That all African workers in all spheres of employment be covered by unemployment insurance and illness allowances.
The consolidation of part of the cost of living allowance into basic wages.
That no person be required to carry a pass or reference book.
Equal rights for ALL people.

WE DEMAND THESE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

WE DEMAND FOR ALL WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The right to vote.
The right to be elected to all State, Provincial or Municipal bodies.
Full opportunities for employment in all spheres of work.
Equal pay for equal work.
Equal rights with men in property, in marriage, and in the guardianship of our children

AND TOGETHER WITH OTHER WOMEN ALL OVER THE WORLD

WE DEMAND The banning of atomic and hydrogen bombs
The use of the atom for peaceful purposes and the betterment of the world
That there shall be NO MORE WAR
That there shall be PEACE AND FREEDOM FOR OUR CHILDREN.

WHAT WOMEN DEMAND

WE DEMAND Four months maternity leave on full pay for working mothers.
Properly staffed and equipped maternity homes, ante-natal clinics, and child welfare centres in all towns and villages, and in the reserves and rural areas.
Day nurseries for the children of working mothers.
Nursery schools for the pre-school children.
Birth control Clinics.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL MOTHERS OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Compulsory, free and universal education from the primary school to the University.
Adequate school feeding and free milk for all children in day nurseries, nursery schools, and primary and secondary schools.
Special schools for handicapped children.
Play centres and cultural centres for school children.
Properly equipped playgrounds and sportsfields.
Vocational training and apprenticeship facilities.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL CHILDREN OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Proper houses at rents not more than 10% of the earnings of the head of the household.
Indoor sanitation, water supply and proper lighting in our homes.
The right to own our own homes and the land on which we build them.
The right to live where we choose.
Housing loan schemes at low rates of interest.
Lighting in our streets.
Properly made roads and storm water drainage.
Adequate public transport facilities.
Parks and recreation centres.
Sportsfields and swimming pools.
Public conveniences.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ALL RACES.

WE DEMAND Better shopping facilities, particularly in the non-European townships.
More dairies, and full supplies of pasteurised whole milk.
Mobile vegetable markets.
Subsidization of all protective foods: Bread, Meal, Meat, Milk, Vegetables and Fruit.
Controlled prices for all essential commodities: Food, Basic Clothing, Fuel.
Fair rationing of essential foods and fuel when in short supply.

WE DEMAND THESE FOR ALL PEOPLE IN ALL PLACES.

WE DEMAND The right of ALL people to own and work their own farms.
The development of all uncultivated land.
The fair distribution of land amongst ALL people.
The mechanisation of methods of food production.
The scientific improvement of land by:
a. Irrigation and intensive farming.
b. Control of soil erosion and improvement of the soil.
c. supply of seed to all people producing from the land,

Efficient organisation of the distribution and marketing of food,
WE DEMAND SUFFICIENT FOOD FOR ALL PEOPLE.

WE DEMAND

- More and better land for the reserves.
- Schools for children living in the reserves.
- Maternity, medical and social services in the reserves.
- Shops and controlled prices in the reserves.
- Planned agricultural development of the reserves.
- The abolition of migratory labour which destroys our family life by removing our husbands and which destroys their health through the conditions of their labour and the compound system.

IV MATLOU

WE DEMAND THAT THE RESERVES BECOME FOOD PRODUCING AREAS AND NOT RESERVOIRS OF CHEAP LABOUR.

WE DEMAND

- The transfer of trust farms to the ownership of the African people.
- The abolition of convict farm labour.
- The payment of minimum cash wages for all men and women working on farms.
- The abolition of child labour on the farms.
- The abolition of the 'tot' system.
- Free compulsory universal education for all children in rural areas.
- Paid holidays for all farm workers.
- The inclusion of farm workers in all industrial legislation.

MATLOU

WE DEMAND THESE RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE IN THE RURAL AREAS.

WE DEMAND

- That equal invalidity and old age pensions be paid for people of ALL races.
- Homes and proper care for ALL aged and sick people
- National medical services for ALL sick people.
- Adequate and equal hospital services for ALL people.
- Increased cost of living allowances adequate to meet the rising cost of living.
- That all African workers in all spheres of employment be covered by unemployment insurance and illness allowances.
- The consolidation of part of the cost of living allowance into basic wages.
- That no person be required to carry a pass or reference book.
- Equal rights for ALL people.

