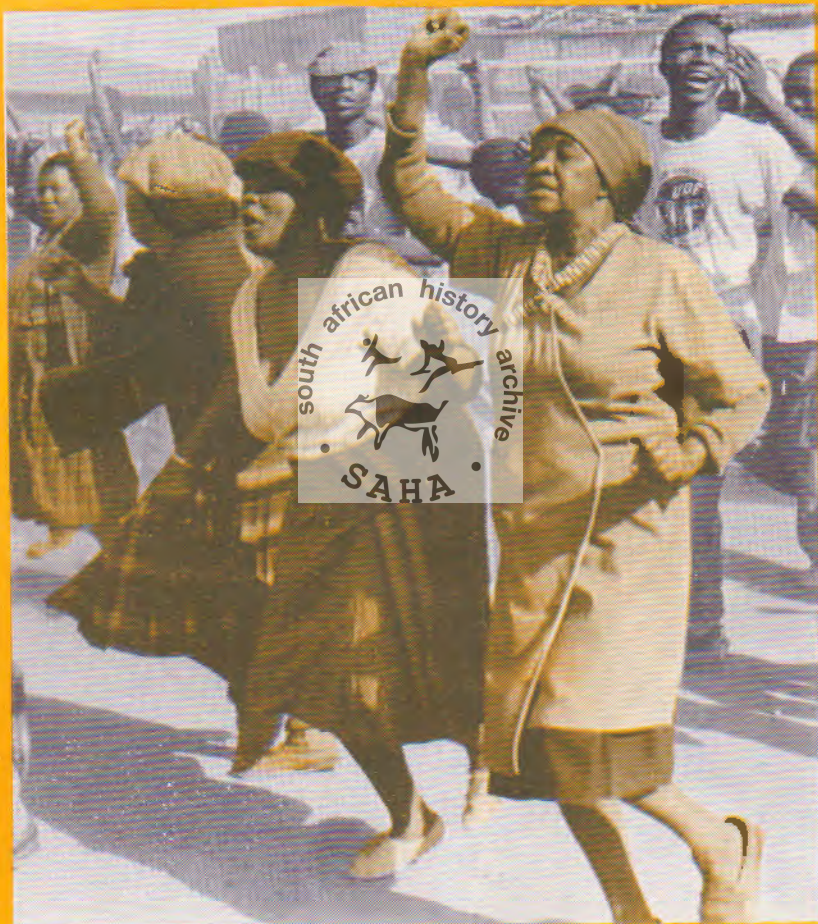
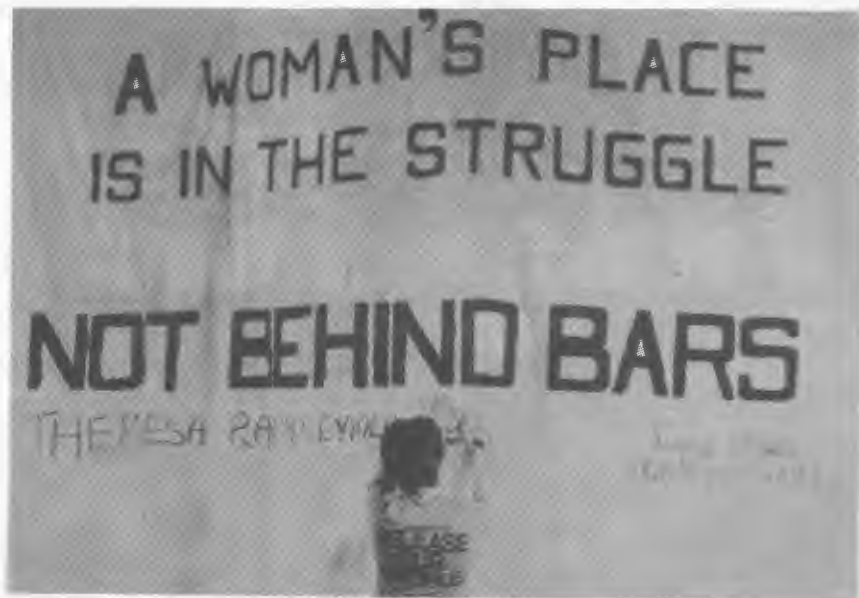


WOMEN ORGANISED



A FEDSAW COMMEMORATIVE PAMPHLET



WOMEN ORGANISED AN INDOMITABLE FORCE FOR LIBERATION

'Tired?', Frances Baard replies when asked if the long struggle of the 1940s and 1950s, as well as her years in jail, have not worn her down. 'I don't know what you mean by "tired". I can't give up because the spirit is still there. I can't help it, even if I wanted to give up. Although I can't do everything physically, the spirit still wants what I always wanted'.

