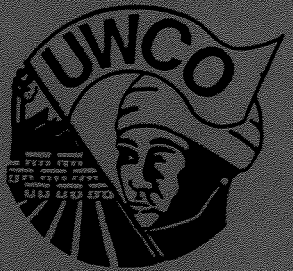


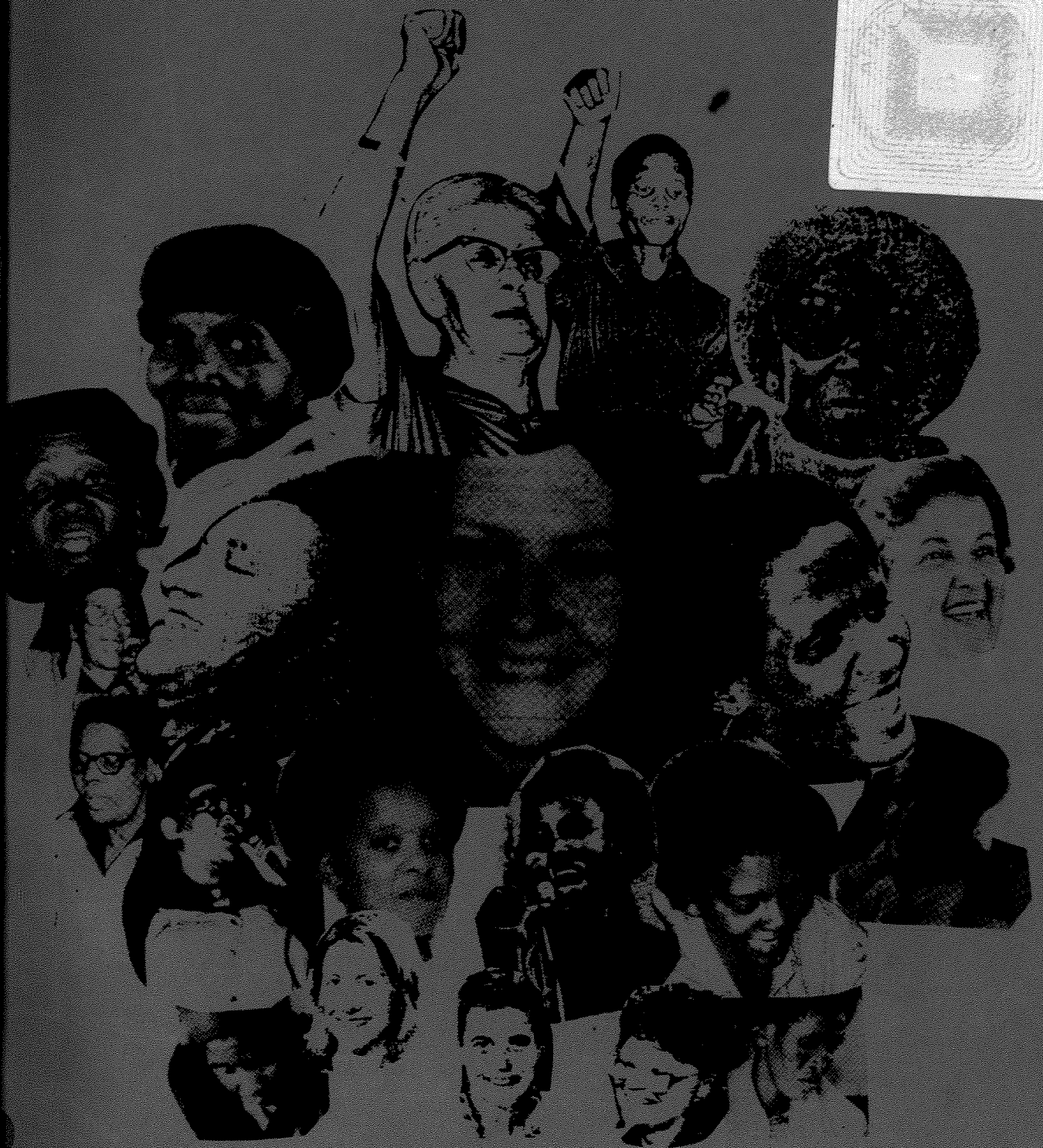
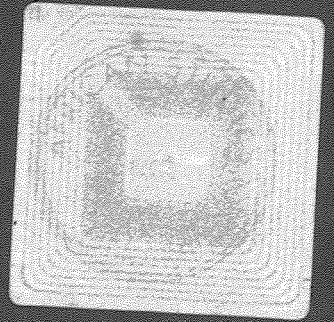
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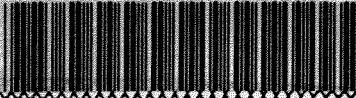
UWCO

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OBS/CLAREMONT





Dear New Member

Welcome to UWCO!

