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AAABZ

CHRONOLOGY OF RESISTANCE BY WOMEN IN S A

"AAB2"

Book 21

- 1905 The Orange River Colony Vigilants Association was formed and began sending petitions and delegations to every level of authority calling for repeal of women's pass laws.
- 1912 Women in the Free State took matters in their own hands and collected 5 000 signatures calling for the abolition of the pass laws.
- 1913 On 28th May, women in Bloemfontein launched a passive resistance campaign and 600 women marched to the local Municipal Offices to see the Mayor. On being told that he was out, they dumped a large bag containing passes at the feet of the Deputy Mayor and declared that they would not abide by the pass laws anymore.
- 1914 A campaign against the pass laws was initiated by the Native and Coloured Women's Association. The government subsequently appointed a commission headed by Louis Botha to study the Pass Laws. A bill was proposed to abolish passes for women, but (as the government explained) the bill never became law because World War 1 broke out.
- 1918 The Bantu Women's League formed by Charlotte Maxeke played a significant role in negotiating with the government and convinced officials that women did not need passes
- 1923 Women are exempted from carrying passes when the Native Urban Areas Act was passed.
- 1937 The National Council of African Women was formed.
- 1940 The YWCA was formed and together with the NCAW they initiated a programme of self-help in the communities.
- 1943 The rise in bus fares in JHB resulted in a 9 day strike in which many women played an active role.
- 1944 Another bus boycott lasted 7 weeks. Middle-class white women taxied old black women to work and were subsequently arrested and charged. In the same year there was a widespread outcry against poor housing facilities.
- 1949 1 May saw a nationwide work stoppage - many women involved
- 1950 On 26 June a national stayaway was organised by the ANC. Women actively supported the call. Since then, this day has become Freedom Day in SA.
- 1952 ANC launches the famous Defiance Campaign against the 6 unjust laws. Many women participated and imprisoned.
- 1954 The Federation of South African Women was formed by women of all races from all over S A. The women resolved to resist all forms of discrimination perpetrated against women in this country and vowed to fight all forms of social injustice.
- 1955 On 25-26 June 3 000 delegates from all over the country signed the Freedom Charter in Kliptown. The women of SA presented their demands and had them included in the Charter.
- * Women in Benoni demonstrated against rent increases, led by the late Mary Moodley, a stalwart in the struggle
 - * The Minister of Native Affairs announced that Africans would be issued with passes from January 1956. In October 2 000 angry women marched to Pretoria to protest against this discriminatory measure.

1956 On 9 August 20 000 women of all races staged a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to voice their objection to the pass laws. The women of SA, dressed in their Women's Federation uniforms demonstrated for 30 minutes and presented the Prime Minister with a petition signed by thousands of women.

* A number of women were charged with high treason (Treason Trial)

1957 A state of emergency was declared in Zeerust after a pass-burning campaign when a number of men and women were arrested and many others forced to flee to Botswana.

1959 Women in Durban staged protests against the pass laws, lack of lighting and sewerage, nightly police raids and forced removals

Police baton-charged women peacefully demonstrating against municipal beer-halls in Cato Manor. This resulted in several days of violent rioting. Dorothy Nyembe, who is still serving a prison sentence, played an active role in the Cato Manor demonstrations.

In the same year, nurses were the first women required to show passes according to nurses' regulations.

1960 The ANC was banned shortly after the massacre at Sharpeville on 21 March and the subsequent state of emergency. The ANC Women's League was also banned. Many of our leaders, men and women, were subjected to bannings, house arrest and imprisonment.

1962 This year saw the decline of the Federation of South African Women because many of its members were detained, banned, imprisoned, house arrested and forced into exile dueing the clamp down by the state on leaders. Although not formally dissolved, the FSAW was forced into inactivity by the state.

1976 The Soweto Uprisings received the support of women throughout the country who stood by their children. Many women were banned and detained at the time.

Women have since taken an active role in the affairs of their communities. They have fought in the name of Freedom at Crossroads and during the Fattis and Monis Strike; they have fought against rent increases, poor housing conditions and unemployment.

An encouraging feature of resistance by women is the formation of women's groups all over the country to fight injustice.

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