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The keynote of the deliberations at the 22nd Biennial Conference of the South African Indian Congress was the total rejection of apartheid and all its ramifications. The Conference, in a resolution declared that the policy of apartheid is purely and solely aimed at bringing about an oppressive fascist dictatorship of the minority over the masses of the people of South Africa. It noted the implementation of apartheid was causing bitter racial contention and conflict in South Africa, being based on the ideology of race superiority and that it must inevitably lead to racial oppression and strife. It therefore constituted a serious threat to world peace.

Delegates at Conference unanimously acclaimed the bold, courageous decisions taken by the leaders and organisations of the African people at the Bloemfontein Conference which was recently convened by the Interdenominational Ministers' Federation. The Conference representing as it does, South Africans of Indian origin, solemnly pledged that it will do everything in its power to assist in the convening of a national multiracial conference to form a broad, united front against apartheid.

The most critical issue that faced delegates at the Conference was the implementation of the Group Areas Act which means the uprooting of thousands of people in settled communities from their homes and businesses. On Saturday afternoon, most of the discussion centred around this particular issue and after lunch on Sunday, in a resolution moved by Dr. A.H. Sader of Ladysmith and seconded by Mr. Salim Saleh the Conference rejected the Group Areas Act and demanded its immediate repeal. Conference expressed its strong determination to defend to the utmost Indian homes, places of business and means of livelihood and all the social, educational, cultural and religious institutions which were built and fostered with sweat and toil. The Conference called for the establishment of Regional and Local committees of all sections of the people to bring into united action all those who are opposed to the Group Areas Act and also called on the Executives of the constituent bodies of the S...I.C. to organise a Day of Hartal and prayer to arouse the conscience of South Africa and the world.

Conference also called on the Indian people in South Africa not to aid or acquiesce in the implementation of Group Areas in any manner whatsoever and not to move into proposed Group Areas such as Lenasia proclaimed for Indians.

This resolution was moved in hushed silence and delegates who were waiting patiently for a lead from the S.A.I.C. against the callous and inhuman intentions of the Government, realised the task that faced them in the immediate future.

Conference also spent considerable time in discussing the trend in South Africa during the last 2 years towards a one-party dictatorial regime of a fascist character. In 2 separate resolutions, Conference condemned the Suppression of Communism Act and viewed with concern the Police State methods used by the Special Branch to intimidate supporters of the Congress and Trade Union Movements. It expressed its strongest indignation at the threat of a Government spokesman to ban the African National Congress in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. It regarded such threat as the expression of the police state mentality which is unable either to answer or to tolerate democratic criticism and opposition. It specifically condemned the Government for refusing Passports to persons even remotely connected with the Peoples Movements, refusal of permits to South Africans of Indian origin who wished to travel from one province to another in pursuance of their political and trade union and business activities. It also condemned the police raids made on the homes and offices of Peoples Leaders.

Conference accepted that "the law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children and to the privacy of their homes from police raids shall be protected by law and all shall be free to travel without restriction from countryside to town, from Province to Province, and from South Africa abroad.

The S.A.I.C. met at Conference for the first time after the historic Congress of the People held at Kliptown in June last year, un-animously adopted the Freedom Charter which it regarded as significant and the assembly at which it was formulated as unique in that it was the first multiracial conference held in South Africa to lay down the basic minimum demands of the people both black and white for Freedom and Democracy.

Mr. G. Hurbans of Natal presided throughout the sessions of Conference which was opened by Chief A.J. Luthuli, President-General of the African National Congress. Delegates at Conference displayed a remarkable appreciation of the grave political situation that faced not only the Indian people but also other sections of the South African population and in very serious debate felt that there was no effective parliamentary opposition to the present Government except the

extraparliamentary forces such as the Congresses. The sessions which started on Friday concluded on late Sunday Afternoon and was attended by numerous visitors from all sections of the population who displayed a very keen interest in the deliberations of the S.A.I.C.

Dr. G.H. Naicker was elected President of the S.A.I.C. and Mr. G. Hurbans and Advocate H.E. Mall were unanimously elected Joint Secretaries, to serve for a period of 2 years. Dr. A.H. Sader and Mr. F. Ebrahim, an old stalwart were elected Joint Treasurers .

Sessions closed with recorded songs rendered by Congressmen from Pietermaritzburg singing the praises of the Congress Movement.

South African Indian Congress

37, West Street,

JOHANNESBURG,

21st October, 1956.

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The South African Indian Congress and other democratic forces of South Africa pointed out very clearly the effects of the Group Areas Bill and condemned it in no uncertain manner when it was before Parliament. Despite our strong opposition this Bill became law in 1950. The Congress made its policy clear that this vicious and unjust law is mainly aimed to strangle the Indian people economically, socially and politically. Ever since the Act was passed the Congress has been opposing the application of this fascist measure at every stage. Even Dr. Danges admitted this. It was precisely because of the strong opposition by Congress that the Law had to be amended at every session of Parliament and proclamations have been delayed until recently.

What does the proclamation mean to our people? It means that the Nationalist Government has declared War on the people. What is your answer? Your answer to Nationalist tyranny must be not of submission but opposition. You must oppose this Act at every stage because submission would mean utter ruination of our people. In order to mobilise and rouse the feelings of the residents of Overport against Group Areas, the Overport Branch of the Natal Indian Congress has organised a mass meeting to be held at the Overport Social Club, 87 Harbottle Road, Overport, on Sunday 2nd December, 1956 at 2.30 p.m. This meeting would be addressed by Chief A.J. Luthuli, Dr. G.M. Naicker, Dr. W. Hathorn, Mr. C.K. Hill, Mr. G. Hurbane and W.T. Naicker, all of whom are officials of the Natal Vigilance Committee.

In order to save your homes and your future, I make an earnest appeal at this hour of peril to all residents of Overport, to attend this meeting and show their solidarity and opposition against this unjust and inhuman law.



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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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