

even into trade unions, so that we can be able to speak with one voice. After all just yesterday a law was passed for the African workers, what they call the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act. We in the trade union movement today, we are very proud because whether the Government wants to recognise us or not we do not care, that Act will never work. It is already three years and it is not working because it is the will of the people that will govern, and the will of the people is already governing as far as that Act is concerned. Those regional committees they will still have to come back-doors to our trade unions and ask for support. They are still doing it because any worker today is a fool who can go to a man who is appointed by the Government and ask him to stand for the workers.

It is the workers that will appoint and elect their own leaders, and the workers in particular they will eventually promulgate laws in parliament. Afrika!".

CHAIRMAN : (Leslie Masina) "I have got only one speaker . Before I call upon my last speaker to address you I am going to call upon the General-Secretary of the African National Congress Women's League to read a message on what is going to be done about passes".

MARIE RANTA : "Afrika! Afrika! Mr. Chairman and fellow workers, I am bringing here a message to you from the African National Congress Women's League. The Women's League warmly greets this unity day of the workers of South Africa, irrespective of race, colour or creed, we have already heard from the previous speakers that the South African Congress of Trade Unions stand for all the workers of South Africa irrespective of race or colour. Freedom in our lifetime will only be achieved if all women workers are organised, today we are disorganised. The African women of this country have already shown their courage and militancy in previous struggles..... Before I go any further with this message I want to elaborate on passes for African women.

It is true that the African women have been demonstrating to their local Native Commissioner. So today we are appealing to both men and women to go back to the Native Commissioner and demand a reply. It is true that in 1913 when the Government wanted to give our mothers passes, our mothers fought this vicious law to the bitter end. Why don't we, the African women today with better education. Write to all the women in this country and tell them how bad this pass law is.

Yes that is why the women of South Africa assembled at the Union Buildings on the 9th of August this year to show this Government that we are not prepared to carry this pass, to show this Government whether they intimidate us by this police force it will not stop us. We still say that the people shall govern and we shall have the police for the people and the people for the police. It is true that today when we stand here we are very proud of our mothers..... today when I pass my mother's grave I always say here lies a hero, a women who did the work of my people.

So Mr. Chairman in brief I still say and I will always say let us fight this vicious law, let us show the Nationalist Government that we are alive and that we are human beings and we have to fight for our rights. So Mr. Chairman and friends let us be serious when we discuss these passes because it is the end of the African people in South Africa. I want to say this that the Nationalist Government is shivering today when they see the Africans meeting.

So I will continue with the message from the women of the African National Congress. We women have the greatest force in our hands, it is the courage and determination of mothers to fight for their children which they have given birth to in pain and suffering, there is no power on earth that can prevent the mothers from fighting for their children. Let no difference of race, social background or politics come between us, we are mothers and women and we shall strive together for our children. Let us together defeat the oppressive forces of South Africa, let us by unity, courage and strength together defeat this Government."

CHAIRMAN : (Leslie Masina) "I am going to call upon my last speaker, the Chairman of the Johannesburg local committee".

JOHN NKADIMENG : "Comrade Chairman and fellow workers I have the greatest pleasure to speak to you this afterboon, I have listened to various speakers this morning, but there is one thing I want to tell you. If you look at this (indicating a pamphlet) do you all see it? This is the wheel of freedom, this is the wheel of freedom. We want to say here in the name of the liberation movement of the people of South Africa. Whether Strydom, Swarts and Verwoerd and the like, whether they like it or not this wheel of freedom is rolling and rolling, and the people of Africa will in their lifetime achieve it. We say it in a time when comrade Nasser and the people of Rhodesia are fighting side by side with us, we say it in the name and during the lifetime of Luthuli /12.

and Dadoo we shall achieve freedom in South Africa. Friends when we look around us here we see many agents of the Government. Six months ago the so-called Minister of Justice said there was treason in South Africa. Is there any treason when the people of all races and creeds come together and speak in the name of freedom? We say to Mr. Swart so far history has proved you a liar, because when the people speak for freedom, for the freedom of their children to live free as human beings there cannot be treason at all.

It was on the 25th and 26th of June 1955 when the people of South Africa came together on this square and proclaimed the Freedom Charter. Of course freedom to Mr. Swart and his friends freedom means treason. We say to Mr. Swart and all his agents here who are themselves oppressed, they are writing here whilst Mr. Swart is playing tennis. I say to you my friends it was only three months ago when members of Parliament had an increase of wages, where is your increase in wages? We say to you today that we are here speaking in the name of the people of South Africa, that man must live together with man. It was this Government when it came into power who bluffed the whole world that there was communism in South Africa, they said the communists were going to burn the houses of the white people, later on they called it treason. My people and my friends, Mr. Swart we just want to tell you please stop telling the people lies you must learn to be a proper Minister of Justice. No civilised man can expect to get such lies from a Minister of Justice.

