The wettest weekend of the year! The organisers of the Transvaal Regional Conference of the Federation of South African Women gazed anxiously at the heavy rain clouds, listened in horror to dismal wireless forecasts of "rain in all parts of South Africa". Sunday morning came and so did the rain! We were beginning to feel aggrieved - this was the first mass Transvaal women's conference since December 2nd 1956, three days before the treason arrests, and on that occasion heavy rain had kept many women away. Was this disappointment to be repeated?

But this wet Sunday morning presented an unexpected and moving sight. Before 9 o'clock, the women had begun to arrive from all over the Transvaal. Carltonville women were the first; they had left their homes, forty miles away at five o'clock that morning. Twenty women from Evaton followed, and then as I drove around the neighbourhood, I saw groups of women coming from every direction, marching sturdily through the streaming streets, umbrellas aloft. "Where are you from?" "Heidelberg...Benoni...Meyerton...Springs...Balfour...Morgenzon...Bethal," came the replies, called across the wet street, covering the vast Transvaal.

Cars, vans began to arrive and then buses, hired for the occasion. Excitement mounted as the women of Orlando, led by militant Albertina Sisulu, poured out of their bus. Then came one hundred and fifty women of Roodepoort, Viola Hashe at their head, still elated at the success of their boycott of the pass unit. The women poured into the hall, followed by African men, eager to get in to the women's conference. And smiling breathless women come out of the hall to say triumphantly, "The men have given up their seats to the women. Women are here from Lichtenburg, from Volksrust, from Standerton.....Its wonderful, WONDERFUL!"

Now Indian women can be seen, in gay, colourful saris, these are familiar faces, they are the women who have been to gaol in Defiance and Passive Resistance Campaigns, and the young women who will lead the Indian women of today and tomorrow; I see lovely Amina Cachalia and vital Ayesha Massa as they drive up with carloads of women. Some Coloured and European women arrive at the conference, their number small but their presence significant, for this is a multi-racial gathering, a challenge Flung in the face of the Minister of Bantu Education and Development and his threatened bans.

The Security Branch of the Police has arrived; they push their way in, armed with warrants to remain at the conference, while uniformed police remain outside in...
A small van drives up; it is packed with African women and it is making its fourth trip that morning from Jabavu, fourteen miles away; stalwart Mrs. Moekheti is the last to clamber out, beaming with pride as she shepherds the women into the hall. Now comes a large lorry and the Congress flag is brought out first and proudly unfurled, despite the rain, while the ladder is lowered and the women, young and old, the stout and the slim, climb out. I remember the last time I saw these women; then they were packed into a police lorry, giving the Congress salute as they were driven off to gaol to begin serving their sentences after their great campaign against passes in October 1958. Virginia Mngomo, Catherine Moqaai, Florence Mposhe, they are all here today, once again leading the militant women of Alexandra Township. And still the little groups of women are arriving, striding along the wet street, while the glistening pavement reflects their umbrellas and their marching feet.

Conference has started and the doors are shut. I cannot see any women from the outside, but I can make out the backs of the heads of men, pressed against the windows of the foyer, for there is no room for them in the hall. I wait for a moment before driving off and suddenly I see two great Juggernauts approaching, two buses bringing more than a hundred women from Pretoria. Can more women really get into the hall? It seems impossible but somehow they are pressed in through the door and they vanish one by one from my astonished eyes. I hear the women singing behind the closed doors. I cannot hear the song, but I know that it must be "Inkosi Sikelele!" and I remember how 20,000 women sang in front of the Union Buildings in Pretoria on August 9th 1956. Then the sun shone brilliantly on the gay gardens, aflame with flowers, aflame with the courage and determination of the women, and Phyllis Altman wrote "...and then I knew a moment of triumph. Nothing can defeat these women, these wives, these mothers."

Now Fox Street is empty save for me and a few policemen. The rain pours down and the street is grey. There are no flowers, there is no sun, but the spirit of the women is not gone from the street and the moment of triumph has come again. "Nothing can defeat these women, these wives, these mothers."
Federation itself but only through all the Congress organisations. The resolution was therefore referred to the Transvaal Consultative Committee, where it was agreed that 1958 would probably provide a suitable opportunity for the proposed demonstration. From April until September 1958, however, all meetings of more than 10 Africans were prohibited in Johannesburg and the Reef and thus the proposed demonstration fell away.

AUGUST 9TH, 1957

In response to the call by the National Executive of the Federation for demonstrations to celebrate the anniversary of the great Pretoria Protest on August 9th, 1956, demonstrations to Native Commissioner were organised through the A.N.C. Women’s League to the Native Commissioners in Johannesburg, Krugersdorp, Germiston, Springs, Benoni and Pretoria; the demonstrations were supported by women of other races wherever possible. Some 2,000 women in all participated in these demonstrations, and from all areas telegrams of solidarity with the leaders on trial and commemoration of August 9th were sent to the women leaders at the preparatory examination in the Drill Hall.

CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF THE CONDITION OF AFRICAN NURSES TO THE CONCILIATORY PRODUCTION OF NURSES NUMBERS FOR REGISTRATION

The Transvaal Region gave immediate and militant effect to the recommendations of the National Executive Committee concerning the Registration of Nurses. Efforts were made to establish liaison with the S.A. Nursing Council and the National Standing Committee for the Registration of Nurses, Professional union; but although this was not forthcoming, the Federation and the A.N.C. Women’s League agreed to organise mass demonstrations of non-nursing women to the native hospitals, to the S.A. Nursing Council and to the Minister of Health to protest against the attempt to force African nurses to take out reference books. It was realised that this attempt to coerce the nurses placed all African women in danger, and women of all races rallied together in the first demonstration which was arranged for Baragwanath Hospital on March 22nd, 1958. Despite extensive police intimidation, road blocks and hundreds of armed police at the hospital gates, nearly 600 women assembled outside the hospital, whilst a delegation of 10 women at a time interviewed the Matron and the Superintendent of Baragwanath Hospital for two hours and were informed that the S.A. Nursing Council had withdrawn the demand for identity numbers. In view of this victory for the nurses, there was no need for the Federation to organise any further demonstrations at this stage.


The Transvaal Region of the Federation undertook all arrangements for the reception and accommodation of delegates arriving from all parts of South Africa for this important National Conference. The Working Committee organised accommodation for several hundred delegates in the Western Areas, and Committee members received delegates at the Congress offices, remaining there day and night for two days, organizing food on arrival and transport to the accommodation areas.

FUND RAISING FOR THE TREASON TRIAL, THE ZEERUST TRIALS AND THE INCITEMENT TRIAL

Various fund raising activities and functions were undertaken in June and July 1958 for the specific purpose of raising funds for these trials, with the result that £25 was raised for both the Zeerust and the Incitement Trials and £7.10. -,- for the Treason Trials Defence Fund.

AUGUST 9TH, 1958

In commemoration of August 9th, 1956, the Transvaal Region called upon all areas to organise prayer meetings and houseparties as the ban on meetings of Africans was still in force. Sales of badges "Women don’t want Passes"
The first Transvaal Regional Conference of the Federation of S. A., Women was held on Sunday, December 2nd 1956 in the Gandhi Hall. Mrs. Narcisse Colden was elected Transvaal President and twelve members were elected to the Executive Committee. An executive committee consisting of a Chairman and six members was elected.

The full Regional Executive has met 9 times during the past 2 years, but the Working Committees appointed for various campaigns have met weekly throughout each campaign. In addition four joint meetings have been held with the Transvaal Provincial Executive of the A.F. Women’s League.

On December 5th, 1956, three days after the Conference, Helen Joseph, National Secretary of the Federation, and Bertha Mashaba, two of the elected members of the new Transvaal Executive, together with Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi, National President of the Federation, were arrested with 153 other Congress leaders on a charge of High Treason. After 16 days in custody, they were released on bail, but were prohibited from addressing or attending gatherings. As, however, they were not prohibited from participation in the activities of the Federation and could perform secretarial and organisational duties, Helen Joseph and Bertha Mashaba were appointed as Joint Secretaries by the Executive Committee. Mrs. Ruth Ratcliffe was appointed Vice President. In May 1957 Mrs. Joseph applied for 6 months leave to cover the period of the treason trial and Miss L. Naidoo took over the Joint Secretaryship, but Mrs. Joseph continued to work actively in the capacity of organiser.

LOCAL COMMITTEES

Following the decisions of the Conference, Local Committees were set up in Pretoria and on the East and West Rand, with the object of their development into Regional Committees. Lack of personnel prevented the continuation of the West Rand and Pretoria Committees, but the East Rand Working Committee covering Benoni, Brakpan and Springs, has been firmly established under the chairmanship of Mrs. Harry Moodley, and has made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Federation.

ANTI PASS AND ANTI GROUP AREAS CAMPAIGN 1957.

At the 1956 Conference a resolution had been taken to collect a million anti pass pledges from women of the Transvaal and also signatures to a protest against the Group Areas Act and Proclamations. During March 1957 three successful women’s conferences were held in Benoni, Pretoria and Krugersdorp to launch the campaign and working committees commenced activities immediately thereafter. Despite excellent work in some areas, however, this campaign failed to spread as widely as had been hoped and by the end of June only 8,000 pledges had been obtained and some 3,000 signatures to the Group Areas Protest.

