

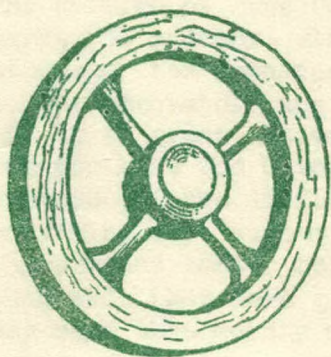
FSPW East

CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE

Special Pictorial Issue of the "Call"

Organisational Bulletin for the Progressive Movement

THEY SPOKE OF FREEDOM



Special Pictorial Issue of the

CALL

containing a collection of photographs taken at the CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE which met at Kliptown, Johannesburg on 25th and 26th June, 1955.

Captions by

MR. ALFRED HUTCHINSON

Published by :

THE "CALL" COMMITTEE

— P.O. Box 700 —

DURBAN

*"Another milestone in the Road
to Freedom"*

Chief ALBERT J. LUTULI



THE HOLDING of the Congress of the People marks yet another glorious milestone in the struggle for democracy in South Africa. We cannot adequately appreciate the achievements of this great Assembly, especially in a country like the Union of South Africa, unless we first try to get a clear picture of the difficulties that were met in the preparation for, and the convening of, such a large gathering. Such a picture would throw into sharper and bolder relief those achievements when we come to realise under what odds they were gained. But the limitation of space forbids my doing any more than merely mentioning some of them.

RIGHT FROM its inception the Congress of the People met with terrific antagonism from the Government and many "responsible" Europeans. They subjected it to the most virulent and malicious propaganda such as labelling it as Communist inspired and controlled when the truth was known that the idea originated in the circles of the African National Congress from members who could not possibly be accused of communistic leanings. Even some supposedly liberal-minded people cold-shouldered the Congress. During the campaign meetings were hounded and raided by the special branch of the police.

AS THE day for this great Assembly approached the authorities were thrown in to a frenzy. Police all over the Union were detailed to use all means to stop people whom they would suspect of going to the meeting. Some people reported that they were refused railway tickets, whilst others were arrested and kept in custody on trivial charges.

IN A terrific blitz and much show of power and force an avalanche of armed-police swooped on the meeting at Kliptown and so disturbed a peaceful democratic meeting.

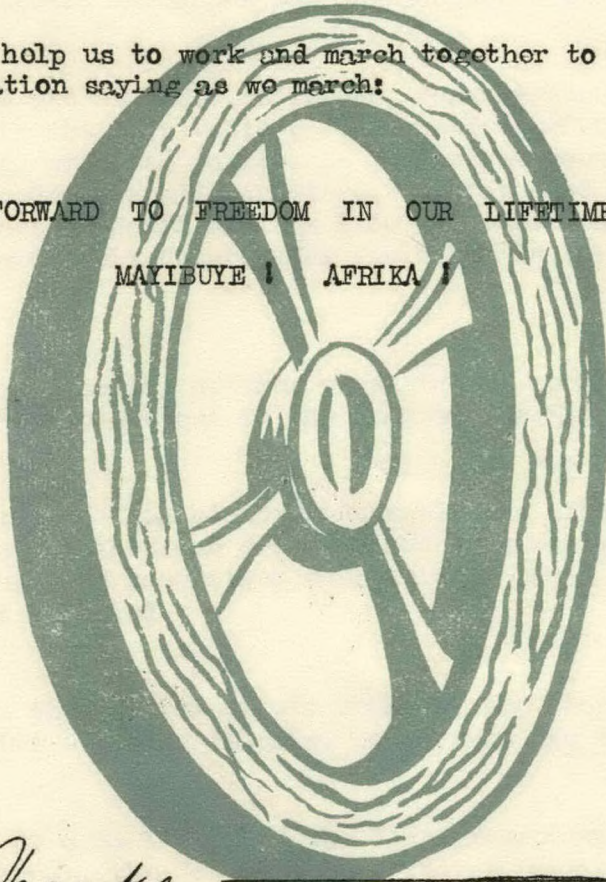
THE LOCAL white-controlled press joined issue by withholding publicity to the campaign for the Congress of the People and on the day of the meeting at Kliptown there was an almost complete blackout on news about the gathering.

ONE COULD not imagine a more hostile climate to the holding of the Congress of the People than the one I have described. Despite all this the meeting was a huge success. It will be to the everlasting glory of the people that they responded to all this provocation with heroic fortitude. The studied and unwarranted interference with the liberties of the people throws out into sharp prominence the great achievements of the Congress of the People.

MAY THE spirit of this great Assembly inspire many more people to join the army of Freedom and to work devoutly and devotedly for its realisation.

MAY THIS inspiration help us to work and march together to Freedom, fearlessly and with determination saying as we march:

"FORWARD TO FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME !"
MAYIBUYE ! AFRIKA !



Thanks..

The "CALL" Committee wishes to place on record its very sincerest thanks to NEW AGE for the loan of printing blocks and photographs used in this issue.

They Spoke of
FREEDOM

BENEATH a great, green four-spoked Freedom Wheel, the symbol of the Congress of the People campaign, Two Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty Four elected delegates met and adopted the Freedom Charter.

