

C141

United Women's Organisation



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P.O. Box 120
Athlone
7760



Bas "C141"

Dear Comrades,

UWO is spearheading the commemoration of National Womens Day in the Western Cape. Nationally women are organising a focus week from 5-12 August, around the theme 'Women against forced removals and the elections'. We will picket on the streets throughout the Western Cape. We will pamphleteer factories and squatter camps. The week will end in a rally at Athlone Civic.

We come from a tradition of well organised women. In 1956, 20 000 women marched to Pretoria to declare their opposition to passes. Thousands more marched to their local 'Native Affairs' Offices. For 15 years, National Women's Day was hardly celebrated. Now, wherever women are organising, National Women's Day is a big event.

This year, we say 'Women reject the forced removals and the elections' But it is not enough to reject the hardships women suffer. We must organise to fight these actively. We must look at which women need to be organised and how we should organise them.

Black women are the most unemployed people. The bantustan system and influx control divides our families. The women in the bantustans are employed as slave labour - women are the source of the bosses super profits. In the urban areas, young women are fired when they become pregnant. When there is a recession, it is the women who are the first to be retrenched. ~~The bosses say these women are housewives - they are not employed.~~

It is the duty of all democratic trade unions and womens organisations to defend a woman's right to work and to live where we can get a job. But we must demand more than this. What will happen to our children and families while we are at work?

We must organise to demand the right to bear our children with adequate health care for child and mother. We must demand that there are crech and child care centres for all working mothers. We claim paid maternity leave as our right, and we demand a guarantee that we can return to our same job.

In many of the clinics in our communities and at the factories, they us dangerous contraceptives. We demand our right to choose when we wa to use birth control. It is our right to make this decision with full knowledge about what we are doing to our health. No boss can demand t we must use contraceptive before we can get a job. Motherhood is our right.

The time is past when women were at home all day. Now we too have to work to support our family. But the law and our attitudes hold us bac The law says that black women are minors, with their husbands or sons as guardians. The divorce laws does not apply to black women. Our husbands, brothers and sons expect the women of the house to do the housework. All this must change. The people shall share the work in the home.

We say it is the right of all people to organise into democratic organisations at their places of work, in the community. We say that women should take their place alongside their men in the struggle.

Women are brought up not to speak about political issues. We are told that is the men's business. We are told not to speak but to listen. It is the task of all democratic organisations to train women to participate fully in the work of the organisation and to arrange the organisation so that women can participate. There is work to be done if we want the right for women to organise not to be a hollow slogan.

The Labour Party thinks that they can fool our women into voting. But we know that our struggle as women is part of the struggle for a non-racial and democratic South Africa. Our demands for maternity leave, creches, equal pay for equal work, for prices we can afford are only milestones along the way to a South Africa where the people shall govern.

Comrades, the United Women's Organisation works hand in hand with other organisations. Within the UDF we hope to move the women's struggle and the struggle as a whole forward. Our task is to reach out to unorganised women and draw them into the democratic movement. The task of organising women is a task that confronts us all - the trade union movement, the student movement, the civic associations and the youth movement.

On National Women's Day 1984, we say for the whole world to hear that Botha's New Deal is no answer to our problems as women. The wages remain low and the prices and GST go up. There are no houses, security and comfort for South Africans. We can not live in peace and friendship when our sons are dragged into the army. We do not live in a democracy when the majority of our people are shunted off to the Bantustans.

UWO calls on comrades, men and women, to join us in the activities of the Focus Week:

MONDAY 6 AUGUST: blitz to squatter camps.

Please bring as much transport as possible.

TUESDAY 7 AUGUST: blitz to factories.

Please bring as much transport as possible.

THURSEDAY 9 AUGUST: Pickets.

Please bring as much transport as possible.

SUNDAY 12 AUGUST: Mass Rally Athlone Civic 2.00 - 5.00 pm

WOMEN AGAINST THE FORCED REMOVALS AND THE NEW DEAL.

Our office phone number is 691055⁶ - please let us know if people are coming from your organisation or your region. Please phone if you need information or have suggestions. The office address is: 3 Hares Street, Mowbray, right next to the Mowbray bus terminus.

We hope to see you all in the National Womens Day Focus.

Yours in struggle,

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SECRETARY.

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