

MEETING : AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS : SOUTH AFRICAN COLOURED  
PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION : TRANSVAAL INDIAN CONGRESS, AND THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS : CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE  
CONFERENCE : TRADES HALL, 30 KERK STREET, JOHANNESBURG, ON  
SUNDAY, 25TH JULY, 1954.

CHAIRMAN : (E.P. Moretsele) "I call upon Mr. Slovo to clarify the whole position ! "

SLOVO : "Mr. Chairman, as I have already indicated, that this meeting is a meeting for representatives of organisations. We understand that a number of individuals representing the C.I.D. have come to this meeting and they have indicated that they have no warrant to enter this meeting, that they are unaware of the fact, that they think that this is a public meeting and that they have the right to be here.

Well, it was indicated quite clearly that this is not a public meeting and they have no right to be here and I want to put a resolution to this meeting at this stage, that an application be made to the Supreme Court, that an application be granted to the Chairman of the Credentials Committee, so that all unauthorised persons should leave this Congress meeting and I want you here to first of all to pass this resolution that this meeting authorises Mr. Pieter Beyleveld, Mr. Harold Wolpe, to make an immediate application to the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court to have all unauthorised persons removed from this gathering".

(Audience sang various songs).

CHAIRMAN : "Now, we are about to start and I shall ask you to get up and sing". (Nkosi Sekelele Afrika!)

CHAIRMAN : "Ladies and Gentlemen, this conference is a conference of all people who have the inheritance of Africa, irrespective of race or colour. This is one of the most fully representative conferences, not a conference based on the colour bar. This is a conference which is going to build peace and create love, not like other conferences which are like those of the Nationalists, which are to create race hatred and all other discriminatory laws. This conference is also not a conference of the United Party which don't want to come out into the open and show their policy. This is a conference based on building a South Africa for everyone to live in happily.

You people who are assembled here today, the safety and future of this land is in your hands. The Nationalist Party and the United Party clique have refused to come to this conference. I must tell them that this country has never been safe under their guidance or in their hands.

We will speak again and again until the people of this country have justice. No laws can ever be just whilst the majority of the people are shut outside when laws are made. Unless the people of this country are all allowed the privilege of voting, making the government, making the laws themselves, South Africa will never be a safe place for everybody to live in.

If we were fully represented in Parliament, there will not be Pass laws, there will not be any oppressive laws. The oppressive laws are made for the black man only because there is nobody to represent him in Parliament. There is one by the name of Verwoerd, a member of the Nationalist Party, this man when he goes about addressing Nationalist meetings, he classifies the Africans as similar things to cattle or an ass on a farm. There is another, who also goes around, he is a Nationalist, telling the people, saying that the Congress and the United Party are one thing, we want to tell you this, there is no such a thing. If the member of the United Party are prepared to create any disturbance, or cause bloodshed, Congress is not an organisation which is for bloodshed, it is a peaceful organisation.

One of them again, a Nationalist in a statement made by the 'Vaderland', says the African National Congress is a Communist organisation. I wonder how do they come about to call our organisation a communist organisation, because we come here to describe our troubles to congress, we are not communists, we are only asking for our legitimate interests. I want to know, that seeing that we have a Riotous Assemblies Act, and this Act is applied to people who create racial strife and race hatred, why is it that this man, this member of the Nationalist Party, who runs about the country, giving false information, and creating race disturbances, is not charged under the same Riotous Assemblies Act ?

We as Africans, we who hate nobody, we wish to say and tell you that there are Europeans who understand the situation today, we hate nobody through his colour, but I must say that those Europeans who are assembled in Parliament, making laws for us whilst we are excluded, let them know that well, that we are not going to accept which is detrimental to our progress. If they themselves were in our shoes, and laws were made for them, and they were just told to obey those laws, they would not agree with them because those laws were made in their absence and they did not take part in the making of those laws.

We shall organise the people, we shall organise them and we shall go on organising. That is all you can do, to ban, but you will never close our mouths, because you are deporting us in the continent of Africa: They can see that we must win this freedom, and.../3

and we shall even shut the mouths of those people they deport us to, until freedom is won in Africa. I have noticed something, that there are certain races which ~~undermine~~ other races. When we sing our National Anthem, then they are sitting down with their big stomachs. If a fool comes amongst you and wants to provoke you, only because he thinks he has got machine guns and everything behind him, make him a fool.

I want to tell you, the African National Congress is a people's organisation. As we are assembled here, even in our congress, we are not here to create trouble. What happened previously, most of you know what happened. It is still going to happen we know, they think we don't know, but we want to appeal to you, we did not call this meeting for the police, just do what we tell you when they come to listen to us. We must not get excited, we must rule this country in a proper manner. (Applause.) So I am appealing to you, show these people that you are better people than themselves, we did not come here for trouble. We came here to discuss ways and means, but let them know one thing, without bloodshed, like the Afrikaners took this country without bloodshed, we are going to rule this country and make everybody happy and proud. We will go on with discussions, we don't care, who is going to stop us ?

