

With the development of the national liberation movement, a day must come when there will be no need for separate political organisations for the different sections of the oppressed peoples of the Union. Instead of having an Indian Congress and an African Congress, we will then have a South African Democratic Congress in which all democrats, no matter to which community they belong, will be able to play their part for a prosperous, free and democratic South Africa.

I have taken some pains to stress the question of the franchise because I feel this to be a very important test in determining the character of political groups. For instance we have heard a great deal about the so-called United Democratic Front and so-called friends of the Non-European people among the Whites of South Africa. Let me say most categorically that only those Europeans belong to the democratic camp, who, without reservation, accept the inherent and fundamental right of all the oppressed peoples in South Africa to exercise equal franchise with those who enjoy it at present. Any person, who denied the right of the Non-Europeans to have equal franchise and speaks of a qualified franchise for them, by his very stand, places himself outside the democratic camp whether such person happens to be White or Non-White.

Once we are clear on the question of franchise then it follows that we totally reject an inferior status for ourselves or for any other section of the South African people. Because we stand for full democratic rights for all we cannot under any circumstance take part in any machinery set up for the oppression of our people. For this reason the Natal Indian Congress rejected the communal representation and the Board created under the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. It is because we stand for equal municipal franchise rights that we reject the Advisory Board suggested by the Durban City Council.

As equal partners in the common struggle against oppression, we have a right to tell all our allies that they too should pursue this policy, fully and consistently in the cause of unity and national liberation. We as an oppressed group must not only oppose new attacks made on us, but we must by political action strive to put an end to our present status, and march forward to liberation.

Delegates to this Conference must seriously get down to the task of rallying our people in opposition to all the oppressive and unjust laws that operate in South Africa. For that task we require powerful and active Congress Branches in all parts of the Province. The strength of the branches will depend on the extent and nature of activities in which they engage themselves.

South Africa is at the cross roads. The only effective force against fascist tyranny is the combined strength of all those who believe in true democracy. When we leave this conference, we must be satisfied that in this hour of our country's crisis, we were not found wanting to play our part fully and courageously in the cause of democracy and freedom.

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SECTION 3.

SECRETARIAL REPORT

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I. POLITICAL

DELIVERED BY MR. DEBI SINGH AT THE 6TH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATAL INDIAN
CONGRESS HELD AT DURBAN ON 21ST and
22ND FEBRUARY, 1953.

1. This Conference of our Congress is in some respects of a different character than the Conferences that have been held annually since the present leadership came into office. Our community, with the rest of the people of South Africa, is facing the imminent danger of the firm entrenchment of a Fascist group which is about to arrogate to itself wide autocratic powers. We can no longer talk of merely a Fascist threat. In a few days time the white Parliament of South Africa will most likely place on the Statute Book two new laws, thus completing the Nationalist programme for the establishment of a police state.
2. Delegates meeting in Conference this year must not fail to realise the gravity of the situation which faces us in common with the rest of the country. Because we form part of the non-European oppressed majority in this country the danger is all the greater to us, for Fascism strikes most ruthlessly against those who are the greatest exponents of democracy. It is for Conference to take note of the state of emergency created by the Government of the day, and to give priority to the question of meeting the threats of the tyrannical and barbarous measures which aim at the extinction of all freedoms and liberties. The keynote at this Conference must therefore be the strengthening and harnessing of our forces with those of the other oppressed groups in the Union for the purpose of defeating Fascism, for liberating the oppressed people and for the establishment of a truly democratic state in which human values will be respected.
3. International Developments:
While we have these serious problems confronting us in our own country, we must not lose sight of the fact that we form part of the oppressed people of the world and that international events must have their impact on our country and our liberation movement. Throughout the world we find the oppressed people making tremendous strides in their efforts to overthrow the centuries - old domination under which they have suffered. We also find powerful imperialistic groups not only continuing to dominate some of the old colonial territories but spreading in new forms their influence and control over new and wider regions.

4. While the Imperialists prepare for war the common people throughout the world are taking active steps not only to counter the war hysteria that has been let loose but to create conditions which will lead to a lasting peace. A prerequisite for world peace is, however, the ending of all foreign domination and exploitation, and the abolition of racial discrimination.
5. In Asia great changes have taken place and today the peoples of that continent are in the vanguard in the struggle for peace and against aggression. This is natural, for the people of Asia have for many centuries suffered under the yoke of foreign domination with all its savagery.
6. At the United Nations, India and Pakistan were in the forefront of the Arab-Asian condemnation of the Union Government's racial policy. Their resolution received the support of the overwhelming majority of member nations of this world tribunal. We take this opportunity of thanking the peoples and governments of India, Pakistan and of the other countries who supported our just cause at United Nations.
7. In the fight against imperialism and foreign exploitation the continent of Africa is emerging as a focal centre. From north to south we find peoples' movements carrying forward the flag of liberation. Africa is no longer satisfied with mere protests against the injustices under which she has been made to suffer for centuries now. Her people, by positive action, are now engaged in shaping her new destiny in world affairs. Hence we find the Sudanese demanding the end of foreign rule, Egyptians and Moroccans refusing to tolerate foreign troops on their soil, and in the Gold Coast the people forging ahead towards independence. Further south we find the people of Nyasaland and the Rhodesias uniting against the imperialist scheme of entrenching oppression through the much discredited Central African Federation Plan.
8. South Africa:
 In the extreme south Dr. Malan and his Government have continued with the implementation of their mediaeval policy of apartheid. Whilst the Nationalists themselves are very keen to extend their ideology northwards, we find two different reactions to this sinister endeavour. Firstly there is an outright condemnation of Malan's policy by the democratic people of the world who see in it the same danger that they saw in the Hitler regime in Germany. Secondly, there is also the condemnation of the Nationalist tactics and policies from within the imperialist camp, not because they are against oppression as such but because they feel that the Malan Government is antagonising the indigenous people of the African continents to such an extent that apartheid has become a danger to their old and mature tactic by which they seek to make use of the indigenous people in giving a new lease of life to imperialism. For us on the African continent it is important to note this vital difference between the two different oppositions against apartheid arising from differing motives.
9. The struggle against oppression throughout the world is one common struggle. The need to appreciate that commonness is even greater in relation to the struggles waging from north to south in Africa.

