

EGS.1.13.

F 27 ①



speaking together

28/9/55 - 39(6)
'Congress of the People' Bulletin

NO. 2. END OF AUGUST, 1954

What it means to be a VOLUNTEER

Chief A.J. Luthuli, President-General of the African National Congress has called for 50,000 Freedom Volunteers for the Congress of the People. Many thousands in different parts of the country have already answered the call. Many more are volunteering daily.

Coming so soon, when the tasks of the heroic Defiance Volunteers are still fresh in the minds of the people, there is bound to be some misunderstanding as to the tasks of the Freedom Volunteers. And in their desperate attempts to discredit and disrupt the movement, the enemies of the Congress of the People go to all lengths to spread deliberate lies and distort the real meaning of this great movement.

Firstly, it should be made quite clear that while the Congress of the People came about as a result of the radically changed political situation caused by the Defiance Campaign, the present campaign is NOT the continuation of the Defiance Campaign.

We realise that the entire South African political situation has changed; we must meet it with changed tactics and methods. Therefore, the tasks of Freedom Volunteers would be quite different to those of the Defiance Campaign.

The word VOLUNTEER is retained, firstly because it has become a word of honour in our struggle for freedom; secondly, because though they will have different tasks and duties, the Freedom Volunteers will be volunteers nevertheless, in the same struggle.

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE "SHOCK-BRIGADE"

We can't enumerate ALL the tasks Freedom Volunteers will be expected to carry out. But simply stated, their task will be to act as the "Shock-brigade" of our non-violent army of Freedom.



They will be the active organisers against the apartheid menace. They will go from house to house, street to street, to the factories and farms, to schools and mines, to meetings, parties and weddings, everywhere where there are people; and they will be expected to carry the message of the convening of the Congress of the People, to gain support for it and to recruit new volunteers.

They will carry the message of light and truth to areas and to people who have for years and years been kept in deliberate ignorance and darkness. They will educate the masses about the

(continued)

TASKS of VOLUNTEERS

To undertake regular, active and intensive work in mobilising resistance to the apartheid policy of the Government. Volunteers must campaign against the Bantu Education Act, the Group Areas Act, the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, the Western Areas Removal Scheme; as well as all local grievances of the people such as housing, passes, rents, and transport.

To carry to every corner of our country the message of the Congress of the People, and to gather in the people's demands for the Freedom Charter. Volunteers must visit every town, village, farm, factory, mine and reserve in South Africa. This is directly linked with the first task, for the Congress of the People must not be an abstract campaign, but must at all stages and on every issue be related to the actual conditions of the people.

To assist in every way possible in building the sponsoring organisations.

To assist in any other tasks required for the Congress of the People.

VOLUNTEERS
continued from Page 1

L.L., Jhbq., writes:

"Every right-thinking person, whether he or she be a churchman, teacher, nurse, cook, street sweeper, clerk, miner or a pilot will agree with you.

.....Many, many years back people used to think we are safe in the hands of the ruling class, by the ruling class I mean the VOTERS. But now we realise that those who thought that way are very much mistaken. Because should it not have been for the voters, those who are ruling today would not have been ruling. Something MUST be done!

Since the non-voter is in the majority and the voters in the minority, something shall have to be done to let the voices of the non-voter be heard, and heard in a very big way. That is, THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE."

dangers of the Bantu Education Act, the Group Areas Act, the Native Resettlement Act, the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, and about every other Act that is insulting to our dignity as human beings and that aims to maintain the jack-boot of oppression on our backs till eternity.

They will speak to people, study their conditions, make careful note of their grievances and demands, and ensure that the smallest of these is conveyed to the organisers so that they can be expressed in the Freedom Charter.

They will bear in mind all the time that their foremost aim in carrying out their tasks as volunteers will be to strengthen the national organisations of the people.

They will ensure that by their work, propaganda and careful explanation they will educate the people sufficiently not to be provoked into violence which will be constantly attempted by the enemies.

Freedom Volunteers will carry out their tasks with courage, discipline and utmost devotion, with the realisation that their tasks will end only when our country, South Africa, is free from the bondage and oppression under which it has suffered for so long.

AUGUST 29th - MEETINGS WERE HELD IN MANY AREAS.

500 COPIES OVERSEAS

500 COPIES OF THE FIRST ISSUE OF "SPEAKING TOGETHER" WERE SENT TO PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Your help is needed!

A separate office has now been opened for the National Action Council. The address is 8, Somerset House, Fox Street, Johannesburg; and the Box number: 11045.

There is a tremendous amount of clerical work to be done in the office, and volunteer helpers are needed. After you have finished work, and during the week-end, give up at least some of your time to assisting with this work. 'phone 33-0975 before calling at the office if you can only come 'after-hours', so that arrangements can be made to show you what work must be done.

See that this Bulletin is not wasted! Proper distribution is important - and if you read this Bulletin, you can help in distribution. Pass it on to another volunteer, or to someone you wish to enlist as a volunteer. Do not put it in your pocket and leave it there. Make "Speaking Together" one more weapon in organising a mighty Congress of the People.



speaking together

'Congress of the People' Bulletin

3

E 27

TO ALL VOLUNTEERS.

Dear Volunteer,

Wysstuk No.
Gekry by... *A. A. ...*
Deur... *J. H. ...*
Te... *28/9/57*
Datum... *28/9/57*
Verwysings No. *39(6) B.*

Greetings to you for the New Year. It will be a good year - a year of success for our Congress of the People - if we get down to work without delay.