They must tell Mr. Malan and Mr. Verwoerd, of course Swart is sick, we might not get him, (Laughter) all the clique, that we are going to rule this country, we are going to take it with our bare hands, they don't know the secret, but we are going to take it and we are going to rule this country, and I hope we shall have confidence in our discussions here. What you have to do, listen people, listen, from this table we shall tell you what to do. When we say sit down, sit down and don't be like a policeman, sit down, I want you to mark anybody who is going to come here with his mad ideas, you must know when a man does not belong to us, he stands by the Police, you must not look at those people, you must take your education from this table and listen to us.

Now this meeting will be opened by the honourable Dr. Conco. Before I allow the doctor to open the meeting, I shall introduce to you our guests of honour who are here assembled. Here we have Mr. (Yengwa). Mr. (Yengwa is from Natal). Here we have Dr. Conco, he is Treasurer-General of the African National Congress. (Further names inaudible).

Ladies and gentlemen, if you do anything with a free heart that thing must win, but if you do anything with fear you are bound to make mistakes. I say this because I want to open your hearts so that when you give to the congress, this money must just come freely, you must empty all your pockets. I shall...../4

I shall call upon the doctor to open this conference and Mr. Mfeko shall interpret".

DR. CONCO : "Mr. Chairman and friends, I find myself honoured to open this historic conference of the people in the Transvaal. This conference is the outcome of a most important resolution passed at the last conference of the African National Congress. With this resolution the African National Congress instructs the executive to invite all other organisations to organise and call a nation-wide conference of the people of South Africa irrespective of race, colour or creed. To this call the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured People's Organisation joined hands to organise and launch this historic conference to draw up and plan for true freedom throughout South Africa. This is a fact because no such conference has ever been called before.

It will be a true Freedom Charter because it will enshrine the aspirations of all the people of South Africa, black and white, illiterate and literate, intellectuals and common men in the street, a conference in short of all shades of opinion and of all beliefs. That is why, therefore, all of us here are on the correct road. This is the road to freedom because the indication to this historic conference comes from Africans in chains in the land of their birth. It is the road to freedom because it comes from the majority in this country. Let us point out the way to true happiness and democracy in South Africa. The African people through their national organisation the African National Congress are pledged to free not only the non-whites but also the whites. The whites must be liberated from fear. This fear exposes itself in the legislation that is passed in South Africa. This fear is expressed best in the racial theme of apartheid. If true democracy consider that all people should have the unalienable right to afford to all men equal political, social and economic opportunities, we all here are on the true road to freedom. Apartheid says there are differences between various people and holds that these differences implies the principle of obedience to the will of the master race. It compares to slaves all who are capable of following the will of the master race and to exterminate, or to use a very common South African expression, to ban all those who are unable to make themselves unique in its full operation.

Apartheid has a grandfather - fascism in its last phase : The growth of the liberatory movement in South Africa, the liberatory movement in the East and the liberatory movement in Africa cannot but take notice of the struggle for freedom in South Africa. It is for us to know, the African National Congress, and the South African Indian Congress, whilst retaining their full identity as

as national organisations, are no longer isolated organisations, but together with the South African Congress of Democrats, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation are part of the other liberatory movements. The future object or aim of the whole liberatory movement is to awaken the political consciousness of the non-whites, to fight the Nationalists and to get the present rulers in the Union to accept the non-whites on this basis of equality and no other and to give them full democratic rights with a full say in the government of the country.

It is therefore very important that we must regard our liberatory movement in the Union as part of the liberatory movement in the whole of Africa and in fact in the whole world where there are oppressed people. We believe that all oppressed people in South Africa must be liberated if this country is to realise its full development. We in the Union have pledged ourselves to adopt a new method to attain our freedom, that is the non-violent method. The African National Congress has set in motion the liberatory movement, it can well be regarded as being the father of the movement in the Union. Contrary to the criticism of some of us, it was the African National Congress which took the initiative in inviting other organisations to discuss the matter of joining immediately to draw up a militant programme against the oppressive measures of the present rulers of South Africa.

