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THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

CAPE PROVINCIAL SECRETARIAL REPORT : JANUARY - NOVEMBER, 1955.

It is with very deep regret that I have to submit to our National Head Office a report from my Province that is not full of activity as it should have been, judging from the nature and decisions of the last Annual National Conference of the African National Congress held in Durban last year. In this report, I shall venture to divide it into small portions and deal with one aspect of the work done or work that should have been done under its own heading.

A : DIRECTIVES FROM THE HEAD OFFICE :- As soon as the national annual conference was over, the National Working Committee sent out to all the Provinces directives that were to be later transmitted to the various Branches of Congress throughout the country. All these directives or instructions were accordingly sent out to the Branches of the Cape. It has always been my practise since I took over secretaryship to conduct all my communication with the branches in Xhosa which is the only major and common medium of this Province. No branch has had to suffer any negligence in as far as communication from the Head Office is concerned. All other directives sent out periodically were treated in the same way.

B : RESPONSE OF THE BRANCHES TO DIRECTIVES :- It is here that a poor Secretary has to worry much and even write letter after letter to the branches about the instructions that are not carried out. The work of Congress, which is a national and responsible duty, requires some considerable amount of efficiency from the branch officials. It is on this very level that one finds a lot of difficulty in making a comprehensive report for any conference because the branch secretaries themselves are far from doing any efficient work for submission to their Provincial Head Quarters. The branch officials need some training on how to handle correspondence from the Office and how to reply to it precisely. Further more, the branch officials lack terribly a system of letting all the instructions that have been sent to them reach every member of the organisation in their area. It is quite discouraging to find that though the Provincial Secretary had sent all the directives to the branches and therefore expecting every member of the organisation to know exactly what is happening on the Congress front, yet he finds quite a number of members knowing nil. Time and again I have pointed it out to the branches that the communication from the Head Office is not meant for the branch officials only but for every member of Congress to know and thereafter implement. The general laziness to attend meetings by the members is one malady that renders it very difficult for any branch to carry out the instructions given to them by the Head Office. Several times I have had to complain to the branches for not obeying the instructions promptly or even reporting why they did not carry them out. Congress needs to organise some periodical courses for secretaries throughout the country where these men will be trained how to get on with the work. One link in the whole machinery of administration that is weak causes tremendous harm to the entire organisation. This unsatisfactory response is reflected in the Provincial Secretarial Report given to our Annual Provincial Conference held in Port Elizabeth last June, where it was given in greater detail. (See Annexure A).

C : THE FAILURE OF THE CAMPAIGNS :- As I have already pointed out above, the reason why our campaigns do not achieve the expected degree of success is that not every body is well and sufficiently educated or convinced about Congress decisions. It is now my task, in order to illustrate my point, to deal with some of the most important campaigns Congress had set herself to wage in the course of the current year.

(a) THE ANTI - BANTU EDUCATION CAMPAIGN :- As is well known, the Durban Conference in December, 1954, passed a resolution calling for a boycott of Bantu Education Schools. April the 1st, 1955, was put as the date on which the Boycott would be implemented on a nation-wide scale. The Provinces and branches were expected to put the resolution before the people, and to unfold and speed up the preparations for the day. There was, however, no comprehensive plan of the campaign developed by the top leadership, both nationally and provincially - a plan corresponding with the Conference decision to boycott on a national scale, and also calculated to co-ordinate the approach to the immediate tasks of propaganda and mass education so far as that was possible in a

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complex, uneven situation, such as we have in South Africa.

The result was that in the Cape at least, with its far flung areas, the progress towards the goal, was relatively slow, so that by the end of March, only the more advanced areas such as the Eastern Cape Region could be said to have put the resolution to the people with any degree of satisfaction. However, on the 6th of March, 1955, there came the decision by the National Executive, to wit, that the implementation of the resolution should be deferred to a date later than April the 1st.

As is well known the Transvaal found itself in no position to follow this National Executive directive. They proceeded with the boycott as from the 12th of April. The Cape, meanwhile, stood by the Executive directive, and withheld the implementation of the resolution until further notice by the Executive. This divergence of lines, needless to say, created a confused situation in the country, and added to the fact that wide areas had not been reached by the organisation at the time; it rendered the work of propaganda in favour of the boycott doubly difficult.

