

Chapter 4.

CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE.

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CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE (C.O.P.)

It is now one year six months that the African National Congress decided to convene a Congress of the People Conference. This was discussed at the Annual General Conference of the African National Congress which was held at Queenstown in December, 1953, and it was decided upon that all the racial groups throughout the Union of South Africa be invited to attend an assembly where we would all speak of freedom and the ways to achieve it, for ourselves, our children and all freedom-loving peoples.

We shall not confine ourselves to this question as it has long been ^{hitherto} discussed. The time has now come that we should all go to that mighty multi-racial assembly to be held at Kiptown, Johannesburg next Saturday. What must be clear to this conference is that those people will meet as a result of the initiative which was taken by the African National Congress for the holding of such a conference to devise a plan whereby all the people of this country could live in security and comfort, to be entitled to a share in the vast fortunes which our lovely country can offer to all not to a few (as is the case presently when millions of people have no rights). Today we speak of a Congress of the People because of the oppression of which we are victims in this country. The African National Congress has taken a step which will always be remembered by the whole world, for we, Africans, do not at all intend to chase other national groups from this land; but we believe in the peaceful and harmonious existence of all in comfort in the country that we all love so dearly. That is why some of the Whites are joining hands with us for it has also dawned to them

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that the only course to take towards a better South Africa is the course that the African National Congress has taken - (which is a course which the Almighty God created when He said "Love thy neighbour as thyself").

The Campaign of the Congress of the People has long been undertaken but for financial reasons little was achieved. This campaign called for everyone - the miners, the factory-workers, the railway workers, the teachers, the ministers of religion, washerwomen, farmers and so on, to speak together of freedom. As we have said, for financial reason the work was not so satisfactorily done; but in spite of all that every thing ^{possible} must be done to send delegates to this Conference which will be held in Johannesburg, so that we should not lose the opportunity of our demands being included in the FREEDOM CHARTER.

As a means of receiving the spirit of the Cape Province, we shall all read the call led by the Organizer of this campaign and in one voice say,

"We call the people of South Africa -----"
(THE "CALL" was read while all were standing).

You have all heard and felt the truth in the words which are on this paper, and we should, therefore, realising the importance of the achievement of those aspirations, and copying the example of our National Volunteer-in-Chief, Chief A. J. Lutshuli pledge ourselves as Freedom Volunteers.

Next week therefore all the roads lead to Klerksdorp. This Cape Provincial Conference should be prepared to send as many delegates as possible. The sum of one shilling per person should be paid now for the Campaign, and this Province should send delegates to the Congress of the People.

"LET US PREPARE FOR THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE,
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM,
LET US ORGANISE FOR THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE
LET US MARCH TO FREEDOM IN OUR LIFE-TIME!!!!"

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Chapter 5.

MESSAGE

TO ALL FREEDOM VOLUNTEERS

FROM

THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER-IN-CHIEF

CHIEF A. J. LUTHULI

THE

OF VOLUNTEERS AND THE RULES

FOR VOLUNTEERS.

A MESSAGE TO ALL FREEDOM VOLUNTEERS

"We call upon all the people of this country to stand together and fight against the oppression which is a product of discriminatory legislation. We appeal to them to undertake the great task of removing apartheid with all its accompanying evils forever.

"We call upon all African men and women to pledge themselves as Freedom Volunteers. Our leader chief Luthuli wants 50,000 volunteers and we should not disappoint him. These volunteers will go amongst the people preaching to them the gospel of freedom. We want our volunteers to take a great step than that of 1952. Then, you did a great job of work which will remain immemorable in the history of this country, forgetting all the pleasures of this world and preferred to go to prison for it. Today we speak not of jails: we speak of getting every man, woman, boy, girl and child to rise up now and fight for their freedom.

Volunteers are requested that in the face of all kinds of jackboot ^{and bloodthirsty} methods which the police may adopt against them, they should be calm and never allow their passions to get better part of them. They should be determined in whatever they mean to do and never lose the courage to fight for freedom in our life-time.