In 1949 a programme of action was drawn up and was received with approval by the annual conference of the African National Congress. It is proper to report it here that in this programme of action many forms was discussed and the militant programme of action was agreed upon in principle. Non-violence of participants became our aim. A Non-violence campaign for the defiance of unjust laws was organised by the leading organisations among the non-whites, the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress and the Native Representative Council, was raised as one of the most significant events in the political history of South Africa. Many events followed in its wake. It is accounting for the notorious congress which produced the Defiance Campaign. There are lessons to be learnt from this campaign, both about ourselves and about the rulers of this country. About ourselves we learnt that a joint struggle, a joint struggle was not only well received by our people, but was equally well received by the world at large. About our rulers we learnt the fact that they were really shaken. About ourselves the biggest lesson that we learnt from the Defiance Campaign, it accelerated the political consciousness of the people, it gave them a new feeling of courage and confidence in themselves as a people. But even more profound, it brought to the forth a new awareness of the policy of united and

and co-operative action by all oppressed people irrespective of colour or class. That is why the African National Congress opened its wings wider in order to have a wider circle of co-operation to include other organisations.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are on the road to freedom. The road to freedom is by no means an easy one, though I can assure you all here that it is the correct one. There are three obstacles in our road, let us deal with them one by one.

The first one - racial discrimination and segregation. This is the traditional policy of South Africa, a heritage not only of the Voortrekkers but a consistent policy of all colonists and fascists; the present life in the Union is based strongly on the domination of the European races over the non-whites. When the four provinces entered into Union in 1910 these conditions prevailed throughout the years into Union in 1910 and the traditional segregation was reborn in 1948 as apartheid. Apartheid is nothing more than segregation remade with an emphasis more than ever before. Apartheid was reborn in 1948 and to keep this hold is the modern policy of certain sections of the white people of South Africa - amongst them a certain section, not all the white people. Some are building their hopes on the apartheid song for fear of frightening away capital from South Africa. Amongst some of the ideals which the Nationalists strive for are the following :-

(1) that the Africans should be made to recognise races and colours, of the differences in social, economical and political rights, that the situation should provide for the (precise) dominance, dominance of the African nation at all times, some hope that it will be for ever. (2) That the Non-Europeans should be given such education that they will not be able to come up. That is what they call maintaining Western civilization. These are the Nationalists principles for 1954, for South Africa, and we who are taking a new road, we will be free. The ruling power, that is the Nationalist Party, have been deceiving the people of South Africa with the fear of apartheid, they have been conditioned by these leaders - the Nationalist Party to oppose any measure that would give the Non-Europeans a say in the affairs of this country.

Beware, ladies and gentlemen, we shall see things on our road to freedom. The people are scared for the re-actions when one talk of equality and of equal rights for all. This is indeed very tragic of the people who believe themselves to be freed by the hand of God. The Union is ruled by a clique of dictators who continually threaten to ban leaders, leaders of the liberatory movement. ..../7

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, is is openly as a result of fear under which these people are working. These leaders are banned under the pretext that they create hostility between black and white, meanwhile Ministers of the Crown, issue, some of them issue racial statements which in fact create hostility between black and white. Where do we blacks stand? Thank God, the Ministers of South Africa know where we stand. But let them know that we in South Africa, despite all bans and deportations, that we shall continue in the non-violent plan and no amount of bans and deportations will stop us. (Applause) We also assure them that in this land of our birth we pledge to go on with our campaign for full citizenship until we have achieved freedom.

What is our basis of action of the future? We want to build up a civilization that will weather the storms of time, something that will shine without blemish, without fear, something under which we will suffer apartheid no longer. It is time to see what we owe ourselves and mankind. If the Herrenvolk white man wants to dynamite his own civilization by sitting at the door with his enemies, that is his own business. So far as we are concerned, we must never look back from our destiny, not even when we are threatened with such wicked systems as today with apartheid, bans and depotations and what not.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are on the road to freedom, and for us on this road, there is no turning back, we shall go forward and fight all difficulties lain before us. With this statement, Mr. Chairman I am very glad to open this conference of the people of the Transvaal Conference". (Shouts of Africa Mayebuye !)

CHAIRMAN : "Order ! Order ! There is a little mistake I made, of course I did not make it purposely, I was just in a hurry to hear the wonderful speech which was made. You have all heard this speech. What has been said here I presume and I hope you will all take it to those people who are not here today. The mistake I made will be rectified now and I ask Mr. Matle to propose certain names for the Credentials Committee".

MATOLE : "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I think without wasting your time I shall move the following names for the Credentials Committee. Of course we must have this committee in order that our work might be perfect. These are the names that I wish to move, Mr. Chairman :- Mr. (Wenden) (Maïke) Feinstein, (Wolfson or Paulson) and Paul Joseph.

Mr. Chairman I wish to move these names as the members of the Credentials Committee".

SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR : "Mr. Chairman I second the motion".

MATOLE : "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to move further names of the resolutions committee. These are the names - anyway I am sure you will add them to the first lot.

Helen Joseph ; Agie Patel ; and Mr. Barnes.

These are the three names I wish to move to the Resolutions Committee, Mr. Chairman. Well, Mr. Chairman, I move these names, are there a seconder for them?