In April 1957, Helen Joseph, the National Secretary and Joint Regional Secretary, was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act from attending any gatherings for five years and prohibited under the Riotous Assemblies Act from leaving Johannesburg for five years. These bans did not, however, prohibit her from working for the Federation and continuing as National Secretary and Joint Regional Secretary.

On June 23rd a mass Conference of women was held at the Patadium Hall in Fordsburg and the resolution was taken that men and women of all races should go to Pretoria in a mass demonstration to hand the pledges and the protests to the Minister of Native Affairs and to the Minister of the Interior. This resolution was fully discussed by the Regional Executive of the Federation and it was agreed that such a demonstration could not be handled by the
were organised, extensively through African National Congress Women's League branches and through the Regional Executive and the East Rand Working Committees. An open air public meeting of non-African women was called in Pretoria but this met with little support. Many thousands of badges were sold and the proceeds used for the trials. Attendance of women on August 8th at these trials had been organised, but the adjournments of all three trials prevented the fulfilment of this plan.

ANTI PASS STRUGGLE OCTOBER TO DECEMBER, 1958

A few days before the meeting of the Joint Executives of the Federation and the A.N.C. Women's League, the issuing of passes to African women started in Johannesburg and the historic anti-pass demonstrations at the pass office and the mass arrests of the courageous protestors began. During the next two weeks when 1893 African women were arrested, women of all Congress organisations assisted in the collection and preparation of food and delivery to the police stations and goals. Members of the A.N.C. Women's League and the Federation Executives worked at the Congress offices throughout this period. 50,000 printed leaflets "Uars Jou Pas, Kaffermeid", explaining the dangers of passes were issued by the Federation and the Women's League and distributed widely through the area, while the Federation initiated the distribution of other printed leaflets to housewives in European suburbs later carried on by the Congress of Democrats and the Transvaal Indian Congress. Further sales of the August 9th badges "Women don't want Passes" were organised to raise funds for printing leaflets and to assist with the provision of food for the arrested women both during their period of custody and their attendance at the courts.

The Women's Joint Executive Committees agreed to organise a mass demonstration of women of all races to the Mayor of Johannesburg and extensive organisation followed this decision. A further 50,000 leaflets were printed, calling women to the protest. During the whole of this period Federation Working Committee worked in close liaison with the Transvaal Consultative Committee and the A.N.C. both at the Provincial and National levels.

The Federation Working Committee drew up a detailed programme for the organisation of the protest, involving a minimum of two visits to every branch of the A.N.C. and/or the A.N.C. Women's League in Johannesburg, on the Reef and in Pretoria. 50,000 leaflets calling women to the protest were printed and distributed at the first visits, when the purpose of the protest was explained, volunteers called for, and a request made for a donation towards the cost of printing and the paper for the protest. Branches had already received letters from the Provincial Executive urging full support for the protest. The second visits were for the purpose of distributing the actual protests and the instructions to volunteers, emphasising the importance of discipline, absolute obedience and order. As on previous campaigns, the Federation supplied the transport and the drivers while the organisers were from the A.N.C. and the A.N.C.W.L. During this period of two weeks one car was in use for the whole of the weekend, most of the weekdays and all week nights for the South Western Region while four other cars were used for the two visits to the Western Areas, Pretoria and the East and West Rand. It must be pointed out that organisation of the Indian women presented great difficulties, arising from there being no specific women's organisation through which to work and the loose organisation of the T.I.C. All work has really to be done at the last moment by three or four Indian women and much work looks the organisational value of the intensive work done through the A.N.C. branches in the women's campaigns. C.O.D. women responded well, particularly in regard to the poster parade, but their small numbers cannot be denied. On this occasion no response was forthcoming from the Black Sash or the Liberal Party. Coloured women proved impossible to organise in Johannesburg, for lack of an organisation, although Benoni women of S.A.C.P.O. sent in a good number of Coloured women to the protest.
From the beginning of the week of the demonstration, severe intimidation began. The Mayor refused to meet the women on the pretext that he was being made an excuse for a mass demonstration; the Police Commissioner warned that he would take strong steps to preserve law and order. The Federation announced that the protest would go on, and the police replied that "lawlessness would not be allowed".

On the day before the protest strong warnings were relayed over the re-diffusion system, urging women not to go to the City Hall for fear of arrest. On the day itself the police used all possible means to intimidate the women with outspoken threats of arrest, even boarding the public buses to threaten the women.

In view of this savage police intimidation, and the difficulties which the Congress was already experiencing with legal defence, bail and fines for the first anti-pass protesters, the Federation was faced with a tremendous responsibility for the safety of the women at the forthcoming demonstration. But the responsibility went even further than this. Had the Federation yielded to the public intimidation and the private pressure to call off the protest, the very right to peaceful local protest would have been endangered, was indeed at stake.

