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G. 862.

TRANSVAAL INDIAN YOUTH CONGRESS.

11TH ANNUAL MEETING.

17th June 1956.

DUNCAN HALL, JOHANNESBURG.

AGENDA.

- 1. OPENING ADDRESS. *D. H. M. Moolah read in*
Dr. M.M. Motale. absence of
- 2. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS. *Mr. E.M. Moolah. Motale.*
- 3. RESOLUTION FROM CHAIR.
- 4. FRATERNAL DELEGATES AND MESSAGES. *General Chairman*
- 5. GUEST SPEAKER. *Dr. R.E. Press. J.A. Longwell of*
Democrats
- 6. MINUTES OF THE 10TH ANNUAL MEETING.
- 7. SECRETARIAL REPORT (POLITICAL). Mr. M.M. Moolah.
Discussion.
- 8. PAPER ON EDUCATION. Mr. M.A. Moosajee.
Discussion.
- 9. RESOLUTION ON CULTURE. Mr. E. Jessat.
- 10. NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTIONS.

LUNCH AND ENTERTAINMENT.

- 11. SECRETARIAL REPORT (ORGANISATION) Mr. S.M. Esakjee.
Discussion.
- 12. PAPER ON YOUNG WORKERS. Mr. F.A. Adams.
Discussion.
- 13. ELECTIONS.
- 14. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION (IF ANY).
- 15. TREASURERS' REPORT. Mr. H. Pillay.
Discussion.
- 16. RESOLUTIONS:-
a). Political. b). Sports.
- 17. GENERAL.

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ADDRESS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
TRANSVAAL INDIAN YOUTH CONGRESS

17th JUNE 1956

G. 861

Mr. Chairman and Orators,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I have accepted your kind invitation to address the 1956 Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress. Knowing as I do the past record of the T.I.Y.C. and having had the privilege of personal contact with at least some of the activists of the Youth Congress, I know that in addressing your Annual General Meeting I shall be in good company. I had hoped to be present in person so that I may be able to renew old contacts and make new ones. More so I would have liked to be present if for no other reason, only to infect myself with a little of the boundless enthusiasm that I know permeates your ranks or perhaps to borrow a little from the courage that is characteristic of youth dedicated to so noble and worthwhile a task as you have dedicated yourselves to.

The year that has passed since your last Annual General Meeting has seen the consolidation of the Nationalist stranglehold on South Africa and when one views the distinctly fascist actions of the Nationalist Party Government, one cannot help being possessed by a sense of frustration and despair at the trend of events in the country. I am convinced, however, that the overall picture of the events of the past twelve months does not warrant any feelings of despair. For even though the forces of reaction have taken a forward march, during the year under review, there have been on the march also other forces which even though not easily discernible, yet nevertheless have continued to operate. Both nationally and internationally the forces of freedom, peace and progress have also taken significant strides. Particularly in the two continents of Africa and Asia, powerful forces have been at work seeking to readjust the old social relationships which have relegated for centuries vast masses of humanity to a position which they could no longer tolerate.

The Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung in Indonesia last year has demonstrated in no uncertain manner the determination of the people of the two Continents to rid themselves of centuries-old subjugation and exploitation and to take a hand in the shaping of their own destiny.

In Asia the struggles of the oppressed have gathered momentum during the past year. In Malaya and Indo-China the imperialist powers have suffered severe setbacks and the struggles of the colonial peoples in those countries have continued.

In the Middle East these movements have assumed proportions hitherto unknown and the vigour with which foreign control is challenged makes the position of imperialism daily untenable in the Middle East.

While imperialism, in the twilight of its life, hangs on grimly to its depleted resources in Asia, in Africa too it is being challenged more increasingly. In the French and Spanish possessions of Algeria, Tunis and Morocco the movements for national liberation have developed to an extent which promises to make French political control of these territories a thing of the past in the near future.

The Gold Coast has moved on steadily towards complete independence. The people of Nigeria and the Sudan have taken strides towards the winning of political power.

