

des but they in turn were arrested. We have not been given even their grave numbers. Despite all this, services took place wherever our people are in memory of the slain heroes. Everybody knows that to bury our fallen we have gone to Maseru, to Matola and to Harare to mention only a few places. We condemn most vehemently the secret burial of our two comrades killed by the Swazi police in April 1984.

SLANDEROUS CAMPAIGN

The latest of Pretoria's slanderous campaign, assisted by some elements within the Swazi police and security, is that the ANC is receiving copies of the one-million signatures presently being collected by the UDF from our people as a political act rejecting the constitutional entrenchment of apartheid. This is a desperate act by Pretoria to frighten our people from massively supporting the campaign and it is a systematic plan paving the way for banning the UDF. We call upon our people to reject this crude and fascist method of dealing with opposition.

Our people shall always draw a distinct line between fraternal Swazi people who have always supported our struggle and those elements who have sold their souls and are in the pay of South African generals.

We urge our people to raise still higher and maintain the level of their vigilance, political action and awareness and to develop and consolidate the unity in action against our common enemy for people's power in a unitary non-racial democratic South Africa.

**THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!
VICTORY IS CERTAIN!**

**AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
PRESS RELEASE
26 JUNE 1984**

MANIFESTO

VELI-SITHA
Thirty years ago on the 17th of April 1954, 150 delegates representing 230,000 women of all races, converged at Johannesburg in a conference to found the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). This organisation was to set itself the task of mobilizing South African women to fight for equality and against all the manifestations of apartheid rule in South Africa.

Present at this historic meeting were outstanding women leaders of the calibre of Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Francis Baard, Dora Tamana, Fatima Meer, Ray Alexander, Dorothy Nyembe and many others from the African National Congress Women's League. Although the main thrust of the come-together was aimed at thrashing out the issues that affect women daily, the delegates demonstrated a proper understanding of the socio-political situation in our country - linking the question of women's rights with that of the struggle for liberation.

The founding of FEDSAW was not the result of the conference. It was mostly initiated by the development of women's struggles dating as far back as the days of World War II. During those trying days, women saw the need to be organised against shortages and high food prices. As a result of this, Food Committees were formed to ensure the fair distribution of food, especially in the outskirts of the cities.

Through the Food Committees and during occasions such as the 8th of March, women were able to

BRINGING TRIBUTE

meet and discuss issues affecting them. Their meetings were inspired by the activities of organisations such as the Women's International

Women's League attended. Thorough assessment of the role that the women played in the Defiance Campaign of Unjust Laws influenced their decision



Meeting celebrating the 30th anniversary of FEDSAW'S founding

Democratic Federation which had begun organising women in the struggle against war and for the re-toration of lasting peace.

Activities such as these gave rise to the bringing together of women on the 1st of April 1953 in Port Elizabeth where leading women from the ANC

of working towards the creation of an organisation that could effectively ensure fuller participation of women in our national liberation struggle.

At FEDSAW's founding conference, the women condemned the racist regime's apartheid rule that subjects us to poverty, ignorance, ill-health and slave

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labour conditions. The women linked their own struggles and their problems with the struggles against the bills that were before parliament and the political issues of the day. They also spoke of the conditions under which children are brought up, lack of proper family life, amenities and education opportunities, the need for schools, chreches, maternity homes, the high rents and poor houses.

Délegates further underscored the need and determination to fight against the unjust laws, the Bantu Education Act, the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, the Population registration Act and the pass laws, all of which affected the lives of women, as an urgent task.

Above all, they pointed out that women were further victims of oppression in their homes because of tradition and custom. They failed to attend meetings and contribute fully

in the struggle because they have to be home to cook, feed and look after their families, and have to do a lot of other chores without the help of their husbands.

The conference of the women sought to educate their menfolk that women were half of the population and without their support and full participation in the struggle progress will look like a mirage. The women's conference also adopted a Charter of Women's Rights demanding the right to vote, the right to full employment opportunities, equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children, and for the removal of all laws and customs that deny women such rights.

The inaugural conference also elected a National Executive Committee. Ida Mntwana, then President of the ANC Women's League, was elected President. Gladys Smith, Lilian Ngoyi, Bertha Mkhize and Florence Matomela were

elected Vice Presidents. Ray Alexander became Secretary.

It is a fitting tribute indeed to the 30 years of struggle waged by our women through FEDSAW and other organisations, that the African National Congress, the vanguard of the oppressed masses of South Africa timely declared the year 1984 as the Year of Women. It is a tribute to the Women. It is a testimonial tribute to the spirit of no surrender that our women have demonstrated over the years irrespective of severe bannings, detentions, arrests, harassment and victimisation. For instance comrades Lilian Ngoyi and Dora Tamane had bannings and harassment as part of their lives, but they fought without flinching for a moment till their last days. The life of Helen Joseph, the first person to be house-arrested in South Africa, has been an ordeal no less. Today the regime is bent on silencing Albertina Sisulu. Dorothy Nyembe spent fifteen years in the racist dungeons. But the women's march to freedom continues.

It is in this vein that in his message of January the 8th 1984, cde President Oliver Tambo, Commander-in-Chief of the people's army Umkhonto weSizwe said, »Our struggle will be less than powerful and our national and social emancipation can never be complete if we continue to treat the women of our country as dependent minors and objects of one form of exploitation or another. Certainly no longer should it be that a woman's place is in the kitchen. In our beleaguered country, the woman's place is in the battlefield of struggle.»

Having taken full note of this call made by our President Oliver Reginald Tambo, we as women have to transform these words into action. Let us as women say, all in one voice, again and again, what we spelled out in the Women's Charter, 30 years ago that, »In and through our various organisations, we



Helen Joseph, second national Secretary of FEDSAW.

march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people. As women, we have the burden of removing from our society all the social differences developed in the past times between men and women.»

We cannot forget to make mention of August the 9th, 1956, a day when 20,000 women marched to Pretoria to register their protest against the extension of passes to women. We are convinced that both men and women will fulfil our special task and respond positively to the call made by the NEC of the African National Congress during 1984, Year of the Women, to organise and mobilise our womenfolk into a powerful, united and active force for revolutionary change.

We commend our women to join in their greater numbers the ranks of our people's army, Umkhonto weSizwe so as to better be able to fulfil the tasks that history has imposed on us. Together as men and women engaged in the bitter struggle for liberation of our motherland, South Africa, we all say forward to the Year of the Women! Aluta Continua!