(Quoted by Cherryl Walker in *Women and Resistance in South Africa*).

One strong concept — a basic idea — underlies the history of the Federation of South African Women: unity. FedSaw, which came about as a result of the development of women's struggles waged in earlier decades, began its existence in 1954. It was founded on the principle of a national women's organisation that would be open to women of all races, and of any political, religious or other faith.

No easy task! In the first place, the very geography of South Africa constituted a huge hurdle. The population lived in the four different provinces, each one with its own characteristics, where the difficulties of meeting and of communication were vastly compounded by distance and aggravated, particularly for the women, by poverty, the lack of money for such luxuries as travel.

Then there was the ever-present class/coulour divide, a great river that separated women of different racial groups, and that the women were seeking somehow to bridge. Also the moving spirits behind the establishment of Fed-saw were unmistakably radical and militant, placing the struggle for women's rights firmly in the context of the struggle against apartheid. This was to be no social welfare organisation, nor one aiming only to raise the status of women in South African society or to put forward polite requests for modification in discriminatory laws.

A Common Struggle

From the beginning it was inspired by a twin need — the need to rid women of all laws and customs that discriminated against them; and the need to organise women to play their full part, with men, in changing the nature of South African society, 'a common struggle', as the Women's Charter states, 'against poverty, race and class discrimination, and the evils of the colour bar'.

It was a period in which the position of women underwent deep changes. Economic changes that had arisen through the growth of industry during the Second World War had led to a growth of independence among women as

they came to the towns to work in factories, in industry and commerce, bringing with it greater possibilities to organise and a more pressing need for them to be organised.

But at the same time attitudes towards women and what their place should be had scarcely changed. In 1954, the year *Fedsaw* was brought into being, *Drum*, a popular pictorial weekly magazine directed at Africans put the question 'Should women have equal rights with men?' to the vote of its readership. Out of 159 replies, 101 readers answered no. The winner of the prize for the best letter said: 'Let us give them courtesy but no rights. They should continue to carry no passes for they are harmlessly inferior; put on their bonnets everywhere, for it is a shame for women to go bareheaded.' This was, after all, only thirty-five years ago, and certainly represented a majority view. And it was these attitudes the women had to confront.

Women were caught in the contradictions imposed on them between their changing economic conditions and the static social customs. At the very moment when the thrust towards unity was gaining momentum, the gulf separating black and white women was increasing. White women certainly suffered from disabilities because of their sex, but they had the vote, and in their perception to improve their status they had to press for reforms in laws affecting marriage rights and employment. But for black women to change their status they were impelled to join the struggle to change the nature of the state itself. Thus, from the beginning, although the new organisation was deeply concerned with women's rights and women's oppression, the main political thrust was always in co-operation with organisations of men and women, such as the African National Congress.

Long History of Organisation

Fedsaw did not spring into being from nothing. Women had engaged in organisation from the beginning of the 20th century; their campaigns were based around local issues, questions that affected their daily lives, while in the earlier years the long-term political goals were the men's territory. But despite this, from the early years — and particularly in the historic anti-pass campaigns of 1913 onwards — women revealed an independence and militancy that was far in advance of their legal and social status.

During the post-war years, and especially during the 1940s and 1950s there was considerable organisation and many campaigns, but these were not co-ordinated on a national basis. The women who were most active in organising this first-ever women's conference to establish a national organisation on what were to be militant principles, were also motivated by an even larger view — the need for co-operation among women of the whole world, to eliminate wars, to make the world safe and peaceful for their children. In those days it was not called 'sisterhood', but the feeling of a network of women everywhere, who together would work for a world free from wars, and for

freedom and justice for all.