CHAIRMAN : "Ladies and Gentlemen, I shall call upon Mr. J. Slovo to tell you what the aims are of the Congress of the People. I want you to listen to him very attentively. But I want you to know one thing, there is a certain bad air about, this called nationalism, African Nationalism, I do not know what that African Nationalism is. This thing about nationalism is all nonsense, if you want to be safe with your nationalism ideas, go to Malan he is a Nationalist. I am now going to call upon the next speaker, Mr. Joe Slovo. I want you to listen very attentively because now we are coming to the cream of the whole thing".

JOE SLOVO : "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen and fellow delegates, I am going to talk to you on the "volkswil" today, that is this will of the nation we hear from the lips of the Nationalist Ministers every second day or so.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am not going to talk about the 'volkswil' of the minority of the minority which is ruling today, I am not Mr. Chairman going to talk of the 'volkswil' which Swart is using to win and imprison his political opponents and to remove them from public by a stroke of the pen. I am not Mr. Chairman going to talk of the 'volkswil' of the so-called best benefactor of the African people, Verwoerd, who is going to remove sixty thousand souls from their homes in the Western Areas ; I am not Mr. Chairman going to talk of the 'volkswil' of Minister Schoeman who will not allow the African workers to combine together in order to fight for better conditions of labour ; I am not Mr. Chairman going to talk of that 'volkswil' which herds the majority of our people in the Reserves and in Meadowlands, nor Mr. Chairman am I going to talk of the 'volkswil' which some of you saw this morning demonstrated at the door, where in a country, where the law boys belonging to Mr. Swart's organisation, when it was suggested to them that this was a private gathering, that you have to have credentials to enter, one of the leaders amongst them raised his fist, that is their 'volkswil'. I am not Mr. Chairman going to talk about that type of 'volkswil' because I believe and I think you believe with me, that that is not the 'volk' and that is not the 'wil', and a man that can say that all these things are the will of the people of South Africa, he is what lawyers will call 'Guilty but insane'.



No Mr. Chairman, the 'volkswil' of which I am about to speak, is something completely different, it is the will of the majority of the workers in this land, for decent conditions, and for the right to organise a united states for better conditions, it is the will of the peasants to be left in peace to toil on their own soil and to be given more land. I want to talk of the will of the teachers not to be forced to teach the children that they must hate other racial groups, that they are to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. I want Mr. Chairman to talk of the will of the citizens not to be uprooted from their homes to suit the whim of some mad man. I want Mr. Chairman to talk today of the will of the people to be respected and not to be humiliated every moment of their lives, and above all Mr. Chairman, I want to talk of the will of the people to be allowed to say what they want to say.

The difference of the first type of 'volkswil' and the one I am going to talk about, I think it is best illustrated by the ruling of somebody that you might know which came out of the Defiance Campaign. You will remember that during the Defiance Campaign an election - a by-election was taking place in the constituency of Wakkerstroom. The European political parties regarded this election as a very important event. You will remember too that the farmers of Wakkerstroom in the result thought that the best persons to represent them was the Nationalists, and the Nationalists won that election. At about that time there was a young man who has joined the Defiance Campaign as a volunteer, when he was arrested he gave the usual salute which is familiar, the one of Afrika ! There was a policeman who was obviously overjoyed by the Nationalists' victory in Wakkerstroom, and he said Wakkerstroom!

Now Mr. Chairman the one 'volkswil', the one will of the people is the will of the people of Africa and the other is the will of a couple of farmers in Wakkerstroom. The one Mr. Chairman is the will of a clique whose policy may - for some of us today - will be laughed at by historians. The other Mr. Chairman is the will of the people who desire only, which is not very much, only that they be treated as people, but the will of the people, the majority of the people is not enough. This desire is becoming famous in the minds of individuals. The majority of the common men in this country have never in their whole history had the opportunity of publishing, voicing their desires, because the majority of the people of this country have never been given the opportunity to participate in the governing of the land and in the making of laws. When the majority of the people in this country suffer an injustice, we know that sometimes the only remedy that they have is to go and make a statement to the local police and we have heard sometimes what happened.

The type of justice from which the African suffers in South Africa today is, I think clearly illustrated by a story which might be familiar to some of you. This is the story of a lot of sheep who were becoming desperate because the wolves were coming every day and eating them up, and they decided they better do something about it, so they organised a conference with the wolves and at this conference they tried to work out a way to prevent the wolves from coming and devouring the sheep. And eventually, said the wolves to the sheep, that as soon as the sheep see a wolf coming to attack him, he has the right to grab it by the neck and take that wolf to the police station.