Over the decades, the women of South Africa have stood shoulder to shoulder with men in the common struggle against race, class and sex discrimination. A strong women's organisation is vital for women to gain strength and speak out against the many problems which face us.

UWCO believes that women cannot be free unless our country is free, but we must also be aware that in many liberated countries the struggle against sexism continues. We must therefore make sure that the manner in which we work today will determine the way we live tomorrow.

As a member of UWCO, your contribution - no matter how small - will serve to strengthen and take forward our struggle to create a peaceful and democratic South Africa.

**Yours in the Struggle
The Branch Secretary**

UWCO CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED WOMEN'S CONGRESS

As adopted at the 1988 Annual Conference

NAME: The name of the organisation is United Women's Congress, and will be referred to as UWCO.

AIMS AND OBJECTS:

The United Women's Congress was formed to unite all women regardless of education, occupation, colour or religion in common action to remove all political, cultural, social and sexual oppression and economic exploitation.

MEMBERSHIP:

1. Membership is open to all women over the age of 18 who accept the policy and programme of UWCO.
2. Any women who is a member of another women's organisation with similar aims to UWCO may be a member of UWCO. The final decision for membership rests with the Executive Committee.
3. Application for membership is made on a membership form, accompanied by 25c joining fee, given to the branch or working group secretary.
4. Every application for membership will be considered by the Executive Committee within one month.
5. Branch secretaries keep branch membership forms once members have been accepted by the Executive and membership cards have been written. A member must inform the branch secretary of her change of address, and contact the branch secretary of the new branch if she moves to a new area.
6. UWCO has a CODE OF CONDUCT to teach members a sense of service, responsibility, initiative and discipline.

It is the right of every member to take part in making UWCO policy; to take part in elections and be elected to any committee or delegation of UWCO; to submit proposals or statements to the branch or to the Executive Committee; to question and criticise any official or decision of UWCO in a constructive and responsible manner in her branch meeting, or at the branch's request, in Council or directly through the Extended Executive meetings.

It is the duty of every member to understand the policy and programme of UWCO and to carry it out at all times; to take an active part in the work of her branch in organising the women and to explain the policy and programme to these women; to educate herself about the political, social and economic problems of South Africa; to combat any rumour or propaganda that will harm UWCO; to observe discipline and accept the decisions of the majority in the branch, in Council or the Executive; to set an example by her appearance and bearing in meetings, organising work and in her daily life and never to be provoked into loss of temper; to accept without ill-feeling, criticism and reprimand, raised at branch meetings or by the branch committee, and in the event of consistent breach of discipline at a meeting specially convened by the Executive with the knowledge of the Branch Committee.

Branches commit themselves to ensure that all members honour and respect the code of conduct as defined here.

7. A branch can, with the approval of Executive Council, suspend a member for any period or expel her for breach of discipline. Any member who has resigned or is expelled from UWCO can state her case to the Executive and can call witnesses in support of her case. Any member who has resigned or been expelled can be re-admitted on conditions determined by the Branch Committee and the Executive.

Breach of the code of conduct by entire branches shall be subject to disciplinary procedure by Council. Breach of the code of conduct by Executive members shall be subject to disciplinary measures by Council.

JOINING FEES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS:

1. A joining fee of 25c must be paid with the application form for membership.
2. A re-joining fee must be paid annually before the Annual Conference to retain membership.
3. An annual subscription of R2.40 will be paid by members either as 20c a month, or in one sum.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

1. The Executive Committee is elected by the membership at the Annual Conference. The election is conducted by an electoral officer from outside of the organisation. A member may only serve on the Executive for at most two years in a row.

