

"AFRICANS DETERMINED TO FIGHT PASSES FOR WOMEN"

A.N.C. DECIDES TO LAUNCH SPECIAL CAMPAIGN

From GOVAN MBEKI

BLOEMFONTEIN.—"TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE POLITICAL EVENTS DURING THE PRESENT YEAR IS TO GIVE A SORRY CATALOGUE OF ASSAULTS UPON THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, BUT THE PEOPLE REMAIN UNDAUNTED BY SUCH EVENTS," DECLARED PROFESSOR Z. K. MATTHEWS, ACTING PRESIDENT-GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE 307 DELEGATES FROM 81 BRANCHES WHO ATTENDED THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE A.N.C. HERE LAST WEEK-END.

"The women have been galvanised into action by the Government threat to subject them to the humiliation of the pass laws.

"This is the most dangerous scheme the Government has ever embarked upon and they must accept responsibility for whatever may happen."

Conference resolved to set up an action committee to plan action by Congress against passes for women. In speeches delegates indicated the African people felt very strongly on this issue.

In his speech Professor Matthews said the life of the African is made up of one crisis after another. When the people are beginning to say that the situation could not get worse than this, fresh injustice is added to the already heavy burden.

"The policy of baasskap shows no sign of abating.

"Ten years ago who would have thought that the missions would be treated as they have been over the transfer of African schools to the Government?

"Who would have thought that one day, in a country in which there was no compulsory education for African children, it would become a crime for parents to give their children, at no cost to the State, the kind of education they would like them to have?"

"Who would have thought that teachers of long standing would be dismissed from their posts on the mere ipse dixit of some official? Who would have thought that people could be deprived of property rights which they had acquired legally?"

WILL FIGHT BACK

Professor Matthews emphasised that the African people were determined to fight back.

"The African National Congress was founded specifically for the purpose of fostering among the African people that love of freedom and determination to be inferior to none in the land for which their forefathers gave their lives on many a battlefield."

HUDDLESTON'S ADDRESS

Father Huddleston's opening address was read in his absence. He regretted that he had to leave South Africa at a time so vital for her future, when decisions of the utmost importance for that future had to be made.

"Nothing except obedience to my community would have drawn me out of this struggle at such a time. I can honestly say that it is not my will or my desire ever to leave the African people. This is my home.

"In spite of dark days to come Africa is moving rapidly forward towards that goal which we all so long to see. It would be a fantastic betrayal of one's trust to believe otherwise. Unity, strong and intelligent leadership, integrity of purpose, the refusal to sacrifice principles—these are the qualities most desperately needed if Congress is to shape the destiny of young Africa."

MRS. LUTHULI

Conference was attended by Mrs. Nokhukanya Luthuli, the Chief's wife. In a special message to con-

ference she said:

"The tragedy of our day is that the White man who boasts of centuries of civilisation now wishes that the Christian missions had never brought light to Africa for he now speaks of the Christian missions as having 'spoiled the Native' and in various ways his Government is using its political power to send back the African to the wilderness of past darkness.

"That is why in Bantu Education the Government tries to fit us for a lower station in life.

"We reject apartheid, which is a policy based on fear and suspicion. No community or nation can grow into a strong and healthy group when it feeds itself on these base passions of man."

Conference decided to intensify the campaign for the boycott of schools and resolved to call upon those areas that have not yet observed the national decision to boycott to do so.

The draft constitution was rejected and conference resolved to draw another to be presented at the next conference.

Amidst tumultuous applause, and Afrika salutes, Chief Luthuli was unanimously returned as President General and Mr. Oliver Tambo as Secretary General.

... AND WIN A GREAT VICTORY

DURBAN.—THE MILITANCY OF AFRICAN WOMEN UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WOMEN'S LEAGUE, HAS FORCED THE CITY COUNCIL TO ABANDON ATTEMPTS TO INTRODUCE PASSES FOR AFRICAN WOMEN.