Now although Mr. Chairman it can be seen, the South African Liberatory Movement has a big task - of its unbroken records of struggle for the rights of the non-white people, never before in South African history have there been a desire to proclaim South Africa in the world what they want of life. In order to help to get that desire representatives of the people of South Africa have now gathered here today. Those of you who are here and are members of the African National Congress can well be proud of the fact that it is this organisation which was the first to issue the call - historic call for the Congress of the People. As a result of this historic call made at the last Queenstown Conference of the African National Congress, the African National Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats, the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured' People's Organisation have had two meetings and have laid the foundation for an organisation of this assembly.

Let me just say one more thing to Malan and his representatives, and I would say this to him ; in the past you have come down on the people's movement giving the excuse that what we have done is unconstitutional, is illegal and is leading to violence, although I have my point of view about this I do not want to argue about this now, but what I do want to say is that the Congress of the People is the most constitutional, the most legal and the most democratic business that has ever originated in the history of South Africa. All that we desire is that for the first time in South African history the voice of the people must be heard in the great assembly. If you are afraid of the voice of the people, then your fear is the fear of the devil. I also want to say this to them, that all that emerges from such a great conference will be a truer reflection of the will of the people than that which emerges from your discriminatory institutions. This assembly is not intended as an alternative Parliament which will attempt legislating, to supplement or to replace your Parliament, it has a limited aim and that is as I have already said to incorporate into the Freedom Charter the actions and aspirations of the

common man in South Africa. You, Dr. Malan has been invited to take part in the decisions of this conference, come along to this great assembly and convince us, if you can, convince the true representatives of the people of South Africa of the correctness of your policy. But Dr. Malan, convince us by words and by arguments and not by shambocks and by sten guns. Of course you might have learnt by now that shambocks and sten guns are the most unconvincing weapons that man has ever invented.

Now, let me tell you this about the conference of the people, at a meeting of the joint representatives which I have mentioned that it was decided that representatives of every section of our people, Indian, Coloured, Europeans and Africans coming from every factory, from every farm, from every mine, from every race, from every home and from every school, from every location and from every kraal, should come together and should discuss and adopt a Freedom Charter. This gathering, it has been decided, must take place as soon as possible, and in any case not later than June 1955. The assembly will be made on an occasion in addition to a meeting for a great cultural festival of the people of South Africa. Between sessions which we feel will last a session or over, I mean a week or over, groups from different parts of the country will be encouraged to demonstrate the arts and culture of their particular locality.

The organisation of this assembly has been entrusted to a body which is known as the National Action Council for the Congress of the People, and we believe, and I think you will all agree with us that such a broad scheme and such a democratic move cannot be the property of any one political group or a small number of political organisations. Therefore, the first step that the National Action Council has taken is to send out a form to every national body which exists in South Africa, including the Nationalist Party, whether the organisation be political, whether it be social, whether it be religious, to join with us too in this great demonstration of democracy. Already we have had a response and I might mention in particular that the South African Liberal Party has agreed to co-sponsor this campaign. Let me say that by this act they have placed themselves on the side of the people.

The second step you see today. Throughout the country today there are peoples conferences taking place electing provisional members of the people's committees on the same broad basis, and already your job, the job of everyone present at this conference, when it is over, is to go back to your locality and to organise local Congress of the People committees in every corner of your suburb and in every corner of your province. There must be a local Congress of the People committee in every village, in every mine, in every factory, in every kraal and so on.

Now it was already pointed out that the basic aim of this assembly will be to adopt a Freedom Charter. Those members who have worked in political organisations, prepare resolutions or prepare a statement which is placed before a group of delegates who adopt it. The Freedom Charter will not be just another resolution, just another statement or just another declaration, it will be a document drawn up by the people themselves. The question will be asked how can twelve million people draw up a document like the Freedom Charter. Is it possible? Yes it is! Again it must be emphasised that the closing date is October the 30th of this year by which time all the demands of the people must be in from every corner of the land. Every one must know that by October the 30th, what they desire must be incorporated into the Freedom Charter and although in certain cases those of you who are gathered here might be called upon to translate the desires of the people by assisting them in writing it down, the desires and the demands, the desires and the demands will be the desires and the demands of the common people in South Africa. It will not be for us Mr. Chairman at this stage to guess the importance of this. That will be discussed by the representatives of the people at the congress. It is merely for us to select every desire, every demand, no matter how small these things may seem to those people who are not affected by it. It might be that a group of peasants in a Reserve object to the refusal to be allowed to plough on the river banks, it might be that certain peasants object to do a certain type of work without being given overalls, let us get their demands too. It might be that parents object that they should provide school books for their children, it should be provided by the state, let us get their demands too. These are a few of the illustrations.