The original plan of missing the women on the City Hall steps was reviewed and an alternate plan substituted of the filling court for the women one at a time to hand in the protest before proceeding to a mass meeting in Speightstown. While a public parade maintained by women at all times would effectively focus public attention on the women heading in the process. Volunteers were instructed to see that the women did not form crowds while waiting to hand in their protest and to see that no proceedings were formed at any point. The discipline of the women was superb and the response of more than 3,000 women in the face of police threats and intimidation was beyond all expectation.

The firm stand of the Federation and the declaration of the legality of the protest had its effect upon the Mayor and the United Party. On the eve of the protest the Federation was approached for agreement to interviews with the Mayor and the Non-European Affairs Committee of the City Council on the day following the protest. The Federation agreed to these proposals and together with the N.E.A.L.C. appointed a delegation of 12 women of whom ten were to be African women.

On the morning of the 28th, the women made their representations to the Chairman and members of the Non-European Affairs Committee and the Acting Manager of the N.E. Affairs Department. The interview lasted for nearly two hours and the women maintained a steady attack, putting forward their complaints and pressing for the City Council to call for the cessation of the issuing of reference books. The Chairman of the Committee asked for the representations of the women to be forwarded as a memorandum. In the afternoon the women were given a cordial and sympathetic reception by the Mayor who undertook to give serious consideration to the demand of the women. A memorandum was subsequently drawn up and because of its importance I would at this stage like to recommend that it be distributed as widely as possible.

A brief report is given of the financial position of the Federation, showing the total income and expenditure to date since the last Transvaal Conference in December 1956. It must be emphasised that the Federation has no membership fee and affiliation fees have been difficult to obtain even at the National level. The Transvaal income has been rechannelled through the fund raising efforts of the Regional Executive Committee and donations obtained towards the organisational expenses of each campaign. Our policy has not been to accumulate funds but to see that money is raised for each campaign as it is undertaken for we do not compete with the affiliated organisations for financial support.
When it is realised that at no time has the Federation been able to afford a full or even part-time paid official, the work and achievements of the past two years can be fully appreciated.

**JANUARY 1957 TO JANUARY 1959**

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<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
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<td>£345.11. 9.</td>
<td>Donations (to legal defence) £26.19. 3.</td>
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<td>Organisational expenditure</td>
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<td>Transport £53.16. 3.</td>
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<td>Remm paper/ink £57. 6.</td>
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<td>Other organisational expenses £28. 5. 11.</td>
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<td>Printing £149. 2. 8.</td>
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<td>Sundry Expenses (postage, stationery, etc.) £100. 8.</td>
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<td>Add excess of expenditure over income £23. 8. 10.</td>
<td>£354. 7. 11.</td>
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**THE TASK OF THE FEDERATION**

It will be seen from this report that the Transvaal Region of the Federation has maintained the high standards established in the first two and a half years and has continued to justify the status awarded to it by the Congress organisations. It is both inevitable and correct that at this stage of the struggle for freedom, the work of the Federation will be directed towards the unification of women of all races in protest and activity in this struggle, and will be particularly concerned with the campaign against passses for African women and the other threats to African women arising from the pass system. Our ultimate objectives are the rights of women, the defence of our children and peace for all people, but in South Africa these objectives cannot be separated from the struggle for liberation and will indeed flow from it in the future. Our further aim of strengthening women within the affiliated organisations is an integral part of all campaigns undertaken by the Federation, through the extensive organisational work involved and the assistance provided by the Federation in propaganda and transport. The Federation maintained steady press publicity through our campaigns, and press statements which are issued frequently and almost invariably receive publicity in the daily press, and thus the Federation has won increasing respect from non-Congress organisations and individuals.

Nevertheless the Federation in the Transvaal remains limited to Congress organisations and it must be the task of the incoming Executive to see that we develop beyond the Congress movement and draw in other groups and organisations of women to work with us within our multi-racial federation, on the vital issue which we all have in common as women, the right of our children to freedom, justice and security. This task becomes of even greater urgency at the present time when the government is attempting to force apartheid at an ever-increasing pace. The threatened ban on mixed social gatherings was obviously aimed also at political gatherings and we must expect that further attempts will be made. The Federation of S.A. Women is a multi-racial organisation and thus directly in the line of these attacks. Our very existence is threatened, and it is for us not only to affirm our right to associate together freely, to defend that right with all our united strength, but also to carry our work forward with ever-increasing vigour and determination.