Within these far-reaching and ambitious aims, an invitation signed by 63 women to a conference 'to promote women's rights' was sent out in March 1954, to a wide range of women's organisations, to trade unions, Congress organisations, (the ANC Women's League, the Natal Indian Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the Coloured People's Congress) and to groups in the townships. From the beginning the preparations were marked by a relaxed and open attitude. All women were welcome — to come and discuss; not only women in formal organisations, but, as was stated 'any group of women, from factories or areas, can get together and send a delegate'. And from the first the response was enthusiastic and optimistic.

Inaugural Conference

The inaugural conference took place on the 17th April 1954, in the Trades Hall, Johannesburg. The hall was decorated with banners setting out the women's demands: **WOMEN WANT EQUAL RIGHTS OVER CHILDREN AND PROPERTY**. Calls for women to organise in trade unions, demands for homes, for education for all, for the right to vote. And on the platform, stretched out behind the speakers, in large letters: **GREETINGS TO WOMEN OF ALL LANDS**.

Most of the delegates were African; there were Indian women, members of the South African Indian Congress, who had already proved themselves in passive resistance campaigns against discriminatory laws; Coloured women, many from the CPC and the clothing unions; and a few white women, most of whom were members of the Congress of Democrats. Many of the women were prominent in the Women's League of the African National Congress, and a number were activists from trade unions. There were no women's organisations that embraced all racial sections, and this racially-mixed gathering was an important feature — for participants and observers alike. In a society where segregation, race purity and white *baaskap* were all key elements in the official apartheid ideology, the mingling of black and white women at the Trades Hall was a radical departure from prevailing norms and a clear political statement.

Women came from all the main urban areas, and for many of them it was the first time that they had undertaken such a long journey from their homes. Such a simple statement of fact hides the enormous problems that had to be surmounted for them to come. Many of them had no income of their own, all but a few lived scarcely above the poverty line, most had families to consider — even to contend with. To travel the hundreds of miles to Johannesburg they had to raise the expensive fares among their own, equally poor communities; to find relatives or neighbours who would care for their children while they were away; to travel long distances to reach railway stations. Perhaps the fact that they had to surmount such practical problems, together with the



release from them once they had left their homes, contributed to the holiday atmosphere that they brought with them.

There were no representatives from the farms and the reserves. For the next decade Fedsaw drew its support mainly from the urban areas, although the rural base of the ANC Women's League grew substantially during the anti-pass campaign and the resistance to the imposition of 'betterment' and the puppet system of Bantu Authorities.

When discussing the arrangements for the conference — meeting the delegates, arranging accommodation, transport from the station to the black townships, collecting food and catering — none of the women organisers wanted to miss any of the discussions through spending time in the kitchen. It was decided to ask the men in the Congress Alliance to take over all the catering arrangements, 'not one woman in the kitchens' — and this the young men from the Indian Youth Congress did. It was a gesture, not an indication of any permanent change of attitude, but it had real significance, and was a source of both amusement and delight to the delegates.

The inaugural conference set a style that pervaded all future meetings and conferences of Fedsaw; they were always joyous occasions marked by much singing. The discussions were serious, often painful revelations of the suffering of poverty and deprivation, of injustice and oppression. But the women seemed to draw great strength and sustenance simply from coming together and being able to give voice to the daily hardships of their lives, unconstrained by the presence of men with their greater political experience and articulateness.

'It was not a gathering of "élite" among women in South Africa; most of the women were drawn from the turbulent world of the black townships. Their outlook was shaped by their lives there as married women with family responsibilities in a general situation of poverty, insecurity and rightlessness. Middle class women, black and white, were present, but did not predominate'. (Walker)

While the main speakers from the platform put forward general principles and ideas, it was the speakers from the floor who, one after another, brought to the conference the reality of their lives. They spoke in direct and moving terms about the poverty, deprivation and hardships of their lives, their struggles to provide for their children; how they had to go to work and leave babies in the care of young children; of jobs where they did identical work with the men and were paid so much less.

Women's Charter

The conference adopted a Charter of Women's Aims, and thirty-five years on, women who were not born when the Charter was adopted are reproducing it, finding its declaration of the need to emancipate women from the special disabilities suffered by them and of removing all social differences which subordinate women, as apt and relevant when the Charter was framed. Fed-saw embodied both the idea that women have common interests, and also a strong political attitude.

'We women do not form a society separate from men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.'

The preamble to the Charter declares:

'We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indian, European and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of the inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.'