In Kenya and Uganda the people continue relentlessly their long and bitter struggle for a better life.

In the Central African Federation the African workers continue to consolidate their organisations in order to prepare for the bitter struggles that lie ahead in this new refuge of the imperialists upon whom Asia has served notice to quit.

From Cyprus in the north to South Africa in the South, from British Guiana in the west to Malaya in the east, the urge of the common man for a better life has set afoot powerful movements to disturb the old order. More often than not the people have won concessions and the oppressors have been on the retreat. Everywhere old prejudices are being swept aside, horizons have widened, barriers have broken down. Only in our own country reaction has gained the upper hand and oppression has been intensified.

In South Africa the past year has seen the growth of the stranglehold on the political life of the country by the Nationalist party. The impotence of parliamentary opposition has become more apparent each day. More and more legislation designed to render ineffective all opposition to Nationalist rule has been enacted. For the Non-European people particularly the past year has been one of great tribulation. The implementation of the Bantu Education Act has been carried out with a ruthless determination for which the Nationalist party has become notorious.

The Industrial Conciliation Act Amendment Act seeks to render, through apartheid, even more defenceless the non-white workers already suffering untold exploitation through the original iniquitous Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924.

New regulations for the extension of the Pass system to African women are being contemplated.

The Senate Act and the South Africa Act Amendment Act, designed to disfranchise the Coloured voters and thus to strengthen the Nationalist stranglehold, have disillusioned even the most optimistic amongst the population and have proved beyond any shadow of doubt the intention of the Nationalist party to enforce for all time a one-party dictatorship in South Africa.

The banning of the accredited leaders of the Non-European people and European democrats have continued through the past year. Restrictions have been imposed more rigorously upon the movement of individuals and the right of freedom of speech and assembly drastically curtailed. Intimidation through police raids on the premises of decent law-abiding citizens on the pretext of investigating treason and sedition has become the stock tactic of the government. Youths in their teens are subject to visits by the Special Branch of Mr. Smart for no other crime but that of being seen at a political meeting. Indiscriminate bans have been imposed upon literature in the past year.

These and other acts of the government, too numerous to detail and revolting to civilised society everywhere have so contracted the territory of individual freedom that South Africa today, much to the abhorrence of all those who value democracy the world over, stands condemned as an almost fully fledged fascist state.

Yet even in the face of the savage onslaught on the lives and liberties of the people something has been achieved by the forces of democracy and progress during the year under review. As in previous years it was left to the national organisations of the Non-European people to shoulder the responsibility, in conjunction with the Congress of Democrats, of offering resistance to the diabolical schemes of the government.

The determined 1955 boycott of Bantu Education schools in many Transvaal towns even if unstained, reflect the mood of the militant African people of the Transvaal led by the African National Congress.

The emergence of the South African Congress of Trade Unions as the mouthpiece of the downtrodden and heavily exploited non-white workers of South Africa is a significant and important step in the struggle to rid South Africa of economic exploitation of the masses and the national oppression of the Non-European racial groups. But perhaps the greatest task accomplished by the Congresses in conjunction with the South African Congress of Trade Unions was the formulation of the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter adopted at Klip-town at the historic Congress of the People is the most noteworthy achievement of the year. In a colour and race conscious country such as is South Africa, the adoption of the Freedom Charter at a mass assembly attended by thousands of delegates of all colours is of tremendous significance at the present stage of development of the movement for the establishment of democratic rights for all. The adoption of the Freedom Charter represents the first concrete attempt on the part of the people of South Africa to displace all narrow loyalties to race and colour with a broader and healthier loyalty to a set of ideals which are acknowledged by democratically minded people the world over. This is a tremendous step forward on the road to freedom for all, for in a multi-racial country such as South Africa there can never be peace or freedom until considerations of race and colour give way to those of justice and fairplay for all. I am quite convinced that the problems of South Africa will find a permanent and satisfactory solution only on the basis of the fulfilment of the Freedom Charter.