FOR TWO days, June 25 and 26, 1955, Kliptown, Johannesburg, a quite little settlement in the Klip Valley, became South Africa in miniature. Old and young, grizzled patriarchs and bright young children, clerks and scholars, doctors and ministers, workers and farmers - every shade and facet of South African life discussed their disabilities and put forward their demands for inclusion in this historic document.

THEY PLEDGED to strive, sparing neither strength nor courage, to win the democratic changes set out in the Charter for all South Africans.

EACH DELEGATE who attended this historic Assembly was elected by anything from ten to a few thousand people, and this was without doubt the most representative convention ever held in South Africa. It was also the most spirited.

FOR THE first time in the history of our country, the people met not as black and white - but as "equals, countrymen and brothers."

THEY MET as a result of a call made by the Joint Executive of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured Peoples' Organisation, to discuss their problems and to embody their cherished desires in the Freedom Charter.

THE "CALL" which is the Organisational bulletin of the progressive movement in Natal has great pleasure in presenting a record in pictures of this momentous gathering so that it may inspire all freedom fighters to continue with the struggle to achieve FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME.

STEPHEN DHLAMINI
SECRETARY: THE "CALL"
COMMITTEE



They came in their thousands...

from the cities, towns, villages, farms and faraway kraals. They came in buses, lorries, motor cars and trains. They came in all colours; they came in all ages. Ministers, factory workers, farm labourers, drivers, business men, students, doctors, teachers, clerks, workers in the kitchens.

The call that had been made many months ago was being answered; the call that ran through the length and breadth of our vast land. The call of the people of South Africa to meet together, to speak together, and together decide how they wanted to live, was being answered.



The people had answered the call . . .

The call that had swept through the vast land, from corner to corner, became alive and now the people were giving it back. It would ring from city to city, from town to town and find its way back to the kraals. The people have spoken; they have spoken in one strong voice.



Marching and Singing . . .

delegates entered the enclosed strip of veld where the Congress was held. They marched under their banners and African National Congress flags.

Many of the women wore beautiful saris, others wore dresses and shawls elaborately embroidered in Congress colours.



Chief Lutuli was in distant Groutville . . .

but his spirit was with the people and the people had him in their hearts. You cannot banish a leader from the people. He sent his daughter Albertina to represent him and to receive the Freedom Award on his behalf. (The picture shows the platform from left to right, Miss Albertina Lutuli, Father Huddleston, E. P. Moretsele, president Transvaal A.N.C., Dr. Wilson Conco and Mr. Pieter Byleveld).





Also on the platform were . . .

Achie Patel, Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Congress and G. Hurbans, Vice President of the N.I.C. who was chairman of the second session of the Assembly.



Father Huddleston and Leslie Mesina...

stood before the people as they had done many times. For years they had fought with them. For years they had tramped the difficult road together with the people.



Father Huddleston acknowledged the cheers of the delegates with the "Afrika" salute after being honoured with the Isitwalandwe. Leslie Mesina spoke of the low wages and miserable working conditions of the workers of South Africa.

Together with them on the platform were, Dr. Wilson Conco and George Peake Chairman of the S. A. Coloured Peoples' Organisation.





The presentation of the Isitwalandwe were moving

The people of South Africa meeting as one were conferring the highest distinction on those who had served them well. **ISITWALANDWE** — the wearer of the feather of the rare bird, almost unknown — legendary almost; the the feather worn by the heroes of the people. South Africa knows her heroes.

In many minds there will always remain the picture of the frail, white-haired woman in a sari, standing under the ox-wagon wheel of the Congress of the People. She was Dr. Dadoo's mother and she was receiving the **ISITWALANDWE** on behalf of her son from Dr. Wilson Conco, Acting President of the **A.N.C.** The mother of a hero, standing before the people, brought tears in many eyes.



Members of the Special Branch were also there...

They were seen entering the small Peace Pavilion and with a knife slashing the peace exhibition to ribbons. They photographed the crowd from all angles; they confiscated all monies lying on the tables collected from literature sales, they carted away huge quantities of literature. They said they were investigating a charge of treason.

What treason was there to uncover when the people declared their aims to the country and the entire world to know? Was it treason for the people to meet and speak together? Was it treason to demand food and clothes, plenty and security? Was it treason to demand the brotherhood and equality of all men irrespective of race or colour? Was it treason to work for peace among all mankind?



*The people burst into
Song...*

as the police carried out their "investigations". The National Anthem swept upwards, carried by strong resolute voices. It told of the wrong foundations of the Union of South Africa; the foundations of inequality and injustice and the harrowing inheritance of the people of South Africa.



At the end of the proceedings the elected representatives of the people of South Africa adopted the . . .

FREEDOM CHARTER



WE, the People of South Africa declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people;

that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure for all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief;

AND therefore, we, the people of South Africa, black and white together - equals, countrymen and brothers - adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

* THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN ! Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws;

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country;

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, colour or sex;

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self government.

* ALL NATIONAL GROUPS SHALL HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS ! There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All people shall have equal right to use their own languages, and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

Collection Number: AD1137

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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