2. The Executive will meet at least once a fortnight or as often as necessary. The quorum for meetings will be two thirds of the total number of Executive members. Any member who is absent without apology from more than two consecutive Executive meetings will automatically lose her position. She will be replaced by a member co-opted at a Council meeting to serve on the Executive until the next annual conference.

The Executive Committee should be fully accountable to the Council. The Executive shall submit reports on each portfolio or office bearer as well as on the overall functioning of the Executive to every second Council.

3. The Executive shall carry out the work of UWCO as directed by the Council and in accordance with the policy and programme of UWCO.

4. The Executive shall open and operate a bank account in the name of UWCO and approve all expenditure.

5. The Executive shall approve branch projects where possible by referring them to Council.

UWCO constitution cont...

6. The Executive will consist of the following portfolios with the following functions:

The CHAIRPERSON, who will call all Executive and General Meetings; be one of the three signatories to all cheques, and will open the Annual Conference.

The VICE-CHAIRPERSON, who will assist the Chairperson in her duties and deputise for her whenever necessary.

The SECRETARY, who will keep minutes of all meetings; administer correspondence in accordance with the wishes of the Executive; keep the records of UWCO; be one of the three signatories to cheques; give an annual report on the activities of the organisation at the Annual Conference.

The ASSISTANT SECRETARY, who will assist the Secretary in her duties and deputise for her whenever necessary.

The TREASURER, who will administer the finances of UWCO; keep the books in proper order; draw up monthly statements to be approved by Council, and submit an audited annual report to the conference; to be one of three signatories to cheques.

The FUNDRAISER, who will co-ordinate central fundraising activities and assist with branch fundraising as determined by Council; and will co-opt branch treasurers to work on central fundraising.

The EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER on the Executive, who will assist the Education and Training subcommittee to plan the education programme; to assist branches when requested to do so by branches or by Council; and assist in organising workshops for the organisation as determined by Council. There will be a second Education and Training Convenor who will not be an Executive member. She will co-ordinate the activities of the Education and Training subcommittee.

The UDF REPRESENTATIVE, who will represent UWCO at all UDF General Councils, ensure two-way communication between UWCO and UDF, and assist branches to work with the UDF Area Committees.

The FEDSAW REPRESENTATIVE, who will represent UWCO at all FEDSAW General Councils, ensure two-way communication between UWCO and FEDSAW, and assist branches to work with FEDSAW subcommittees and campaigns.

In the urban areas, the Executive should co-opt an organisers group.

EXTENDED EXECUTIVE:

1. The Extended Executive will consist of all Executive members and the branch chairpersons.
2. The Extended Executive will meet once a month or as often as necessary.
3. The functions of the Extended Executive are to give leadership to the organisation particularly at branch level and to ensure proper communication between the Executive and the branch committees.
4. The Extended Executive is not a policy making body of UWCO.
5. Two thirds of the branches must be present at Extended Executive meetings to constitute a quorum.
6. General Members Meetings should be called only if an urgent organisational mandate is required.

UWCO constitution cont...

COUNCIL:

1. The Council shall consist of the Executive Committee and three representatives from each branch and one from each working group.
2. The Council shall meet once a month to discuss the work of UWCO or to hold educational workshops.
3. Council's function is to carry out the policy determined at the Annual Conference. Council has the power to determine policy on matters not previously discussed at the Annual Conference. In the case of an emergency, policy decisions can be taken by the Executive Committee.
4. Council must ratify all branch projects and hear reports on branch activities.
5. Council will hear a report from the Volunteers Group convenors on the organising work of UWCO and will allocate work to the Volunteers Group to follow up.
6. Council can set up sub-committees to carry out the specified work as the need arises.
7. If necessary, Council can be convened by half or more of the total number of branches.
8. Council shall be the highest disciplinary body of the organisation.