10. Defiance Campaign:

In South Africa an historic milestone on our country's road to liberation was set by the launching of the campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. This important development has taken the freedom struggle of the Union's oppressed people another step nearer its ultimate goal.

11. Our national body, the South African Indian Congress, meeting in Conference at Johannesburg in January last year, expressed the clear will of the Indian people of the whole country when it unequivocally declared its whole-hearted support for the decision of the African National Congress to embark upon an active political campaign in which volunteers would defy certain specified unjust laws in a disciplined, peaceful and orderly manner.

12. For the purposes of this campaign the following measures were chosen from the long list of unjust laws which disgrace the Statute Book of the Union: Suppression of Communism Act, Group Areas Act, the Pass Laws, Limitation of Stock, Bantu Authorities Act and the now invalidated Separate Representation of Voters Act. This line of action was adopted after a careful examination of the existing conditions and a study of the practical methods of struggle affectively adopted by oppressed peoples during the various stages of the world's history.

13. Suppression of Communism Act:

When the Defiance Campaign was launched on June 26th last year the most recent outrage perpetrated by the Nationalist Government against democracy was the Suppression of Communism Act. As time has amply proved, the aim of this ruthless measure was not merely to crush Communism but to stifle all freedom of speech, assembly and organisation on the part of those opposed to Nationalist policies and practices.

14. At this stage of their tyrannical apartheid rule the Nationalists had a particular reason for the enactment of the sinister "anti-Communist Act." In the Malanites' plot to transform South Africa into a perfect apartheid state, the Group Areas Act has been given a place of pride.

It has, indeed, been studiously conceived as the unflinching instrument to put apartheid into practice. It is by this inhuman measure that Dr. Dinges and his totalitarian colleagues of the Broederbond hope to expatriate the Indians, to make the Africans and Coloureds more landless and poverty-stricken, and finally to put the Jews and the English "in their place."

15. Government spokesmen put a thick coating of sugar on the Group Areas pill in the hope that large sections of the non-European people would swallow it. The Africans, they said, would be given self-government in their own areas, more land would be set aside for Coloured development, the Indian workers would receive proper housing; everybody would live in his own happy Heaven benevolently set aside for him by a thoughtful and just Government, and peace, progress and harmony would reign in the country.

16. But to the Government's chagrin, the non-European people, following the concrete and bold lead given by the African and Indian Congresses, totally condemned the Group Areas Act as a vicious law and large masses of people everywhere demonstrated their total and uncompromising opposition to the Act.

17. The non-Europeans and refused to swallow the pill. In the opinion of the Government the two Congresses and certain "agitators" formed the stumbling block in the way of apartheid. "These mischief-makers must be removed, their organisations destroyed; apartheid must be implemented; the Broederbond Republic must come soon" - thus ran the thought in the Nationalist mind. The child of that thought was the so-called Suppression of Communism Act.

18. Group Areas Act:

In so far as the Group Areas Act is concerned, delegates will remember that at our last Conference we unanimously decided to make a clarion call to the Indian people of this Province not to co-operate with the authorities in the setting aside of group areas under the Act. We are proud to place on record today that the Indian people have heeded our call and that even any weak links that may have existed in the community have abstained from giving a helping hand to the authorities.

19. The latest development in the history of the Group Areas Act is the recent announcement by the Land Tenure Board that it has before it certain proposals for the proclamation of group areas in Durban and that it would like interested parties to submit representations. We decided to place before the Board Congress' total rejection of the Act and any proposals under the Act. For the information of Conference our written memorandum to the Board is annexed to this report.

20. Achievements of Defiance Campaign:

The Defiance Campaign, which our Congresses launched on a country-wide scale, has been carried out at a high level of organisation and has achieved remarkable successes. To-date over 8,000 volunteers have defied unjust laws in 37 centres of the Union. Further facts and figures are embodied in the "Organisation" section of this report.

