

The BSM Women's Group was formed in September 1983, when we realized that black women on campus played a very secondary role in student organizations like BSM. Realizing that this was but a manifestation of our peculiar oppression as women, the BSM Women's Group was formed with the following broad aim:

- To unite women students around issues which affect them
- To encourage women to participate in broader struggles
- To develop confidence and provide training skills for women
- To fight sexist attitudes and practices on campus
- To explore the sexist nature of our education system
- To forge links with progressive women's groups and other organizations outside campus
- To ensure the continuous participation of women in ongoing organizational work

Anyone interested in joining the Women's Group please contact Portia Maurice in opples.

SHARPEVILLE

Best 2
1960

T. Rutledge
69 DEAD, 180 WOUNDED

SHARPEVILLE 1976 SHARPEVILLE 1980

SHARPEVILLE 1984/1985

SHARPEVILLE ...?

MASS MEETING

VENUE : METHODIST CHURCH OF AFRICA
J STREET -- TANTYI

TIME : 7.30pm

SPEAKERS: IVY GCINA -- PE WOMEN'S ORG.
BSM SPEAKER

Transport outside the Great Hall leaving at 7pm.

AAC47

SHARPEVILLE

On the 21 March 1960, thousands of people showed their rejection of passes in demonstrations throughout the country.

In Orlando thousands of people publically burnt their passes
At Langa 12 000 people marched to police stations -- 3 were shot
In many areas, including Nyanga, Evaton, Cato Manor, Pondoland and Zeerust similar demonstrations took place and many people were arrested. In some cases people were shot.

At Sharpeville, near Vereeniging, the State responded with particular callousness and brutality. Although the crowd of 20 000 remained peaceful, police shot at them and continued to shoot even as the demonstrators fled. Sixty-nine people were murdered and more than 180 wounded. The massacre at Sharpeville marked the culmination of years of protest against passes by organizations like the ANC, PAC and FSAW.

State violence of this kind is a recurring feature of our history. Similar reactions took place in 1976, 1980, 1984 and in 1985. The last few weeks have seen more than 30 people killed in the Eastern Cape alone! At Crossroads 18 were killed, hundreds were injured...

Passes have been used as one means of oppression, control and domination of blacks, especially workers. Our people have always resisted the carrying of passes. Their struggle against passes is a vital part of our struggle to end all forms of exploitation. Many people have been detained, tortured or killed after Sharpeville. The ANC and PAC were banned, thousands were sentenced to prison and many were exiled. In spite of this repression however, our struggle has and will continue. Events like Sharpeville will not deter us. Rather they reaffirm our dedication to fight for a democratic and just society.



SHARPEVILLE 1960.

WOMEN AND THE PASSES

The 1950s saw a decade of unprecedented involvement of black women in political organizations and in other more spontaneous forms of protest. Land shortages and land rehabilitation measures gave rise to increased migration of black women from rural to urban areas. State reaction was the extension of the pass laws to women who now had to have permits to live and work in the towns and had also to carry reference books. Demonstrations by the women forced the State to drop the offending clauses temporarily.

Women were more assertive socially and they came to play a more vital role politically. In 1952, many women participated in the DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN and demonstrated that women could play an active and central role in the liberatory struggle. In 1953, the Bantu Education Act was passed and the women fought this issue. Their involvement culminated in the formulation of the Women's Charter and the launching of the Federation of South African Women in 1954. At the founding conference of FSAW, the most important issue was seen as the threat which the pass laws posed to women.

The next year intensification of pass raids on the Rand were the focal point of 2 000 angry women led by Bertha Mashaba and Helen Joseph to demonstrate their protest against the unjust laws outside the Union Buildings in Pretoria on the 27 October. The government announced its intention to issue reference books to women and in March 1956, 1 500 women were induced to carry reference books. The furious women burnt their books on the following day and this illegal action led to their arrest. The protests were effective in that for the next six months, no passes were issued to women.

Continued protests and organization resulted in the repetition of the 1955 Pretoria demonstration. On August 9, 1956, women led by Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph marched to the Union Buildings bearing 20 000 petitions which they were to present to the Prime Minister. Finding an empty office on their arrival, they sang the anthem, "Strydom you have tampered with the women, you have struck a rock", and left peacefully. In 1957 FSAW leaders were arrested and charged with treason. Pass laws were enforced but met with continued resistance by the women. The last major protest against pass laws in 1958 was in the form of a demonstration outside the Johannesburg Pass offices where women courted arrest. Caution dictated the response of the seeming submission of the ANC which met the payments of bail and secured the eventual release of the women. It was largely pressure from the women that led to the ANC taking up the pass issue.

The protests of the women in the 1950s was important for the development of specifically women's organization in which the liberatory struggle took precedence, but it also reflected the growing consciousness of many women that the removal of racial and class discrimination would not remove all the disabilities which they as women experienced.

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DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989

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