

E f b. 2.1

SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

P.O. BOX 17133,
HILLBROW.

JOHANNESBURG.

15th October, 1962

/ C O P Y /

The Hon. The Minister of Justice,
Union Buildings,
Pretoria.

Dear Sir,

'HOUSE ARREST' OF MRS. HELEN JOSEPH

The South African Congress of Trade Unions states that the confining orders served by you on Mrs. Helen Joseph on the 13th October, 1962 prove conclusively that your Government does not uphold the rule of law in South Africa.

Freedom of speech and association, the right to trial by an independent judiciary have, at one step, been entirely abrogated. You have found Mrs. Joseph guilty without giving her an opportunity to defend herself and you have taken it upon yourself to impose this sadistic sentence.

In terms of these orders by which Mrs. Joseph may not leave her home from 6.30 p.m. to 6.30 a.m. on weekdays; from 2.30 p.m. on Saturdays; every Sunday and every public holiday, you have sentenced her to a nightly and week-end solitary confinement which is unparalleled in its severity. We note that she is permitted no visitors during her periods of solitary confinement, apart from a doctor whose name does not appear on your list of 'banned' people. In addition, you require her to report to the police once a day.

When the General Law Amendment Bill was first announced, our Congress stated that you were obtaining absolute powers over every South African citizen. These orders served on Mrs. Joseph confirm this. In addition to the solitary confinement, she will not be permitted any privacy as your Security Police have already indicated their intention of checking upon her movements at any hour of the night to see if she is obeying the orders.

We state that if other people are placed under 'house arrest' you will require vast recruitments to the Security Branch of the Police Force (at the cost of the taxpayer) so that each person under this form of arrest can be kept under surveillance. This constant watching of and checking on the movements of citizens and the regular invasion of their privacy are the hallmarks of the police state.

We demand that if there is any charge against Mrs. Joseph, she appear in a Court of Law with the opportunity for her to obtain legal defence, and that these confining orders be immediately withdrawn.

Yours faithfully,

(SIGNED) P.M. ALTMAN.

Assistant General Secretary.

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SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

COPY OF LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

19th November, 1962.

The Hon. The Minister of Justice,
Union Buildings,
P R E T O R I A.

Dear Sir,

RE: BANNING ORDERS SERVED ON MR. A. BENNIE,
PORT ELIZABETH.

On behalf of the 54,000 workers affiliated to the South African Congress of Trade Unions we protest most strongly against the orders served on October 4th, 1962 on Mr. A. Bennie, organiser of the General Workers' Union, an affiliate of our organisation.

He has been given no reasons for these banning orders and has not heard the evidence against him or been given an opportunity to defend himself. There has been no question of a fair trial. Your claim, therefore, that South Africa upholds democratic practices has once again been shown to be false.

These orders violate the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of association. Their effect will be that Mr. Bennie will not be able to interview, address or help workers and this will virtually put an end to his trade union work. We demand, therefore, that they be withdrawn immediately.

We have written to the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, giving him details of these orders and we have asked him to register a complaint on our behalf with the Committee for Freedom of Association.

Yours faithfully,

SIGNED P.M. ALTMAN
ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY.

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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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