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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION
FEDERACIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA INTERNACIONAL DE MUJERES
Международная Демократическая Федерация Женщин
國際婦女民主聯合會
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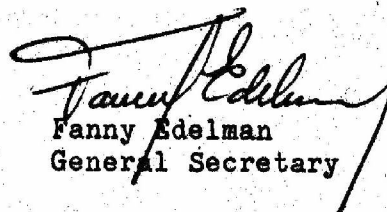
27 December 1977

Dear friends,

This year a WIDF delegation composed of two Finnish MPs, Mrs. Kaarina Suonio from the Social Democratic Party, and Mrs. Terhi Nieminen from the Socialist Party, made a study trip to the Republic of South Africa and Namibia. Their detailed report, which will be sent to you shortly, should be useful to you in your work next year, 1978, which has been proclaimed by the 32nd General Assembly of the United Nations as the "International Anti-Apartheid Year".

We enclose our WIDF statement and we are sure we can once again rely on your co-operation in our joint solidarity work with the women, children, and all the people of South Africa who are heroically fighting for their dignity and their liberty.

Looking forward to your early reply, dear friends, we remain cordially yours,


Fanny Edelman
General Secretary

International Anti-Apartheid Year

From its very foundation, the Women's International Democratic Federation has struggled tirelessly to help wipe fascism and racism in all their forms forever from the face of the earth. True to its principles, it fully supports the struggle of the people of South Africa for the eradication of apartheid, for national independence and freedom, and has consistently extended its political, moral and material solidarity to them. The two fact-finding delegations sent to South Africa by the WIDF returned with valuable documentary material on the situation of women and children there. This material provided the basis for the reports submitted to the UN Division on Human Rights.

The WIDF welcomed the proclamation of 1978 as the International Anti-Apartheid Year and supported the "Programme of Action against Apartheid" adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and the additions to this programme of action decided upon at the UN Conference against Apartheid, held in Lagos September 1977.

The South African minority regime is the bastion of apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa. It continues its illegal occupation of Namibia, supports the illegal minority regime in Rhodesia, infringes on the sovereignty of the neighbouring independent African states, the People's Republic of Angola, Mozambique, the Republics of Zambia and Botswana, and constitutes a permanent threat to this region.

In this context, it should be pointed out that those countries which collaborate with South Africa bear a special responsibility. The special relations the South African regime has with France, Britain, the USA, the FRG and Israel not only assist this regime to suppress the black people of that country but also endanger peace in Africa and the world.

It is impossible to measure the cruel toll taken on black men, women and children through violence, persecution and repression. The children know no other life than one dominated by violence; be it the murder of their fathers and mothers in prisons; be it a parent imprisoned for political offences; be it police shooting; be it the violence of Kwashiaker and malnutrition or indeed the violence of Soweto, where the fascist regime has not only tortured and murdered but maimed, arrested and detained children, refusing to allow their parents to see them.

The WIDF vehemently condemns the ruthless insensitivity shown by the Verster Regime's police, who, having failed to intimidate the heroic people of South Africa, cannot even allow them to bury their dead and mourn their loved ones, but shoot them down even at the graveside.

The cases of Winnie Mandela, Helen Joseph and others are examples of the systematic persecution and unjustified convictions.

Recent events have clearly shown that resistance has in fact intensified and that the people are more determined than ever before to win their freedom. What began as a peaceful demonstration by school children has become a national uprising against apartheid. Resistance is widespread throughout the country. The total number of those killed will never be known.

In the words of one of the thousands of leaflets distributed by the ANC (S.A.) inside the country: "To the parents, we say, 'Be proud for giving birth to such heroic children. They have not died in vain and we will continue the battle until victory is won.'"

In an effort to delude public opinion the Vorster Regime has stated that it will scrap Passes for Africans. But the truth of the matter is that under the apartheid policy all black people are considered to belong to the "homelands" and in future they will not carry South African Passes but will carry Bantustan travel documents with which they can enter white South Africa only as migrant labourers. Every change Vorster makes is aimed at strengthening white supremacy and against resistance by the Africans.

The WIDF proclaims its commitment to the Anti-Apartheid Year and calls on women and their national organizations

- to intensify their activities for the complete eradication of apartheid as a crime against humanity;
- to disseminate information on the inhumanity of apartheid and on the just struggle of the oppressed people in South Africa;
- to protest at South African embassies and diplomatic missions;
- to demand that all governments that continue to collaborate with South Africa, despite the UN Resolutions, should cease such support immediately, fully implement the UN resolution on the mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, and end all collaboration in the nuclear field;
- to demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and freedom for all those detained, banned and banished for their involvement in the struggle for liberation;
- to promote concerted action for the complete isolation of the illegal South African minority regime and solidarity with the struggle of the people in Southern Africa for their liberation and national independence.
- to organize powerful actions on international days such as:
 - 8 March International Women's Day
 - 21 March International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

1 June International Children's Day
16 June Commemoration of the Massacre in Soweto
26 June South Africa Freedom Day
31 July African Women's Day
9 August South African Women's Day
11 October Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners
16 December Heroes Day

Let us continue to extend our solidarity to these heroic people, especially to the women and children, by giving them our political, moral and material support.

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