BRANCHES AND WORKING GROUPS:

1. Ten or more members in an area can apply to the Executive to establish themselves as a branch of UWCO. Five members can apply to form a working group.
2. Branch members will elect a committee when the branch is launched and then on an annual basis after the Conference. The Branch Committee will consist of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, branch organiser and additional members as determined by the branch. Two members of the Executive must be present at the elections of the Branch Committee.
3. The Branch will elect two volunteers to serve on the UWCO Volunteers Group to assist with organising work outside of their branch.
4. Branch activities must further the aims and objects of UWCO in their area. Proposals for branch projects and reports on activities must be submitted to the Council for ratification.
5. Branch treasurers must collect subscription fees. All joining fees and 25% of the annual subscription fees of the branch must be given to the Executive Treasurer. Branches can open a bank account in the name of that branch of UWCO. Branches will give financial reports to Council.
6. Branches will elect three representatives to Council meetings. Working groups will elect one representative to Council.
7. Branches will elect three delegates per ten members of the branch to represent them at the Annual Conference. Working groups will be represented by one delegate at the Conference.

UWCO constitution cont...

ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

1. The Annual Conference is the policy making body of UWCO.
2. The Annual Conference will be convened by the outgoing Executive Committee.
3. Office bearers will take up positions at the conference until the new Executive Committee is elected.
4. Decisions will be taken by voting amongst the delegates. Each delegate will have one vote, and in the case of deadlock, the Chairperson will have a casting vote.
5. All members of UWCO can attend the Annual Conference as observers with full speaking rights.
6. The Annual Conference can be divided into different sessions, open or closed to non-members of UWCO.
7. The election of the Executive Committee will take place at the end of the Annual Conference. Branches will nominate for each portfolio with motivations. Voting for each portfolio will be by show of hands amongst the delegates.

PATRONS:

The Annual Conference will have the power to elect patrons as a salute to women in UWCO who have shown outstanding leadership and commitment to the UWCO and to the struggle of women in the Western Cape.

FINANCE:

1. All money coming to the Executive Treasurer will be paid into a bank account of UWCO. Withdrawals will be signed by two of the three signatories.
2. Funds for the running of the organisation must come from subscriptions and fundraising activities organised by the branches and the organisation as a whole. 25% of subscriptions and branch fundraising will go to the Executive Treasurer.
3. Outside funds may be applied for to donors approved by the Annual Conference. These funds can only be applied for for specific projects motivated for to the donors, and already operating within the organisation.
4. An annual audited financial statement will be presented to the Conference.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION:

1. Branches must send proposals to amend the constitution to the Executive a month before the Conference. The Executive will circulate proposals to all branches before the Conference.
2. Amendments to the constitution must be passed with a two-thirds majority of the delegates at the Annual Conference.

DISSOLUTION:

If the Executive Committee sees the need for the dissolution of UWCO, the Chairperson shall call an emergency general meeting, which will vote on the matter. Any assets left after the dissolution will be distributed by the Executive to any organisation that it decides on.

OUR BRANCH HISTORY

- a personal account

Any new member attending one of our branch meetings might feel quite confused: she is confronted by a wealth of taken-for-granted assumptions and common references amongst members; endless lists of acronyms, committees and subcommittees are sometimes thrown up in the meetings; often political lines seem so cut and dried, even though they are not clearly articulated for new members, who might well wonder how our branch obtained its rather distinctive flavour - a flavour which never ceases to amaze older members, like myself. Despite my own bemusement, I can say that our branch has undergone many changes in terms of size, direction, and even geographical location.

Some of the changes in our branch relate to the state of community organizations, the internal state of our own organization and the ethos of the white left community at different political moments. I must add that some of the developments I'll be referring to have been analysed in terms of my own political consciousness, which was not clearly defined when I first joined UWCO. UWCO is an amalgamation of the United Women's Organization, the one I joined, and The Women's Front. Whilst separate, these two organizations had a very similar political vision, even though they only merged in April 1986.

In the Beginning

When the United Women's Organization was launched in April 1981, there was little grassroots organization in the Western Cape, and certainly no non-racial body which those of us in Observatory or Claremont could join. It isn't surprising, therefore, that a flurry of women came to the first set of meetings of what was to become the Cape Town branch of UWO. These women were mostly young, single, university graduates and left-thinking. My memories of those early days are of totally unwieldy numbers - up to 60. Many of us had incredibly strong personalities and convictions. Whilst we shared a similar vision of the future, there was less consensus about political strategy than there is in our branch now.