We call upon all freedom loving people.
LET US GET 50,000 VOLUNTEERS IN ORDER TO
DEFEAT STRIDOM! LET US GO FORWARD TO FREEDOM!

..... This call is
made by CHIEF A. J. LUTHULI, NATIONAL VOLUNTEER
IN CHIEF.

PROVINCIAL VOLUNTEER - IN-CHIEF: Mr. E. MFAXA of
Duttenheim is our Cape Provincial

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Volunteer-in-Chief. He was recently elected in succession to Dr. Uongwe as the Capes Volunteer in Chief during March. He will be assisted throughout by the Provincial Volunteer Board and other volunteer committees. All the Volunteers-in-Chief will have to confer privately during this conference to discuss their problems.

THE TRANSVAAL VOLUNTEER-IN-CHIEF: MR. ROBERT M. RESHA:

We are awaiting the arrival of Mr. Resha the Transvaal Volunteer-in-Chief. A chance will be given to this brave son of Africa to meet the volunteers of this province together with our own Provincial Volunteer-in-Chief and to discuss with them such matters as they will find worth going into.

MAYIBUYE! MAYIBUYE! AFRICA!!!

PLEDGE OF ^{FREEDOM} VOLUNTEERS

"I am convinced that I should fight until victory is achieved, all discriminatory laws repealed and the voice of the freedom-loving people is heard at the historic Congress of the People: and therefore I, the undersigned, a freedom volunteer do hereby solemnly promise to serve my ^{people} ~~country~~ and my country to the best of my ability according to the recognised policy of the African National Congress.

"I shall always be in readiness to perform the duties which I will be called upon to accomplish by the African National Congress:

"I shall at all times obey the orders of my leaders and will faithfully obey the directives of the NATIONAL VOLUNTEER BOARDS."

Date -----

Signed -----

THE RULES FOR VOLUNTEERS.

1. The object of these Rules for Volunteers is to foster a spirit of service, diligence and devotion in the cause which we have undertaken.

2. Volunteers must develop a spirit within themselves of self-help and must be prepared to perform all duties which may be placed before them.

3. Volunteers should execute all the directions which they may receive from their leaders.

4. Volunteers must expect to be criticised for their mistakes without ill-feeling being created.

5. Volunteers must be an example to the people as a whole in appearance, demeanour and self-denial.

Therefore:

(a) They must keep their clothing, houses and characters spotless.

(b) At ~~all~~ ^{no} times, ^{must} volunteers be found under the influence of liquor, and should always endeavour to avoid places where lawlessness and immoral habits are prevalent.

(c) When volunteers are at work they should always be alert and lively.

6. Volunteers should never allow themselves to be overcome by anger, and should exercise the greatest amount of self-control.

7. Volunteers should always be prepared to work at all times.

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Translated by S. Lunga
from Xhosa into English.

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Chapter 3.

REPORT ON THE REGIONS OF THE CAPE,

namely,

1. WESTERN CAPE REGION,
2. EASTERN CAPE REGION,
3. NORTH WESTERN CAPE REGION,
4. CAPE MIDLANDS REGION,
5. VICTORIA EAST REGION,
6. NORTH EASTERN CAPE REGION
7. BORDER REGION, and
8. THE TRANSKEI.

REPORT ON THE REGIONS OF THE CAPE.

This report comes to ^{one of} the most important aspects in the policy of the African National Congress, namely, ADMINISTRATION. During this year we were fortunate enough for our Provincial Secretary to become National Organiser of the African National Congress. This enabled him to tour the country at the same time making a close observation on the progress of the branches and correcting several wrongs. Moreover when he came back to his office he would again write to these places, and this enabled him to understand as to whether what the National Headquarters directs is being done.

This chapter is, therefore, of great importance since it is necessary for the ordinary membership to know the policy which is generally followed. Knowledge of one's work is an indispensable weapon.

