

Delayed on Way to Congress

25.6.58

DELEGATES of the Transvaal Indian Congress on their way to Johannesburg to take part in to-day's 'Freedom of the People' congress are being delayed en route in all parts of the country by police who are stopping cars to question them, according to officials of the Indian Congress.

A spokesman said: "Messages have reached the secretary of the congress that some delegates will not be able to get to Johannesburg in time in consequence.

"Complaints have also been made by the secretary that he is unable to receive incoming calls on his office telephone. Reports to the telephone department that the instrument is out of order have been made more than once, but no action has been taken to restore the incoming service."

CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE PROTESTS

Says Police Action Was Unwarranted

IN a statement last night Mr. P. Beyleveld, chairman of the "Congress of the People" conference held at Kliptown and national president of the "Congress of Democrats", protested against the police action at the meeting.

He said that the action of the police was completely unwarranted in that they could have had no reasonable suspicion that any high treason was committed at the conference. They were present throughout the proceedings and knew what was going on.

"PROVOCATIVE"

"The documents distributed to delegates were all public and freely distributed, and the police had copies.

"The raid was carried out in a provocative manner.

"That no incidents took place was due to the good behaviour of those present."—SAPA.

PEOPLE ARE BEING INTIMIDATED BY COMMUNISM BOGY

—HUDDLESTON

ADM 28.6.55

“Deplorable Misuse Will Recoil on Those Who are Responsible”

COMMUNISM was being used as a bogey to intimidate people, Father Trevor Huddleston said in Johannesburg yesterday, but this irresponsible and deplorable misuse would recoil upon those responsible, with serious consequences for them.

He was commenting on the “visit” of European and Native police and a squad of men from the Special Branch to the “Congress of the People” at Kliptown on Saturday and Sunday.

He was present at the opening on Saturday when about 26 Special Branch men were present.

There is this fantastic and recurring claim by the Special Branch that they are investigating a case of treason. Anyone present

at this gathering would know how ludicrous that charge is.

“The congress was held in the open. There were 3,000 present—all easily identifiable. Every statement was public, and all papers were available to whoever attended the meeting.”

Contrast in Method

Father Huddleston said that, in all these respects, the meeting was in marked contrast to the kind of procedure used by the Government over the Senate Act.

“In my view (and I have been present at very many of such meetings) a deliberate attempt is being made to intimidate the non-European people.

“The bogey of Communism is being indiscriminately produced in a most irresponsible and deplorable manner. It will ultimately have very serious consequences for the people who exercise it in this fashion.”

On Sunday the police presented a search warrant to Mr. P. Beyleveld, chairman of the meeting, which said that they were investigating a charge of treason, and that they had come to look for “inflammatory or subversive literature.”

Police at Congress

According to the organisers, 2,884 delegates attended the congress. Some came from Durban, Cape Town and other parts of the Union. Most of the Johannesburg Native Townships, including Meadowlands, were represented.

There were 112 European delegates present.

Each delegate, before being admitted, had to show proof that he had been elected by a group of people.

"150 HELD UP"

An organiser said that more than 150 delegates from other provinces had been held up on the road to Johannesburg by members of the Special Branch, who had refused to allow them to continue on their way.

Among the messages of goodwill which came from many parts of the world was one from the South African Labour Party, which said: "Your peaceful struggle for human rights and freedom is an important part of the fight of all South Africans for a better life."

Other messages came from Chou En-lai, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China; Luigi Grassi, secretary of the World Federation of Trade Unions; Paul Robeson, the singer, Howard Fast, the American author, and the American Labour Party, New York.

Members of the Special Branch stood watch throughout the conference at the gates of the enclosed area. They took notes and photographed people going to the meeting.

3,000 SEARCHED BY POLICE AT TALKS OUTSIDE CITY

RDM. 27.6.55

Names Taken at "Congress of the People" Meeting

ABOUT 200 armed European and Native police and a squad of men from the Special Branch surrounded the open-air meeting of about 3,000 delegates to the "Congress of the People" at Kliptown, near Johannesburg, yesterday, searched everyone present, took their names and addresses, and took possession of papers and banners.