**LONG LIVE THE FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN!**

Presented to the Transvaal Regional Conference held on Sunday, January 25th, 1959.
It gives me great pleasure to present to you today for your consideration this report of the Transvaal Executive of the Fed. of S.A. Women. The great determination of the women to resist the onslaught of the Nationalist Government. Before dealing with the report itself, I would like to remind members of two facts of the Federation. The Federation has no individual membership. It is not an organisation set up in opposition to other organisations. The Federation, by its very nature—affiliation of groups—tries to bring all the women together and protects the status of all women. Because the ANC Women's League is the largest force, we of the Federation would not have our achievements of the past two years without the support and the struggle of the African women, not only the ANC Women's League but the Indian, White and Coloured women organised in the different organisations—SACOD, SACPO, and the Food and Canning Workers' Union.

Secretary's Report read.

I would like at this stage to ask that the memorandum be distributed as widely as possible so that each woman will be able to see what is being said. I refer to the Minister of Defence and his attempt to ban mixed gatherings. In December 1978 he wrote to the Johannesburg City Council advising that he intended prohibiting Africans from attending mixed meetings outside the African urban areas of Johannesburg, and at the same time he wanted to prohibit certain citizens from organising or holding gatherings in their homes. Mrs. de Wet Nel at that stage had to write to the City Council for their permission. After all, here was the chief—the great induna—second only to the Big Chief Dr. Verwoerd himself. Mixed dancing, mixed drinking, and other things left to the imagination. Well, I am one of the 13 people, and I tell Mr. de Wet Nel he is a liar, or if not possibly been misinformed by the gentlemen who are here today. All he wants to do is to stop the black and white people coming together. If they want their apartheid, let them take it somewhere else. We do not want it. The women will stand together—not only the women, but all the people who love freedom. And if Dr. Verwoerd and the rest of them do not want it, let them go. All I want to say is that we must stand firm and not allow these crazy people to separate us. We know where we are going, it is more than I can say of Dr. Verwoerd. Forward to freedom. We want freedom now.

Discussion

(unknown) I am very glad to see such a response. I am very glad pleased to be here this morning.

Mrs. Ngoma The organisation is not so good, but it is for the women here today to organise the others.

Credentials Committee: Kruger were elected.

Resolutions

MRS. ? We listened to the report, and know exactly what work the Federation has done. Wax (Made an appeal for money).

Mrs. K. Kruger: Read a paper on "Apartheid and our Children"

Mrs. R. Moosa: There is nowhere in the land of our birth where we can stay. In the cities we have made our homes and built our schools, hospitals and have worked for our living. Indian people have made their homes here. We must know clearly what the Group Areas Act really means. It means just this—that the Government will not allow us to live amongst white people. And who knows for how long we will be allowed to live in Lenz? We see the homes of African people being moved every day. I am a mother, most of you are. You have children you love dearly. Will you allow these children to be outcast? You must struggle and sacrifice for the future. Coloured people have already been affected. Gave details of schools of Indian children which have been shifted.

Mrs. Sibeko: There is even apartheid amongst us African people, so that we cannot live together in one area. Spoke of Xantu education.

LUNCH INTERVAL

Mrs. M. Goldberg (Chairman) The spirit of the women is so strong that nothing can break it.

Mrs. M. Turok: Spoke of the struggle of women in other countries for their rights.
Mrs. K. Molala: Reference book says you must name your guardian, i.e. husband, father or nearest relative. In 1922 African women fought with their husbands. 20,000 women went to Pretoria in 1956, 2,000 women were arrested recently.

Chairman: Said that the men must stand up now too.

Women and Job Reservations: Mrs. H. du Preez welcomed the people present. Also remarked on the few Coloured people present. The non-blacks have every bit as much ability as any white children, yet will be debarred from jobs. Our children want higher and higher standards of education. I say to you mothers today - stand very firm against any onslaught that we expect. Mothers of Africa, Mayibuye!

Chairman: We have learned a lot from Mrs. du Preez, and she would teach us a lot more if she had the time.

Report of Credentials Committee: It was reported that owing to the crush of delegates entering the hall, it had been impossible to get proper credentials. Leaders of delegations handed in the number of people in their delegations.

PASSES FOR WOMEN: Mrs. Sisulu.