21. Our last Conference resolved that the most important task before our Congress for the coming year was the extension and consolidation of Non-European co-operation and united action on the part of all democratic in the struggle for liberation. This task was placed before all Congressmen as priority number one. The Defiance Campaign has carried understanding and active co-operation between the African and Indian peoples to a higher level than ever before. This Campaign has proved beyond doubt our firm belief that lasting and fruitful co-operation among the different sections of the oppressed people of this country can only be forged along the path of an active political struggle for freedom. Moreover, the Campaign has brought political consciousness to vast masses of the people and made them realise that their freedom can only be won by themselves through great sacrifices. An increasing number of

European democrats have been made to understand that the only way to serve democracy is for them to throw in their active lot with the cause of the Non-Europeans. Some of them have already defied unjust laws.

22. When the Campaign began the Government hoped to cut off all support from it and make it peter out by accusing the leaders of being communist and alleging that the movement was "Indian-instigated" and that India wished to ferment trouble here as she had imperialist designs on Africa. The Nationalists also sought to divide the Non-European peoples by inspiring and assisting discredited and bogus bodies such as the Bantu National Congress, the Supreme Council, the Kleurlingbond and others.

23. But the people unwaveringly supported the Congresses and the Defiance Campaign grew in scope and intensity. The Government then came down with its iron fist. Thirty-seven of our leaders, including Dr. Dadoo and Dr. Moroka, were charged under the Suppression of Communism Act, our offices and homes were raided, meetings were banned, new regulations were proclaimed providing for severe penalties and Defiers were subjected to harsh and cruel treatment in the jails.

24. The Campaign, however, went on unflinchingly and in fact the spirit of the people was aroused more than ever before.

25. Recent Disturbances:

At this stage we saw the tragic happenings at New Brighton, East London, Kimberley and Denver, where many lives were lost in disturbances and police shootings. Mr. Swart and his Government have been quick to lay the blame for these happenings at the door of the Congresses and leaders of Defiance. He has persistently refused, however, to institute an impartial judicial inquiry into these happenings. We are convinced that these tragic disturbances would never have taken place had it not been for the unjustifiable actions of the police, who obeyed Mr. Swart's instructions "to shoot before trouble starts." It is inconceivable that in any civilised country such an irresponsible order would be given by a civilised Cabinet Minister. It is the duty of the police to maintain order, not to provoke disturbances. It seems that Dr. Malan and his Ministers are callous enough to disregard even human lives if only it serves their political purposes.

26. The responsibility of the Government for the disturbances can be appreciated if we follow their subsequent actions. They blamed the United Party, the Labour Party, the Torch Commando and in fact all their opponents for the occurrences. They posed as the supreme defenders of law, order and White South Africa against black barbarism. Every Minister and Government spokesman busily engaged himself in making the white population panic. One example of the effectiveness of their tactics was the pathetic meeting of the United Municipal Executives who urged the Government to pass more severe laws to deal with the leaders of the Defiance Campaign. The Government soon declared their intention to introduce two new bills in Parliament to protect South Africa from the Defiance Campaign and violence.

27. The Swart Bills:

These two bills are now before parliament: The Public Safety Bill and the Criminal Laws Amendment Bill.

28. The Public Safety Bill provides for the declaration of an emergency by the Governor General or in cases of extreme urgency by the Minister of Justice. In effect it provides for the declaration of martial law in the country or any part of it. Once this is done the Governor General or any person or body appointed by him is authorised to make new regulations and provide penalties for breaches of these regulations, which will have the effect of suspending the ordinary laws of the land and which may be contrary to the provisions of any law passed by Parliament.
29. The Bill authorises penalties up to five years imprisonment and fines up to £500, detention without trial for unlimited periods, and condonation of illegal arrest and actions by the police with retrospective effect.
30. The provisions of the Bill flout the rule of law and create a police state. Public insecurity, terror, and intimidation will be let loose under the pretext of public safety.
31. The Criminal Laws Amendment Bill, otherwise called the anti-defiance bill, is the crack of the Government whip on the growing child of freedom. It provides for savage penalties for offences committed as a protest against any law or in support of any effort to change any law. It prohibits persons and organisations from soliciting, receiving or contributing money or other material assistance to any resistance movement or campaign to protest against any laws, and makes such actions punishable as incitement.
32. The Bill provides for maximum penalties up to £300 fine, 3 years jail, ten strokes or any two of these sentences together for an offence and higher penalties for incitement with maximum penalties up to £500, 5 years jail or 15 strokes. For a second offence whipping or imprisonment is compulsory.
33. Confiscation and sale of property to recover fines imposed, joint trial of persons, deportation of persons born outside the Union, banning and confining people to certain defined areas, and the right of Post Office officials to open letters and confiscate moneys suspected to be for resistance funds are further provisions contained in this barbarous measure.
34. The Minister of Justice and the Government have been at pains to explain that these two bills, when enacted, will be used solely for the purpose of maintaining law and order and ensuring the safety of the State against violent action.
35. The Official Opposition:
- The United Party and some of its allies have fallen for

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this ruse. The official Opposition has put forward a shameful stand in Parliament by accepting the vicious and barbaric principles embodied in these Bills with half-hearted attempts to amend certain detailed provisions in them. The Labour Party and the African representatives have been the only ones to voice real objection to the enactment of these measures. However, even the Labour Party has paid little attention to an organised campaign among the people to explain the true nature and motives of Swart's Bills. Instead there is talk among them that protests will be of no avail and that the real issue is the casting of votes against the Nationalists in the April elections.