The Cape Province is divided into 8 REGIONS, namely, :-

1. WESTERN CAPE REGION.
2. EASTERN CAPE REGION
3. NORTH-WESTERN CAPE REGION.
4. CAPE MIDLANDS REGION.
5. VICTORIA EAST REGION.
6. BORDER REGION.
7. NORTH EASTERN CAPE REGION, and
8. TRANSKEI.

A region comprises of the various local branches and is established in order to form up a common front of those branches to discuss matters of common interest. When the people fight in unity and with one spirit against a common wrong no injustice can victimise them. Let us explain the basic principles for the establishment of a region - as follows:-

Here are the rural locations of beadie: Lujiko, Ulloko, Qutho, Impoko, Nobumba, Mgwalana, Mtati,

Masekwani, Lewuswood ne Newtondale. In this Area
the laws which victimise the people are more or less
the same because they are in one district. Here people
complain of:

- (a) Inadequacy of Arable land.
- (b) Livestock taxes, dog taxes, and so on.
- (c) Stepping of cattle and their pounding.
- (d) Limitation of Stock.
- (e) Native Trust and so on. Therefore it
is advisable that the people of this Area should stand
together whenever an injustice is perpetrated on
them. The people of Ngwalana for instance should
not do something which is opposed by the people
of Mtati. We want to smash this "Divide and Rule"
principle of the white people. These 10 Locations may
after being granted permission by National Headquarters
form up a region. The same applies to the six Kirkwood
Locations. All those in an area should be UNITED!

Of great importance is the fact that these
branches should be known to the National Headquarters
and that their subscriptions have been sent to the
Provincial Treasurer. Such a thing as is prevalent
in some of the Regions that branches are only known
by the Region and not by the National Head Office
cannot be allowed to happen. According to the
Constitution of the African National Congress, twenty
or more persons may establish a branch and to pay
2/6^d each as a membership fee and annual subscription
which will be distributed as follows:

Of the 2/6^d per member the branch retains 10^d
and the rest is sent to the Provincial Treasurer.
Each person who pays a fee should be issued with
a Congress membership card. This card is valid
for a year and no fee whilst that card is in force
shall be payed by the member except after some new
subscriptions have been called for by the National body
as it happens at certain times. All the counterfoils

of these cards should be sent to the Provincial Secretary. After these formalities have been complied with, a branch is already established and this branch enjoys all the rights like the other branches and can also join a local Region.

The remaining $1/8$ ^{of the 3/- per member} which is sent to the Provincial Treasurer is again dealt with in this manner:- The Provincial Treasurer retains 10d and sends the other 10d to the National Treasurer of the African National Congress. ^{Members} ~~branches~~ should therefore ^{realise} ~~remember~~ that it is only in the branches that their half-crowns are ever seen but they are also known by the National Headquarters. All these rules should be observed and followed. The branch is more important than a Region to the National Executive because the Region is a product of the branch. A region may be disestablished if it be noted that it usurps the powers of the National Executive and branches would be directly under the National Headquarters.

What cannot be tolerated is that ^{Regions} ~~branches~~ should do their pleasing and disregard the orders of the National Head Office. During this year we have noticed a nasty practice of the Regions taxing the branches without the Provincial Headquarters even knowing about it. It should be well understood that the Regions are a product of the branches in the same way as the National Executive is formed up ^{from} the branches. When tax after tax is demanded of the people, some cannot be tolerant to any great extent. The Provincial Secretary has in his possession correspondence from Regional Secretaries demanding certain subscriptions from the branches and yet those very Regional Secretaries have not a bit touched the work that National Head Office has assigned to them. Such a situation cannot be tolerated and practices of such nature must be relinquished forthwith.