When every woman is anxious to know about passes, when the Government is prepared to give passes to the African women, who does not now the meaning of a pass? What has it meant to our African men for the last 200 years? We have passless husbands. Some have heard of the brutal illtreatment on the farms. That is what it means to the African men. It will mean the same thing to the woman. It is going to bring untold misery to hundreds of thousands of our women. It is going to destroy our family life. In Even if you are looking for work you can be arrested. Not everybody is so educated that they know exactly what is what about a pass. They often have to go back to the Pass Office. You all know there are millions of African women in the Reserves. We all know what this Government is aiming at. There are about 2,000,000 African women in employment - 1,000 or more are unemployed. African women in urban areas must have influx permits. Gave details of Africans qualified to be in Urban areas. Those who were born in the area, those who have worked for 10 years consecutively, those who have been there for 15 or 17 years(?) and the wives of exempted Africans. The Government is appealing to all employers and the City Council to assist with registration, but if we get permits what will be the result? You know the meaning of the pass, you know what is going to happen to us. We have seen mothers with babies on their backs scrubbing floors in No. 4. That will be the answer, to go to jail with your babies on your back. We must stand up and fight against them. Either we give in, or we say we do not. You know how you are going to fight against the passes because you know how they will affect you.

Discussion: Speaker on behalf of domestic servants - it has been said that domestic servants have been taking passes - those who take them do not know what a pass is. Described how policemen come in lorries to take domestic servants to the pass office. They tell the women if they do not take a pass they will be arrested and fined £50. "We are busy on it".

Rustenburg Delegate: We fought quite a great battle. We were grateful to see you going to prison willingly. Let us all go to prison as long as we do not carry a pass. We must not be afraid to fight this lion of the Government.

Viola Hashe: (Roodepoort). This dirty fascist government has tried all ways to induce the women to carry passes. Vans came to Roodepoort, but she is happy to inform Conference that during 4 days only 70 women took passes. Police went from house to house, but even the 70 women who took passes have thrown them into the street.
Another Speaker: I want to appeal to Conference that the women here must tell the ANC that we the women have asked the men to help us.

?? We decided to go to No. 4. We are not going to take a permit just like a pass.

Kate: All these laws are a burden for the Africans. There is nothing wrong with the Nationalist Government - something wrong with the African people. Cannot understand why we get them make these laws for us. Appealed to European progressives not to compromise.

Zeerust Speaker: Men and women have been struck just because they refused to take a pass. We are being murdered just for the sake of carrying a pass. There is no African who likes to carry a pass, because we see that it is a pass. It is not that they take a pass because they like it, but because we are being forced to and killed. We ran away from our homes.

Chairman: The struggle of the women in Zeerust makes us feel - we have more than they. Still have clothes and a house to go back to. We must make these women realise that we stand together, that they are not alone in their fight.

RESOLUTIONS: (1) Draft resolution - moved by Mrs. Seripi, seconded by Mrs. Poflrence Moposho. Adopted.

It was agreed that organisations be left to decide what to do on June 26th.

(2) This Conference of women of all races protests against the threat to ban mixed gatherings and denounces this further attempt to destroy our right to be together. It is our right to invite whom we please into our homes and no Government shall decide this for us. We know that this ban will be extended to other gatherings and that it will be used against this great Federation of South African Women which has called us together today, as women and mothers, no matter what our race or colour.

We condemn apartheid in all its forms. As mothers we see our children suffering from the evils of Bantu Education, from the Group Areas Act, as women who must work we are threatened with job reservation. We are now threatened with being forced to find guardians and we denounce this as a further insult to the dignity of womanhood. We resolve that we shall never cease in our struggle to end apartheid, to gain our rights as women and the fundamental right of our children to freedom, justice and security.

Moved by Dorcas Mongxa, seconded by Mary Mabogola. Adopted.

(3) This conference of women of all races protests against the threat to ban mixed gatherings and denounces this further attempt to destroy our right to be together. It is our right to invite whom we please into our homes and no Government shall decide this for us. We know that this ban will be extended to other gatherings and that it will be used against this great Federation of South African Women which has called us together today, as women and mothers, no matter what our race or colour.

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Moved by Mrs. K. Kruger, seconded Mrs. Ngobo.

(4) This mass conference of women called by the Federation of S.A. Women condemns the attempts to extend apartheid in our Universities, and, in general, the principles of Bantu Education, which condemn our children to permanent inferiority in the land of their birth.

Moved by Mrs. K. Molale, seconded by Mrs. Miriam Boloi.

(5) This Conference condemns the action of the City Council of Johannesburg in setting up labour bureaux for African women. After the Non-European Affairs Committee had deliberations with the leaders of the women and were fully informed of their opposition to taking reference books, they asked for a memorandum. This was supplied, but instead of replying, the City Council
announced that African women must register at labour bureaux if they wanted work. This is nothing more than an indirect and deceitful method of forcing them to take passes.

Moved by Mrs. V. Mokwe, Orlando West ANC, seconded by Mrs. Seroke. 

Mrs. WALAZA: Had moved an amendment to Resolution 1 (I did not get it down). Not satisfied with the resolution on passes. The women are waiting to hear what action has been decided on. (Had suggested that women go to Parliament in Cape Town to protest).