36. Our Task:

South Africa must realise that the most potent force against Fascism is the organised might of the non-European people of the Union. Any political party which fails to realise this basic fact cannot pursue a correct policy for the defeat of the Nationalist Government and cannot serve the cause of true democracy.

37. It is vitally necessary for the non-Europeans themselves to realise the value of their present struggle and their potential power for the realisation of freedom for all. Liberation will be won by the people of this country only through their own efforts. When new attacks from the Nationalist Government threaten the last vestige of freedom and liberty of all South Africans, we must without any hesitation be in the vanguard of the fight against totalitarianism in the full knowledge that the entire oppressed peoples of the Union are with us.

38. It is for delegates at this Conference to review the struggle that has been waged up till now and to formulate plans which will carry forward the great struggle for liberation a stage further. Now is not the time for hesitancy. The entire community must be alert and ready to make greater sacrifices which it will be called upon to make in the days that lie ahead.

ACTIVITIES

II. HOUSING AND AMENITIES

MEMBERS: Housing and Amenities Sub Committee:-

MESSRS	C.I. Amra (Chairman)
"	G.S. Naidoo
"	R.A. Pillay
"	F.Ephraim.

On account of the fact that the Defiance Campaign has occupied so much of the time and energy of the Congress, the Committee has not been as active this year as it was last year.

VICTORIA STREET BUS RANK:

Arising out of the decision of the last Annual Conference the Committee has been constantly urging the City Council of Durban to establish a proper Bus Rank, with all the necessary amenities for passengers, at the Testing grounds in Warwick Avenue.

The City Council submitted a counter proposal whereby the present Bus Rank in Victoria Street was to be decentralised.

It was proposed that a Bus Rank be established in the Centenary Road/Lorne Street Area for all Northern bound buses, a Sydney Road Rank be established for South bound buses; and the Victoria Street Bus Rank be maintained for the West bound buses.

The Congress rejected the above decentralisation plan of the City Council, and appointed a deputation, consisting of Messrs. A. Choudree and C.I. Amra to interview the City Council with a view to putting forward our objections to the decentralisation plan and demanding the establishment of a proper rank at the Testing Ground. The deputation met the City Council and the Congress view was put forward.

At the same time a mass petition signed by nearly 26,000 citizens and jointly sponsored by the N.I.C. and A.N.C. asking the City Council to establish a bus rank at the Testing Ground, was presented to the Mayor.

As a result of this mass pressure some small improvements, in the way of tarring and hardening of the surface of the Bus Rank, were brought about.

INCREASE IN BUS FARES:

When the City Council announced its intention of increasing the Bus Fares of the Municipal Transport Service, the Congress strongly objected to the increase on the grounds that the non-European people of the lower income groups could not afford to pay the increased fares. Despite our protest, the bus fares were increased.

We also objected to the Road Transportation Board when it was considering the application of the Bus Owners' Association to increase bus fares. However, despite our objections, increase in bus fares was allowed.

EMPLOYMENT OF NON-EUROPEANS IN MUNICIPAL UNDERTAKINGS:

In view of the crying shortage of European skilled labour, the Congress again drew the attention of the Durban City Council to the fact that thousands of Non-Europeans were available to do clerical, artisan and skilled work for the City Council. We strongly urged the Council to employ non-Europeans, not only as labourers, but also in the skilled jobs. So far, we have not succeeded in changing the policy of the Council. The question of employing non-Europeans as drivers, mechanics and conductors in transport undertakings of the Council is still under consideration.

GROUP AREAS ACT:

The Committee submitted a special report to the Executive of N.I.C. in connection with the application of the Group Areas Act to the City Of Durban and our attitude to the Land Tenure Advisory Board. After a very lengthy discussion the Executive came to the conclusion that:-

- a. We must oppose the Group Areas Act at every stage of its application.
- b. We must show the Land Tenure Board in no uncertain terms our opposition to the establishment of Group Areas by making written and oral representations to the Board.

The Land Tenure Advisory Board published a notice in the press dated 30th January, 1953, advertising the proposed establishment of Group Areas in Durban. A lengthy memorandum opposing the Group Areas Act in principle, and reflecting the creation of Group Areas in Durban, has been forwarded to the Land Tenure Advisory Board. A full text of the Memorandum is included in the Agenda Book.

HOUSING:

The neglect of the Durban Municipality in providing adequate economic and sub-economic houses to meet the needs of its Indian citizens is well known.

Since the Group Areas Act came into force almost all housing developments have come to a stand-still. Besides the few houses being built by private enterprise, all Municipal plans for building houses for Indians have gone into cold storage. It is estimated that between 1951 and 1956 about 8000 new houses will be required to house the expanding population and cater for those who are now de-housed. Instead of fulfilling this crying need the Council is pre-occupied with its Zoning Plan.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION:

The shortage of school accommodation is still the biggest single problem facing the community in the field of education. It is estimated that in Natal there are 37,000 children of school-going age who are without school accommodation. The heaviest pressure, naturally, is in Durban and its suburbs. At the beginning of this year Congress representatives called at the various schools in Durban and found that everywhere it was the same story. Hundreds of children were turned away.