When all these demands are in from every corner of our land then the National Action Council will collect them and incorporate them in a vast Freedom Charter. I may say it here that the success of the first phase of the campaign of getting the people to express their desires and demands will depend to a large extent on the people who are gathered here and the number of local congresses of the people's committees which we are able to establish between now and October the 30th. The Freedom Charter when finally adopted by the people as their own document, in every school in every factory and farm - the call of the people to participate in this great assembly - and you will hear of the call after I have spoken. Our copies of this call are already at the printers and we must all see to it that a copy of this call to the Congress of the People find its way into every home in South Africa.

The next most important stage in this campaign will be the election of representatives of the people who will be sent by the people to this assembly.

After.../1

After the election the National Action Council will announce the time during which elections will be held throughout South Africa - either on the one day during the week. We cannot at this stage divide up the country into units and say that those units will be able to have so many representatives because we want every section of our people to be represented, it is inevitable that a certain amount of numerical irregularities in constituencies cannot be avoided. We cannot for instance say that a farm - a European farm which employ say twenty African labourers can have one representative for these twenty and that a location like Alexandra Township should also have one representative for every twenty inhabitants. Let me say at this stage that we cannot give you a precise guide, but one could say at this stage that the number of electoral units - that the number of constituencies will depend on the number of active local congress of the people committees, which you here form when you get back to the different parts of the Transvaal. But what have been decided is something which has never happened in South African history before, and that is that every person in South Africa, irrespective of race, colour or creed, will have a vote and elect his representative to the Congress of the People. Election date or election week must be made an occasion for great political demonstrations. Everywhere it must be a joyous occasion for the South African people and in the manner in which the delegates will be elected to the great assembly, here again we cannot be rigid. In some cases it will be possible to elect these representatives at public meetings, in other cases, in the mines or on the farms it might be possible to elect a representative by words of mouth from individual to individual, after all these representatives have been elected the date of the congress, this great assembly will then be announced.

The convening of thousands of delegates will take place. When a large number of delegates are gathered together, then we will organise freedom processions in every village and in every town. Wherever it is possible a number of delegates should come together and go on a freedom march. There is a question which will be asked, can we succeed in such a large plan, can we get the men for it? The National Action Council - have no doubt about it - that we will succeed, if we go about it in the right way.

Then there is the question of money. To pay for freedom if money is a very low price. We are confident that if this idea can fall the imagination of the majority of the people in South Africa as it has captured our imagination, we will not be short of funds. Every person that is here must regard it as his most important task to collect funds for the congress of the people. We need a large amount for our propaganda if it is to make any impression...../14

impression on the people. If we have not got enough money for our congress it will be the responsibility of the electorate themselves and we are confident that they will be prepared to make the financial sacrifices.

Some of might have already read in the newspapers about the appeal made by Chief Luthuli for fifty thousand volunteers. We are confident that the same spirit of the people that was the hall-mark of the Defiance Campaign will again be seen and they will be prepared to make, not sacrifices of going to gaol unnecessarily, of breaking the law, but giving up their spare time in order to spread this message of the Congress of the People throughout South Africa. The recruiting has already started and the National Action Council of the Congress of the People have emphasised August the 28th - that is next month as a national day of pledge and on this day all the volunteers who will have been recruited by this time will publicly take their pledges during the period of organising for the congress of the people.

In spreading the message for the Congress of the People, those who do it must bear in kind what the National Action Council has said in the circular which was sent out to all organisations. The message of the coming Congress of the People will inspire people and will everywhere awaken the people's minds with their own problems and with the vital needs of the country.

Now, the burden of this campaign for the Congress of the People will fall on you who are the most militant, the most political conscious section of the African people. When you get back to your homes talk about the Congress of the People, set up local committees of the people, start recruiting volunteers immediately, start collecting peoples demands, make it known in those parts of the country where there are not already organised units of the people, and collect money for this campaign.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, the question might be asked, what can the congress of the people achieve? I do not hold myself out as a prophet and I think that speculation is always bad, but what I say is this, this Congress of the People, if we go about in the right way will mean that we will have in every corner of our land, organised units, which will in itself be a tremendous advantage, it will stimulate the people into greater activity together, and their fellow men and women, and we must instill confidence in them, that confidence which is not there when people carry on an isolated struggle. The isolated demands of every group of people will be woven together in one great document and it will do away with the feeling of isolated defeatism which is the result of disconnected and sporadic acts of political struggle. We are going to get a lot of people and bound them together.

Above all Mr. Chairman it will give the people a feeling that this human document will be the property of all the people which will give them that assurance of a future for every decent South African.

Let me end Mr. Chairman by reading a paragraph from the circular which was sent out by the National Action Council. Those people and those organisations who refuse to take part in the Congress of the People will stand exposed as enemies of the democratically expressed opinions of the majority of the South African citizens and will lose the support and allegiance of all decent freedom-loving persons. Let us all say together, long live the voice of freedom, long live the Congress of the People".