Chairman: Gave the names of the standing committee of the Transvaal Region. It was suggested that the committee be re-elected en bloc, but it was pointed out that some of the members had been inactive for some time, and some had moved away and could not attend meetings. The suggestion was rejected.

Nominations: 

Mrs. Goldberg - Chairman.
Mrs. R. Moosa.
Mrs. Ruth Motsoane.
Mrs. Helen Joseph.
Mrs. Violet Weinberg.
Mrs. Moodley.
Miss Lily Naidoo.
Mrs. Ngoma.
Mrs. Viola Hashe (declined).
Mrs. Pohla.
Mrs. Rima.
Miss B. Mashaba.
Mrs. Naidoo.
Mrs. Walaza.
Mrs. Mhita.

These were elected.

Closing Address: Mrs. Moodley - said this had been a wonderful conference. The conference ended with the singing of Nkosi Sikeleli and Morena Boloka.
The wettest weekend of the year! The organisers of the Transvaal Regional Conference of the Federation of South African Women gazed anxiously at the heavy rain clouds, listened in horror to dismal wireless forecasts of "rain in all parts of South Africa". Sunday morning came and so did the rain! We were beginning to feel aggrieved - this was the first mass Transvaal women's conference since December 2nd 1956, three days before the treason arrests, and on that occasion heavy rain had kept many women away. Was this disappointment to be repeated?

But this wet Sunday morning presented an unexpected and moving sight. Before 9 o'clock, the women had begun to arrive from all over the Transvaal. Carltonville women were the first; they had left their homes, forty miles away at five o'clock that morning. Twenty women from Evaton followed, and then as I drove around the neighbourhood, I saw groups of women coming from every direction, marching sturdily through the streaming streets, umbrellas aloft. "Where are you from?"

"Heidelberg...Benoni...Meyerton...Springs...Balfour...Morgensan...Bethal," came the replies, called across the wet street, covering the vast Transvaal.

Cars, vans began to arrive and then buses, hired for the occasion. Excitement mounted as the women of Orlando, led by militant Albertina Sisulu, poured out of their bus. Then came one hundred and fifty women of Roodepoort, Viola Halo at their head, still elated at the success of their boycott of the pass unit. The women poured into the hall, followed by African men, eager to get in to the women's conference. And smiling breathless women came out of the hall to say triumphantly,

"The men have given up their seats to the women. Women are here from Lichtenburg, from Volskrust, from Stanerton.....Its wonderful, WONDERFUL!"

How Indian women can be seen, in gay, colourful saris, these are familiar faces, they are the women who have been to gaol in Defiance and Passive Resistance Campaigns, and the young women who will lead the Indian women of today and tomorrow; I see lovely Amina Gachalia and vital Ayesha Husat as they drive up with carloads of women. Some Coloured and European women arrive at the conference, their number small but their presence significant, for this is a multi-racial gathering, a challenge flung in the face of the Minister of Bantu Education and Development and his threatened bans.

The Security Branch of the Police has arrived; they push their way in, armed with warrants to remain at the conference, while uniformed police remain outside in
a car for the whole day.

A small van drives up; it is packed with African women and it is making its fourth trip that morning from Jabavu, fourteen miles away; stalwart Mrs. Koekheti is the last to climb out, beaming with pride as she shepherds the women into the hall. How comes a large lorry and the Congress flag is brought out first and proudly unfurled, despite the rain, while the ladder is lowered and the women, young and old, the stout and the slim, climb out. I remember the last time I saw these women; then they were packed into a police lorry, giving the Congress salute as they were driven off to jail to begin serving their sentences after their great campaign against passes in October 1956. Virginia Ngqomo, Catherine Ngqazi, Florence Ngqaba, they are all here today, once again leading the militant women of Alexandra Township. And still the little groups of women are arriving, striding along the wet street, while the glistening pavement reflects their umbrellas and their marching feet.

Conference has started and the doors are shut. I cannot see any women from the outside, but I can make out the backs of the heads of men, pressed against the windows of the foyer, for there is no room for them in the hall. I wait for a moment before driving off and suddenly I see two great Juggernauts approaching, two buses bringing more than a hundred women from Pretoria. Can more women really get into the hall? It seems impossible but somehow they are pressed in through the door and they vanish one by one from my astonished eyes. I hear the women singing behind the closed doors. I cannot hear the song, but I know that it must be "Inde siwelele! and I remember how 20,000 women sang in front of the Union Buildings in Pretoria on August 9th 1956. Then the sun shone brilliantly on the gay gardens, aflame with flowers, aflame with the courage and determination of the women, and Phyllis Altman wrote "...and then I knew a moment of triumph. Nothing can defeat these women, these wives, these mothers".

