

MEMORANDUM ON ANTI-PASS CAMPAIGN

ANC (General)

There is nothing in the country that makes an African a prisoner, irrespective of his social standing in the community although he is outside the prison walls, more than the operation of pass laws. The Pass System operates under different laws, the most vicious being the Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 as amended, in particular Section 10 and Section 29. The Freedom of movement of the African is denied under this law, not only from country to town but from one town to another. Drastic limitations are imposed on his economic capabilities.

In terms of Section 10, "No Native shall remain for more than 72 hours in an Urban or Proclaimed area unless -

- (a) He was born and permanently resides in such area; or
- (b) He has worked continuously in such area for one employer for a period of not less than 10 years or has lawfully remained continuously in such area for a period of not less than 15 years and has not during either period been convicted of any offence in respect of which he has been sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine for a period of more than 7 days or with the option of a fine for a period of more than one month; or
- (c) Such Native is the wife or unmarried daughter or son under age."

Many Africans who do not qualify in terms of this provision, who have been fortunate enough to obtain a permit, are only allowed to be in these areas until the expiration of their service contract. These provisions apply to both men and women.

In terms of Section 29 of the same Act, an authority is given to the local authorities to banish any African whom they deem undesirable or whose presence they maintain is detrimental to the maintenance of peace and order. These two measures and various other laws and regulations literally outlaw an African population in the Urban Areas and have already had a detrimental effect on thousands of Africans.

Although the A.N.C. has been the bitterest opponent of the Pass System and has carried out a struggle against the system in one form or another, never until now have the people been so indignant, never has the opportunity of mobilising for action been so ripe. But the harnessing of the great potential force will largely depend on a systematic campaign and on a systematic organisation which must be undertaken, a house to house campaign, yard to yard, location to location, factory to factory, in the towns, likewise in the countryside. The need for the moment is to conduct a country-wide extensive campaign to educate the masses of the people on the issue of the passes and their extension to women.

"The struggle against passes has gone on, sometimes fiercer, sometimes quieter, for many years. The new round of the struggle which is opening as a result of the threat to extend the passes to African women, does not mark the beginning of the struggle, but only a new phase. It opens up the possibility of widening and making changes in the whole struggle against passes and of rousing great sections of the people for the struggle.

In such a long drawn out war as the war against the pass laws it would be foolish to expect that victory can be won by a single action of the people. The pass system is the foundation of the whole cheap labour system in South Africa and the ruling class will not easily be forced to give it up. It follows that victory in the struggle against the pass laws must not be looked for in every minor skirmish against the enemy. In a long drawn out battle, there will be many minor victories, minor defeats, many advances, many retreats. But final victory for the people which means the end of the cheap labour system of South Africa, can only be finally achieved by the overthrow of the ruling class, and by the achievement of the Freedom Charter as the ruling policy of South Africa.

The present struggle against passes for women can well prove to be the decisive turning point of the whole long drawn out war. There is no aspect of the pass system which will cause such bitter opposition as this; and the present situation therefore enables us to bring thousands of new militant fighters into the struggle, to rouse those who have become accustomed to and tolerant of the pass laws, for a new effort and to awaken the conscience and the resistance of those sections of the people - White, Coloured, Indian - who do not themselves directly suffer under these laws.

Clearly the women are in the front rank of the battle now opening. They are the victims the government has singled out for its latest attack. But the struggle is not one for women alone. It is one in which women and men must join together, each helping, assisting and encouraging the other as the circumstances demand. By themselves, the women can perhaps resist the latest attacks. But their resistance would be stronger and lead more surely to victory if the menfolk fight with them. But even a temporary victorious resistance of the women to the present attack will postpone the day of the attack till the government can muster greater force. It will only be a breathing space before a new attack in a new direction. This must be a joint campaign of men and women, whose aim is to end the pass system and the Government which upholds it." (The above quotation is an extract from the Congress policy on the Anti-Pass Campaign.)

The struggle against the pass system, which is today the major campaign of the Congresses, has undoubtedly again revealed the militancy of the people and their courageous determination to struggle against this vicious system. At the same time during the course of the campaign serious organisational weaknesses with the leading organisations have again come to the surface, which must be remedied if the campaign is to be intensified and sustained.

The Resolution adopted by the National Executive of the A.N.C. at its meeting in August, re-states the policy and directives which were issued to the Branches during the first part of the year. The reason why the Resolution embodies the directives is because these directives have in many areas not been implemented at all and in some areas only partially been implemented.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN

(a) Militancy of the People.

The A.N.C. Women's League and the S.A. Federation of Women are quite correctly congratulated by the Executive for the militant demonstrations they have organised throughout the country. Up to date, these two organisations have indeed been the vanguard of the struggle against passes. It was through the intensive work done by these two organisations that the militancy of the people, particularly the women, was revealed.

