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REPORT OF  
THE FIRST TRANSVAAL PEACE CONFERENCES  
• JOHANNESBURG, 28th & 29th APRIL, 1951

This historic Conference marked a most important step forward towards the full participation of the people of South Africa in the world-wide movement against war and for a firm and lasting peace.

Convened jointly by the Transvaal leaders of the African, Coloured and Indian people, together with the Provisional Peace Committee, the Conference was itself a remarkable demonstration of the harmony and good relations among men and women of all races of South Africa, which can be brought about when they are united by the noble cause of Peace.

OVER 167,000 REPRESENTED

396 delegates attended the Conference, representing 167,234 members of the various organisations which sent them.

There were 105 delegates from factories and trade unions; 24 branches of the African National Congress, and 6 Advisory Boards were represented; 15 Transvaal Indian Congress representatives attended. Other bodies to send delegates to the Conference were 21 Residents' and Vigilance Associations, 9 Religious organisations, ex-service-men's, cultural, women, youth and sporting associations, local Peace Committees and others.

MESSAGES

After the official opening of the Conference by the Reverend D.C. Thompson, messages were read to the Conference from prominent peace-loving individuals and organisations throughout the world.

Cheers greeted the message from the Rev. Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, wishing Conference "God's speed .. in your crucial land and in these crucial days." Another name which evoked warm enthusiasm was that of Paul Robeson, Chairman of the U.S. "Council on African Affairs" who wrote:

"It is indeed good to know that people of all races and faiths are working together in South Africa for the cause of world peace and democratic brotherhood."

The World Peace Council, presently situated at Prague, sent an encouraging message, and various National Peace Committees, from Britain, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Finland, India, Germany, the United States and the Netherlands, sent greetings.

Others from whom inspiring messages were sent to the Conference included Mulk Raj Anand, the famous Indian novelist; the veteran American Negro leader, Dr. W.E.B. du Bois; Professor I.G. Crowther; the Dean of Hamilton (New Zealand); Mrs. Jessie M.G. Street (Australia); Adv. D.N. Pritt, K.C; and from many trade unions, national, religious and other organisations in the Union itself.



CONFERENCE AT WORK

Conference followed with keen interest the Reports presented on the various subjects by the Rev. D.C. Thompson who spoke on the second World Peace Congress at Warsaw, Mr. I. Wolfson, Dr. S.M. Molema, Dr. W. Nkomo, and Messrs. Y. Cachalia and M. Harmel.

Over fifty delegates took part in the discussions on the various resolutions, and many more would have spoken had there been time.

Rev. Thompson presided over the first session, Mr. A.P. Dickenson over the second, and Mr. J.B. Marks over the third.

The resolutions taken by the Conference are reproduced in full at the end of this report.

TRANSVAAL PEACE COUNCIL

To carry forward the work of building a broad peace movement and to implement the policy of the Conference, a representative Transvaal Peace Council was elected by the Conference. Its members are as follows:

PRESIDENT: The Rev. D.C. Thompson (member of the world Peace Council)

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Mr. J.B. Marks (President, African National Congress, Transvaal)  
Mr. A.P. Dickenson (Life-President, A.P.O. Transvaal)  
Mr. T.N. Naidoo (Vice-President, Transvaal Indian Congress)  
Dr. W. Nkomo.

SECRETARY: Miss Ruth First.

MEMBERS: Messrs. I.N. Cachalia, M. Szur, James Phillips, J. Reid, E.T. Mofutsanyana, I. Wolfson, S. Sello, A. Kathrada, G.T. Sibanda, H.J. Setzin, S. Tefu, I.P. Marawa, H. Rabinowitz, J.P. Magona, A.P. O'Dowd, M. Harmel, L. B. Moleela, J. Kamaar, A. Fischer, A. Manala, A. Lipman, P.Q. Vundla, H. Wolpe, S. Moema and Leballe; the Misses I. Mntwana and V. Kramer and Mesdames F. Abrahams and I. Adams.

The Transvaal Peace Council was directed by the Conference to conduct, in co-operation with other peace-loving organisations

A NATIONAL PEACE BALLOT  
among the people of this country; and to campaign for

A FIVE-POWER PEACE PACT  
among the Five Great Powers, the United States of America, The Soviet Union, the Chinese Peoples' Republic, Great Britain and France.

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RESOLUTIONS OF THE  
TRANSVAAL PEACE CONFERENCE

1. FOR A PACT OF PEACE

Gravely concerned at the growing threat of world war, and convinced that agreement and friendly relations among the Great Powers which recently stood united to defeat Fascism, would be a major contribution to world peace, Conference resolves to render the fullest support to the following declaration of the World Peace Council, and to place it before all sections of the South African people:

"To fulfil the hopes cherished by millions of people throughout the world, whatever may be their view of the causes that have brought about the danger of a world war,

"To strengthen peace and safeguard international security:

"We demand the conclusion of a pact of peace among the Five Great Powers: the United States of America, the Soviet Union, the Chinese People's Republic, Great Britain and France.

