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AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
(South Africa)

WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT.

Telephone; Office: 72319

P.O. Box 1791
LUSAKA.
ZAMBIA

Our Ref. No. ^{M/MT}.....

Your Ref No.....

CIRCULAR.

Dear Comrades,

We wish to inform you that the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in the G.D.R. held an international Conference to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the publication of "The Women and Socialism" by August Bebel, from the 23rd to 25th February, 1979 in Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic.

The invitation was sent to the mother body (A.N.C.) which delegated Comrades Mavis Thwala and Orea Mohlala to represent us, as the theme was on women.


We are sending you the attached report and paper presented by our delegation for your information and any remarks you may have, as an exchange of ideas and experience.

The conference was exceptional in that it was organised by the ruling party on women and was somehow theoretical. Any questions or remarks raised will be answered by Comrade Mavis, who was leader of the delegation.

We are happy to inform you that Mavis has since recently arrived to take up her position as secretary to the Women's Secretariat as appointed by the previous meeting of the N.E.C..

Regretably Comrade Mittah Seperepere is still not in a position of taking up her position as deputy.

With revolutionary greetings.


Florence Mophosho.
Head. Women's Section.

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY OF G.D.R

The conference, held in Berlin from the 23rd to the 25th of February, 1979 was organised to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of August Bebel's book "Women and Socialism."

The A.N.C. was represented by comrades Mavis Thwala and Orea Mohlala. We arrived in Berlin on the 16th of February and were warmly received by comrades from the Central Committee of the SED. The actual conference programme was to begin on the 19th so that between then and our time of arrival we were taken around on sightseeing tours of Berlin visiting museums and other places of historic importance.

From the 19th to the 22nd we visited factories, collective farms, schools and children's kindergartens. In all these places the comrades from the party got us acquainted with the life of the German people, their achievements in the social, political and economic spheres within the last thirty years of the existence of the Republic. Very significant progress has definitely been made in improving particularly the position of women. In all these places women occupy high positions in the administration and the political life of their societies. There is also provision made for good child-care facilities, such that motherhood is not a stumbling block for women's development in all aspects.

The conference sessions started on the 23rd of February, each day beginning at 9.00 hours till 19.30 hours with breaks in between. There were altogether 62 Communist and Workers' parties, 18 Revolutionary and Democratic and 5

Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties represented at the conference. 155 foreign guests and 303 GDR citizens took part in the conference.

The main paper delivered by comrade Inge Lange, Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED on the position of women in the GDR was a confirmation of what we had witnessed during our excursions to the different institutions. All delegations then took part in discussions, each delegation presenting a paper of 15 minutes. Unfortunately only 60 delegations could speak due to limited time. Our delegation's application was accepted and on the 24th we presented our paper on the "DIALECTICS OF WOMEN'S POSITION UNDER APARTHEID."

Also present at the conference was comrade Sonia Bunting who represented the South African Communist Party. A series of meetings and discussions were organised after the conference sessions in which we informed interested persons about the South African situation, particularly how apartheid affects the women in South Africa. Comrade Sonia was of much help during these discussions.

Many delegates taking the floor voiced their condemnation of the systems of racism and apartheid in Southern Africa, the active struggle of women in the world against these systems and the continuing support that they give to the national liberation movements in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa was reconfirmed. This support was also expressed in the report of the Central Committee of the SED given at the end of the conference.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Sudan called a meeting of the African delegations after the conference,

in which the agenda was:

- 1: The Pan African Women's Organisation.
2. Support for the National Liberation Movements.

The Sudanese delegation expressed concern that they had for a long time not been invited to meetings of or conferences of the PAWO. After discussion it was decided that the meeting had no authority to discuss the issue and that the party concerned should contact PAWO directly.

The parties represented confirmed their support for our struggle and the meeting closed.

IMPRESSIONS: The conference was very educative and theoretical. All delegations after the position of women in their countries had been presented had one common conclusion: That the true emancipation of women and their subsequent involvement on an equal basis with men in all aspects of life is not possible under any social system except socialism. Women from developed capitalist states like the United States, Britain, France and the FRG explained the various attempts made by their governments to try and accord women equal rights within the exploitative capitalist system and how this is failing. On the other hand women from the socialist countries, the Soviet Union, Mongolia, Cuba and others told how their countries have managed to give true equal rights to women.

Women from the developing countries which have embarked on the socialist orientated way showed how radical the change has been on the position of women in their countries from colonial times to date. The situation for women in South Africa came to be different from any other. We explained
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to the conference the complex correlation of the three forms of oppression - sex, racial and class exploitation - how these have an effect on the African woman in South Africa. The experiences of other revolutions were helpful in a further elaboration of the theory and practice of women's role in the struggle for the elimination of obsolete systems. Parallel to this process is the struggle of women for the recognition of the rights and their acceptance into society on an equal basis with men.

For the struggling women of South Africa this means we must intensify the struggle for national liberation and the complete elimination of the apartheid system. On the other hand we must regard ourselves as equal participants within this struggle. We do not have to wait for a socialist system to be created for us by some external force.

Finally, equality should not be interpreted in the context of feminism of sexism and reduced to a struggle between the sexes. Our form of equality will be appreciated if we prove more by our practical deeds during the process of the national liberation struggle, that we can make an equal contribution towards the achievement of freedom for our people.

We wish at the end of our report to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our organisation, the A.N.C., for extending the invitation to us and making all necessary arrangements for us to attend this conference. We sincerely hope that the experiences gained at that important conference will enable us to better tackle the problem of mass mobilization of our women, who represent a powerful potential force in our struggle.

FORWARD WITH THE YEAR OF THE SPEAR.