The police presented a search warrant to the chairman of the meeting, Mr. P. Beyleveld, which said that they were investigating a charge of treason, and that they had come to look for "inflammatory or subversive literature."

Some Natives, who are alleged to have been without proper papers, were arrested. The other

people at the meeting were allowed to go after they had been searched and their names had been taken.

About 3.45 p.m. Major H. C. T. Muller, the area commandant, marched through the fringe of the delegates to the platform, escorted by about 25 armed European policemen and a squad of Special Branch men.

Formed Cordon

Other European and Native police formed a cordon around the area.

When the police marched to the platform all the delegates and onlookers stood to attention and sang the anthem, "Mayibuye Afrika," and shouted "Afrika."

Mr. Beyleveld called for order and silence.

He read out the contents of the warrant, which was given to him by Major Muller, and said that, in spite of the presence of the police in force, the meeting would continue. The meeting would not be intimidated, he added.

While Special Branch members made parcels of the notes of speakers and other papers on the platform, and 25 police stood guard below, the delegates continued to deliberate on the clauses of the "Democratic Freedom Charter" they had come to draw up.

Anthem Sung

As each clause was passed, the 3,000 Native, Indian, Coloured and European delegates, and the 3,000 onlookers, who were outside an enclosure, stood up to chant the anthem.

At the end of the conference the anthem was sung again.

As the delegates stood around waiting to be allowed out of the enclosure by the police, a Native band, with a dented tuba, trumpets and a broken set of drums, played songs which were composed during the defiance campaign. Some of the people danced.

Draft Charter

The last people passed through the barriers about 8 p.m. All the Europeans were photographed individually by the police as they gave their names.

Papers taken by the police included the official documents of the congress, and copies of the draft "Freedom Charter; a message from Chief Albert Lutuli, president-general of the African National Congress, who has been banished to the Lower Tugela area of Natal, and of goodwill messages.

(Continued on Page 9)

Police search people's Congress delegates



THE STAR JUNE 27, 1955

Good humoured search of 3,000 at "Congress of the People"

About 3,000 non-European, Indian and Coloured delegates to the Congress of the People held at Kliptown at the week-end yesterday by members of the Special Branch, on a charge of treason. Women were called upon to empty their pockets. The photograph shows members of the Special Branch questioning delegates as they searched out to leave the meeting.

A ABOUT 3,000 non-European, Indian and Coloured as well as about 100 European delegates to the Congress of the People held at Kliptown, Johannesburg, at the week-end submitted with good humour to a search by members of the special branch of the police.

The congress began on Saturday but, although special branch detectives were on duty taking notes and photographing delegates, they did not interfere with the meeting until about 3.45 p.m. yesterday when the Acting D.S.-district Commandant for Newlands, Maj. H. C. T. Muller, with a handful of armed police and accompanied by detectives from the special branch entered the enclosure and strode to the platform.

continue. At the time the delegates were debating the 11 clauses of a "Freedom Charter."

The special branch men then collected all messages sent to the congress, as well as documents on the persons of the delegates. Men were told to empty their pockets and women their handbags.

All exits from the enclosure were manned by police, and as delegates left they, too, were submitted to a search. It was well after dark before the search was completed.

IN GOOD HUMOUR

It was carried out in good humour by police and delegates alike.

While the search went on a police photographer took close-up photographs of each speaker and photographs of the Europeans as they were searched.

When the meeting broke up and the crowd surged towards the search barriers the congress band in faded uniforms and with battered and worn instruments struck up lively tunes, to which the crowd sang and danced while they waited their turn to be searched. There were no incidents

No receipts for goods taken by police

Complaints that the police had taken personal belongings from people who attended the "Congress of the People" meeting at Kliptown at the week-end and in some cases had not given receipts were made by Mr. A. Sachs, a Cape Town law student, and members of the congress.

Mr. Sachs said that among the things taken from him was a letter from a friend and his diary containing the names and addresses of his friends. He was given no receipt.

NO RECEIPT

He said he knew of several people who had belongings taken from them and who had not received receipts from the police. Mr. P. Beyleveld, the chairman of the meeting, had his diary taken away.

Mr. Farid Adam, a member of the Indian Congress, had all his possessions taken from him but was given a receipt.