IV HELENI

WE DEMAND THESE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

WE DEMAND FOR ALL WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA.

- The right to vote.
- The right to be elected to all State, Provincial or Municipal bodies.
- Full opportunities for employment in all spheres of work.
- Equal pay for equal work.
- Equal rights with men in property, in marriage, and in the guardianship of our children

RAHIMA

AND TOGETHER WITH OTHER WOMEN ALL OVER THE WORLD

WE DEMAND

- The banning of atomic and hydrogen bombs
- The use of the atom for peaceful purposes and the betterment of the world
- That there shall be NO MORE WAR
- That there shall be PEACE AND FREEDOM FOR OUR CHILDREN.

V

1374

JOE MATLOU: These people must reduce their stock in order to be accommodated on that piece of land. The fields on which they plough must of necessity be reduced so as to accommodate the great number of people. Of course they must exhaust the water supply on the land. Necessarily the vegetation must be destroyed and when the people cannot make a living on the piece of land there must be immigration into towns, And what happens when they come into towns? They are faced with the pass law and you will appreciate that with the abolition of the pass law in urban areas Verwoerd has tightened up these pass laws and Johannesburg is merely a place that they pass on their way to Bethal, so I say that the day you have achieved getting fair distribution of land among all people, you will have achieved the greatest step to solving many problems of the people of South Africa. One thing which perhaps we average people do not realise is that the government has organised corporations for farmers and that the farmers are under the protection of the Land Bank. The improvement and irrigation of the land is going on with the assistance of the government and the day we have created a government in this country which will feel responsible to all the subjects we shall have achieved one of the greatest things. You will then realise your responsibility as responsible people to ~~the~~ your fellow sufferers in the reserves, farms etc, who are in tremendously large numbers. The last item here is, that we demand sufficient food for all. Speaking to daughters and mothers, I am sure that I am speaking to people who understand this demand very clearly. I cannot imagine that there is anything which would please God more than if we demand food for everybody. In this demand lies one of the signs that the Congress of the People is really the torch light which must ultimately bring about the peace and good relations between the people of South Africa.

X The last portion of the demands here are as follows:- More and better land for the reserves, schools for children living in the reserves, maternity and social services in the reserves, shops and controlled prices in the reserves, agricultural development in the reserves, that the reserves should become food producing and not reservoirs of cheap labour. We demand the ownership of trust farms to the African people, the abolition of convict farm labour, payment of minimum ~~222~~ cash wages to all people working on farms, abolition of child labour on the farms, the abolition of the toll system, continues reading.

Josie Palmer: If we want to live in a town we must be able to live there. We do not want to be told where to go. What we want is a place where we have lights, not like Orlando. Demands on housing should go as they stand here. If I wish to live in Parktown next year, I must be able to go there. Environment makes people dirty. Agreed that demands should go as they stand.

HELEN JOSEPH: I am going to be very brief. I chose this set of demands because they are close to my heart and I wish to talk about them. These are the demands which cover people when they get old and sick and when they are working. Today we are all workers here. All of us will one day be too old to work, some of us too sick and what is to happen to us then? In this country the government makes provision for me but not for all of the friends I see before me. In every civilised country in the world the country makes provision for the people who are too old and too sick to work but not in South Africa. Here the government makes provision for white people who can draw old age and sickness pensions. ~~Her~~ The pensions are not high. £9 per month but what do the Africans draw, when and if they can draw? The pension is not even paid every month, only every two or three months and it is only £1 or £1.10.0. A human being cannot live on that and we as women demand that these things be put right. We demand that proper provision shall be made for all people who are too old and too sick to work. We demand also that there shall be proper places where old

people can be cared for. Demand for all people because they exist for a few Europeans. Demand them for Indians, Africans, Coloureds. We demand that the state shall provide proper medical services for all people in South Africa. We demand free hospitals for all people in South Africa because I see them in every civilised country in the world. Demand that our wages shall be sufficient to meet the Cost of Living. We demand it because we are women and we know what it is like to buy bread for the children. How many women are forced to go out to work and leave the children because the wages are not enough. In this country we talk about a C.O.L.A. but it does not meet the C.O.L. We demand that it shall be increased to meet the cost of living, and we demand that all the African people as well as the other people shall be protected when there is unemployment. When the government started unemployment insurance all people were included, then the government said it is too difficult and costs too much to cover the African people so that although the African people had paid in £1000s they were put out. Today only African people who earn more than £180 per year can belong to the UIF. Today that fund stands at £62,000,000 and still the African people are not all included so we demand that all people be protected in times of unemployment. Most important of all our demands is that nobody in South Africa shall be required to carry a pass. How can we get our demands? First, by the biggest demand of all and that is the vote for all people in South Africa. Every living person who is old enough to vote is entitled to that right. So we the women of South Africa demand this right for all the people of South Africa.