CHAIRMAN : (E.P.M.) "Ladies and Gentlemen, you have all heard that the aims of congress are, the last speaker have told you. This Nationalist Party consisting of rich farmers and the - they call themselves Duct Reformed Churches, now these Dutch Reformed Churches preaches the fascism of the Nationalist Party. You all know that the policy - the Dutch Reformed Church policy is that of the Nationalist Party. You know that a white minister of the Dutch Reformed Church if he preaches in the African churches he does not mix with the white minister who preaches in white churches. He does not have to mix with them at all or discuss anything. He must stand aside, he is segregated because he has decided to preach for people who are not white. All these things, and that one particularly, we are fighting against, because we do not want fascism.

In the services in these churches they collect money, not only for orphans but also in order that their work can be spread amongst the people. You see the thing is money, everything is money, we understand that even Jesus Christ was killed through money, this man, this Judas - in order to give away Jesus Christ, was given money. The police who could not even go to church or go to sport had to come here on account of money, for the sake of money because if they do not come here they will be fired. Even this oppressive government must give these poor dogs money because if they dot get money they will not come here, they only stand here because they want money.

In order that our organisation must grow, that it must continue to grow, we must give money. If the organisation must show that it has grown in order that our gospel can be spread. You all know that the Europeans have always formed the ruling class, they always say that they do this for us, but we, we know that they do nothing for us. Most of you know - I wonder if most of you know that as soon as I put on a jacket, never mind if I have already paid oash. You see that mark, there is some indication

that from what is shown here, it states how much cash you paid for that jacket. Every article you buy you pay indirect taxes to the government. You, the African people, you are the majority consumers, you pay the most indirect taxes, so much that your children should be at school and they should get all the facilities that children should get. There is nothing that your government is doing for you. I want to appeal to you all to give free - to give freely so that our organisation may grow, even if you are a policeman please give freely because you, my friends - because you shall be liberated and you might have to go to sport too one day, please give freely. I am surprised what kind of reports they give to Malan and Strauss, I am sure they think the people are still in prison when they get out here. I want to appeal for a thousand pounds here and that thousand pounds must be a foundation - somebody has already thrown in one pound. We come here to sacrifice now.

Before I call the next speaker, the doctor here who have opened the conference has some other duties which he has to attend to in Durban and he must leave now and I appeal to you to greet him so that he can go back to Durban. I gladly allow the doctor to go and have his meal so that he can leave for Durban, he must be there by tonight.

Now Dr. Guy Routh is going to read the call to the Congress of the People. This is a form written by someone for the Congress of the People, it will be read by the doctor".

DR. GUY ROUTH : "We call the people of South Africa. Let us speak together of freedom ; we call the farmers of the reserves and the lands, let us speak of the wide lands and the narrow strips on which we toil, let us speak of brothers without land, that have children without schooling, let us speak of taxes and of cattle, let us speak of freedom.

We call the miners of coal, gold and diamonds, let us speak of the dark shafts and of cold compounds far from our families, let us speak of heavy labour and of long hours - let us go back to bad homes to die, let us speak of freedom !

We call the workers of farms and mines, let us speak of the rich food we grow and the laws that keep us poor, let us speak of harsh treatment, of homes and children forced to work, let us speak of private prisons, of bans and of the pass system.

We call the workers of factories and of shops, let us speak of the good things we make and the bad conditions of our work let us speak of the many passes and of the few jobs, let us speak of poor men and of transport and of trade unions and of holidays and of houses, let us speak of freedom !



We call the teachers, students and the preachers. Let us speak of the light that comes with learning, and the ways we are kept in darkness. Let us speak of great services we can render and the narrow ways that are open to us, let us speak of laws, and government and rights. Let us speak of freedom !

We call the housewives and the mothers. Let us speak of the fine children that we bear, and of their stunted lives. Let us speak of the many illnesses and deaths, and of the few clinics and schools. Let us speak of high prices and of shanty towns. Let us speak of freedom !

Let us speak together. All of us together - African and European, Indian and Coloured. Voter and voteless. Privileged and rightless. The happy and the homeless, all the people of South Africa, of the towns and of the countryside.

Let us speak together of freedom, and of the happiness that can come to men and women if they live in a land that is free. Let us speak together of freedom and of how to get it for ourselves, and for our children.

Let the voice of all the people be heard, and let the demands of the people, all the people for the things that will make us free be recorded. Let the demands be gathered together in a great charter of freedom.

We call on all good men and true, to speak now of freedom, and to write their own demands into the charter of freedom.

We call on all who love liberty to pledge their lives from here on to win the freedoms set out in the Charter.

We call all the people of South Africa to prepare for :- The Congress of the People, where representatives of the people, will meet together in a great assembly, to discuss and adopt the Charter of Freedom.

Let us speak together of freedom. Let us work together for the Freedom Charter. Let us organise together for the Congress of the People.