As the Transvaal was carrying on with the boycott, and as no National Executive directive was immediately forthcoming, the Eastern Cape Region proceeded with the boycott without Executive (Cape) directive. The following centres withdrew their children from Verwoerd's Schools :- New Brighton; Korsten; Despatch; Hankey; Uitenhage; Kirkwood and other smaller branches of Congress prescribed in the same vicinity.

The Provincial Secretary visited all these areas, and after regularising the position where possible, rendered such assistance as was possible in the circumstances. Meanwhile, the National Executive through the Working Committee, issued a call for renewed action, and placed 25th of April as the date for a national effort to boycott the Verwoerd's Schools. This directive came at the height of the Transvaal effort, but the series of preceding events had damped spirits throughout the country, and the counter measures by the Government and their Agents every where, which included intimidation, the isolation and ruthless persecution of leaders as well as deportations and threats of deportation served to break the back-bone of the boycott wave. Nevertheless, the spirit remained high in major centres like Port Elizabeth, although even there the forces opposed to the boycott came out in full force to capitalize on the already existing difficulties which were intensified by the fact that some members openly flouted the decision, and sent their children to school. In spite of all, however, the boycott spirit is being maintained and the Province looks forward to a further development of the struggle

THE REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL : In compliance with the National Executive resolution adopted after the Consultative Conference of all bodies and organisations opposed to Bantu Education, held in April at Port Elizabeth, to establish local/regional councils for alternative education, in all the centres that have boycotted such Education Councils have been formed. Just recently I summoned a fully representative conference of the Eastern Cape Region, which was attended by nearly 20 branches of Congress, and we had the Regional Education Council established. This Council now looks forward to the National Education Council for guidance.

(b) THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE :- In the course of this very year the Congress of the People took place at Kliptown in Johannesburg in June of 1955. It was the culmination of a campaign which had gone on for the best part of the year. The response was tremendous, and all were agreed that it was the biggest gathering of the people of South Africa ever to assemble at one Conference to state their aims concerning the future of the country. The Cape played its part also, and it forwarded its full complement of delegates to the conference. In the subsequent interval, several report-back meetings were held in places like the Western Province, the Eastern Cape and Border Regions and every where the people greeted the new document - THE FREEDOM CHARTER - with hope and enthusiasm.

D : THE FREEDOM CHARTER AND THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF 1949 :- The Charter is a great document, and, no doubt, the country has greeted it with overwhelming enthusiasm. The next phase now is to popularize the Charter and to implement it on a nation-wide scale. There is no doubt also that for the Africans, the best way to interpret and implement the Charter is through the Programme of Action of 1949 which aims not only at developing the methods of struggle in the present situation, but also at developing the fighting power of the people through its nation-building aspects. These points have to be widely accepted and put before the people with increasing clarity.

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The great campaigns for the Charter and for the Programme of 1949 must be developed from this point.

E : THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BRANCHES :- Apart from what has been reflected above, the branches of Congress are still very active and are all striving hard to fight against local oppressive measures by the Herrenvolk. The following report is what has been received by me personally after I had to take a tour of the Cape during the months of August and September :-

(a) MEMBERSHIP :- The present statistics shows a very low membership, that is of course, comparatively speaking. All the branches have lost big numbers especially in the Kirkwood area where most of our people are in the farms. Apart from reports of people not having renewed their current year's membership, there are no new people joining the movement. On questioning the members about why the membership is so low, I have been told that quite a number of people are scared of joining Congress. Police intimidation is the order of the day. We have to devise a method of organising the people to honour their nationhood more than just yielding to the police whims and threats. One reason, inter alia, is that people complain of the latest Congress decisions and that in some areas the old members of Congress have decided to be inactive. There are quite a number of people who have not accepted the withdrawal of children decision. But, it is still a pleasure to have to report that the Cape has still over 10,000 members of Congress in spite of all these adverse conditions.