CENSUS:

The Education Department held a hurried census on the 12th February, 1953, in Durban and Pietermaritzburg of children requiring school accommodation. The Congress regrets that this census will serve no useful purpose. It was carried out in such haste and so short notice with no publicity at all, that in some cases the instructions to Principals was not even communicated to the teachers and children at the school. We hope the Department does not use the figures obtained from this census to belittle the immensity of the problem of school accommodation. If the Department is earnest in its desire to obtain the factual position, we submit that it should hold a proper census on the opening day of schools next year and instruct the Principals of all schools to take the name of every child that calls for admission and is turned away.

PLATOON SCHOOLS & ADMISSION FEES:

The platoon schools which were introduced at the beginning of last year at a few Government schools and the private platoon classes started at some Aided Schools, have helped to accommodate a few thousand children, but have not appreciably eased the pressure for more schools. But many school committees have taken advantage of the grave situation and have made payment of fees a prerequisite for admission, resulting in a serious hardship for the majority of the parents who cannot afford the high sums demanded. The same practice is also followed by many Aided Schools with the result that to-day the position is that if a parent cannot afford an admission fee his child must remain at home.

The Congress seriously urges the Department, under whose control and management most of these schools fall, to prohibit the practice of admission fees in all its schools. We submit that school committees which require funds for the maintenance, extension and improvement of aided schools, should obtain these by hard work - through public collections, donations, concerts, etc.

The Private Platoon teachers' salaries could be subsidised, if necessary, by a small monthly school fee but not by a lump sum donation at the time of admission, as this practice has not only led to serious hardships but to abuse and preferential treatment based on rich and poor.

The Congress urged parents, through leaflets widely distributed, not to pay for their childrens' admission. - But we know that many parents were forced to do so in the interests of their school starved children. We will endeavour to remedy this sorry state of affairs this year

SECONDARY EDUCATION:

The opening of the Teachers' Training College, the new secondary school in Verulam and the additions to the Girls' High School have helped to ease the pressure on secondary school accommodation. Nevertheless, nearly 250 boys were turned away from Sastri College this year. The need for another boys' high school in Durban is urgent. The Department has delayed unnecessarily in not proceeding with the erection of the proposed Secondary School at Clairwood for which £51,300 has been voted and land has already been acquired. We urge that the school be built immediately.

CONGRESS HIGH SCHOOL:

Last year the enrolment at Congress High School topped the 400 mark, demonstrating concretely the need for another High school in Durban. This year 120 new students were admitted to the standard seven classes. The girls' section was disbanded because the Girls' High School was able to accommodate all new applicants and all the girls at Congress High School.

The Congress wishes to record its special appreciation for the untiring efforts of the Honorary Principal, Mr. M.B. Naidoo, who has continued to organise these classes despite his onerous duties as Vice-Principal of Sastri College. We would like to mention that Mr. Naidoo has given to education every penny due to him for his work at Congress High School. He has paid for the qualification of four Indian nurses and has purchased from his remuneration necessary equipment and aids for the Congress High classes. We salute this spirit of self sacrifice and record the community's gratitude for this high and noble endeavour.

STUDENTS PETITION:

Over 200 students through the Congress have petitioned the Administrator of Natal for a secondary school in Durban. This is the first time in the history of our community's struggle for education that students just out of the primary schools have taken direct action. We hope the Administrator will take note of the voice of youth crying for what is their due - education.

CONC

The Natal Indian Congress has collected nearly 10,000 signatures to a petition to be sent to the Administrator of Natal demanding more schools, and free and compulsory education, free books, medical inspection, playing fields and proper recreational facilities at all schools. The Congress will submit this Petition to the Administrator together with a memorandum putting forward the views and demands of Congress in regard to education.

MASS MEETINGS:

A mass meeting convened in conjunction with the African National Congress (Natal) to discuss the educational needs of the non-European people in Durban and Natal was broken up by the S.A.P. after the Mayor had refused permission to hold it. Five members of the Congresses, including Chief Luthuli and Dr. Naicker, the Presidents of the respective Congresses, will appear in the magistrates' court on 4th March to face charges under the recently promulgated by-laws controlling meetings in public places in Durban.

PAMPHLET:

Five thousand pamphlets on the Congress' policy and demands on education were published and distributed among the people at the beginning of this year.

THANKS:

The Congress wishes to thank the officials and members of the Durban and District Women's League and the Natal Indian Youth Congress for their welcome and valued assistance during the campaign on schools and wishes to congratulate the League for taking an active part in bringing this problem before the attention of the authorities, the press and the public.

COMMITTEE:

The members of this Committee for the period under review were:-

Messrs: J. N. Singh (Chairman)
A. C. Meer
K. Moonsamy, and
I. C. Meer.

In addition, Mr. A. I. Bhoold rendered the Committee valuable assistance.

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IV. ORGANISATION

MEMBERSHIP: Arising out of a directive to all branch Secretaries calling on the Branches to organise membership drives, 273 new members have been recruited during the last month. It must be mentioned here that only three Branches have carried out this decision with any amount of consistency. Branches that have not carried out this task must immediately organise a house to house recruiting campaign in their areas. During these drives it must be remembered that one person must be appointed in each street to be in charge of all organisational work that may arise from time to time. For instance, the appointed person in each street must continually distribute all propaganda material that is issued by the Branch or Headquarters.