Let us go forward together to freedom ! "

(Audience - Afrika Mayebye ! repeatedly.)

**CHAIRMAN** : "There will be time for adjournment. If we are for this conference we will do what we are called upon to do. We are being to liberty. We are being called".

**SPEAKER** : "Friends, we are now going to have lunch, you must avoid a rush for the kitchen. Now I will allow the people on this side to go through and get their food and come back, we will go and so on like that".  
(Lunch). .. /18

CHAIRMAN : "Ladies and Gentlemen, we are going to resume the second session of conference, I ask you all now to take your seats so that we can proceed with the agenda. The next item on the agenda is a call for volunteers by Mr. A.M. Kathrada. I have been asked to take the chair in the absence of Mr. Beylveld who is busy at the moment to ask for an order of court. I appeal to you to take your seats and listen attentively to Mr. Kathrada. Mr. Kathrada ! " (Applause.)

A.M. KATHRADA : Mr. chairman and Friends, it is my task this afternoon to speak to you about the task of volunteers - of the freedom volunteers. If I want to describe in one word what the tasks of the freedom volunteers are I would say that our freedom volunteers are going to be the top brigade - of the fifty thousand strong in the army of national liberation in this country. Every army in the world has got its hard core of men to rely upon under all circumstances, to perform a task that has great difficulties, that has greater hardships and tasks, that demands greater vigilance and sacrifices than the rest of the tasks.

Our freedom volunteers are going to provide that hard core of men in our army of liberation. In our army of national liberation led by the Congress Movement in this country, but ours is not going to be like the armies you know. Quite unlike the Imperialist's armies known to the masses of Asia and Africa through the hundreds and hundreds of years of oppression. Quite unlike the armies of so-called Western civilization who have perpetrated the most monstrous and hideous crimes in Korea and Kenya. Quite unlike the armies of the so-called enlightened nations who have left behind the hundred thousand illegitimate children in Germany and Japan, quite unlike all these, in fact, in contrast to these. Ours is going to be a new kind of army with a new kind of religion. Ours is going to be the so-called torch burners of civilization, what civilization means. Ours is going to carry light and truth to areas and to people who have been deliberately kept in darkness for years and years and years. Ours is going to be the four corners of South Africa, not with guns, not with bombs, and other weapons, ours is going to organise the people, not for rape, not for destruction, our volunteers are going into the field with a purpose far stronger than everything we have seen before. Ours is a non-violent army, we consider ourselves too civilized to resort to barbarism and our mission is to organise the greatest assembly in the history of South Africa on our march to freedom.

Previously Mr. Chairman, I have already explained what the Congress of the People is, what its aims are and do not wish to cover the same ground again, but there is one point I feel I must emphasise. In the great Defiance Campaign we have been dividing

the country in two distinct camps, the camp for peace and freedom led by the African National Congress and the camp for reaction and oppression led by the Malan Government. Yes, the Congress of the People must provide the next opportunity to emphasise democratic South African demands and take our struggle to a higher level. And it is for the carrying out of these aims that our freedom volunteers will have to play a great part. There are a great number of tasks which the volunteers will be called upon to perform, tasks that oppressed South Africa is looking upon them to perform with determination and courage and with confidence; on our path there is no turning back.

The important thing therefore is that these freedom volunteers must realise this does not just mean finding another form of joining another society. All of us should realise that our path are not going to be smooth and full of roses. The primary task of the freedom volunteers as has already been explained from the platform, is to carry the call - the message, to bring the Congress of the people to every nook and corner of South Africa; to every individual and to every corner of every street, and every home, and every factory and farm, to every school and university and every place wherever there are people. Volunteers must discuss with the people their conditions, their demands and have it carefully studied, they must bring back these details to the organisers who will then have the aspirations of all of us in South Africa and they can then record it in the charter of freedom. The volunteers must at all times bear in mind that we are going to the masses of the people of our country not with something we hope, something that is far far away from their day to day life.

The Congress of the People must be made into a living movement taking into account each minute detail and ensure that these are conveyed to the proper committees for discussion. The volunteers must for instance explain the Bantu Education Act as a scheme for creating a servile nation of slaves, they must explain the Group Areas Act, the Native Resettlement Act, the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, they must talk about the fierce attempt that have been made to be-head our congress movement of its leadership, of the Pass Laws, that drive hundreds of thousands of people every year to prison and which are used to provide slave labour for the farms. They must talk and listen to complaints about housing, about transport, about rent, about cost of living, about the price of bread, about everything they have to talk about. And after talking to these people, then as Mr. Slovo has said, we must not allow the matter to lie there, it must be the aim of the volunteers to set up congress of the people committees in every establishment where it is possible to set up one. In every factory, on the mines, on the white farms, in every mine we must and can find two or three people./20

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

**TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961**

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