The Charter went on to describe the harsh living conditions for women and their families; resolved to struggle against laws and customs that held women as perpetual minors without the right to their own earnings and even their own children. It spoke of the need for education and laid out the following aims: To strive for women to obtain:

- The right to vote and be elected to all State bodies
- The right to full opportunities for employment with equal pay
- Equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children and the removal of all laws and customs that deny women equal rights
- Free compulsory education for all; the protection of mother and child

through maternity homes, welfare clinics, and proper housing

- The removal of all laws restricting free movement, that hinder the right of free association
- To build women's sections in the National Liberatory movements; the organisation of women in trade unions
- To co-operate with all other organisations that have similar aims in South Africa as well as throughout the world
- To strive for permanent peace throughout the world.

Action Against the Pass Laws

Fedsaw not only linked women's demands firmly with the struggle against apartheid laws, but also fought consistently for trade union rights and against racial divisions in the trade unions. 'We are women, we are workers, we stand together'. A number of leading women in the Federation were trade union activists.

Fedsaw provided women with an organisation that engaged in activity on a continuing basis; previously women had been very active, but in a more sporadic fashion, as issues arose. Fedsaw was central to the tremendous mass movement against passes for women. The campaign that was launched reached women all over the country. In 1955 the government issued an edict stating that 'African women will be issued with passes from January 1956'.

Central to the system of apartheid is migrant labour and territorial separation. Every person has to live in an area designated as their 'own area'. For the white minority this means most of the country, including the areas where almost all economic activity is based. For the black majority it means living either in a 'bantustan' — reserve areas covering 13% of the country, and on an ethnic basis — or on white-owned farms; or in a black township near a 'white' town. This system was imposed by a combination of legislation, administrative decree and naked force. At the end of the 1980s, by when residential segregation had been made into an almost universal reality for all South Africans, a minority of blacks illegally occupy homes in some suburbs of the largest towns. These so-called 'grey areas' have emerged as a result of the acute housing crisis facing black urban residents, where, in defiance of the law and at great personal and financial cost, (because of the exorbitant rents charged and the power landlords have over tenants who are living illegally), black working people have tried to find shelter for themselves and their families. In a very few places in the largest towns there are now what are known as 'grey' areas, where blacks illegally occupy flats or houses in what are 'white' designated areas. To some extent this has recently been tolerated, but it affects a very small section of the black population.

For centuries African labour law has been controlled by pass and influx control laws. Up to the 1950s they only applied to African men, considered the main labour force. Nevertheless, every African family knew the effects of the



pass laws, the constant harassment, raids, arrests and cruelties they inflicted on people's lives. When African women began to enter the industrial and urban waged labour force in significant numbers, and joined the general movement to the towns — as they did from the war years on — the regime decided to extend the system of control to force them to carry passes also. The struggle against this imposition became central to Fedsaw, with the ANC Women's League, its main affiliate, playing a key role.

Women had, all their lives, witnessed the effect of pass laws on the men: the night raids, being stopped in the street by police vans, searches, jobs lost through arrests, disappearance of men shanghaied to farms, and the prosecutions.

Mass Protests Organised

The first big protest organised by Fedsaw took place in 1955, when 2 000 women converged on the seat of the government in Pretoria. The movement against passes began to grow, and a year later, on August 9 1956 — the day that has since been celebrated 'Women's Day' by the national liberation movement — 20 000 women assembled, overcoming tremendous difficulties, to get to Pretoria to see the Prime Minister and hand in thousands of petition forms



**WOMEN
FIGHT
ON ALL
FRONTS**



**IN THE TRADE UNIONS
IN THE MASS
DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT
IN THE NATIONAL
LIBERATION MOVEMENT**



with hundreds of thousands of signatures protesting against the pass laws.

That day all processions to Pretoria were banned, so the women converged on Union Buildings (the seat of government) walking in twos and threes; all Pretoria was filled with women, thousands wearing the green and black of the ANC Women's League, others in richly-coloured traditional dress. Slowly they converged and filled the amphitheatre of the Union Buildings. Five women were permitted to take the petitions into the building, although, of course, they did not meet the Prime Minister. Afterwards they stood in complete silence in the winter sun for thirty minutes, then burst into magnificent harmony to sing the anthem *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* and as they dispersed, a new freedom song echoed over the city with its refrain 'Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo, uzokufa' — When you touch the women you have struck a rock'.

