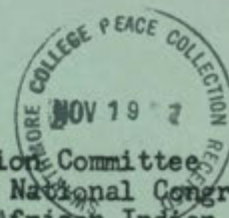


Bulletin

of the Campaign for the
Defiance of Unjust Laws

The National Action Committee
of the African National Congress
and the South African Indian
Congress
PO Box 2948, Johannesburg



Bulletin No. 1

Historic Decision

South Africa is on the eve of June 26th - the day chosen by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress for the beginning of the organised Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. The period before the 26th June has witnessed the development of the campaign stage by stage. It was initiated on the 6th April 1952 - when racialist South Africans were celebrating the 300th Anniversary of the landing of the first white man on South African soil. On this day over 100,000 people gathered in different parts of the Union to protest against the 300 years of oppression, and solemnly took pledges to carry on a relentless struggle for freedom and for the establishment of human worth and dignity.

Call for Volunteers

A call was then made by the President-General of the African National Congress, Dr. J. S. Moroka, for 10,000 volunteers by June 26th. The heartening response to this call to date displays the strong determination of the people to fight for their legitimate rights.

Government Attacks

Throughout the land there was a new awakening of the people. Instilled with the spirit of freedom, the African giant began to rise. In the factories, on the farms, in the far-off Reserves (areas set aside for occupation by Africans) everywhere there began a stirring - the people were on the march, the movement gained momentum.

But it did not take long before the Government sensed this awakening. In desperation and in the hope of stemming this tide the fascists unleashed a fierce blow against four of the most outstanding leaders of the Non-European people.

Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, President of the South African Indian Congress, Mr. J. B. Marks, President of the Transvaal African Indian Congress, Mr. Moses Kotane, member of the National Executive of the African National Congress, and Mr. David Bopape, Secretary of the Transvaal African National Congress, were served with orders signed by the Minister of Justice, ordering them to resign from these organisations. The order also prohibited them from attending or participating in any way in meetings and proscribed their movement by restricting them to remain in the Province of the Transvaal.

Leaders Defy Ban

The Executive Committee of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress considered these despotic decrees at a joint session. The meeting, taking into account the "vital lessons of history in which many communities have been vanquished and decimated because they could not be roused in time to halt the floods of destruction that engulfed them and their way of life", called upon the four leaders to defy this fascist ban.

In accordance with this decision, in the first week of June, after having refused to resign from the organisations, these four leaders attended and addressed mass meetings in further defiance of the Minister's order. They were all arrested and are now languishing behind prison bars, where they are treated as ordinary murderers, gangsters, and criminals, there being no provision for political prisoners in South Africa.

The Leaders Speak

"We face the most critical hour in the history of our land," declared Dr. Dadoo, in what was his parting speech, at a crowded meeting in Johannesburg. "The twilight of fascist tyranny is fast passing into the darkness of a fascist police state. . . I bid adieu - carry on the just and noble fight. Volunteer in your hundreds and thousands, defy the unjust laws. We shall make our country, South Africa, a worthy place for all its citizens to live in, irrespective of race, colour, or creed."

Mr. J. B. Marks told the people that he stood before them as a symbol of the indignation and frustration of the African people. "Life is very precious and very valuable, but if for the freedom of our people I must give it up, I will give it up. I will give it for true democracy in this country. I will give my last drop of blood."

Court Demonstration

Unprecedented demonstrations took place in the courts and outside when the leaders appeared for trial. Masses of people were unable to find seating accommodation, but nevertheless remained outside throughout the trial, singing the national songs and intermittently shouting slogans, demanding the release of their leaders. Their solid determination and enthusiasm found practical expression when at a lunch-hour meeting on the same date hundreds of them enlisted to Defy Unjust Laws.

Next Phase Begins 26th June

The 26th June has been chosen for the beginning of the organised campaign of defiance. On that date batches of volunteers will go into action in important centres of the Union to defy selected laws and regulations. This date is of special significance in the struggle of the Non-European people of South Africa and marks an important turning point in our history. On June 26th 1950, at the call of the two Congresses, the Non-European people throughout the land in their united millions staged a one day strike as a protest against unjust laws.

The Executives, in a joint statement, declared that they are enunciating and defending principles which are cherished by an overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa and which form the foundations of culture and tradition in many parts of the world.

"A grim period of hard work, self-denial, and trial stretches before us. In a period of shocking lawlessness and tyranny on the part of the Nationalist Government the heaviest burden will be borne by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress. The inner citadel of our struggle and the foundation for a free and happy South Africa lie along the path of a well-disciplined and non-violent struggle for the removal of the unjust laws."