The euphoria we felt at being able to join a community, township-based organization can't be underestimated. I remember being so shy, but nevertheless excited at getting up and dancing around to sing freedom songs, "Ayangena, ayaphuma, ayadizela, ayasapha 'mabhulu.." at the launch of UWO at St Francis. For many of us this exposure inspired the incredible fervour we felt about being part of UWO in those early days.

The question of how we should participate non-racially was already a contentious issue. Often we would berate ourselves for "flooding" large gatherings, or of dominating discussions. This was a real issue we had to deal with, as the UWO vision of the future was of a society where intellectual, middle class people would not be accorded a louder voice than anyone else. Of course we had to put this ideal into practice in the struggle itself. Some members suggested that our branch split up, and some of us join the coloured branches of Kensington and Lansdowne. This didn't happen, as some branch members argued strongly that one must organize in one's own community. Nevertheless, as our large group was too cumbersome and inaccurate in its geographic delineation, we split up into the Gardens, Woodstock, Observatory and Claremont branches. I joined the Observatory branch.

Projects

Events which we participated in during those early days included the Fatti's and Moni's strike and the Wilson Rowntrees sweet boycott. Projects were regarded as an important organizing tool; Gardens, for example, organized a baby sitting cooperative in the neighbourhood. Claremont organized a creche on Saturday mornings for the children of Harfield village. In terms of the Group Areas Act coloured people started being shunted out of Harfield at this time ("Die Groep moer ons"). Together with some the Harfield residents, the branch produced a booklet on the village and "die groep". Both the collaboration on the booklet, and the booklet itself, are extremely significant politically.

We in Observatory did a survey to assess the needs of our community. The results left us with a clear dilemma: our community had no specific needs we could help with, and even if they did, there was very little hope of mobilising a rather conservative grouping around the aims of UWO. (In those days Obs had less of a Yuppie, and more of a white working-class component than it has today.) It was suggested to us that we organize the domestic workers of our suburbs. We tried to incorporate them into our branch, but this attempt failed. However, we did cooperate well with an UWO branch of domestic workers from Pinelands. We enjoyed putting on plays for events such as National Womens Day and against the Tricameral parliament. Overall, drama seems to have been our best known activity.

Our branch played a strong service role in the organization. At any given time we had at least one of our members on the executive of UWO or on its organizing committee. (This issue of participation on the organizing committee generated heated debate, as some members of our branch felt it wasn't for whites to represent UWO when it was organizing in the black areas.) We used to participate very vigorously in centrally organized jumble sales in Mowbray. When the community paper, Grassroots, came onto the scene, we used to distribute it in Mowbray and talk to pedestrians about the struggle and UWO. Our sense of belonging to UWO was strong, and we created firm bonds with members in the townships, despite problems such as language difficulties, and the very obvious age gap. (We were mostly in our twenties and non-mothers, whilst women from the townships were mostly mothers over 40.) Our organization generated a strong sense of women in the struggle. To compensate, men in Claremont even formed a "boys' group" at one point, which would help out at UWO activities, like the creches at conferences.

A Collective Marshmallow

Although our branches were vibrant in those early years, there were inherent problems which only began making themselves felt later, once the UDF gained prominence. Many women had joined UWO as the only place to become involved, without having a strong sense of commitment to the women's issue - or they did have this commitment, but lost it on the way - as we frequently neglected to include the women's angle in our political work. Our branches had many ideologically schooled members, but we would couch complex ideological debates (and there were many!) in such bland terms that the uninitiated didn't get an adequate political training. Debates happening elsewhere were brought into our branch, but members like myself didn't understand



Branch members in front of quilt made by us for Jenny

the Western Cape tensions which informed these debates, and as the branch was supposed to be "neutral", no one explained these to me either. (Tensions in the Cape were evident between people who were later to become involved with the UDF, and those who focussed more on union work.)

Just before the launch of the UDF, community organizations began to reach a fairly static point generally, not knowing how to proceed. This, coupled with our inability to infuse a women's consciousness into our broader programme, led to a lack of direction, certainly in the Obs branch. The repeated attempts of UWO and the Women's Front to achieve unity made many of us despondent, and this contributed to the marshmallow-like quality of our branch in late 1984.