But fellow workers in spite of all the lies which the Government in this country have been telling the world, we must continue to speak the truth, that truth is in South Africa, we want freedom of all men whether their colour is white or yellow. Somebody said that we want the police for the people and the people for the police. We, the people who are gathered here are the only people. As I said before that this wheel of freedom is rolling, all who speak about treason and all who speak in the language of the oppression of the working people of this country, those people will be pushed aside and the people who want freedom will have to come in. We have gathered here this morning because of that urge for freedom. Every sitting of Parliament we have seen these low bastards in Parliament coming out with new acts to stop this upsurge of the people for freedom. I say whether you pass laws in Parliament or not, whether you pass the Suppression of Freedom Act, the people who are here, are the people who are going to get freedom. /...13.

We must support that man of Egypt, we must tell Mr. Louw the so-called Minister of Foreign Affairs that the people of Egypt has got the right to nationalise the Suez Canal, they must enjoy the wealth of their country. They must stop the people, the people of Egypt, together with us they must stop the system of Colonialism. And we must tell the Colonial powers, whether they like it or not, the writing is on the wall. We must tell Strydom and his agents, we must get freedom in South Africa to rule ourselves, schools for our children and everything in Africa as much as we want. We must tell them, in fact tell these chaps who are here taking notes today that their business must actually be to protect the people, but what we see is they are terrorising our people.

Why have they stopped our leaders to be with us here today? Why do they pass all these kinds of laws to stop them? That is a clear indication that they are afraid of you. We want to tell them that Hitler tried to do the same but the end of him was unknown, who knows where Hitler's grave is. I say to Strydom and his gang in Parliament that if they want to live as free men they must accept to live with everybody in South Africa whether his colour is black or yellow. They must stop this nonsense of apartheid man, because it has failed and it shall always fail. When we have gathered here friends we have been listening to very good speeches, in fact we should have had music, plays and so on, but because of the filthy minds of these people who call themselves the Government they went behind the back door to buy these people to stand there. We say you can do what you like man but freedom shall come, we are not going to ask you for it, anybody who stand in front of us we shall push him aside, we demand it, to freedom we shall go. In the name of the liberation movement of the people of South Africa. Mayibuye!"

CHAIRMAN : (Leslie Masina) "Comrades and friends we have now come to the end of our meeting. I thank all those workers who made it their business to come to this meeting today. This meeting, as I told you at the beginning that it was a meeting called by the South African Congress of Trade Unions. We wanted to get together the workers of Johannesburg and other places, because we feel that it is very important that workers must be organised in trade unions so that they can be able to fight for higher wages and better working conditions.

In many civilised countries in Europe workers are now working forty hours a week and others even less. But in our own country where we are ruled by people who claim to support Western civilisation, we find workers working more than fifty hours a week. In civilised countries trade unions are not being boycotted. Instead in our own country African trade unions are being denied recognition by the Government. The Government goes to the extent of making a special law to see to it that African trade unions are being bled to death. In spite of that law the African workers in South Africa say that they will not co-operate with any inspectors or anybody in the Department of Labour to make that law work. One speaker told you here that that law is unworkable, that is true comrades, the South African Congress of Trade Unions is appealing to you not to co-operate with the Native Labour Officers. We are fighting that the African trade unions should be recognised by the Government in this country. And I am appealing to you all who are present here to become members of your different trade unions.

S.A.C.T.U. is prepared even to organise our friends the police, who are not being paid proper wages. My friend Mr. Tabeta, he is a first class sergeant, but he does not receive the wages that a first class European sergeant is getting. Here we are fighting for them. We shall continue to fight even for the white police because they are underpaid. So you see that S.A.C.T.U. is not a colour bar body at all. It fight for all people who make their living with work. Unfortunately there is some stupid Native police who do not realise that S.A.C.T.U. is fighting for them. In fact white policemen are much better because they don't interfere when it comes to trade union meetings but native police do interfere. So we are going to organise you brothers.

It is the duty of this organisation to see to it that unorganised workers are organised into trade unions. Our Vice-President told you about the activities of the South African Trade Union Council, that it wants to bribe African trade unions to form liaison committees. They say to African trade unions we are going to make a memorandum for you so that you can fight through the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes Act)

Now we of the Congress of Trade Unions say that we do not want to form a liaison committee with the Trade Union Council but we want them to form one with the Congress of Trade Unions.