BRANCHES: During the first half of last year the organisational structure of Congress suffered considerable deterioration mainly due to the lack of political activity during this period. It is important to remember that Congress organisation cannot be isolated from other aspects of Congress work. Actually the strength or weakness of our organisation is dependent largely upon and is a reflection of our political activity.

Therefore, it is easy to understand why there was such a transformation in our organisational position immediately the Defiance Campaign began. Whereas only one or two Branches were functioning fairly regularly during the first half of 1952, immediately after the Defiance Campaign began nearly all Branches swung into action, with the result that we can happily report that all seventeen branches are active.

It must be mentioned that numerous people from different areas where no Congress Branches exist have approached us to form Branches in their areas and that this task is being undertaken by the Executive which has now appointed two full-time organisers - Messrs Billy Nair and Reggie Chetty.

WORKING COMMITTEE:

During the period under review five meetings of the Working Committee were held. Unlike the previous year the attendance at meetings was greatly improved.

However, some Branch representatives were regularly absent from meetings. Branches must see to it that all their representatives attend meetings of the Working Committee regularly.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

It is necessary to stress that the burden of carrying out decisions of the Executive Committee fell on the shoulders of the few willing members. Some members of the Executive did not seem to realise fully the graveness of the political situation in South Africa, and even after the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws began they did not throw their full weight in the struggle. This lethargy and inactivity

must be...../

must be eradicated if Congress wishes to prepare itself for the trying and bitter struggle that lies ahead. Unfortunately it is not possible to give details of the attendances of individual members at Executive meetings as many of our files are still being held by the police, who raided our offices in August last year. After the Campaign began it was found necessary to co-opt a number of non-voting but active members on the Executive Committee and the Secretariat with a view to strengthening the number of active workers for the campaign.

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN AND ORGANISATION:

The Executive Committee, in pursuance of the decision of the South African Indian Congress Conference held in Johannesburg in January, 1952, to launch the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign, jointly with the African National Congress, decided at a joint meeting of the Executives of the Natal Indian Congress and African National Congress to set up a Joint Action Committee consisting of six members of each organisation to prosecute the struggle in Natal.

The Joint Action Committee realised:

- (1) That the Campaign could be a powerful weapon for awakening the peoples' political consciousness and for rousing their support for our slogan of: "FULL DEMOCRACY FOR ALL IN SOUTH AFRICA" ;
- (2) That such a Campaign will help to prepare the people for future struggles by impressing upon ^{them} that sacrifices had to be made before victory was won;
- (3) That the Defiance Campaign was a prelude to MASS ACTION of other types, which would take the struggle forward.
- (4) That the Campaign would bear its full fruit if side by side with it the movement was strengthened organisationally and the people prepared for other forms of struggle;
- (5) That during the struggle, agitation on day to day local issues affecting the people must be taken up and constantly linked with the struggle as a whole;
- (6) That the Congress must work at all times to maintain the widest possible unity of the people compatible with continued struggle; and most important of all;
- (7) That the struggle was a long drawn out one and that it would change in character with the changing circumstances.

The Campaign in Durban was launched on the 31st August, 1952. Other centres had already been in action since June 26th 1952.

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In the Campaign 269 volunteers in Natal have served terms of imprisonment up to and including 10th December, 1952. The facts below show the intensity of struggle and the Union wide support it evoked:

- (1) Total arrests in the Campaign up to and including 10th December, 1952 in 37 different centres of the Union .. 8080.
- (2) Monthly figures for the number of volunteers who participated in the campaign:

JUNE (5 days)	146.
JULY	1,504.
AUGUST	2,015
SEPTEMBER	2,058
OCTOBER)	2,054
NOVEMBER)	
DECEMBER (10 Days)	303
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	8,080

- (3) Number of volunteers arrested in each centre:-

(i) Eastern Cape	5,719
(ii) Western Cape	423
(iii) Transvaal	1,411
(iv) Natal	269
(v) Free State	258
	<hr/>
	8,080

- (4) The following are the centres of operation:-

- (1) EASTERN CAPE: Port Elizabeth, East London, Uitenhage, Queenstown, King Williamstown, Jansenville, Grahamstown, Peddie, Fort Beaufort, Port Alfred, Alice, Stutterheim, Cradock, Aliwal North and Kirkwood.
- (ii) WESTERN CAPE: Mafeking, Kimberley, Cape Town, Paarl, Worcester, Ceres, Stellenbosch.
- (iii) TRANSVAAL: Johannesburg, Springs, Brakpan, Boksburg, Benoni, Germinston, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp, Pretoria, Witbank, Vereeniging, Bethal.
- (iv) NATAL: Durban and Pinetown.
- (v) FREE STATE: Bloemfontein.

In the initial stages numerous organisational difficulties were experienced, but there was great enthusiasm shown by many rank and file members and members of the Natal Indian Youth Congress who volunteered to spend all their spare time helping to carry out the numerous organisational tasks that arose from time to time.