Launch of the UDF

It's ironic that the UDF area committee in Observatory was launched primarily by our UWO branch in 1983, and featured UWO women so prominently. Yet it was soon to lure many of us away from UWO, into a sphere of work which seemed more dramatic and exciting, and which provided the novelty of working with men, as well as activists from coloured areas: UDF area committees had sprung up from Bokaap to Mitchells Plein. Many of us worked intensively on campaigns and on massive door to door signature-collecting blitzes, with comrades from these areas. A similar process of depletion was occurring in the Claremont UWO branch. In 1985 the Observatory and Claremont area committees merged, and soon after that the two UWO branches joined forces. At one point attendance at this new joint UWO branch dropped to 5-10 members.

Solidarity by Candlelight

In 1985 I became inactive in UWO, but still remained part of the broader struggle scene. The Friends and Family of Detainees (FAFOD) campaign of December 1985 and the fasts in the Buitenkant Street Church gave the branch a

boost: many women from the township branches of UWO participated in the candlelight services and vigils. Their commitment and strength so impressed a number of unorganized white women who also attended the services, that they expressed the wish to join UWO. A member active during this period said that these new members were aware of their position as women, but "felt politically inexperienced and unconfident". They saw UWO as "an appropriate and unthreatening organization to join. Due to the intimacy of this small branch and the absence of political 'heavies', members felt able to voice their opinions easily, and learn about politics in an adhoc, but open fashion".

The Branch Grows

By early 1987 people in the Cape had begun to ask, "What happened to the women? They used to be so vocal!" both at area committee level as well as in the broader UDF. Once again the concept of women's struggle began to grow in popularity. After a great deal of hard work by some, UWO and the Women's Front had finally merged to form the United Women's Congress (UWCO) in 1986. This process symbolized for many in the Cape, people's ability to forget their differences and work together. It certainly boosted the morale of members and ex-members of UWO and the Women's Front. In the past two years UWCO branches have been formed in Surrey Estate and Athlone, while others have been revitalized. By 1987 our own UWCO branch had grown significantly.

In the UDF people were beginning to express the need for us to go back to our grassroots organizations and build them up to be the true organs of democracy. As the UDF Obs/Claremont area committee consisted of a collection of individuals, and not rep's from organizations as it should have been, we therefore decided to disband. People then had the opportunity to participate in the formation of the Mowbray Congress and the Cape Democrats. It was felt that rather than begin a new women's organization, UWCO Obs/Claremont should be supported. It was at this time that I became active in the branch again.

Our branch began a fairly aggressive "outreach" programme, and drew in many previously unorganized women. Late 1987 was particularly exciting in this respect. We attempted to streamline our branch administration, structured a branch executive and delineated our tasks more clearly. (See accompanying outline of the work of the branch.) As a result of our desire to reach out and serve the needs of women in our area, we began our newsletter, branch forums and the mothers' group. Several of the old UWO members returned and others who had been in the UDF area committee also joined.

The multiplicity of the tasks we have defined for ourselves and the perhaps inevitable bureaucratization of big groups has certainly led to some old problems reemerging: our branch has grown quite large, and one wonders whether everyone is developing to their fullest capacity, and whether they are having their needs met. Some of these are personal, such as the need for confidence building and support, but others are more strictly political, such as the need to develop a political understanding and a sense of satisfaction at being involved in the struggle. The balance between "meeting members' needs" and the branch being a place for political women activists has not been satisfactorily solved. I do believe that if any branch or organization is to grow, or improve its ability to carry out its political tasks, it needs to be aware of such problems and attempt to solve these where possible. It is this dialectic to which we must respond, and ensure that we and our organization grow from strength to strength as a pillar in our struggle for liberation.

UWCO STRUCTURES AND LINKS

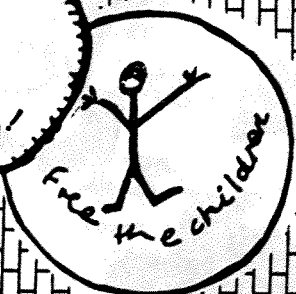
WOODSTOCK GUGULETU SEC 1 GUGULETU SEC 2 GUGULETU SEC 3
 SURREY ESTATE TAMBO SQUARE WYNBERG ATHLONE
 NEW CROSSROADS LANGA MASINCEDANE GARDENS WYNBERG

Education and Training Subcommittee: provides political education for members of our organization.