So each branch has its Executive Committee of

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thirty members, so the branches have to elect two persons to represent them at the Regional Committee. When these representatives from the various branches meet they elect a Regional Working Committee which will consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Assistant Secretary, the Treasurer and others who will be elected by the general membership. This Regional Working Committee must notify the National Headquarters of whatever it is doing. It is regrettable to report that these Regional Committees do not correspond with the National body. They just do things which the Provincial Secretary does not know of. Such a state of affairs is objectionable and should be particularly noted by Conference. An official spokesman has stated that this is the main cause of the commotion which characterises the clash amongst the branches of a particular region. This kind of thing has been more marked in the Western Cape Region. It seems as if in this Region the officials think that Congress was founded on the basis of the Regions; they forget that it is the African National Congress not the African REGIONAL CONGRESS. In the branches there are people who know the policy of the African National Congress quite well though they be not Regional Committee members and when they notice that the Regional Committee is wasting matters for the branches, trouble ensues. When the Regional Committee meets the difference becomes apparent between those who intend to be loyal to the African National Congress and those who want to usurp its powers.

The Western Cape Region is becoming a problem. What is happening in this region is far from respecting the directives of National Headquarters. The name of the African National Congress is abused by persons who evidently know nothing about Congress policy. Study circles on the policy of Congress are in great demand. There are certain points which if not clarified

to most of us could lead to considerable damage to the whole organisation. To this end particular attention is drawn to our relations with the other progressive organisations which have joined hands with us in the struggle, namely:-

- (a) The South African Indian Congress.
- (b) South African Congress of Democrats
- (c) South African Coloured Peoples Organisation

It is true that the African National Congress warmly welcomes ^{the} co-operation of these organisations; but the most important aspect of it is that the leaders of these organisations should devote their efforts in organising their own national groups in order to understand the necessity of inter-racial unity in this country. It is rather embarrassing to notice that in the Cape Western Region our African leaders find it a favourable past-time to run around with the Europeans of the Congress of Democrats and Coloureds of the South African Coloured Peoples Organisation and forget all about enlightening our African people on the establishment of friendly racial relations. It is further strange to understand that in this region meetings are no longer held to discuss matters which are of particular interest to the African people but our leaders are always with the leaders of these organisations far away from the masses of the African people. This might create a bad impression but it is really what is happening in the Cape Western Region. We do realise that the leaders of these organisations sympathise with us in all respects but we have still got a long way to go in enlightening our people who have not as yet understood the whole affair. Furthermore, there are many things which are done by the leaders of the C.O.S. which are not included in our policy and these Cape Western Region men just plunge into them. We refer especially to such matters as "ELECTION" which was long dealt with by the

"PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF 1949," which must be obeyed by all members within the African National Congress. The Congress Leaders of the Cape Western Region should pay particular attention to this. Leaders should not stand on the Mountain top and call on the people "to follow up"; They should go to the people and show them the way. We would appreciate it if each leader of any of these organisations would preach the gospel of freedom to his national group until we reach the plain of Alliance when each leader will have to say, "Here are my people, they are so much and they follow me". It would be ridiculous for a man from another organisation coming to us alone and speaking his head off in salesman manner and yet he has not a single follower. What counts is the thundering footsteps of the people you are leading following behind you more than being known by the Mister So and So's of other organisations.

We are a national organisation and it must be our objective to unite the people of South Africa. That is why one of our national songs says, "Zulu nomXhosa, Mautnu hlanganani" (Zulus, Xhosa and Basotho be united!) On the very founding of the African National Congress the primary aim was to eradicate tribalism and foster a spirit of nationalism. The African National Congress was founded on the basic principles of African NATIONALISM, which calls for our intellectuals to contribute literary matter on this principle in order to enlighten our people to preach what they know best. Our political, social and economic unity as Africans mark the success of national advancement which we envisage LET US BE UNITED FIRST and only then can we meet other national groups.

Another cause for commotion in the Cape Western Region is this: There are some branches which are at loggerheads with others and this trouble among the branches became noticed by the other organisations

which we mentioned here. This spirit is unwelcome and such things should be settled. The only way to solve this problem is for the people to know the policy of Congress.

The Western Region of the Cape Province has not at all provided a good example and some of the ^{problems} which have sprung up from this region will be brought to the notice of this conference by the Provincial Secretary in due course.