South Africa stands today at the cross-roads. The road to fascism appears to be the more easily accessible, the journey to democracy long and arduous. The hour of decision has arrived particularly for the white population of the country. They either take the stand alongside all others irrespective of race or colour who are prepared to struggle against fascist tyranny or they remain aloof from the struggles of the masses and thereby themselves increasingly endure all that is loathsome and foreign to democracy. The tragedy of our times and our country is that European public opinion is notoriously oblivious of the threat of fascism that looms large over the country. The result is that the European opposition parties continue to remain ineffective to a point of being completely impotent. The United Party cannot seriously challenge the Nationalists for the reason that fundamentally it stands for exactly what the Nationalists stand for, i.e. the rule of the minority over the majority of the people. The difference between segregation and apartheid is not fundamental, it is merely a matter of detail. Who does not know that apartheid could never be applied except on the foundations of the racial segregation policies of the United Party. The Federals and the Anti-Republican League appear to be in serious earnest in their struggle against the Nationalists but their efforts are doomed to fail (as did those of the late Torch Commando) for the simple reason that they do not believe in democracy for all and therefore have to continue their struggle isolated from the struggles of the masses of the country. The Liberal Party, though it professes belief in the extension of democratic rights to all is scared out of its wits at the mere thought of being labelled communist and therefore refuses to co-operate with the organisations of the people, i.e. the Congresses and carries on its lone battle which makes no greater impression than that of the proverbial cry in the wilderness.

Such being the state of the European opposition parties the responsibility for the prosecution of the struggle for democracy falls heavily again upon the national organisations of the Non-European people. In the struggles that lie ahead of us in the coming year the youth movement has a role to play no less important than that of any other unit of the liberatory movement. In the present context of circumstances in which we find ourselves I am quite convinced that the liberatory movement cannot succeed

without the active participation in it of the country's youth. There is no power on earth that can thwart the determined endeavour of conscious, enlightened and militant youth. You have established a tradition of militancy that is second to none. The courageous manner in which some of your members have devoted themselves to the tasks of the liberation movement has served to inspire the conscious youth of our country. It remains now for you to rededicate yourselves to the tasks that lie ahead, with yet greater determination. REMEMBER THAT THE GREATER THE EFFORT AND THE SACRIFICE THE MORE SPLENDID WILL BE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY.

Even though the immediate future appears to be black there should be no cause for despair. There are signs already, slight perhaps, but nevertheless signs, that all is not well in the camp itself of the apostles of apartheid. The economic implications and contradictions of apartheid will become apparent each day for the preaching of apartheid is not quite the same thing as the implementation of apartheid. During the past few months it has become noticeable that those who have been peddling around their pet theory of apartheid are themselves not quite agreed on the exact meaning of this magical but nebulous theory. In the coming year it may be expected that these dissensions will grow and mount to the surface with the problems that the implementation of apartheid will present. It is possible also that the solid wall of reaction that has stood behind the label of apartheid for eight long years will begin to crumble however slowly that process may come into being. It is possible too that the white electorate, for years the tools of the United Party mining and industrial magnets and Nationalist zamindars may awake to the realisation that apartheid is, after all, not the panacea for the problems of South Africa. Perhaps sooner than we imagine it will be realised that the problems of South Africa are capable of permanent solution only by the acceptance of the principles enunciated in the great and historic Freedom Charter. We must rededicate ourselves in the coming year to the great tasks that await us, with the unshakable conviction that the oppressed people of South Africa must inevitably reach their unalterable destiny - democracy and freedom from all forms of oppression and exploitation.

In the name of democracy I salute the militant youth of the Transvaal through this Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress. All power to the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress! May your labours never cease until we reach our cherished goal - freedom in our lifetime!

MAYIBUYE!

AFRIKA!

Collection Number: AD1812

RECORDS RELATING TO THE 'TREASON TRIAL' (REGINA vs F. ADAMS AND OTHERS ON CHARGE OF HIGH TREASON, ETC.), 1956 1961

TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

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