

16th August 1956

The Editor,
Fighting Talk.
JOHANNESBURG.

Dear Friend,

Certain statements contained in your August 1956 "Comment", concerning what you define as "a wide united front of democratic and progressive bodies, extending from the A.N.C. to the Black Sash...", are open to serious doubt by many practical workers in the Congress movement. You say : "The solid core of such alliance has been laid by the alliance of the four Congresses themselves solidly and unbreakably united around the Freedom Charter. The process of extending that alliance from its core outwards to all non-Congress yet democratic and progressive circles has begun ."

But a few of the questions these allegations raise are: Has there been forged, in fact, a real "solid core" of steeled and experienced Congressmen and women, capable of combating the worst excesses of our police and Government, and able to give continuity, stability, direction and never-ceasing energy to our movement ? Has the official and historically important acceptance of the Freedom Charter by the Congresses, passed to an active struggle by the rank and file to fulfil the urgent tasks of the present of imparting a real "Freedom Charter" political consciousness to the masses of workers and oppressed national groups ? Have we engendered and utilised every aspect of the day-to-day struggles of our peoples to give a concrete politically conscious direction to these struggles ? Has the Congress won the support of the masses of workers and oppressed peoples by taking up these issues ?

Certainly no one will deny that in the struggle for democracy the co-operation and "friendly neutrality" of non-Congress sections may well be decisive.

But what have we done to build our own movement , to ensure the unswerving support of the people for the Congress movement ? Can we speak of the "hurly-burly" of "building alliances" when we have not ensured the strength of our own organisations ?

The failure, for example, to make a wide success of the Freedom Charter signatory campaign, or to lift the significant "Anti-Passes for Women" demonstrations into a consistent effort to aid the building of strong Congress branches all over the country, evidences the primitive level at which we still work. In fact, the failure to lift our whole movement from the "doldrums" which you describe and to "keep political effort perpetually at concert pitch", may well be ascribed to our failure to build a "solid core" of the Congresses.

These are undoubtedly burning questions of our movement & .
Fighting Talk and other democratic journals could make a
positive contribution to our struggles by opening these points to
the widest democratic discussion . Every rank and file Congressman
should be involved in such a discussion. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

For certainly, it is only when, drawing its inspiration from
the people themselves, a careful, detailed and extensive analysis of
these and related questions of political difference, has been made,
that a real step forward of our movement can be made ~~take place~~ *take place*
be achieved .

Yours sincerely,

CONGRESSMAN.

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