EASTERN CAPE REGION: This region is the pride of the province, the very bone and marrow of the African National Congress in the Cape. This is the biggest region consisting of:- Port Elizabeth, Lisswood, Uitenhage, Grahamstown, Aliceville, Port Alfred, Hankey and other small districts. Such a big region calls for careful and strong administration. The Provincial Secretary visited this region recently and found some misunderstanding amongst the branches. This had mainly been attributed to the decision which had been taken at a meeting of the Regional Committee for the withdrawal of the children from the schools as from the 23rd May. The Provincial Secretary undertook to visit the places which had withdrawn their children from the schools and still found that the mistake had been made by the Regional Committee.

A committee to be elected at this conference will have to pay particular attention to the trouble in this region. It can still be settled because the cause of it is far different from that of the Western Cape Region. In this Region only one question created some misunderstanding amongst the people and this is to be regretted. The main topic will be discussed at a time when the schools boycott will be tabled as from the 23rd May. Except for a few matters which can be rectified, this Region is still progressing satisfactorily.

CAPE, MIDLANDS & NORTH-WESTERN CAPE: These regions should be revived because nothing so far is being reported to be done in these areas except for the fact that we have very active branches in Braddock and Kimberly. Both these branches should endeavour to establish other branches in the neighbouring districts.

VICTORIA EAST: There are very strong branches in the locations in this region. The Africans of these districts - Middleburg, Alice, Fort Beaufort, Adelaide and so on are trying their best to work hard. A very successful Regional Conference was held at Kearslandhoek on the 19th March, and the Cape Provincial President, the Professor was present. The President's speech will ever be remembered by all those who attended this conference. Speaking on Bantu Education the President outlined the following points:-

(1) The first school for the Africans was founded in 1799 by the Missionaries. The government was not interested in the undertaking. The number of Missionary schools increased and today there are 5,500 ^{Missionary} African schools for Africans. Of these schools the government has built not more than 400 schools. Most of them belong to the Missionaries helped by parents. That is why they are called Mission Schools.

(2) About 900,000 African children are attending school of their own free will and not as a result of the government's project.

(3) The government first aided the schools with grants in 1850 in the Cape.

(4) Prior to 1925 it was difficult for the government to make state grants for educational facilities. As a result of their reluctance to grant aid for African schools, the government introduced the poll-tax as a means to provide for the educational expenditure for the African people.

(5) The Nationalist Government came to power in 1948 and immediately afterwards appointed in

10. the Kaiser Commission of Enquiry. As a result
his Enquiry the Bantu Education Act was passed
by Parliament.

The Professor proceeded with his speech and
told the Conference that the government was assuming
control of the schools that had been built, by force
and his address really opened the minds of the
audience. It is enough for the reader of course to
read from his report the points enumerated above.
The Keesdamahock Conference ~~was~~ ^{had} a pleasant
atmosphere and the people had prepared for it
before-hand.

BORDER REGION: In the face of hardships with which
our oppressors waylay us this Region is still
struggling on under the Chairmanship of Mr. Komani
of East London. Financial difficulties were
responsible for the little progress in the expansion
of this Region. The branches which still exist,
however, are still carrying on satisfactorily
with the Provincial Headquarters.

NORTH-EASTERN REGION: In this region, too a lot
has still to be done, especially in the vicinity of
Alival North and Herschel. The Queenstown Branch
is the only ^{strong} branch and members should be sent
to organise the people in these places Dewu, Islen. Isyey,
Kala, Tarkstad, Burgheerloop and so on.