(b) Organisational Weaknesses.

While the women deserve congratulations, the Movement has to subject itself to sharp criticism with a view to remedying its weaknesses and thus intensifying the struggle.

WHAT ARE THE WEAKNESSES?

- (1) Failure by Committees and members to implement directives,
- (2) Failure by Committees and members to submit reports,
- (3) Lack of co-ordination,

IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECTIVES

This revealed itself more particularly in regard to the men of the organisation

who regarded the struggle against the passes to be solely a campaign for women. The men generally adopted a passive attitude, leaving it to the women to shoulder the burden. It was expected that the women would oppose vigorously the extension of the pass system to them and that they would be more active than the men, but the attitude adopted by the men towards the campaign had the effect of depriving the women of the support and assistance which would have strengthened their demonstrations and also the opposition of the men towards the passes. We are all to blame for this, and the Resolution correctly repeats the call for the participation of the men in the campaign. This call was clearly made in the Policy Statement adopted by the Joint Executives in March, 1956.

Because of the failure of the men to participate in the campaign, the organisational machinery in the form of broad Anti-Pass Committees have not been established except for a few by women. Branches and Provinces have not implemented the directive of establishing broad Anti-Pass Committees.

FAILURE TO REPORT

Despite repeated requests, no proper reports have been received from Branches and Provinces, and this has been due to, firstly, the failure by these organs to implement directives so that they have had little or nothing to report, and, secondly, the undisciplined and irresponsible attitude of Committees and members towards their duties.

LACK OF CO-ORDINATION

The attitude of the men towards the campaign and the lack of reports has resulted in the absence of co-ordination between the organisations and the women, and the various organs of the movement.

WHAT ARE OUR TASKS?

- (a) To correct our mistakes and consolidate our gains.
- (b) To intensify and broaden the campaign.

The above tasks can only be fulfilled if we have a sound organisational machinery; and to have a sound organisational machinery members who are in higher organs must participate actively in the lower organs, of which they are members.

ORGANISATIONAL MACHINERY

Internal

In order to consolidate and intensify the campaign the Congress must be consolidated from its unit - the member - to its highest organs.

Each member in a Branch must now in accordance with the M-Plan be given a small area (a few houses in the street) within which he must establish within a specified time an Anti-Pass Committee. Regular reports should be demanded from members in respect of their blocks, and strict supervision should be exercised over the activities of the blocks in order to check reports.

Each Branch Executive member should be given a few blocks to supervise and he should in turn report to his executive and the executive to the Provincial Executive which finally reports to the National.

Without neglecting other areas it is recommended that this plan be implemented in the Reef areas first. If a beginning is made on the Reef then the plan can be supervised carefully without seriously involving the question of personnel. It is important to stress that work in other areas should not be neglected.

CO-ORDINATION WITH WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES AT ALL LEVELS

Regular joint meetings between women's committees and the committees of the organisations at all levels should be held to discuss the development and progress of the campaign. This co-ordination should be encouraged without thwarting the initiative of the women.

BROADEN THE STRUGGLE - EXTERNAL CO-ORDINATION

There are two ways of broadening the campaign. The one is from below, from the people, and has already been dealt with in regard to formation of Anti-Pass Committees, by members of Congress and people who have already participated in the struggle against passes. The other method is from above, through the Committees of organisations. Congress Committees must meet committees of other organisations with a view to forming broad Anti-Pass Committees.

On the National and Provincial levels the Congresses should attempt to bring about co-operation with organisations like the Liberal Party, Labour Party, Black Sash, etc.

THE SPECIAL TASKS OF THE S.A. CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS, S.A. COLOURED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION, S.A. INDIAN CONGRESS, S.A. CONGRESS OF TRADES UNIONS AND THE FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE ANTI-PASS CAMPAIGN.

S.A. CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS

The specific role of C.O.D. members should be to make Europeans conscious of the evils of the pass system and to keep the struggle against the pass system constantly before them. C.O.D. members, as members of the Congress Movement, should be prepared to render active assistance to the African National Congress in this campaign.