Unfortunately as you all know there are sellers all over, spies and traitors are all over, the so-called Secretary of the African Tobacco Workers Union he has accepted the liaison committee, he wants to remain a boy when the African workers are fighting hard.....
I am appealing to the workers in the tobacco industries today that they should not accept a liaison committee, because Mr. Hlongwane, their Secretary has sold them. Mr. Hlongwane of Pimville not our Mr. Hlongwane. And I am appealing to you if you have friends in the tobacco industry to tell them not to accept a liaison committee.

We of the Congress of Trade Unions are prepared to co-operate with you in the Tobacco Workers Union, in fact we wrote them a letter and told them that we want to fight the Industrial Conciliation Bill but they turned down our offer. On the 18th of July we wrote them a letter saying to them that we want a joint conference to discuss with them, they also ignored our letter. We wrote to them again on the 10th of September, I only received a reply after speaking so you can see for yourselves is T.U.C. fighting for the interests of the workers or for the Government? I say it is not your leaders who are going to be the judges but you are going to be the judges. Comrades I am now going to read the resolutions.

This meeting calls upon S.A.C.T.U. to organise workers both in urban and rural areas into militant trade unions, and to fight for increased wages, better working conditions and shorter working hours.

Is the resolution accepted?

S.A.C.T.U. Workers Committees should without delay organise workers committees on a local and regional basis for the establishment of unity days the entire solidarity of the workers and which will foster material understanding of the problems of the workers and that in future these days become days of dedication. Accepted?

This meeting pledges its solidarity with the people of Egypt in their struggle against Anglo-French imperialism, and in defence of their sovereignty and independence. We firmly believe that the Suez Canal belongs to them.

That this meeting deplores the activities of certain co-ordinating bodies who have appeased the apartheid /16.

policy of the Government by dividing workers on a racial basis and thereby betrayed the workers. This element now seeks to divide the African trade unions by sponsoring a liaison committee. This meeting warns all progressive trade unions not to fall for this trap.

This meeting demands the repeal of all pass laws which have brought untold miseries upon the workers, and strongly warns the Government against their attempt to extend this vicious system to the African women.

In conclusion comrades I say we should carry on in organising the African trade unions so that we can have strong trade unions that will fight for the rights of the workers in this country. Although the Government do not want to recognise African trade unions at this moment, but I say if we are well organised the employers will be forced to recognise us. In fact many industries recognise the African unions. We negotiated with the employers and we solved many problems. Why is that, it is because those unions are strong. As long as we are weak the employers will never recognise us and they want to put out their goods, they don't want to lose production. The employers know that dissatisfied labour don't produce goods as they should. Therefore comrades the fight is on, let us carry on. We are even organising the domestic servants. In fact we are going to call a meeting soon to submit the different demands to the employers.

Each worker will have to take the demands to her employer and tell her I want so much or no work. It is either the Missus is going to give or they will have no labour. I am confident that the people who employ the servants will give an increase without the consent of the Government. These people are doing a very important job, they cook food for them but outside on the street they don't meet.

Another announcement I would like to make is this, that we are going to have a dance on the 13th of October at the Bantu Social Centre. This dance is sponsored by the Congress of Trade Unions. We are trying to get workers together so I will be very pleased if that hall will be filled with workers not employers. The admission is not much just six and six - it is much to workers but it is for a good cause. The African sisters will help us.

Another announcement I want to make is to inform you that we have now a local committee at Benoni which is

going to see to it that workers in Benoni are organised, and in fact they have already called one meeting with success. We have a local committee in Randfontein and we are going to form one in Germiston and we also want to form one in Krugersdorp, and we have got one in Pretoria. In other countries where people are free it is because of the fight put up by the workers, it was because their trade unions were properly organised. The workers of the Gold Coast were properly organised they went on strike Dr. Nkrumah was in gaol. Just see what is heppening on the other side of the Limpopo. It is an inspiration to us workers here, why can't we follow suit there is nothing wrong with us. If our trade unions are strong we will say we want £5 a week and a thirty six hour working week.

You know comrades for your wages you receive at the factories you only work five hours for it, on Monday, then from then on to Friday and Saturday you work for the profits of the employers. They are rich at the expence of the African workers. I think if once you know how profits are being made you will not doubt tomorrow to go out and organise your people. S.A.C.T.U. is prepared to organise you. Comrades, workers of the Gold Coast are going to get their independence, Dr. Nkrmah will be Prime Minister within the Commonwealth, and we hope that the South African Government will send some representative to the Gold Coast.

Comrades you can see that the workers of the Middle East are fighting for their rights, the workers of Egypt have nationalised the Suez Canal but the exploiters of America and England and France are worried because they are not going to get profits. We have passed a resolution here that we support the stand taken by those people. In fact the Government of South Africa is a little bot confused as to what line they should take because they also want their independence. Afrika forward to Freedom!".

3.15 P.M. (Singing of Nkosi Sikelele Afrikca).

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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