UWCO CENTRAL

OBS/CLAREMONT BRANCH
 Branch Exec: Chairperson, secretary, treasurer, UWCO council rep, area rep. (Branch meets weekly)
 Mothers' Group meets every second week.
 Media Group meets as needed
 Open Forum meets almost monthly

AREA:
 MOYCO, NUSAS, Cape Democrats



HOUSES , SECURITY AND COMFORT

Little houses in the water
 little houses of apartheid
 little houses (x3)
 All the same
 There's a zinc one and a tin one
 A paper one and a plastic one
 and they're all made of Apartheid
 and they all look just the same

Lyrics from an old branch play

DEBATES WITHIN OUR BRANCH

- * How to prioritise:
 campaign work;
 branch building and meeting members' needs.
- * How to make the concept of nonracialism meaningful.
- * What is our position on feminism.
- * How best to share skills and resources amongst branch members and with members of other branches.
- * How to develop an adequate security consciousness.
- * How to accommodate women with or without children; with or without salaried jobs.



Examples of badges made by our branch

... STRUCTURES

- in the days before UDF was "banned"

← **OUTLYING AREAS:**

ASHTON BEAUFORT WEST SALDANHA BAY VREDENDAL WORCESTER
MBEKWENI ATLANTIS ELANDSBAAI SOUTH CAPE

← Neighbourhood Care Subcommittee: coordinates the training of "neighbourhood" skills such as first aid and sewing.

→ United Democratic Front
Federation of South African Women (Western Cape)
National Education Crisis Committee
Detainees Parents Support Committee
Free the Children



WORK:

- * Media:
 - newsletter
 - cards, T- shirts
 - crafts - often in conjunction with other branches
- * Open forums
- * Internal education:
 - prepared talks, role play etc
- * Fundraising:
 - stalls at fairs
 - bycicle ride (Spekenham)
 - jumble sales
- * Detainee support:
 - cards, quilt for a branch member in detention
 - New Year's Eve party
 - mill in
- * Campaigns and issues:
 - first Cape Women's festival
 - Mandela's birthday
 - Save the Press
 - Lawaaikamp - with other branches or organizations
- * Social activities, such as picnics and video evenings
- * Social activities such as picnics or video evenings.

Lunchtime stall at UCT

THE WOMEN'S CHARTER

WOMEN'S CHARTER AND AIMS - A SUMMARY

The Women's Charter was drawn up in 1954, and adopted at the inaugural conference of the Federation of South African Women in that year. It reflects the demands and analysis of women during that period, based on the social and political realities of that time. When reading it, it is important to keep the political climate of the 1950s in mind. Not only is it an important historical document, but many of its clauses remain relevant today. None of the Charter's aims has been achieved and in many cases conditions have worsened. We believe the demands cannot be fully realised within the present system. Progressive women today need to take forward the spirit of the Charter and clarify our own current analysis, aims and demands.

PREAMBLE: We, the women of South Africa, ... 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 our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.

A SINGLE SOCIETY: We women do not form a society separate from the men ... As women we ... join hands with [men] to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.

TEST OF CIVILISATION: The level of civilisation which any society has reached can be measured by the degree of freedom that its members enjoy. The status of women is a test of civilisation. Measured by that standard, South Africa must be considered low in the scale of civilised nations.

WOMEN'S LOT: We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils ...

POOR AND RICH: These are evils that need not exist. They exist because the society in which we live is divided into poor and rich, into non-European and European. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. We women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination, and the evils of the colour-bar.

NATIONAL LIBERATION: As members of the National Liberatory movements and Trade Unions ... we march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people ... As women there rests upon us also the burden of removing from our society all the social differences developed in past times between men and women, which have the effect of keeping our sex in a position of inferiority and subordination.

EQUALITY FOR WOMEN: We resolve to struggle for the removal of laws and customs that deny African women the right to own, inherit or alienate property. We resolve to work for a change in the laws of marriage ... which have the effect of placing wives in the position of legal subjection to husbands, and giving husbands the power to dispose of wives' property and earnings, and dictate to them in all matters affecting them and their children.