By decision of the National Council, the Congress of the People will definitely be called before June of this year. There is a great deal to do before you can say "Now we are ready; the people are ready; our Congress of the people will be a tremendous success".

What are the things we need to do?

First: We must collect in the demands of the people for inclusion in the Freedom Charter. This work must start now; By 30th of February, 1955 we must have received the claims and demands of the people, so that the work of assembling all these demands into a single Charter can go ahead.

WHAT IS THE FREEDOM CHARTER? The Freedom Charter will be the Charter of the demands of all the South African people for the things that they want to make their lives happy and free. It will be a document to guide all our future work, but it will be written by the ordinary people themselves, through the demands that they themselves sent in. It is hoped that thousands and thousands of gatherings, some small some large, will be held where people can speak freely of their own lives, of what changes they want in their way of life, in the laws they live under and in the conditions. Look at the "Call" - in it are the kinds of things that people will talk about - the land, wages, taxes, education, health, recreation, laws, food and peace. From these meetings, no matter how small they are will come the demands of the people for the changes they want. All those demands, no matter how trifling, no matter how local they may be - ALL those demands of people must be noted on, recorded and sent in for inclusion in the Freedom Charter. And they must be in by not later than the 30th February, 1955.

When all these demands are received, they will be put together, carefully, to make a single Charter which will truly be the voice of the people of this country. And this Charter - The Freedom Charter - will then be put to the elected delegates of the nation at the Congress of the People, so that they can dilute it, discuss it and adopt it as a guide for all who wish for and work for Freedom.

WHAT MUST A FREEDOM VOLUNTEER DO? A volunteer is an organiser and a leader of the people. Now, in the next two months - but starting right away, now without delay, he must organise people to formulate their demands. We must call people together, explain to them the Freedom Charter, encourage them to speak out, listen to their demands, and record their demands and send them into the Congress of the People Committee. For some volunteers a start can be made in their own factories or their place of work - where lunch-hour discussion with his work-mates can be arranged. For all volunteers, a meeting of neighbours in a house, perhaps only of one street or block, can be called together. From these small beginnings we must branch off, going from street to street, from block to block, organising meetings, explaining, listening, recording. For the next few months, volunteers must work like missionaries, without resting. It should be one aim to meet with one group of people or another every night, systematically covering our whole town or locality so that no citizen of South Africa is left out of the discussions on the Freedom Charter.

This is a big task - a tremendous task. But a good volunteer does not work alone! He works in the first place with the other volunteers in the neighbourhood, planning together with them all that is to be done. But even when a volunteer starts work alone, with no others to assist him his task is - at every meeting - to call on those who are inspired by the ideals of the Freedom Charter to take their own initiative - to call their own meetings - in their own places of work and to become also organisers and leaders for the Freedom Charter.

Let us not overlook the countryside. Volunteers from the towns who have relations and families in the countryside must try to get to the rural areas on the week-ends, and hold discussions on the Charter. They must urge, at every meeting in the towns that all the people write or visit their friends in the rural areas and in the villages, to tell them about the Freedom Charter, and to urge them to make their demands without delay. Every one who has made his own demand must now organise others to do the same! Let the Freedom Charter spread like wild fire among the people.

HOW SHOULD A MEETING BE CONDUCTED? At every meeting the volunteer should start by explaining about the Congress of the People. They should explain that the African National Congress, South African Indian Congress, South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured Peoples' Organisation have joined hands to call elected representatives of the people to a central assembly - the Congress of the People - not later than June of this year. They should explain that at this assembly the Freedom Charter will be adopted. They should explain that the Freedom Charter is to be written by the people everywhere in small and great gatherings, who will voice their own demands and send their demands in for inclusion in the Charter.

The "Call" to the Congress of the People should then be read. Volunteers should explain that the time has now come for the people at the meeting to speak together - to speak of Freedom and of what it means for them.

The volunteers should carefully write down the demands and grievances that are voiced. They should guide the discussion so that people do not only say what they suffer from but also say changes must be made to set things right. They must encourage people to talk of small things, and not to speak generally of "unjust laws" or "oppression". They must ask - what laws are unjust, and what should be done about them; what is oppression, and how it can be abolished.

At the end of the meeting, all the demands of the people should then be read out by the volunteers, and the meeting asked to vote for or against their inclusion in the Freedom Charter. The people at the meeting should be asked to spread the message, to organise other meetings for other people to discuss their demands. The meeting should be asked to appoint a Committee for the Congress of the People which will carry on the work in the area, and which will prepare to organise and hold elections for a delegate of the people to go to the Congress of the People when the call is given. But the volunteers task does not end with the meeting. After the meeting he must see that the report form is filled in, that all the demands of the meeting are written on the report and that the report is handed in to the local C.O.P. Committee, or posted to the National Action Council at post office Box 11045, Johannesburg.

This is a great task. But freedom is not easily won. It is won through hard, persistent work, organising the people, mobilising them and leading them forward.

LET'S GET DOWN TO IT NOW, WITHOUT DELAY.

Yours for Freedom,

(Sgd) P. Beylveald
for NATIONAL ACTION COUNCIL.

Collection Number: AD1812

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

TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

©2012

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of the collection records and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a private collection deposited with Historical Papers at The University of the Witwatersrand.