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NATAL PEACE COUNCIL

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REPORT ON ACTIVITIES SUBMITTED TO THE SECOND  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT THE SURAT HINDU  
ASSOCIATION HALL, DURBAN, ON SUNDAY, 22ND  
MAY, 1955

*Am P.*  
*5/10/56*

The Natal Peace Council has been in existence for just over two years and during this period has devoted most of its activities to propoganda work. This is as it should be because the main task of the peace movement everywhere is to educate people on the need for constant vigilance and to rally support, in every possible way, for the demands of the movement.

With the limited forces available, we have fairly successfully carried out the tasks set us by the South African Peace Council and can claim, to some extent, to have made the people of Durban "peace conscious". Not so very long ago it was a rare thing for a speaker from a political platform to mention peace during the course of his speech, but to-day it is the rule rather than the exception. The realisation is growing stronger daily in the progressive movement that peace and freedom are interdependent.

In its work the Council has always received the willing co-operation of factory workers who have assisted by raising funds when necessary, distributing our propoganda material and collecting signatures. Assistance has also been forthcoming from other members of the public and the response has always been heartening.

Several successful public meetings were held, but many more could have been organised if the Council was able to call on a sufficient number of speakers. Apart from the meetings organised by the Council, we have almost always been represented by a speaker at meetings organised by the African and Indian Congresses, the C. O. P., certain trade unions and, in some instances, by social clubs.

Our Council was fully represented at the inaugural conference of the South African Peace Council. The 25 delegates who attended the conference on behalf of our Council were impressed by the attendance at conference and the manner in which it was conducted.

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Unfortunately, our work during the past two years has almost exclusively been confined to Durban. Recently, however, a Peace Circle was organised in Pietermaritzburg and according to the reports we have received to date, the Circle is already doing good work and is receiving all the necessary assistance from the Council.

Our Peace Exhibition, held towards the end of 1953, was attended by a large number of people from all walks of life and made a favourable impression. This exhibition, which was held at our offices for want of a suitable hall, consisted almost entirely of photographs of the Korean War and World Peace Congresses.

The following pamphlets and leaflets, issued by the South African Peace Council, were distributed:-

- A Call to Peace
- Germ War
- Peace is Possible
- Protest against Re-militarisation of Western Germany
- The H Bomb - We want to live.
- Does China Exist?
- Again - Facts about German Re-Armament
- Money can do a lot of things
- Peace is withing your grasp

In addition to these, limited numbers of numerous other material issued by the South African Peace Council were also distributed.

Successful campaigns for signatures on two occasions were also carried out, in addition to the sale of badges.

We are now in the midst of a "Peace Week" which is being held in all parts of the world in support of the World Peace Congress to be held in Helsinki, Finland. Our main task during this Peace Week is to collect signatures in support of the appeal against atomic war and to popularise the aims of our movemant.

So far the response to the signature campaign has been excellent. During the two days we had tables played at two points in the city, over a thousand europeans signed the

appeal. This goes to show that the aims of the movement have an appeal not only for the non-European section of our community, but for the Europeans as well.

It is too early to give a full report on the signature campaign, but we have every reason to hope that the Council will pass its target without much difficulty.

The movement in South Africa is comparatively young, but in spite of the many difficulties with which we have to contend, we can claim some success in putting South Africa in the forefront of the struggle for peace.

Bannings under the Suppression of Communism Act have taken a heavy toll of our personnel, whilst many of those who are not banned are so heavily burdened with work in other progressive organisations that they cannot devote the necessary time to peace work. This is especially so in Durban, the result being that the Council could not extend its activities to cover other areas in the Province.

During the coming year, the Council must set itself the task of establishing peace committees in the other towns. Only in this way can we carry the message of peace to all the people of Natal and draw them in the struggle for a lasting peace.

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**TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961**

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