(b) SUSPENDED PEOPLE :- There are quite a number of people in some of the branches that have already withdrawn their children from school who are now suspended. The suspension has come about through their failure to honour their branch's decision of withdrawing children. These branches have placed this matter before me and I have had to refer it to the Provincial Executive which has further left the matter for consideration by the national conference now to assemble in Bloemfontein. In almost all

In almost all the branches I have visited during my tour of the Cape, 25 branches in all, there are people affected by the disciplinary measure of suspension. Due to shortage of funds and other matters demanding my personal attention, my tour of the Province is not yet complete as we have about 60 branches of Congress in this Province.

(c) SUBSCRIPTIONS : - quite a number of branches are late with their membership subscriptions. The instructions sent out in January to the effect of having all subscriptions paid by the 31st January, 1955, was not carried out. This system should be discouraged and that membership subscriptions be paid up as early in the year as possible. I have then ordered the branches to bear this in mind in future.

But again there is still an unacceptable practice by the branches which the Head Office should lay stress on. The branches are mainly all guilty of using money that does not belong to them, that share which belongs to the Province and National Head Quarters. On checking up the number of current membership in each branch and then finding out how much has been sent to the Provincial Treasurer, I have discovered that quite a substantial sum of money has not been paid in by the branches. This sum exceeds £100 owing by the branches I actually visited. I spoke very strongly to the branch officials about this money, showing them how hard it is to get on with the work when the National Head Quarters has no funds. I appealed to the branches to try means of raising the money owing and asked them to have it paid in to the Treasurer at the end of September. It is with deep regret to have to say that this money has not yet been paid and that the general flow of subscriptions into the Provincial Treasury is very slow. I had prepared an analysis showing the following :-

Current Membership; Last year's Membership; Rise or Fall; Subscriptions paid; Subscriptions owing; Levies paid; Levies owing; but unfortunately, on the day of the nation-wide raid of Congress officials, this document was confiscated by the police.

(d) THE REGIONS :- As is well known, the Cape is made up of EIGHT Regions viz., The Western Cape; the Eastern Cape; Border; Cape Midlands; Victoria East; the North Eastern Cape; the North Western Cape and the Transkei. Some of these regions are still very active and are doing fairly well saving a few things which have to be put right here and there. Again I wish to refer you to the Provincial Secretarial Report - Annexure A - given at the last conference of the Province. In this report you will find a more detailed information about the Regions./4. In order to

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In order to have a much more systematic and methodical administration, and in full acceptance and implementation of the system proposed by the National Executive in its annual report to conference of last year, -to divide our big regions/branches into smaller groups - the Eastern Cape Region which is a very big area has had to be cut up into several Zones which will work under a Central Administrative Committee of the Region. I have then divided it as follows :-

ZONE A :- New Brighton : This is a very big township and already its administration was a headache to the leadership of the branch. Now the whole area has been cut up into smaller street committees whose work is very encouraging, promising to win us more people.

ZONE B :- Korsten; Salt Pan; Fairview; Salisbury Park and Walmer. All these branches will work together and co-ordinate all their efforts to carry out our Programme of action.

ZONE C :- Veeplaats; Missionvale; Bethelsdorp and Kleinskool. In a like manner as above.

ZONE D :- Uitenhage; Despatch and all the 6 Branches of Kirkwood. Just in the same way as above.

N.B. I have had to appoint Organisers for each of these Zones and I hope to do the same throughout the Province when my tour of the Cape is complete.

Kindly refer to Annexure B, a circular to all the branches quoted above, which circular explains in full the present system.

(e) THE WESTERN CAPE REGION :- This region has not co-operated with the Provincial Executive of the Cape. It has tended to follow an independent line quite as if it was a province by itself. It has for instance,

- (i) many a time failed to obey instructions,
- (ii) failed to submit Provincial dues and levies which correspond with the numbers they have in the various branches, and
- (iii) blatantly violated the Congress Programme by taking a direct and active part in campaigns for the election of Native Representatives in Parliament.