Among the other documents confiscated by the police at the meeting were several thousand copies of a "Freedom Charter" declaring that the people shall govern and share in the country's wealth, all groups shall have equal rights and the land be shared among those who work it.

Natal's congress delegates



Delegates from Natal to the Congress of the People at Klip-town, Johannesburg, this afternoon arrive carrying banners bearing slogans and the Congress emblem—a four-spoked wheel representing the four sponsoring organizations.

Thousands at Congress of the People

Chou En Lai sends greetings

By a Staff Reporter

AFTER battling my way through thousands of non-European and a number of European delegates to the Congress of the People at Kiptown this afternoon I was shown cables of good wishes from Chou En Lai, Prime Minister of Communist China, U. N. Dhebar, president of the Indian National Congress (New Delhi), Ismail El Azhar, Prime Minister of the Sudan, Paul Robeson, the Negro singer, and many other world figures, some behind the "iron curtain."

The open square was crowded with delegates from the four provinces carrying banners ranging from "Down With Bantu Education" to "Better Houses."

Just outside the enclosure containing the delegates were at least 20 plainclothes policemen, mostly from the Special Branch of the C.I.D. A police photographer took flashlight photographs of a number of people entering the enclosure.

An organizer alleged that the police had been doing their best to prevent delegates attending. He

said that a lot of mail had been delayed (for periods up to two months) and that delegates coming to Johannesburg from other provinces had been arrested on petty offences and detained.

"Freedom awards," in the form of certificates and silver badges inscribed "Isitwalandwe" ("one who bears the feather"—a Native honour) were presented to Father T. Huddleston, C.R., Chief Luthuli, president of the A.N.C. and Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, president of the Indian congress.

An organizer said that he expected 10,000 to 15,000 delegates to attend tomorrow and, in addition, he expected there would be up to 10,000 observers.

"JUST STRUGGLE"

Mr. Chou's cable read: "On behalf of the Chinese people I warmly greet the convocation of the Congress of People and wish that the congress will achieve new success in uniting the people of different origins and all sections in South Africa to oppose racial discrimination and to win freedom and democratic rights.

"The Asian - African conference has solemnly condemned colonialism and racial discrimination. The Chinese people, together with the people of the other Asian and African countries and the people of the whole world, will continue to support the just struggle waged by the people of South Africa."

SPECIAL BRANCH POLICEMEN PHOTOGRAPH EUROPEANS AT NON-EUROPEAN RALLY



A Special Branch photographer photographed the Sunday Express photographer—and vice versa.



Members of the Special Branch grouped together near the main gathering, took notes, observed carefully.

SPPECIAL Branch policemen from the four provinces of the Union, with press and 35 mm. cameras, used the first conference of the Congress of the People at Kliptown, 11 miles from Johannesburg, yesterday afternoon to take pictures of and identify the European delegates and organisers of the conference.

Police photographers and shorthand experts crowded around the entrance to the heastan and wire mesh which enclosed the open-air conference arena, taking pictures and making notes as European organisers received more than 2,000 delegates to the conference.

No European escaped their press-camera screening and even newspapermen were photographed.

At the same time organisers of the conference screened all people entering the enclosure in an effort to prevent police informers from entering.

After the meeting started 25 Special Branch policemen took their seats behind delegates where they took shorthand notes of the proceedings.

Sixty non-European delegates on their way to Johannesburg from the Cape on Friday night were stopped at a police road block near Beaufort West and prevented from continuing their journey.

The delegates were travelling in two motor lorries and

were detained because the drivers had no road transportation licences for carrying passengers.

The drivers appeared in the Beaufort West Magistrate Court yesterday morning and the passengers were subpoenaed to appear in court as witnesses.

A lorry-load of Native delegates from Natal were stopped at a police road block near Standerton this morning and searched for permits and passes.

They were allowed to continue their journey after some of them had paid-up arrear poll tax fees.

The conference will continue today and a senior police officer told the Sunday Express that the police, many of them sent from the Cape, Natal and the Free State, would watch its progress.

No arrests were made.

The official said that the police had no intention of banning the meeting but were satisfied to hear what was being said and see who were attending.

Collection Number: AD1137

FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

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 paper documents 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 collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.