

✓ SAE/020/0699/18¹⁸

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REPORT OF ACTIVITIES OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN
THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION OF THEIR COUNTRY.

OBJECTIVES :

- a) POLITICAL: To organise women into the struggle for unity, peace, democracy and equality e.g. involving them in campaigns against detentions, high rentals, death sentences, racial discrimination and national oppression.
- b) EDUCATIONAL: Fight for equal and compulsory education for all children irrespective of colour or race.

To promote awareness on the importance of the rights of the children as reflected in the UN Charter on Children.

Establishment of educational programmes for example literacy classes and upgrading courses for higher education.

- c) DEVELOPMENT: Women involvement in development process e.g.

projects like creches, womens' centres, sewing and designing, hand lotions, candles, handbags and sandals etc.

POLITICAL.

1. Todate black people in South Africa are still uprooted and moved at a gun point to destinations unkown to them. Some are left in the open despite the climatic conditions: Examples are to be found in KTC, Crossroads, Lawaarkamp, Daggakraal, Leeufontein etc. Recently the mass resistance by the Moutse people against their incorporation into KwaNdebele Bantustan, the State of Emergency, continued arrests, detentions, kidnappings and death sentences still continue unabated.

2. The myth of the fascists strength against people fighting for their democratic rights has been put to test.

INTERNAL:

Since early 80s' todote our women have fought against high rents throughout the country. At the height of refusal to pay rent in South Africa and the continued eviction of our people in the townships; Cdes Albertina Sisulu and B. Ncube were part of the Committee that met the racist judge on the burning issues of high rent. The Committee demands that rent payment be accurately worked out taking into account the state of houses in different townships. Also the scrapping off from the rent list of all old houses no more worthy of any payments. Victory was scored in Soweto in that evictions were stopped forthwith and all owed rent written off as a dead debt. In other areas the rent struggle continues in its third year.

Our/2.....

4. Our Progressive Womens' Organisations at home are in the forefront in the Release of our children, leaders and all other activists Campaign who are in detention and who are serving sentences. They struggle for better education for all the children irrespective of colour or race. The current campaign is Education for all as they get ready to attend whites only schools in January next year. In some schools new syllubases have been drawn following Peoples Education and NOT BANTU EDUCATION. These have been introduced in schools in defiance of Bantu Education and racists laws.

5. The women in South Africa have thrown their weight in organising a variety of projects - Child care Centres, sewing and designing, production of candles and handcraft workshops, like sandals and handbags.

6. Womens' Organisation throughout the country play a very important role in the activities of the Mass Democratic Movements in addition to their own struggle for emancipation. Among these are;-

Federation of Transvaal Women, Natal Organisation of Women, United Womens' Congress, Port Elizabeth Womens' Organisation, GOWCO (a womens' organisation at the boarder region), Congress of South African Trade Union Womens' Forum, Women in Womens' Desks of South African Council of Churches and South Africa Bishops Conference. All these have a number of branches in their regions. Their activities have carried on throughout the 3 years under review including commemorating such events as January 8th, March 8th, May 1st, June 16, August 9th, December 16 etc. They have taken part in strikes, consumer boycotts and other demonstrations.

Their activities include:-

- Demonstrations against SADF's presence in schools and townships.
- Demands for the release of our leaders and detainees.
- Demonstrations against death sentences
- Active in the Free All Children Campaign
- Forming coalitions under the slogan "Women Against Repression".
- Going on Hunger strike in support of the detainees on hunger strike
- Going to the premises of Western Embassies to demand their intervention on behalf of detainees on hunger strike and many others.

7. The Five Freedoms Forum is an Organisation uniting various white groups who are taking part in the struggle against Apartheid in various ways such as the Black Sash, End Constriction Campaign, Detainees Parent Support Committee, Free the Children Alliance and a number of others which have moved from the supportive stance to actual participation in the struggle.

8. Progressive Womens' Organisations have held regional meetings with Afrikaner and other white womens organisations. They were meeting as women and mothers sharing experiences and exchanging views on the effect of the Apartheid system in which their husbands and children are involved. These meetings culminated in the

Harare meeting in which the ANC Womens' Section participated.