RAHIMA MOOSA: Reads demands. We the non-white people of South Africa have no say whatsoever in the government of our country. The population of South Africa is 12,000,000 of which only 2,000,000 are ~~men~~ white and ~~only~~ 10,000,000 non-white, yet we have not got the vote. It is very important because the vote decides the government. Yet we see that it is only the white people and not the black people who have the vote. In other countries such as Russia if women feel like becoming engine drivers, and they are capable of becoming one they may do so. During the war I read about a warship and the captain of the ship was a woman but because we are black women the government of our country thinks we are not capable of holding such positions. The vote is very important. In the Cape the coloured men and women still enjoy the right to vote in provincial bodies but in the O.F.S., Tvl & Natal they have no vote at all.

FS14w

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT.

FREEDOM is a fine word. But it is a word that each understands in his own way. It is an idea, not something you can hold in your hand, touch, see or taste with your tongue. Therefore the word "freedom" must be given a form and shape, something people can feel and understand.

I want to tell you what we women mean by FREEDOM.

As long as there is a child who is hungry, a child who wears rags, a child who does not go to school, a child who lives in a shack, a shanty, a pondokkie or a slum, there is no freedom for us women.

We want, first, decent houses to live in. We want homes where the parents can sleep in a room by themselves - not like the Orlando shelters or the Moroka shacks, where there is no privacy, no simple decency for any member of the family. We want homes where we can turn on a tap and get clean water; where we can wash and bath properly; we want homes where we can switch on a light at night, where our sons and daughters can read and ~~study~~ study. We want homes where we can put the children to bed and close the door and let them sleep in peace and quiet.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

But there is more to it than that. Some people may point to Meadowlands and say - look, there are your homes.

Those are not the homes we want, and that is not the freedom we want. We want the right to live where we choose, not to be forced to live in locations and ghettos, far from places of work. If we have lived all our lives in a certain area, no government should have the right to break down our houses and deport us miles away. We want security in our houses, we want the right to choose which area or suburb we should live in, and to be able to rent a house, or buy a house, or build a house, and stay there.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

And more still. We want the places where we live to be properly planned and designed. We want streets that are paved, and lighted at night, not death traps where people are afraid to walk once it is dark. We want to live within a reasonable distance of our places of work, so that people do not have to get up before it is light and come home after it is dark. So that fathers can see their children, and are not too tired to play with them. So that we don't spend long hours standing in queues and fighting to get on buses and trains. We want to live like human beings in our homes, so that ~~relations~~ our sons and daughters don't have to get 'lodger's permits' for the right to live with their parents; so that we don't have to run to a superintendent if a friend or relative wishes to visit us.

We want halls where we can meet or have concerts, where we can borrow books and enjoy our leisure. We want crèches for our little ones, so that when we work they have proper care; we want parks to walk in, and fields for our children to play in.

That is what we women mean by freedom.

Did you read in the paper only two days ago that an African mother gave birth to quintuplets - five children at once - in a little hut, with no trained assistance at all? In any civilised country this mother would have been taken to a hospital before her children were to be delivered. This mother twice before gave birth to triplets, yet only one of those six children is living. Is there freedom for any woman whose children die one after the other, from diseases that could be prevented, or simply through lack of proper care?

We want proper medical care for our children and ourselves. The pangs of childbirth are just as sharp for women everywhere. No mother should have to bear a child in a hut without a doctor or midwife to attend to her. We want maternity homes, we want trained midwives and nurses, and we want health schemes to safeguard our families.