The protests spread all over the country, involving women in remote country areas and small towns. In the end the passes were imposed on women, but the whole campaign fundamentally changed the position of women within the liberation movement. The display of militancy by traditionally subordinate women had a profound effect on men — white as well as black. Action by women was fundamental. For women are conceptualised as being the centre of stability and security. The arrest of the women radicalised the men, and in the case of the white men, rising by African women was perceived as a threat to the entire social order.

Dr WM Eiselen, a government minister, stated that: 'Recognition of the women's demonstrations on the lines that have found favour among the whites, that is, where women already have a status altogether different to that of Bantu women, can at this stage only have a harmful and dangerous effect which can undermine the entire community-structure'. And he issued orders to officials 'not to have discussions with the masses of women and their so-called leaders, but to make it clear to them that they will always be willing to have discussions with the recognised bantu authorities, the tribal chief and responsible male members of the community'.

The authorities refused to listen to the women because to do so would have meant not only accepting their grievances, but also accepting women on an equal basis with men — an acceptance that threatened fundamental social and political assumptions. In this way, the activities of the women in the countryside, their revolt against the imposition of passes, had significance beyond the immediate issues that ignited them.

Campaigns Against Inferior Education

While the anti-pass campaign was the most important and spectacular, Fed-saw was active in many other campaigns, both local and national. Women's participation was a key factor in 1955 in the campaign against the introduction of Bantu Education, an inferior form of education for Africans. They

organised township schools and when 'unregistered' schools were declared illegal, the schools became 'cultural clubs'. Inspectors were sent around to the clubs, many of which were held in the open air, and if there were any school materials, — books, slates, pencils — the teacher would be arrested and charged. In court cases the evidence handed in would be a blackboard and chalk, the claim that the women were actually trying to teach the children to read or do sums. The teachers would devise rhymes and games that would teach numbers and letters and used a pointed stick to write in the dusty earth so that it could be instantly obliterated if the police arrived.

The Congress movement did not have the resources to provide a proper system of alternative education, but while these schools lasted they were an effective form of protest against one of the most pernicious features of apartheid; one that two decades later would impel the children to open revolt.

Breaking New Ground

Much of Fedsaw's activities took the form of local protests and demands, centred around local living conditions and women's needs. In the course of these struggles women gifted in organising, in public speaking, and of courage and militancy, came to the fore. If many of the major campaigns, such as the anti-pass campaign, were ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the onward march of apartheid, they were of lasting importance. The inspiration of the women's prolonged fight and the deeper understanding it produced were passed on.

'Among us Africans' stated former ANC President and Nobel Prize win-



ner, Albert Luthuli 'the weight of resistance has been greatly increased in the last few years by the emergence of our women. It may even be true that, had the women hung back, resistance would still have been faltering and uncertain ...' He spoke of how the women's demonstrations had made a great impact and had given strong impetus to resistance, and furthermore that women of all races had far less hesitation than men in making common cause about things basic to them.

In her summing up of Fedstaw's achievements, Walker describes it as a political organisation that broke new ground for the women of South Africa, three main aspects of its programme being its commitment to the emancipation of women, its commitment to the national liberation movement and its non-racialism. Its rejection of the colour consciousness that had permeated other women's organisations was strengthened by its more developed feminist consciousness. Because women were seen to suffer serious disabilities on account of their sex, Fedstaw could envisage the possibility of a universal women's movement aimed at removing those disabilities and cutting across existing colour lines.

The legacy it left was one of an open-hearted belief in a free and non-racial society, a legacy of hope and courage. It was a legacy of both defiance and hope, that passed on to the new generations.

Ruthless Repression

The massacre at the small town of Sharpeville in 1960 marked the end of an era of non-violent protests and the beginning of a new, more repressive time. At Sharpeville police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration, killing 69 and wounding 180 people. In the mounting protests the apartheid regime banned the African National Congress and with its banning, the Women's League of the ANC that had been the mainstay of Fedstaw was also made illegal. The Federation itself was not banned, but it began to operate under extreme difficulties. All the leading women were put under bans prohibiting them from taking part in political activities and from meeting with other banned people.