PUBLICITY AND PROPAGANDA:

Mass Meetings: Since the Defiance Campaign began numerous mass meetings were organised mainly in Durban and its suburbs and also at Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and Newcastle. During the first two months of the Campaign, two meetings were held almost daily and a permanent platform was established at the Red Square in Pine Street, Durban. The enthusiasm of the masses at these meetings and the great demonstrations held whenever a batch of volunteers went into action was most inspiring. The Proclamation prohibiting meetings of Africans in the Scheduled areas and the By-Law controlling meetings in Public places in Durban, gazetted towards the end of last year, retarded to some extent the programme of meetings.

PRESS STATEMENTS: During the period under review, numerous and regular press statements were issued by the Natal Indian Congress and on matters affecting the African and Indian people, joint statements were issued by the two Congresses. Congress statements dealt not only with the question of Defiance, but also with problems such as transport and school accommodation. Congress views, decisions and actions have been splashed across the front pages of leading newspapers in almost every capital in the world, and have been mentioned on numerous occasions over the All India Radio, the B.B.C, Radio Budapest and Air China.

FLASH AND AFRIKA NEWSLETTERS: Immediately the Campaign commenced the Joint Action Committee decided to issue cyclostyled News Sheets giving news on the progress of the Campaign especially since the Daily newspapers did not give enough of the news in their columns. Since the Campaign began 71 issues of the Flash have been distributed.

Apart from the Flash, a Newsletter called "Afrika" was issued giving more detailed news on the various problems facing the people. Since Defiance began 7 issues of this Newsletter have been printed. These publications have been most valuable in the organisational and political activity of our Congress and have been appreciated by the people.

PRESS: Realising that a newspaper is a vital part of any struggle the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress have taken over the "Spark" which was formerly the organ of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress and is now known as "Spark for Congress News". This paper now appears weekly and is the official organ of the National Action Committee of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress.

Congress branches must help our paper by sending in news and views and by seeing that the sales of the paper are carried out in an organised way in the different areas. It must be realised that the role of the "Congress News" can only be fulfilled if it receives the fullest support and assistance of those engaged in the struggle.

SECTION 4.

- (i) Annexure to General Secretary's Report: Memorandum on Group Areas Act submitted to the Land Tenure Advisory Board: (Pages 1-11)

- (ii) Draft amendments to Constituion: (Pages 12-15)

MEMORANDUM

Submitted To

THE LAND TENURE ADVISORY BOARD

ON

THE PROPOSED PROCLAMATION
OF GROUP AREAS IN DURBAN.

BY

THE NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS
(Founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894)

INTRODUCTION

(1) THE Natal Indian Congress (Founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894) is the major national organisation of the Indian people, representing all sections of the Indian community in the Province of Natal. It has a membership of over thirty-five thousand. It is also the most representative organisation of the Indian people in Durban.

(2) In terms of the notice published in the Press on the 30th January 1953, in relation to the proposed proclamation of Group areas in Durban, the Congress as an interested party makes the following representations:-

OPPOSITION ON PRINCIPLE

(3) The Indian people of Natal have always opposed segregation and apartheid on principle. The Pegging Act of 1943 was passed in the face of very strong opposition from the Indian people. When the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act was passed in 1946, the Indian people rejected it in no uncertain terms. The Passive Resistance Campaign which the Indian people waged against this measure to defend their inherent democratic rights to acquire and occupy landed properties and to carry on their businesses in areas of their choice, is recent history. The enactment of this Act led to the condemnation of South Africa's policy of race discrimination by the United Nations and the world at large.

APARTHEID/...

APARTHEID

(4) The Nationalist Party came into power in 1948 on the slogan of apartheid. The view of the Congress was, and still is, that the policy of apartheid leads to further oppression of the non-European people. The short history of the Nationalist Government has clearly shown that the Government has no respect but contempt for the civil and economic rights of the non-Europeans. The application of the policy of apartheid has created racial tension, conflict and bitterness on an unprecedented scale. No policy which attempts to keep the majority of the population of South Africa under permanent subjection or "baaskap" can ever succeed. The non-European people rightly claim full democratic rights in the land of their birth.

GROUP AREAS ACT

(5) The present Government, in face of opposition from the vast majority of the people of South Africa, both black and white, enacted the Group Areas Act of 1950. The Government was bent upon the application of its repressive apartheid policy, despite strong and growing opposition. This further machinery of oppression was applied to the people of Natal by Proclamation No.75 of 1951. In introducing the Group Areas Bill, the Minister of Interior Dr.Donges, contended in Parliament that the application of this measure would lead to racial harmony in our multi-racial society. This is a false argument. There were other motives for introducing this measure. The purpose of this Act, as far as the Indian people are concerned, is to create conditions leading to their expatriation. This is borne out by the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee appointed by Dr.Donges to investigate the operation of the Asiatic land laws. It was clear from the beginning, and it is

now/...

being proved that the real motives for the Group Areas Act are :-

- (a) To deprive the Indian people of their long established ownership and occupation of land and homes.
- (b) To facilitate the uprooting and expatriation of South African citizens of Indian origin.
- (c) To ruin the Indian people economically.
- (d) To confine them to ghettos as a source of cheap labour.