Have you heard of a disease called kwashiokor? They are talking about it a lot these days. All over South Africa, all over Africa, children are suffering from kwashiokor. It is caused by the lack of certain necessary foods - it is a disease of poverty. Where is there freedom when children are hungry? Children become ill through insufficient foods and the wrong kinds of food. What use is it to tell us to eat fruit, milk, cheese, butter, eggs, when our mothers cannot afford enough mealie-pap to fill the children's stomachs? We want to be able to afford good food. We'll ~~soon~~ learn^{soon} enough what gives the most nourishment, what has the most vitamins, once we have the chance to buy good food! Prices must be lower. Too much of our money goes in rent. There must be enough good food for all. Not one person should have to go hungry.

Health is a child's birthright. Today doctors are learning how to conquer disease. The people must have the chance to learn proper health care, how to bring up strong families, how to ensure that no child becomes crippled, blind or ill through lack of health facilities.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

When a man or woman is too old to work, what happens to them? They are fortunate if they have children who can support them, even though this is too often a heavy burden for the children. But if their children are dead? Or unable to support them? Or far away? After a person has worked hard all his life, given of his strength and ability, it is only right that the country he has worked for should give him support in old age. But how many old or blind people are there who rot in the Reserves with a pension of 10/- a month?

Children who are left orphans, old people who cannot care for themselves, who are blind, crippled, or otherwise handicapped, should be looked after by the state. Every orphan, every old person, every sick or disabled person should be cared for. There should be equal and adequate pensions for all. There should be training for those who are handicapped.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

But most of all, freedom means nothing to us while our families are broken up.. All laws, all conditions that divide and break the family destroy freedom. Women live in backyard rooms, while their families are far away from them, and if their husbands should visit them, they get arrested for going to see their own wives. We say, we must end such conditions. We say - children must grow up in homes with their fathers and their fathers and their mothers. We say - we must do away with every law that breaks the home and the family.

get them by wishing for them. We do not think anyone will give them to us. We have come to this great Congress knowing we can get what we want only through the joint efforts of all the people, black and white, men and women, who believe in true freedom. We are determined to be united. We are determined to resist those who would divide us, whether they are enemy agents or just fools. We are not prepared to let anything stand in our way. We are ready to face whatever difficulties the authorities may make, whatever difficulties our own menfolk may place in our path - for there are those who want to win their rights but don't want their wives to work or organise for them.

So you see, freedom is not just a word to us. It is not just an idea. It is something we feel, breathe, see. It is the way we live, the way our children live.

And when we have won homes, food, medical care, when our families are whole and our children are happy. then we shall know that we have freedom for everyone in this land.

THERE SHALL BE HOUSES, SECURITY AND COMFORT.

COB. FSAW II A

FREEDOM is a fine word. But it is a word that each understands in his own way. It is an idea, not something you can hold in your hand, touch, see or taste with your tongue. Therefore the word "freedom" must be given a form and shape, something people can feel and understand.

I want to tell you what we women mean by FREEDOM.

As long as there is a child who is hungry, a child who wears rags, a child who does not go to school, a child who lives in a shack, a shanty, a pondokkie or a slum, there is no freedom for us women.

We want, first, decent houses to live in. We want homes where the parents can sleep in a room by themselves - not like the Orlando shelters or the Moroka shacks, where there is no privacy, no simple decency for any member of the family. We want homes where we can turn on a tap and get clean water; where we can wash and bath properly; we want homes where we can switch on a light at night, where our sons and daughters can read and ~~study~~ study. We want homes where we can put the children to bed and close the door and let them sleep in peace and quiet.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

But there is more to it than that. Some people may point to Meadowlands and say - look, there are your homes.

Those are not the homes we want, and that is not the freedom we want. We want the right to live where we choose, not to be forced to live in locations and ghettos, far from places of work. If we have lived all our lives in a certain area, no government should have the right to break down our houses and deport us miles away. We want security in our houses, we want the right to choose which area or suburb we should live in, and to be able to rent a house, or buy a house, or build a house, and stay there.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

And more still. We want the places where we live to be properly planned and designed. We want streets that are paved, and lighted at night, not death traps where people are afraid to walk once it is dark. We want to live within a reasonable distance of our places of work, so that people do not have to get up before it is light and come home after it is dark. So that fathers can see their children, and are not too tired to play with them. So that we don't spend long hours standing in queues and fighting to get on buses and trains. We want to live like human beings in our homes, so that ~~relations~~ our sons and daughters don't have to get 'lodger's permits' for the right to live with their parents; so that we don't have to run to a superintendent if a friend or relative wishes to visit us.