"We would consider a refusal to meet to conclude such a pact, by the Government of any of the Great Powers whichever it might be, as evidence of aggressive design on the part of the Government in question.

"We call upon all peace-loving nations to support the demand for this pact of peace, which should be open to all countries.

"We set our names to this appeal and we invite all men and women of goodwill, all organisations that hope for peace, to add their names in its support."

2. UNO AND PEACE

This Conference declares its support for the aims and objects of the United Nations Organisation. Believing that these noble ideals can only be achieved by UNO returning to its original function as an area of unity between the nations, we condemn all tendencies to convert it into an instrument for the domination of any nation over the others. In particular, Conference calls for:

- a. Immediate cessation of the war in Korea, the withdrawal of all foreign troops including the South African contingent, and a settlement by negotiation and agreement;
- b. The admission of all democratic states to UNO, and in particular the ending of the grave crisis in the Far East by an immediate invitation to the People's Republic of China to join UNO and enter the Security Council.
- c. Adherence to the Charter of Human Rights by all states which are members of UNO, including the Union of South Africa.

3. S.A. AND UNO

Conference deploras the defiant attitude of the Union Government to both the basic principles of UNO and its decisions. By the virtual annexation of South-West Africa, by ignoring the General Assembly's request for negotiations with India and Pakistan, and aggravating the dispute through the implementation of the objectionable Group Areas Act, the Government is helping to undermine the United Nations and to create sources of international conflict.

## 4. WORLD PEACE CONGRESS AT WARSAW

Conference recognizes that the Second World Peace Congress at Warsaw, which brought together over 2,000 delegates from 82 different countries, men and women of widely different social, religious and political beliefs, was a genuine and profoundly important expression of the deep desire for peace which exists among the people of all countries. We believe that the decisions taken at this Conference provide a broad basis for the common action of peace-loving men and women throughout the world and should serve to further the activities of the supporters of peace in South Africa. We congratulate the Rev. Douglas Thompson and Mr. Desmond Buckle on their election at the Congress as South African representatives to the World Peace Council.

Conference joins with peace-loving peoples of all countries in protesting against the measures taken by the French Government to expel the World Peace Council from Paris. Such an act of repression, contrary to the great democratic tradition of the French people, and taken at a time of grave international tension, can only serve to encourage the warmongers.

## 5. DISARMAMENT

Believing that an insane armaments race between the Great Powers cannot serve the cause of peace, but can only inflict additional hardships and poverty upon the people and culminate in war; and that the use of weapons of mass destruction of civilian populations is totally unjustified in any circumstances, Conference calls for:

- a. The total banning of the atom bomb, and of the spreading of disease germs, poison gas and all other means of indiscriminate mass murder, and that the government first using such weapons be branded as a war criminal.
- b. A planned and agreed reduction of armaments of all countries under international control and supervision.

## 6. GERMANY AND JAPAN

Conference condemns outright all proposals for the rearmament of Germany and Japan, in the conviction that any such plans contain a grave danger of general war, and that they will lead to the revival of Nazi and militarist elements in those countries and strangle the rising peaceful and democratic forces. We regard with grave concern the release of convicted war criminals in these countries. We urge the speedy conclusion of peace treaties with both countries, based on their democratic forces, their complete demilitarisation, the withdrawal of all foreign troops, and the unification of Germany.

## 7. AGGRESSION

Conference declares that Government to be an aggressor which starts armed intervention in any other country, whatever the excuse it may make. We declare that we condemn any act of aggression as a war crime, no matter which Government commits it.

## 8. AFRICA AND WORLD PEACE

This Conference expresses the conviction that a just and lasting peace can only be built on the foundation of the free and willing co-operation of free and independent nations, acting as equals and partners.

The inferior, colonial and dependent status of many peoples in Africa, Asia and elsewhere, not only creates a field of conflict between the imperial powers, but also degrades the

dignity.../

stagnation and retards the economic development and living standards of the exploited peoples in the colonial areas.

Efforts on the part of imperialist powers to maintain their domination by armed violence, as in Malaya, Viet-Nam and elsewhere, while they cannot succeed in permanently subjecting those peoples, cause all the sufferings and miseries of war and threaten a general extension of the war danger.

Conference welcomes the powerful movement towards independence which is taking place throughout Asia and Africa. We are fully convinced that the great continent of Africa, whose peoples are still almost entirely under the control of various Governments of Europe, can only achieve its full stature and make its proper contribution to the peace and progress of the human race, when it is governed and its resources are developed by and for the benefit of, the people of Africa themselves.