The other day Mr. Mashibini and some of his
men went to a place called Macibini where a
meeting was held to discuss the Bantu Education
and its committees. This meeting was attended by
many members of the All-African Convention whose
President is Mr. Isotsi, a lady free attorney! These
two organisations soon clashed and the people
listened in earnest to the argument. The conventionists
were calling upon the parents to send their children
to the schools so that the teachers should themselves
boycott this new type of education. Mr. Tabata of

The Cape Town Unity movement was there in person asking the Congressites where the poison was in "a, b, c, d." The atmosphere was tense and the Congressites were stating that as long as the government had its headmen and policemen, the school-boards and committees would continue to be elected. Our group was strongly emphasising the point that not only the school committees ~~and~~ ^{must} be boycotted, but also that the children should be prepared for the boycott of the schools. We do not know now Mr. Mashibini as to where those Conventionists are because the school committees are being elected right at Macibini. Do you still hear of the people who asked you where the poison was in a, b, c, d? It seems as if they have all disappeared together with their teachers who have all along been speaking of the "boycott" and who today are confronted with the question of feeding poison to their very children! Seen in the Press, we understand that these Macibini people still say that they are going to teach this new form of education but "sanctify" it by teaching suitable subjects. What we do not know is as to what the School Inspectors are going to do about it.

We would like to draw the attention of this Conference to this fact: There is not a single teacher who, after having been given the syllabus, will say he will not teach according to that syllabus. That would be the loveliest lie ever told to the people. And, mark you, not one teacher will come out now that we are confronted with ^{the} problem of providing alternative education, and say, "I dare say, for one will not teach this Verwoerd education." That, Mr. A.A.C. is what we call boycott, do not be a member of a banner compromise! In fact this "Macibini" group always cries aloud, "Do not co-operate with our oppressors." Today our oppressors have come with poison but they do not want to administer themselves

to our children. They thought of all the murderous poisons they could lay hands on, prepared them into a mighty poison and then said, "Here you are, take this and kill your children yourselves!" What, then, do these people who always have a lot to speak about, say? In conclusion we appeal to this conference to note clearly the fact that if a woman was carrying a bucket full of clean water and someone poured just a teaspoon of poison, it would be dangerous for anyone to drink that water because of its uncleanness. In the same way education was decent and the government through its Verwoerds poured poison into it. Then its decency was gone and its object was just the mental enslavement of our children forever! When clean water has been polluted there is no better plan than to throw it away and go and get fresh clean water.

We have, alas! gone too far with our Macabini friends and let us now come back to our main topic, as follows: The North Eastern Region has places which could easily be organised and our organisers should not neglect it.

THE TRANSKEI: This region has most of the African people and its locations are extensively big. This is where the people are being recruited to the mines day after day. If you would go to Amabel Junction ^{through} you would see for yourselves what we mean, ~~the~~ the trains pass full of Africans who have been recruited for the gold and coal mines. These people leave their families starving owing to the inadequacy of arable land. The limitation of stock has long been in operation. Native Trust Schemes, Rehabilitation Schemes, Livestock and dog taxes and all other methods of persecution have long been undertaken. In fact, an attempt was made to establish a branch at Mntata, but we regret

to inform this conference that although the Provincial Secretary has many times written to this branch, no replies whatsoever have as yet been received. It is necessary, therefore, that this conference should pay special attention to the possibility of establishing Congress branches throughout the Transkei. We need organisers to go to preach this gospel in the Transkei. To think that this part of the country should lag behind makes all of us uneasy. There are many members of Congress in the towns whose homes are in the Transkei and they are the very people who should help, especially when they go home. What is wrong, friends? Don't you ever go home?

So many things are happening in the Transkei. During the last session of the Transkeian Council the Bantu Authorities Act was accepted. It is necessary that Congress should discuss the Bantu Authorities Act with the Chiefs. In the Transkei not the least opposition was offered against the implementation of the Bantu Education Act. Many well-known men went boot and all into the School Committees. After all, what can we say except for the fact that Transkei is vanishing in front of our eyes?

At present the expulsion of Europeans from the Transkei is the daily talk of the Area - and the people of the Transkei have cloven tongues on this issue. This conference should issue a word of guidance in this respect. What is ridiculous appeared one day in the Daily Despatch where a European writes, "The natives of the Transkei have respect for the whiteman they call of white man 'Baas (Sir)'. But those of the Ciskei call you 'whiteman' (Mlungu)."

For this conference we have, therefore, endeavoured to make a general survey of the situation in your respective regions. All this is tabled before you. A lot has to be done so far.

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

TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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