We want halls where we can meet or have concerts, where we can borrow books and enjoy our leisure. We want crèches for our little ones, so that when we work they have proper care; we want parks to walk in, and fields for our children to play in.

That is what we women mean by freedom.

Did you read in the paper only two days ago that an African mother gave birth to quintuplets - five children at once - in a little hut, with no trained assistance at all? In any civilised country this mother would have been taken to a hospital before her children were to be delivered. This mother twice before gave birth to triplets, yet only one of those six children is living. Is there freedom for any woman whose children die one after the other, from diseases that could be prevented, or simply through lack of proper care?

We want proper medical care for our children and ourselves. The pangs of childbirth are just as sharp for women everywhere. No mother should have to bear a child in a hut without a doctor or midwife to attend to her. We want maternity homes, we want trained midwives and nurses, and we want health schemes to safeguard our families.

Have you heard of a disease called kwashiokor? They are talking about it a lot these days. All over South Africa, all over Africa, children are suffering from kwashiokor. It is caused by the lack of certain necessary foods - it is a disease of poverty. Where is there freedom when children are hungry? Children become ill through insufficient foods and the wrong kinds of food. What use is it to tell us to eat fruit, milk, cheese, butter, eggs, when our mothers cannot afford enough mealie-pap to fill the children's stomachs? We want to be able to afford good food. We'll ~~soon~~ learn^{soon} enough what gives the most nourishment, what has the most vitamins, once we have the chance to buy good food! Prices must be lower. Too much of our money goes in rent. There must be enough good food for all. Not one person should have to go hungry.

Health is a child's birthright. Today doctors are learning how to conquer disease. The people must have the chance to learn proper health care, how to bring up strong families, how to ensure that no child becomes crippled, blind or ill through lack of health facilities.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

When a man or woman is too old to work, what happens to them? They are fortunate if they have children who can support them, even though this is too often a heavy burden for the children. But if their children are dead? Or unable to support them? Or far away? After a person has worked hard all his life, given of his strength and ability, it is only right that the country he has worked for should give him support in old age. But how many old or blind people are there who rot in the Reserves with a pension of 10/- a month?

Children who are left orphans, old people who cannot care for themselves, who are blind, crippled, or otherwise handicapped, should be looked after by the state. Every orphan, every old person, every sick or disabled person should be cared for. There should be equal and adequate pensions for all. There should be training for those who are handicapped.

That is what we women mean by freedom!

But most of all, freedom means nothing to us while our families are broken up.. All laws, all conditions that divide and break the family destroy freedom. Women live in backyard rooms, while their families are far away from them, and if their husbands should visit them, they get arrested for going to see their own wives. We say, we must end such conditions. We say - children must grow up in homes with their fathers and their fathers and their mothers. We say - we must do away with every law that breaks the home and the family.

We do not think it will be easy to get these things we want. We do not think we

get them by wishing for them. We do not think anyone will give them to us. We have come to this great Congress knowing we can get what we want only through the joint efforts of all the people, black and white, men and women, who believe in true freedom. We are determined to be united. We are determined to resist those who would divide us, whether they are enemy agents or just fools. We are not prepared to let anything stand in our way. We are ready to face whatever difficulties the authorities may make, whatever difficulties our own menfolk may place in our path - for there are those who want to win their rights but don't want their wives to work or organise for them.

So you see, freedom is not just a word to us. It is not just an idea. It is something we feel, breathe, see. It is the way we live, the way our children live.

And when we have won homes, food, medical care, when our families are whole and our children are happy. then we shall know that we have freedom for everyone in this land.

WOMEN DEMAND!

Over two hundred women, African, Indian, coloured and European came from all over the Reef and from all parts of Johannesburg to the Trades Hall on Sunday afternoon to a meeting organised by the Federation of South African Women to discuss the demands of women to be presented at the Congress of the People on June 25th.

~~CHILDREN~~ THE MOTHER, THE CHILD AND THE HOME.

The women enthusiastically adopted the demands put forward by speakers, which included maternity leave on full pay, creches, universal and equal education, proper houses and transport, freehold rights for all people, subsidisation of protective foods, rationing and full supplies of pasteurised milk.

THE RESERVES AND THE FARMS.