We recognise that the women are treated as minors by these marriage and property laws because of ancient and revered traditions and customs which had their origin in the antiquity of the people and no doubt served purposes of great value in bygone times ...

WOMEN WHO LABOUR: The tribal and kinship society ... has been destroyed as a result of the loss of tribal land, migration of men away from the tribal home, the growth of towns and industries, and the rise of a great body of wage-earners on the farms and in the urban areas, who depend wholly or mainly on wages for a livelihood. Thousands of ... women ... are employed today in factories, homes, offices, shops, on farms, in professions such as nurses, teachers and the like. As unmarried women, widows or divorcees they have to fend for themselves, often without the assistance of a male relative. Many of them are responsible not only for their own livelihood but also that of their children. Large numbers of women today are in fact the sole breadwinners and heads of their families.

... THE WOMEN'S CHARTER

FOREVER MINORS: Nevertheless, the laws and practices derived from an earlier and different state of society are still applied to them. They are responsible for their own person and their children. Yet the law seeks to enforce upon them the status of a minor ...

OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS: The law has lagged behind the development of society; it no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic position of women. The law has become an obstacle to progress of the women, and therefore a brake on the whole of society.

This intolerable condition would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of a large section of our menfolk to concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves.

We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and in practice.

NEED FOR EDUCATION: We also recognise that large numbers of our womenfolk continue to be bound by traditional practices and conventions, and fail to realise that these have become obsolete and a brake on progress. It is our duty and privilege to enlist all women in our struggle for emancipation ...

It is our intention to carry out a nation-wide programme of education that will bring home to the men and women ... the realisation that freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage.

AN APPEAL: We women appeal to all progressive organisations, to members of the great National Liberatory movements, to the trade unions and working class organisations, to the churches, educational and welfare organisations, to all progressive men and women who have the interests of the people at heart, to join with us in this great and noble endeavour.



DORA TAMANA: one of the founding members of our organization

Dora Tamana was a great leader in the history of our country's struggle, especially our women's struggle. She was a member of the African National Congress Women's League and in 1954 became the National Secretary of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). This is a poem she wrote which is an inspiration to us all:

Women Unite!

You who have no work, speak.

You who have no homes, speak.

You who have no schools, speak.

You who have to run like chickens from the vulture, speak.

Let us share our problems so that we can solve them together.

We must free ourselves.

Men and women must share housework.

Men and women must work together in the home and out in the world.

There are no homes for the aged.

There is no-one to care for the sick.

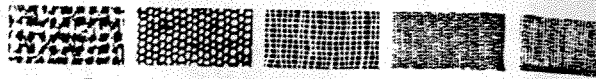
Women must unite to fight for these rights.

I opened the road for you.

You must go forward.



SOME PAST BRANCH ACTIVITIES



UWCO POETRY

* Creative Writing Afternoon: we hosted an open afternoon where people got together to write poetry, sketches and songs. Manan du Plessis gave a report on the launch of Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) and read an extract from her new novel.

Group Poem

(for performance)

Roving round and round
 Pulling my pigtaails
 Battling to be heard
 Unclear about what I'm saying
 Lost in a sea of words
 High pitched voices go unheard
 Grannies, girls and gulls
 Fingers firming, fists forming.
SEIZING FREEDOM



At thirteen, with her hair whirled
 she'd go to sleep, dreaming
 Of boys, the world still seeming
 a place with direct lines,
 clear colours, not yet littered
 with limpet mines.

Brenda

Mama walapha eKapa ndandifuna ukuya esikolweni kwango
 komantu woku ndifundisa yayimbi kakhulu lonto yokuBa
 ndingafundi ndisafuna ukufunda.



Results of a Creative Writing Workshop in 1987

The mother

The Mother Works Day To Night
 Cleaning the House
 Making Food
 Tending the Children
 What Do The Fathers Do??
 They Say We've Had A Really Hard
 But was It As Hard Day
 As the Woman's?

Gudrun (12 years)



Card Design

DATES WE REMEMBER

- 8 MARCH: International Women's Day
- 16 JUNE: South African Youth Day
- 26 JUNE: Freedom Charter Day
- 9 AUGUST: National Women's Day
- 16 DECEMBER: Hero's Day
- (Date not fixed) International Children's Day