I have had to issue a circular drawing their attention to the need for discipline, and it is dated 20th October, 1955. The main points of the circular are :-

- (i) They boycotted the Provincial Conference held in Port Elizabeth last June.
- (ii) They did not accept our Provincial Conference decision dissolving them as a Region but leaving the branches to get on with the Congress work under the Provincial administration.
- (iii) That their tactics of communicating directly with the National Head Quarters was against the proper procedure of the movement and virtually constituted an act of subversion.
- (iv) That we were now on the last point of suspending the very branches that were allowed to continue by our Provincial conference if they do not obey the directives of the Province.

The need for discipline and co-operation as between the central organs and the provincial, regional and branch organs cannot be over-emphasized.

(f) THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE :- The Women's League movement has struck root in the whole Province. In June last, the first Provincial Conference of the League was held in Port Elizabeth, the attendance of which by delegates from all over the Cape was very good. It is hoped to expand and develop its work in the ensuing year.

But it is essential that the Women's Leagues of the African National Congress must regard themselves as bound by the Policy and Programme of Congress, and that they must regard themselves as part and parcel of the main organisation. There is a tendency in some organisations to regard themselves as a separate movement, and as owing no allegiance whatsoever to the Mother Body. This has to be brought to an end. These movements were formed to strengthen the the mother organisation and not to vitiate its

strength or make accretions to other organisations. The whole position of Women's Organisations has to be put on its proper footing and they have to be properly related to the Mother Body.

(g) THE CONGRESS YOUTH LEAGUE :- The position of the C.Y.L. has not always been clear, precisely because the youth have had time and again to neglect their own organisation and devote their time and energy to the Mother Body in its different campaigns. It is hoped that the coming year will see the strengthening of the C.Y.L., the formation of branches wherever possible, and what is more, closer co-ordination with the Mother Body. The youth must learn to toe the Congress line and co-operate closely with the Branch, Provincial and National leaders in all aspects of Congress work. The Youth League should increasingly find time for purely cultural activities so as to bring in more youth into the National Movement.

CONCLUSION : The report does not present a rosy picture. It presents a situation bristling with difficulties and organisational hurdles. So far as that is concerned the report is a challenge to our resolution and ingenuity. We have to set our organisational house in order, improve our over-all machinery, establish, develop and widen our organs of training of the leadership, especially the Branch and Provincial Secretariat, and pave the way for an effective implementation of our Conference decisions.

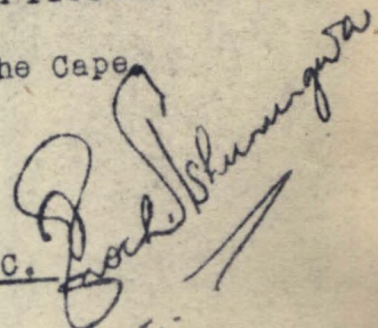
On the other hand the report reflects continued interest and activity among the masses, in spite of discouragements, intimidation and unprecedented hardships. The banishments of certain of our leaders, such as Gwentshe and Lengisi, and the banning and ordering to resign from the organisation of others such as Dr. Njongwe, R. Matjie, G. Tshume, R. Mhlaba, Joe. Matthews, and now recently, Mrs F. Matomela, and a galaxy of other sons and daughters of Africa of destiny, has almost crippled the organisation in other aspects. Yet these things, including threats of even more ruthless measures, deportations and ejections, have not broken the spirit of the people. Everywhere one finds the masses crying out for a lead. Everywhere their hope reposes in the A.N.C. In this hour of a temporary darkness imposed by a fascist tyranny which has passed one vicious law after another to decapitate and liquidate the people's movement, the people look up to Congress for a lead. This is the greatest factor in an otherwise ugly situation. The masses have an invincible faith in their power to end tyranny, and it is this invincible faith of the masses that must communicate itself to the leaders. The delegates are assembled at Conference to translate that faith in terms of a Programme of Struggle to achieve the liberation of the people.

The people cannot fail. The forces of history are on our side. The oppressor is in retreat and we can and we shall win Freedom in our life time.

That is the message of hope we bring from the Cape

AFRIKA ! AFRIKA !! MAYIBUYE !!!

By T.E. KATSHUNUNGWA,
CAPE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY and
NATIONAL ORGANISOR OF THE A.N.C.



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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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