Women demanded the abolition of the migratory ^{lab} system and the development of the reserves as ~~farm~~ producing areas instead of reservoirs of cheap labour, the abolition of convict farm labour, of child labour, of the 'tot' system; they demanded that schools and medical services be supplied in the reserves, that all farm workers, men and women, should be protected by industrial legislation, that food production be scientifically developed and ~~widely~~ distributed.

OLD AGE, SICKNESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

State medical services were demanded by the women, equal and adequate old age and sickness pensions for people of all races, the extension of unemployment insurance to all African workers, and higher wages to meet the ever rising cost of living.

WE WILL NOT CARRY PASSES!

Declaring that the women of South Africa will not carry passes, the meeting unanimously condemned the ~~the~~ Pass Laws and the Population Registration Act, and made the main demand the ~~equal~~ of vote for all people, as the ~~means~~ first step to secure all other demands.

Josie Palmer: ✓

We are here to discuss our part in C.O.P.

The C.O.P. is the organisation to decide future of S.A. Where the people will put forward demands. We have been putting forward our demands. At every meeting we pass a resolution but with such a Govt all the demands have been futile.

It is time for the people to come forward & put demands as 1 man. We are expecting delegates from all over the Union. We as mothers are the people who should play the most important part. If our demands are to be met it is the women who are going to put forward the demands & work for them. I call on you here today to make it a success. Devy Declare Conference open.

First speaker putting forward demands Mrs. Mary on schools & children

I thank you about what the chair lady has said. £. 4 mths Maternity leave on full pay Demand.

Properly staffed & equipped maternity homes & Clinics in villages & all towns.

Nursery school for children are also wanted, because they have school for European children, over sea they have a ~~medal~~ home for children, mothers will agree that they do not like to see children running about begging for bread.

Birth control, its no use one having a child this year and another next year. It is so difficult to give them good education, and to look after them. instead we improving its becoming worse everyday. second - - Anice -

Demand for Birth Control

Legal with Eur. women & husbands agree. In clinics birth control methods. Unknown to N-E people but advice given by sisters esp in Jhb. In J Fox St at 10 a.m you can go to welfare house & get advice. Your husband must agree. Not of interest to all in the hall because ^{some} ~~everybody~~ want children. About 60 years ago I would agree but not today. Today it is hard to feed & educate children. Today children face starvation. Every woman can go to the clinic in her area. Put forward demand & it will be legal even to N-E women in future.

Speaker: On question of birth control the we will have difficulty because our husbands want children. ~~The~~ Women who have children should ask ~~us~~ husbands to give them as req.

Speaker: There are so many married women without children. Before we come to married women we must start with young school children. We should first start with our children

Some think that when we speak of this we are forcing it down their throats. Some feel this burden is too much for them & it is a demand we are putting in. Those who want to give their children security they will apply for birth control.

Same Mary - on schools.

2nd demand Compulsory free & universal education from primary school to university I must thank women for activity regarding Bantu Education, Women Threatened by Govt.

Teach him that his race is inferior to all others.
 Something said by the Ed. League. - The
 fund. aim of education is development of total
 personality of person. Power to make
 judgement. Education should put at the disposal
 indiv. the culture of mankind. B. E. something
 that should not exist. B. E. exists nowhere
 & will only exist at time of Nat Govt.
 A. Sin to the African people. It is a sin well
 answer to God if we agree. Let us fight
 the B. E. & destroy it because it destroys
 out children. Children must have free feeding
 in schools. ~~Gov~~ Govt tells lie when it says
 much money is spent on African children
 Our husbands are taken away to work for
 farmers. They pay tax every year.
 So many dif. taxes on African people.
 Special schools for handicapped children.
 So many lame, blind etc. Don't see such
 things with Europeans only with Africans.
 Let us unite & fight for this demand.
 Playgrounds, sports fields, play centres. Nowhere
 for African children to play. Also talk
 about rural areas & reserves & towns.
 This Conf. will send demand to the C.O.P.
 Must convey this message to the women
 Go & organise as many women as possible
 & send in demands to C.O.P. Let us fight
 for freedom & that of our children.
 Esther Baisel. Agree about B. E. in part.
 Include complete repeal of B. E. A. totally
 reject. ~~Also~~
 Don't get frequent reports at Afr. schools.
 But with Coloured & Indian you will see
 if child is making progress

Collection Number: AD1137

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.