(6) Any Act conceived under the policy of baaskap and apartheid, and passed by a Parliament of the white ruling class, a Parliament from which all non-Europeans are strictly excluded, can only be in the interests of the white dominating section of South Africa. A law which is manifestly unjust cannot be applied justly.

DEFIANCE OF UNJUST LAWS

(7) The Group Areas Act is one of the six laws which the non-European people of South Africa are opposing under the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Over eight thousand five hundred South Africans have already courted imprisonment to demonstrate their rejection of this measure.

(8) The United Nations and the world at large have condemned this iniquitous Act. In fact, the Government of South Africa has been requested by the United Nations not to implement it. Having regard to the opposition both in South Africa and abroad, and in the interests of justice and racial harmony and peace, the Board would be most unwise to apply the Group Areas Act to Durban or any other part of South Africa.

THE DURBAN CITY COUNCIL ZONING PLAN

(9) The Durban City Council is notorious for its anti-Indian policy. This is to be expected from any local authority which is elected exclusively by a white electorate. The zoning plan as submitted by the City Council to the Board reflects clearly the intention of the Durban Municipality to relegate Indians to the undeveloped Northern and Southern areas beyond the boundaries of the City.

(10) When the intentions of the Durban and other municipalities in Natal became clear, the Natal Indian Congress at its Conference held on the 1st October 1951, passed the following Resolution :-

" This Conference views with extreme gravity the serious peril that now faces the Indian community as a result of the racial zoning plans of the Durban Municipality, the Ladysmith Town Council and other Municipalities and local authorities under the Group Areas Act. These plans fully justify the fears and misgivings of the Indian people of Natal; they reveal in all their nakedness that the Government and various municipalities and local authorities are not in the least concerned with any equitable scheme of town-planning.

The reports of the Durban City Council's Technical Committee and the plans of the Ladysmith Town Council do not even make any pretence at any objective planning based on the needs of the different sections of the people. Throughout the Technical Committee's reports emphasis is laid on displacing all Indians from the City. The plans reveal that the first step is to expel all Indians from their residences within the City, the second step being to deprive them of their businesses and their economic interests within the City. Sea Cow Lake, Nowlands and all low-lying undeveloped valleys towards Inanda is hinted at as the best areas where Indians are to be herded in, both for their present residential and business needs and for their future development. This vast pattern of racial zoning is nothing less than a well-planned, clearly calculated attempt to deprive the Indian community of their homes, lands, properties, businesses and other economic interests within the City. Properties worth millions of pounds acquired over ninety years through toil and sweat and industry is to be taken away under the cover of racial zoning.

This Conference, therefore, resolves that in common with other non-European sections of the community, it will resist at every stage all attempts at expulsion and displacement, direct or indirect, of its people from the presently-settled areas of residence and business and will

continue with ever increasing determination its struggle against the Group Areas Act.

This Conference calls upon the Indian people not to co with any authority in the setting aside or creation of Group Areas under the Group Areas Act, and instructs every Congress member and Branch to work vigilantly in its area to expose any individual who co-operates and to prevent any such co-operation, which will result in the implementation of the Group Areas Act with the consent of the Indian people."

OBJECTIONS TO PROCLAMATION OF GROUP AREAS IN DURBAN

(11) While emphasising our total opposition to the Group Areas Act, we nevertheless wish to examine the proposals before the Board in order to expose their unjust and iniquitous nature.

POPULATION OF DURBAN

(12) The population of Durban according to the revised Census figures for 1951 was as follows :-

Europeans	131,430
Coloureds	16,104
Indians	145,744
Africans	132,841
Total	<u>426,119</u>

(13) Approximately two-thirds of the population of Durban consists of non-Europeans. An examination of the distribution of land under Schedule A(1) to A(12) shows that the City Council in its zoning plan is not motivated by a desire to allocate land under its jurisdiction fairly and justly, but intends to uproot thousand of non-Europeans from their homes and to remove them to undeveloped areas outside the municipal boundaries.

(14) It/...

(14) It is not at all surprising to note that the two largest areas set aside for Indian occupation and ownership, namely the Duffs Road area and the Umhlatuzana area are not within the Borough of Durban. This lends proof to the contention that the Council intends removing the Indian people outside the boundaries of the City.

(15) The City Council of Durban is notorious for its criminal neglect of Indian housing needs. It has failed to provide proper roads, lighting, sanitation and other amenities in areas where Indians and other non-white people live.

(16) If the Council plans are implemented, they will result in the shifting of almost the entire Indian community to undeveloped areas where the Council will continue its policy of neglect. Moreover, the Group Areas Act does not make any provision for alternative housing for people displaced, nor does it compel local authorities to provide the necessary civic amenities in zoned areas. The Indian people, denied the municipal franchise, will be left to the mercy of a white municipal authority with serious consequences.

TRANSPORT PROBLEM

(17) The areas suggested for Indian occupation and ownership are so far removed from the City that Indian workers employed in the old Borough of Durban will have to shoulder increased transport expenses. The Indian population is predominantly poor, over seventy per cent living below the bread-line, and the additional transport expenses will mean a further drain on their meagre incomes.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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