- (a) Every opportunity should be taken of presenting factual data to the European public (whether in the form of leaflets, press statements, letters to the press, etc.) showing how the pass system affects the lives of African people, how it is responsible for clashes, terrorism in townships, how unemployment is related to the pass system, etc. etc.
- (b) Regional Vigilance Committees of 2 or more people should be appointed to watch for newspaper reports of incidents and issues related to the anti pass campaign and to be responsible for immediate press statements, letters to the press from individual members, and the production of snap leaflets. The Vigilance Committees should be constantly on the watch for any fresh developments concerning the Population Registration Act.
- (c) Public meetings of political organisations should be attended by C.O.D. members and every opportunity taken of speeches or questions from the floor on the pass system, Section 10, banishments, etc. Wherever possible C.O.D. leaflets and pamphlets should be distributed at such meetings.
- (d) Efforts should be made in co-operation with the A.N.C. to form broad anti pass committees, bringing in other organisations and interested individuals.
- (e) C.O.D. members should assist the A.N.C. and the Congress movement in reaching the rural areas and particularly areas where passes for women have either been introduced or are likely to be introduced in the near future. All efforts should be made by C.O.D. to provide personally or to obtain private transport for this purpose so as to enable the A.N.C. to overcome the real obstacles of time and distance.
- (f) C.O.D. members should endeavour to establish small groups of domestic workers centred around domestics employed in their homes, and to keep these groups in contact with the A.N.C.

- (g) C.O.D. members should assist the A.N.C. with distribution of anti pass propaganda material.

S.A.C.P.O.

The task of the S.A.C.P.O. should be to mobilise the Coloured People and arouse them against the Population Registration Act - Re-classification - and the Group Areas Act. S.A.C.P.O. by education and agitation on these issues will be able to bring home to the Coloured people the evils of the Pass Laws, and to show them how their own freedom is affected by these laws. S.A.C.P.O. should endeavour to get more Coloured people to take part in mass demonstrations of the African people against passes.

Where no branches of S.A.C.P.O. exist the Anti-Pass Committees or branches of the other Congresses should make a special effort to get Coloured people to serve on the Anti-Pass Committees, and to draw as many Coloured people as possible into the campaign, on the lines suggested above.

INDIAN CONGRESSSES

The South African Indian Congress should urge the constituent bodies to co-operate on the Anti-Pass Committees at all levels, and to endeavour to achieve a broad representation of the Indian people on these Committees. Further, it should be the task of the Indian Congresses to expose the evils of the pass laws, by educating the Indian people on -

- (1) the application of the provincial permit system at present in force and the danger that it might be applied to movement from town to town, thus further restricting the freedom of movement of the Indian people, as the pass laws restrict the African people.
- (2) the danger of the Population Registration Act as the forerunner of the extension of the pass system to other racial groups; the Indian people should be urged continually not to co-operate with the Government in the implementation of this Act.

Indian employers of African labour and Indian housewives employing African domestic servants should be educated not to co-operate with the Government by compelling their employees to take passes.

The Indian Congresses should encourage the Indian people to continue and increase their participation in multi racial demonstrations and other forms of opposition against the pass laws.

S.A.G. T.U.

The workers and particularly the women workers are vulnerable to pass laws as they may be compelled by the factory owners to take passes. It is therefore essential that the co-operation of the trade unions be obtained in ensuring that factory Committees pursue a vigorous struggle against passes within the factories.

THE FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

The events of the past year have shown the potential of the militant activity of women and of their initiative and these forces must be correctly employed to further the campaign.

Obviously the Federation of South African Women has a special appeal to women. The Federation should endeavour, together with the A.N.C. Women's League and with women of other races, to see that the spectacular success of the women's demonstration campaign is consolidated, by participation of women in mass demonstrations, by men and women, by further women's demonstrations and by extensive house-to-house campaigning.

Greater efforts should be made to contact women in the countryside and to draw other women's organisations and unorganised women into the campaign. The establishment of women's anti pass committees will be required but it is essential that full co-ordination with any other anti pass committees be maintained, so that women's committees should not be left to carry on the campaign in isolation. It will obviously not be necessary to establish women's committees at every level, nor in every area; this will depend upon local circumstances and the strength and resources of the women.

SECTION 10.

The Government has now embarked upon the most ruthless form of banishment under Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act, which not only brings misery and suffering to thousands of people but is also invoked to intimidate and persecute the militant leaders of the people. Campaigning against Section 10 therefore becomes the major aspect of our struggle against the pass laws.

METHOD OF STRUGGLE.

In the present stage of the Campaign our tasks are to consolidate our gains, stabilise our machinery and to intensify the campaign by widening it to embrace all areas and all shades of political opinion, and both men and women.

Our primary method should be education, agitation, propaganda and establishment of small units throughout the country and various forms of public demonstrations in accordance with the Resolution adopted by the Special Conference.

THE NATURE OF ANTI-PASS COMMITTEES

Anti pass Committees are as the name implies, committees set up for the specific purpose of struggling against Passes. They are not Congress Committees, nor need all their members be Congress members. They are broad committees. Congress members are in such committees to stimulate and give political guidance in the people's struggle against passes.

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