9. Cde. Albertina Sisulu was invited by Cde. Ruth Neto Secretary General of PAWO as a guest of honour to the conference. Cde. Albertina was asked to address the opening of the PAWO Solidarity meeting. Cde. Mary Fulane Head of UNIP Womens' League introduced her to the conference. She also arranged a meeting with the Heads of the Womens' Organisation of the Front Line states.

OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY:

The Womens' Section has attended a number of International conferences and Solidarity meetings. They have attended the WIDF Bureau meeting in Berlin, March 8th celebrations in Paris, Damascus and other parts of the world. They also attended the Economic and Social Council conference in Vienna, the WCC Womens' conference in Accra, PAWO Solidarity meeting in Lusaka and a Seminar on NGO/projects in Lusaka., and a number of others.

ANC women Mirriam, Nompoti, Nomande and Rene participated at the Youth Festival Womens' Centre in Korea where among other activities they presented papers on various topics relating to women in society, showed videos, held interviews by various journalists and bilateral talks on the current situation in South Africa and peoples resistance.

Every year the Womens' Section send women to the Leadership course for women in Cuba.

The Womens Section participate in the meetings of consultations with the Mass Democratic Movements delegates who come to Lusaka to consult with the ANC leadership, and all other groups, like the Five Freedom Forum including Womens' Organisations.

Our women have attended speaking tours to highlight the role of South African women in the liberation struggle, also to organise material and morale support from the international Progressive Womens' Organisations e.g. Canada, Australia, and the some of the Scandinavian countries.

This year on March 23 1989, the President of UNIP of Zambia launched Zambia Womens' Day. To celebrate this occasion the UNIP Womens' League organised a week long activities like tree planting, various community services, cultural competition etc. The ANC Women fully participated in all these activities. The celebrations culminated in a rally at the Zambia Freedom Square. All participants marched past the Zambia President.

SOLIDARITY:

Messages of Solidarity, congratulations and condolences have been sent to various organisations of women upon the numerous occasions and disasters which have happened in the course of the years e.g. to Zambia on the death of Mrs Ndlovu, to Womens' Committee in the Soviet after the flood disaster and Cuba Women on the airplane disaster, etc.

On June 20 1989, ANC Womens' Section held a special Solidarity meeting with our comrades in arms of SWAPO Womens Council. Discussions centred around the role played by SWAPO women in the struggle for liberation. Also tasks awaiting ahead of them in uniting all the people of Namibia to collectively reconstruct a new Namibia for which many lives have been sacrificed.

In September 1987, ANC Womens' Section held a national conference in Luanda , to take stock in its work and assess its achievements and setbacks. The women resolved to intensify the struggle for the liberation of our motherland. A new national executive Committee of 16 members was elected and Cde G. Shope was elected the Head of the Womens' Section.

On the 20th August 1989, a celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Child took place at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. The ANC Regional Womens' Committee invited Cde. G. Shope to be guest of honour and main speaker. Attending were some members of the ANC, SACTU national executive committee, representative of Tanzanian Govt and the school officials.

The occasion was marked with a march to the stadium by children of all ages. As they entered the stadium they marched passed and saluted Cde. G. Shope who was a few steps in front of the rostrum standing with the leadership. As soon as they assembled, the flags of the ANC, SOMAFCO and Tanzania were raised after which our national Anthem was sung. Cde. Shope addressed the gathering on the situation of children at home. At the end of address the new stadium was honoured with the name of Lillian Masediba Ngoyi. Everybody was excited and burst into "MALIBONGWE IGAMA LAMAKHOSIKAZI. The afternoon was devoted to various sports activities.

The Womens' Section also attended conferences on children, held in Nairobi and Sweden.

The ANC women observe and celebrates the International Womens' day and the ANC national days in all regions in various activities.