For some time women in the Federation tried to keep active, concentrating more on immediate local issues as the difficulties of communication between areas increased. But the accelerating ruthlessness of the regime, of the police and security forces, meant that opposition to apartheid had to take new forms, and for some years Fedstaw existed more in name than activity.

This does not mean that women had withdrawn from the struggle, but that the mass organisations through which they had worked in the past no longer could respond to the increasingly violent oppression. Many women, as well as men, suffered prolonged periods of banning, solitary confinement, indefinite detention without trial, sometimes torture, years of imprisonment and were forced into exile. Women were prosecuted on a wide variety of political charges reflecting the range of their involvement in the struggle against apartheid. These included treason, 'terrorism', sabotage, membership of or assistance to a banned



organisation, helping people to escape from the country, recruiting guerrillas, breaches of banning orders and similar charges. Among those who have served or are still serving jail sentences are women of all colours, ages, and religions. There are young girls, many mothers, and grandmothers, some over 70 years old.

Mushrooming of Organisation

For many women in prison the punishment is compounded by separation from their children and the uncertainty about their fate. Thus, while on the surface women turned to activities to ease the burdens of life under apartheid, forming self-help committees and establishing day-care centres and children's feeding programmes, at the same time they were participating in underground organisations. But the need for a central, united women's organisation persisted.

Although it seemed a long time, it took less than ten years for the national liberation movement to recover from the serious blows inflicted upon it by the regime in the early sixties. From the early seventies organised mass open opposition to the system of white minority domination began to revive, stimulated by a combination of patient and tireless underground work and significant objective changes in the social structure. In particular, a new generation, which had only known apartheid, Bantu Education and the dark

years of repression, stood up to challenge and confront the regime. Young women were part of this resurgence and with it came the re-emergence of women's organisations.

In the spirit of the times, where black consciousness captured the popular imagination, the Black Women's Federation (BWF) was founded at a conference in December 1975. The BWF attempted to teach women to realise their own potential; it began literacy and health classes. But with other organisations arising from the black consciousness movement, it was crushed, banned in less than two years, with its leading members detained.

As the years went by, however, and the unbroken history of struggle was uncovered and became familiar to this new generation of women, the appeal and relevance of the ideas of their mothers became increasingly popular. In addition to a mushrooming of local women's organisations around age-old problems of ever-spiralling living costs and unrelenting repression, by the 1980s non-racial women's organisations were formed across the country. The first was the United Women's Organisation, formed in 1981. Dora Tamana, then in her eighties, opened the proceedings of its first conference as a veteran fighter and former Fedstaw leader. Undaunted by age or the length of the struggle, she urged the young women forward, challenging them to resist and struggle for their rights as women, workers and as blacks.

UWO declared: 'We cannot abstract ourselves from political issues because they are our daily life ... Our place must be as part of the struggle for fundamental rights'. And once more the policy and constitution of the new organisation stressed the need for women to fight for 'the removal of all laws, conventions, regulations, and customs that discriminate against women' — the words of the Charter adopted by Fedstaw twenty-seven years before.

UWO was to play a key role in the formation and launch of the United Democratic Front and has been a crucial part of popular struggles in the Western Cape. In response to the national appeal made by the ANC Women's Section to draw ever-broadening circles of women into the struggle, UWO extended its base in 1986, becoming the United Women's Congress.

In November 1983, the women of the Eastern Cape came together to form the Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation (Pewo). And in 1984 Fedtraw, the Federation of Transvaal Women, was launched in the Transvaal and the Natal Organisation of Women (Now) in Natal. By 1987, women's organisations had been formed in most parts of the country, including the Orange Free State Women's Organisation, the Port Alfred Women's Organisation and the Gomo Women's Congress.

In April 1987 eight women's organisations came together to launch the UDF Women's Congress. It was formed to bring all the women's organisations affiliated to the UDF under one umbrella organisation nationwide. During this same period, in a drive for greater unity across an even broader spectrum of women opposed to apartheid, the national liberation movement worked actively

to revive Fedsaw. Unity was formed region by region, building on the experience and particular circumstances of each, but also on the common bond of one struggle against the enemy. By September 1987 four regions had been launched, despite the intense repression of the State of Emergency.