As a result of a protest meeting of African women outside the City Hall and Native Administration offices last week, the Native Administration Committee decided to "drop" its scheme for the carrying of "letters of privilege" by African women.

While a small deputation of African men and women were meeting officials inside the building and demanding the withdrawal of the decision to impose passes on women, nearly 200 women outside shouted that they would not carry passes.

Officials asked the deputation to send the women away while the matter was being discussed but the members of the deputation replied that they "dare not" because the women would accuse them of "selling out."

After the deputation left the building the Native Administration Committee announced that the decision to give passes to women had been withdrawn.

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OFFICIAL SECRETS BILL A THREAT TO FREEDOM

JOHANNESBURG.

A Bill, ostensibly to protect state secrets, is to be introduced in the 1956 session of Parliament which starts next month. Its provisions are, however, so wide that many forms of opposition to the Government will fall within its ambit.

Any person who, for a purpose prejudicial to the safety and interests of the Union, approaches or is in the neighbourhood of a "prohibited" place (which includes factories where munitions are made, airports, naval bases, or any other place designated by the Government as prohibited) or makes a note likely to be of direct or indirect use to "an enemy," is liable to 15 years imprisonment.

The Bill does not define the meaning of "any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the Union," but it is clear that the words embrace virtually every type of action which the Government would interpret as hostile to its regime.

Thus, for instance, the purpose of a trade union organiser, who approaches a factory in order to organise the workers for a strike or some other type of action, might fall within the provisions of the Bill.

WHO IS ENEMY?

As South Africa is not at present

at war with any other State, it is also not clear what "an enemy" is.

Any person who uses information in his possession relating to a prohibited place, in a manner prejudicial to the Union's safety and interests, or forges, alters or tampers with a passport or official document to gain admission to a prohibited place, or for any other purpose prejudicial to the state, is liable to a maximum punishment of £500 and 5 years imprisonment.

FOREIGN AGENTS

The Bill introduces a new, sinister personality into South African legal terminology—the "foreign agent." He is a person who, in the employ of another State, is reasonably suspected of having committed, or attempting to commit, acts prejudicial to the interests of the Union in the interests of a foreign State.

Anyone who knows that a foreign agent (or a person in contact with one) is in the Union commits an offence, if he does not report this to the police.

The Bill also states that anyone who has at any time associated with a foreign agent, or in whose possession the name and address of one is found, is presumed to be guilty of "communicating with a foreign agent," and the onus is on him to prove the contrary.

FREE ALWYN FOR CHRISTMAS!

—SAY LEE-WARDEN AND GIBSON

CAPE TOWN.—Mr. L. B. Lee-Warden, M.P., of the Congress of Democrats, and Mr. J. T. R. Gibson, twice Liberal Party candidate in the parliamentary elections for the Cape Western Circle, have joined in sending a telegram to the Minister of Justice asking for a Christmas amnesty for John Alwyn, the Worcester leader who is serving an eighteen months' prison sentence after a conviction under the Suppression of Communism Act.

"In keeping with the Christmas spirit of goodwill we strongly urge you to grant an amnesty to John Alwyn to permit him to rejoin his family and children for the festive season," says the telegram.



LILIAN NGOYI

"We Will Not Carry Passes"

—A.N.C. Women

BLOEMFONTEIN.

The African National Congress Women's League, attended by 133 delegates from four provinces, protested vehemently last week against the Government's decision to impose passes on African women.

The women resolved that they will not under any circumstances carry the humiliating passes, and pledged to throw the League's entire weight into the organisation of African mothers to withhold their children from Verwoerd's poisoned wells—the Bantu schools.

Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi, the newly elected National President of the Women's League, appealed to all women to discard all fear in the struggle against injustices.

She declared, "if the Government deports women in the impending struggle against passes, they will bring new hope to those in whose midst they are thrown in their deportation; if they are sent to jail they will convert the jails into institutions for universal education."

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