We condemn plans to establish military bases in Africa and call for the withdrawal of foreign armies from all countries and the immediate cessation of imperialist military intervention in Malaya, Viet-Nam, Korea and Taiwan (Formosa.) We proclaim the solidarity of the democratic people of South Africa with all colonial peoples aiming at national emancipation, and salute the people of the Gold Coast and elsewhere for the advances they are making. We condemn the expansionist tendencies of our own Government towards Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland which threaten further areas in Africa with the tragedy of "apartheid." We declare emphatically that all plans for political changes and "federations" in Africa conceived by the minority of European settlers, without regard to the views or interests of the populations, will meet with resistance and failure.

#### 9. THE TRANSVAAL PEACE COUNCIL

Recognising the responsibility of the people of the Transvaal towards the cause of world peace, and the need for a permanent organisation to carry out the decisions of this Conference:

1. Conference hereby establishes the TRANSVAAL PEACE COUNCIL, whose objects shall be:-
  - a. To work for the cause of peace among all sections of the people in the Transvaal.
  - b. To co-operate with other bodies interested in the cause of peace, inside and outside the Transvaal, with the object of forming a South African Peace Council representative of all peace-loving people in South Africa.
  - c. To work in close co-operation with the World Peace Movement.
2. The Council shall consist of:-
  - a. A President, four Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary, to be elected by Conference, who, together with such other persons as the Council may elect, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Council which shall be empowered to exercise all the functions of the Council between Council meetings.
  - b. Twenty five additional members to be elected by Conference.
  - c. Such further members as the Council may co-opt.
3. In pursuance of the objects set out above, the Council may:-
  - a. Meet at such times as it deems necessary, not less than four times a year.
  - b. Delegate such functions and give such instructions as it deems fit to its Executive Committee.
  - c. Set up .../

- c. Set up further sub-committees and appoint further officials as the need arises.
  - d. Call a provisional conference at least once a year.
  - e. Set up district and regional committees to carry out its objects in particular areas.
  - f. Send delegates to conferences and other bodies working in the cause of peace and become affiliated to or merge with any broader peace movement with similar objects which may be set up in South Africa or else where.
  - g. Raise and expend funds, hire premises, employ organisers and do all other things which it may consider to be conducive to the attainment of its objects.
  - h. Draft a formal constitution in conformity with this resolution.
4. Conference directs the Transvaal Peace Council, without delay, and in co-operation with other peace-loving organisations in the Union, to conduct a National Peace Ballot, based upon the need for a Peace Pact of the major powers and the general spirit of the resolutions passed by this Conference.

#### 10. RACE DISCRIMINATION, A THREAT TO PEACE

Conference expresses its belief in the essential unity and brotherhood of the human race. Those who deny this great scientific truth, and who uphold the ideas and practices of race superiority, act as the enemies of peace and the agents of war. For racialism is used to justify the violent conquest of nations, to force them to submit to tyranny and exploitation. It is the weapon of the aggressor, to imbue his people with the conception of the "master race." Its arrogant claims can only serve to inflame hostility between the various peoples of the world and to culminate in war.

We condemn, as a manifestation of this menace of racialism, the "apartheid" policy and theories of the Union Government, which aims at relegating the non-white peoples of our country to a servile status and depriving them of the means of human dignity.

We call for the establishment of friendly and harmonious relations among the various peoples of South Africa, recognising that such relations can only be built on the firm foundation of equality of rights and opportunities for all, irrespective of race, colour or creed.

#### 11. BOMBS OR BREAD

Conference warns the people of South Africa of the disastrous effects of the armaments race upon the economic well-being of the common man. The diversion of productive resources to arms manufacture, the hoarding and wastage of raw materials, discriminatory trade policies and the strangulation of scientific research lead directly to the impoverishment of the world as a whole. Inflation, crippling taxation and the curtailment of social services are being deliberately used to lower the standard of living of the masses in the interests of a small group of monopolists whose business is death and destruction.

Conference therefore demands:-

1. That the influence of the armament manufacturers, merchants of death, be eliminated from world politics.
2. That financial policy be directed to the prosperity of the people, and that the crushing burden of arms expenditure be lifted.

3. That normal .../

3. That normal trade relations be resumed between the nations of the world. .
4. That the resources of science and technology be set free to work for the benefit of mankind.

## 12. THE WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL

This Transvaal Peace Conference, representing the earnest desire of the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the Transvaal for peace, greets the decision of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students to convene the Third World Festival of Youth and Students for Peace in Berlin from the 5th to the 19th August, 1951.

Realising that the forces of reaction the world over are engaged in a mad drive to plunge the world into a blood-bath, this Conference is confident that at the Berlin Festival, the youth of the world will strike a determined blow for peace, and show that young men and women refuse to be used as cannon fodder in a war wherein they will be the greatest sufferers.

In support of the call of the World Peace Council for peace-loving peoples to rally to the Festival, Conference appeals to the democratic people of this country to ensure the success of South Africa's participation in this great event.

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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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