Born in conditions of unprecedented resistance and equally unprecedented repression, the shadow of detention, arrest, harassment and other forms of intimidation has hung over the new generation of women's organisations throughout their short history. None have been unscarred. Many leaders have been detained and restricted. Meetings have been made virtually impossible through bannings or security force and vigilante disruption. Yet, despite these obstacles, women have obstinately and tirelessly continued to struggle, to organise and to fight the apartheid system — leaving no avenue unexplored, no opening unexploited. They continue, in the spirit and tradition laid down by their forebears, to link the struggle for women's emancipation to that of national liberation without subordinating or relegating the oppression they experience as women to an unspecified later date.

In this, the Women's Section of the ANC plays a vital guiding role. As an integral part of the vanguard, it has been key in promoting the drive for national unity and the formation of a single women's organisation opposed to apartheid.

Living Conditions

In the past thirty-five years there have been many superficial changes in South Africa as investment increased and the economy expanded. A black middle class is developing in the cities and out of the bantustan and tri-cameral administrations. More blacks have higher education and some have been able to buy houses. But this apparent prosperity touches a very small proportion of the black population, and least of all African women. The majority are plagued by unemployment and homelessness. An estimated six million people are unemployed and more than seven million live in self-constructed illegal informal shelters. An ever-contracting job market, which particularly negatively affects the majority of black women, forces them to scratch a living out of the informal sector. Others, especially the millions who are crowded into the reserves, are condemned to beg and borrow or to slave intermittently on the farms.

To their load is added the general burden that blacks labour under in South Africa. As one of the wealthiest countries in Africa, more than 20 million people have no access to electricity. Measles kills three times as many black children as white, and the diseases of malnutrition are endemic in the black community, affecting most people throughout their lives.

And children grow up in an atmosphere of daily violence. More and more women are the heads of households, up to 59% in rural areas and more than 30% in urban areas. On the women falls the greatest burden of these conditions,

with which they must contend daily. It is through the network of community help that they build that many are able to survive.

Women Unite

In a time of confrontation, South African women, as in the past, reject the idea that a women must demand equal rights with men in order to participate fully in the very system that brings them their oppression. They emerge with a feminism made more potent by the advances and understandings of women of other countries, but knowing that the struggle for women's rights is also the struggle to change the structures of their society. Women do not simply want to amend laws or just change male attitudes — although this is important too — but they want the fundamental restructuring of a society based on the aims of freedom and justice for all.

In South Africa African women, the most vulnerable and deprived of all groups within the apartheid state, have been forced to embark on a road that takes them beyond their own specific oppression. The struggle of South African women for recognition as equal citizens with equal opportunities is primarily the struggle against apartheid, for national liberation. Nor is it a question of putting one first, then taking up the others. There can be no change in the fundamental position of women, in their social and political status, without the defeat of apartheid. But apartheid will not be defeated if half the people — the women — are constrained from playing their full role in the national liberation movement.

Inside South Africa the traditions, the policies and the experience of Fed saw are alive and influential. The conditions are harsher, the reprisals for opposing apartheid far more terrible, than when Fed saw was founded thirty-five years ago. Women now find new ways to organise, within the limitations of the repressive regime, and of underground organisation and violent conflict.

Thirty-five years ago at the founding conference the women stood under the proud banner — **GREETINGS TO WOMEN OF ALL LANDS**. That spirit of internationalism, of crossing barriers of nationalism, of race, of religion, still inspires the women's movements. With all their difficulties, women still manage to meet — sometimes openly, sometimes clandestinely — on Women's Day, August 9. They put up banners stating:

Women Unite! They stand under the banners of the democratic, non-racial women's movement. They recognise that Fed saw was the first women's organisation to reject the colour-consciousness that had permeated other women's organisations. *'No woman can be free while her sister is in chains'* claimed one Fed saw document. Fed saw's commitment to the national liberation movement reflected the understanding and priorities of the majority of South African women.

'It is a struggle which can never be forgotten, women having a unity, black and white' stated Florence Mkhize, a leading Fed saw member; and Lilian

Ngoyi, who was President of Fedsaw, declared: **'Freedom does not come walking toward you — it must be won!'**

On this thirty-fifth anniversary, South African women appeal to women of all lands: **Our struggle against racism and injustice, against discrimination and oppression is your struggle. As we have striven for unity, we call on you, too, to unite with us to rid our country and the world of the scourge of apartheid.**