The Womens' Section participated in the PAWO conference held in Lusaka at the end of July. During the conference Cde. Kate Mhamba Head of Umoja Wanawake Wa Tanzania invited Cde Albertina at the residence of their High Commissioner for a dinner. In a speech she said, " We in Tanzania attach great importance to what you did to our country immediately after independence. You managed to persuade 21 trained nurses from South Africa to come to Tanzania and serve the people. It showed that you have been in the forefront in consolidating African Unity since then. It was a great great gesture of solidarity.

PROJECTS:

The Womens' Section is involved with various projects in different regions especially where there is a high concentration of ANC women.

ZAMBIA: In Lusaka there is Dora Tamana Nursery School, also we have a multipurpose Womens' Centre, up till is still at its very early stage.

MAZIMBU- TANZANIA : We have a Day Care Centre and a Nursery school. Also we have a Kate Molale mother and child Centre. In the same region we have a Dakawa Day Care and Nursery School.

REPORTS ON AUGUST 9 OF 1989.

INSIDE THE COUNTRY:

TRANSVAAL:- The celebrations took place at three Johannesburg venues. In one of the venues the meeting was addressed by the President of the Federation of Transvaal Women Cde. B. Ncube who told the audience that "effective International pressure on South African Government depended on the people inside the country. About the trip to Zambia she said, that country was paying supreme price for our liberation".

Another meeting was addressed by Cde. Helen Joseph 84. She is a listed person and she can not be quoted.

In the third venue at University of Witwatersrand, with the theme "Womens' Day Today is Freedom Tomorrow" the Federation of women from 18 branches heard an address by Cde. June Mlangeni, wife of the life imprisoned ANC leader Andrew Mlangeni. Also addressing the meeting were Save the Patriots Campaign Committee, restricted SA National Students Congress and South African Youth Congress leaders. The audience was entertained to traditional songs, dances, poetry by groups of women. UDF co-President Albertina Sisulu was Federations rallying point in the Transvaal. Women wore green Fedtraw T-shirts traditionally worn with black skirt which bore Albertina Sisulus' picture.

WESTERN CAPE:

The Cape University held a rally addressed amongst others by Cdes Moulana Farid Essak, Helen Joseph and others. Cde Essak told the rally of 2.500 people that the liberation of women was intrinsically linked to the broader struggle for freedom. Women were vulnerable because of the economic structure, and thier work have gone unnoticed. Women have to push and assert their position at all times as their freedom in a new South Africa is not automatically guaranteed. Cde Helen Joseph saluted the women who defied the restricting laws and attended the celebrations. The meeting ended up in a clash between the people and the racists police.

OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY

LUSAKA : The celebrations were well attended by members of the ANC and leadership. Speakers were from UNIP Womens League, NEC of ANC, Director of UN INformation Centre and Cde Ray Simons as a main speaker from Womens' Secretariat.

The speaker from UNIP Womens' league assured the South African women of their continued support till our freedom. The women from UNIP Women' League sang and danced revolutionary songs. The Director of Un Information in a solidarity message praised the women of South Africa for continued sacrifices. Cde Ray highlighted the plight of women and children in South Africa and courageous resistance against the racists regime. Cde R. September explained at length on negotiations. The meeting was entertained to traditional dance and music.

ANGOLA

The Celebrations started with a march which ended at Soweto Square where a well attended meeting took place. Cde Ruth Neto represented the MPLA Party, also present were the SWAPO representatives. A number of Diplomatic Corp also attended.

A speaker from OMA concentrated mainly on how the very dynamic relations with the ANC Womens' Section had developed over the years. This relationship it traced back to the pre-independence days and how even after independence OMA had learnt and amassed knowledge from our women as they were continually in contact.

The SWAPO Womens' Council message gave a clear picture of the Namibian situation presently. It showed how SWAPO members are the main targets of the murderous KOEWET thugs within the South West Africa Police Force and how South Africa is trying to undermine the UNTAG and delay the implementation of Resolution 435. But one thing came out clearly, and that is that SWAPO's election campaign is gaining momentum with positive results. The message ended on a high note with FORWARD TO VICTORY!

