



The Call to the Congress of the People - 15 March 1955

**WE CALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA BLACK AND WHITE
– LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM!**

WE CALL THE FARMERS OF THE RESERVES AND TRUST LANDS.

Let us speak of the wide land, and the narrow strips on which we toil.
Let us speak of brothers without land, and of children without schooling.
Let us speak of taxes and of cattle, and of famine.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE MINERS OF COAL, GOLD AND DIAMONDS.

Let us speak of the dark shafts, and the cold compounds far from our families.
Let us speak of heavy labour and long hours, and of men sent home to die.
Let us speak of rich masters and poor wages.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE WORKERS OF FARMS AND FORESTS.

Let us speak of the rich foods we grow, and the laws that keep us poor.
Let us speak of harsh treatment and of children and women forced to work.
Let us speak of private prisons, and beatings and of passes.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE WORKERS OF FACTORIES AND SHOPS.

Let us speak of the good things we make, and the bad conditions of our work.
Let us speak of the many passes and the few jobs.
Let us speak of foremen and of transport and of trade unions; of holidays and of houses.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND THE PREACHERS.

Let us speak of the light that comes with learning, and the ways we are kept in darkness.
Let us speak of great services we can render, and of the narrow ways that are open to us.
Let us speak of laws, and government, and rights.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

WE CALL THE HOUSEWIVES AND THE MOTHERS.

Let us speak of the fine children that we bear, and of their stunted lives.
Let us speak of the many illnesses and deaths, and of the few clinics and schools.
Let us speak of high prices and of shanty towns.
LET US SPEAK OF FREEDOM.

LET US SPEAK TOGETHER

ALL OF US TOGETHER – African and European, Indian and Coloured.
Voter and voteless. Privileged and rightless. The happy and the homeless.
All the people of South Africa; of the towns and of the countryside.
LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM. And of the happiness that can come to men and women if
they live in a land that is free.
LET US SPEAK TOGETHER OF FREEDOM. *And of how to get it for ourselves, and for our children.*

LET THE VOICE OF ALL THE PEOPLE BE HEARD. AND LET THE DEMANDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE FOR THE THINGS THAT WILL MAKE US FREE BE RECORDED. LET THE DEMANDS BE GATHERED TOGETHER IN A GREAT **CHARTER OF FREEDOM.**

WE CALL ON ALL GOOD MEN AND TRUE, to speak now of freedom, and to write their own demands into the Charter of Freedom.

WE CALL ALL WHO LOVE LIBERTY to pledge their lives from here on to win the Freedoms set out in the Charter.

WE CALL ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO PREPARE FOR:

THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE – Where representatives of the people, everywhere in the land, will meet together in a great assembly, to discuss and adopt the Charter of Freedom.

Let us organise together for the Congress of the People.

Let us speak together of Freedom.

Let us work together for the Freedom Charter.

LET US GO FORWARD TOGETHER TO FREEDOM!

This Call to the

CONGRESS of the PEOPLE

is addressed to all South Africans, European and Non-European.

It is made by four bodies, speaking for the four sections of the people of South Africa:- by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation.

It calls you all to prepare to send your chosen spokesmen to:

THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE.

a meeting of elected representatives of all races, coming together from every town and village, every farm and factory, every mine and kraal, every street and suburb, in the whole land. Here all will speak together, freely, as equals. They will speak together of the things their people need to make them free. They will speak together of changes that must be made in our lives, our laws, our customs and our outlooks. They will speak together of freedom. And they will write their demands into

THE FREEDOM CHARTER.

This Charter will express all the demands of all the people for the good life that they seek for themselves and their children. The Freedom Charter will be our guide to those "singing tomorrows" when all South Africans will live and work together, without racial bitterness and fear of misery, in peace and harmony.

THIS IS A CALL for an awakening of all men and women, to campaign together in the greatest movement of all our history.

Our call is to you - the People of South Africa. We invite all Unionwide Organisations to join as sponsors of the CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, and to take part in its direction. Those who are not afraid to hear the voice of the people will join us. We will welcome them, and work together with them as equals.

We invite all local and provincial societies, clubs, churches, trade unions, sporting bodies and other organisations to join as partners in the CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE Committee, and to share the work.

Those who are not afraid to speak of freedom will join us. We will welcome them, and work together with them as equals.

We invite all South African men and women of every race and creed to take part as organisers of the CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE and awaken others to its message. Those who are prepared to work together for freedom and the Freedom Charter will join us. We will welcome them, and go forward together with them to freedom.

OUR CALL IS TO YOU!

- **Give your time to spread the message of the CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE.**
- **Become a Volunteer to organise for freedom.**
- **Tell your neighbours and workmates of the nation-wide elections that are coming.**
- **Rouse the people to discuss what they want of freedom.**

LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR FREEDOM!

THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE will take place

- when all the people's demands for inclusion in the Freedom Charter have been gathered in;
- when the whole country has been awakened to speak of freedom,
- and the call for elections has been made;
- not later than June, 1955 - at a date and place still to be announced.

THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE will be organised

- by 50,000 Volunteers, who will give their time to carrying through the campaign as directed;
- by a network of committees in every village, town and factory, representing and uniting all sections and all races.
- by the National Action Council, composed of all national bodies that agree to act as sponsors.

DO THESE THREE THINGS - NOW!

ONE: SEND IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO A PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE, stating that you are interested and would like to assist.

Transvaal Committee, Box 11045, Johannesburg.

Natal Committee, Box 2299, Durban.

Western Cape Committee, Box 4552, Cape Town.

Eastern Cape Committee, Box 1294, Port Elizabeth.

O.F.S. Committee, 3397 Masito Street, Bloemfontein.

TWO: FORM COMMITTEES to campaign for the Congress of the People.

THREE: GATHER GROUPS to send in their demands for the Freedom Charter.

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DO NOT THROW THIS LEAFLET AWAY! PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND. DISCUSS IT WITH OTHERS.
SEE THAT IT IS READ BY MANY PEOPLE.

Issued by the National Action Council of the Congress of the People, Box 11045, Johannesburg.¹

¹ [Call to the Congress of the People, ANC.](#)