Now Fox Street is empty save for me and a few policemen. The rain pours down and the street is grey. There are no flowers, there is no sun, but the spirit of the women is not gone from the street and the moment of triumph has come again. "Nothing can defeat these women, these wives, these mothers."
It gives me great pleasure to have this opportunity to present for your consideration this report of the Transvaal Regional Executive Committee of the Federation of South African Women. Copies of the report were handed you when you entered the hall; if there are any women who did not receive a copy then please take one with you as you leave the hall this evening.

This is the 2nd Regional Conference of the Federation of S.A. Women and as can be seen from the Report the years December 1956 to December 1958 have been difficult for the women of the Province, but even more important these two years have witnessed a growing determination amongst all women of all colours to resist the onslaughts of the Nationalist Government on the rights of women, and to achieve their liberation and their emancipation.

Before dealing with the report itself, I would like to remind you that the Federation is not an organisation of individual members, and is not an organisation set up in opposition to those already existing organisations that were established to protect and advance the position of women in South African society, whilst the A.N.C. Women's League struggles specifically for the rights of African women, the Federation by its very nature and composition — the affiliation of groups of women of different colours and occupations — strives to bring all women together, and to protect and advance the status of all women. Because the A.N.C. Women's league is the dominant force, the spearhead of the women's struggles we of the Federation could not have achieved realised the achievements of the past two years without the support and struggles of the African women. We are a Federation of women's organisations, not only the A.N.C. Women's league, but the Indian women, the white women and coloured women organised into the sister organisations, the T.I.C., S.A.C.O. and S.A.C.P.O., and the women of the Food and Canning Workers Union.
That friends is the conclusion of my committee's report,
I would at this stage, like to deal with a subject that strikes at the very existence of the Federation.
I refer of course to the Minister of Bantu Administration and
Development, and his attempt to curtail mixed gatherings.
In December 1958, he wrote to the JHB City Council
advising them of his intention to prohibit Africans from attending
meetings in areas outside an African residence area in Johannesburg,
and at the same time prohibit 13 citizens from organising,
holding or arranging such gatherings (including social functions) on
certain specified premises.
In terms of the clause under which he wrote, he
was obliged to write to the Council and ask for its permission, but
the Council, to its credit at first declined to give its assent.

Somewhere or other the press got hold of the story, and this
further Nationalist inroad on the people aroused the wrath of
thousands. In turn, the Minister himself, got annoyed. After all here
was a great chief, a great induna, second only to Verwoerd
himself, flouted in his intentions. In desperation he once again
wrote to the Council, asking if it knew what happened on the
premises of these 13 people. Mixed dancing, mixed drinking, and
'excesses that could only be left to the imagination' took place
there. Well I am one of the 13 people the Minister cited,
and I challenge him to substantiate his statements. It would be
impolite to say he did not, but it would be more courteous to say that
he has been misinformed by you-know-who the men sitting
outside, but whether he lied deliberately or not makes no
difference.

His aim, as the possible compromise that he has worked
out with the JHB City Council bears witness to, is to prevent
white and black mixing together freely; his aim is to perpetuate
in the minds of white and black that the only relationship
between white and black that can be permitted is that of
master and servant.

This despicable smear campaign against 13 people who, if they hold anything in common, is their common rejection of such moronic doctrines, is aimed at crippling at forcing out of existence organisations such as the Federation which reject the evil theories of white supremacy and coloured inferiority. It is our duty to defend our existence; it is our duty to join with all other groups similarly threatened to resist this measure. We cannot allow NEL to force us apart.

Friends, I do not want to keep you much longer; there is a long agenda before us, there are important resolutions that require your consideration, and a new committee must be elected to carry on the work of the Federation, I would like to conclude with these observations.

We have heard from Father Jaret Kerr of the important developments in the rest of the continent, dare we allow the Union to fall, to lay behind these developments? Everywhere freedom-loving Africans are on the march, everywhere men and women are asserting their right to independence, to determining their own destinies, we of the Federation of South African women call upon all the women of the Tol to raise their voices, demonstrate their opposition to the tyranny and oppression of baukamp rule. There are still, despite the Minister's claim over 1,000,000 women who have not taken passes, these 1,000,000 women, of whom you gathered here today are, but a tiny percentage, are going to be the grave diggers of apartheid barbarism, they are our leaders - these 1,000,000 women and more are the heirs to a new South Africa, a South Africa in which the fundamental right to freedom, justice and security have been won for our children.

Let us unite in greater numbers than ever before and demonstrate to the powers that be, that their period of police-backed rule is rapidly drawing to a close. Let us unite into a mightier Federation, hong be the Federation of S.A. Women. An end to pass rule; an end to oppression. Forward to
Freedom in our lifetime — NOW!

A very brave Afrika!