The main speaker from the ANC Womens' Section Cde Makho Njobe highlighted the ever growing repression of the minority regime, that after more than three years of State of Emergency, South Africa is still ungovernable and unworkable.

It has become common for trial of political activists and MK cadres to end up in death sentences. South Africa has the highest rate of judicial killings in the world. She gave figures of the executed people, those on the death row, and those presently still in detention. Cde Makho went on highlighting the key role played by the women as our struggle gains momentum. She stressed the involvement of our women in the battles ahead for the final onslaught of the Apartheid regime with UNITY IS THE KEY!

LONDON:

The meeting was held on the evening of August 9th to a packed hall. Present on the rostrum were representatives of SACTU, ANC and support groups who brought messages from their organisations. Others read poems, Cde Rose Matsepe, Chairperson of the RWC chaired the meeting. Messages were read by Cde. P. Stevens. All speeches commended the bravery of SA women in their struggle against repression. Speaker after speaker re-iterated the support of their organisations to sanctions against the racist and their continued struggle till we achieve the gains we have set ourselves.

Cde. Gertrude gave the main speech for the day. She spoke on the brutality in South Africa which is on the increase. She told the house of a number of activities undertaken by women and their campaigns in the struggle for the release of children some as young as eight years old. She briefed the meeting of the question of negotiations and how the ANC sees it.

She concluded/3....

Cde Gertrude concluded by tabualting issues the ANC Womens' Section would request our friends and supporters to undertake among them to accord Prisoner of War status to arrested ANC freedom fighters and cancellation of the death sentences.

Other regions where our women commemorated August 9th are UN in New York, Dakar, Harare, Maputo, Dar es Salaam and Durban. Up to the time of writing reports had not receive their reports.

HARARE MEETING OF ANC WOMEN SECTION

AND AFRIKANER WOMEN HELD IN APRIL 1989.

The meeting was opened by Cde. Sally Mugabe, wife of the President of Zimbabwe. She commended the South African women on the timely action and said it lays a better foundation of the South Africa we are striving for. A full day was dedicated to the sharing of experiences with Zimbabwe women during and after the liberation struggle. Among them were those who were involved in the liberation struggle and those who were actively supporting the Smith regime upto the day of independence. One white Zimbabwean woman said, " The reason why there was a war, was because we were trying ~~trying~~ to prevent the future instead of preparing for it". Their various experiences had an impact on a number of Afrikaaner women and prepared them for the discussions with the ANC women.

The discussion with the Afrikaaner women was marked by frankness from both sides. At the begining there was tension especially from the card carrying Afrikaaner women because of the propaganda fed to them by their Party against the ANC. As the talks progressed and the revelations of the atrocities perpetrated by the South African Defence Force against Blacks were grudgingly accepted, the atmosphere cleared and understanding of the injustice of the South African racist war dawned on them.

The discussions centred mainly around the socialisation of the South African children into a military way of mind, and into the army. Mothers talked with anguish about sons faced with choice of being isolated among the white community, brutalisation and severe trauma. There was an understanding that the future of both black and white children is being blighted. Theneed to re-educate both black and white South Africans, and that the rehabilitation process of our society must start was expressed.

The ANC women acknowledged that they do not expect an over night change. That if we are opposed to Apartheid, we should begin planning for that common future now. That we should start participating in discussions about what kind of South Africa we want, not necessarily setting up a common political programme. That we need to establish broad principles that should shape our future. That the ANC Constitutional guidelines could be the beginning of that process, our belief is that South Africans Constitution must be the product of discussion among all South Africans.

It was agreed that Apartheid needs to be brought to an end, and that we need to examine the ways of resolving the conflicts. There was no consensus on methods to be used. The need to come together on points where we can agree was expressed. A number of areas where we can act in order to make a reduction of the conflict easier were identified. Women agreed on more meetings of this kind.

At the end/2....

At the end of the third day when hour of parting came - some ~~some~~ South Africans going back home while those who wanted to, but could not go remained, tears rolled down the cheeks as they all without exception held hands and sang WE SHALL OVERCOME. The meeting ended with the National Anthem NKOSI SIKELELA I AFRICA.