

Finally, what are the prospects for C.O.D.? To whom may it appeal? So far clearly it has found a response mainly among three groups: (i) youth and students who are less full of racialism than their elders; (ii) intellectuals who are more influenced by arguments, ideas and appeals to principles; (iii) white groups themselves threatened by racialism and religious prejudice—so far mainly Jews, but later no doubt also Greeks and other Continentals, Catholics and eventually Anglicans and British, as the Nats become ever more narrow and desperate. As powerful progressive trade unions are built up with mass Non-European support it should be possible to win widespread support among white workers whose trade union rights and living standards are under attack (albeit less so than those of their Non-European brothers). When we have begun to build mass support among all these groups we shall need to seriously think about methods for gaining a foothold amongst middle-class “Anglicaners” and Afrikaners. But for the immediate future the perspectives it seems to me are fairly clear and plenty of political work is available for all to do.

THE EXTENSION OF THE PASS LAWS

By WALTER SISULU

WHEN the Pass Law was first introduced to control the movement of slaves in 1760 by the settlers of the Cape, no one could have imagined that this slave measure was to cause so much bitterness and misery to millions, generations after its introduction.

It was this measure which gave an idea to Caledon who introduced a proclamation in 1809 requiring the African tribes (Hottentots) to carry passes when moving from one area to another. This infamous Caledon proclamation was the beginning of a forced labour system. It had its basis in the slave system which had taken root in the colony. Since then it has been extended from time to time to the various South African regions, by both Republican and Colonial governments. It has been one of the most important techniques to create a system, not only of forced cheap labour, but also the migratory labour system.

In this system today is found a method for regulating the economic relations between black and white, a method unique in its nature to South Africa. The extension of the pass system to children, African women, and other racial groups in this country, is in fact a continuation of this slave and feudal measure started almost 200 years ago.

A CHALLENGE TO SOCIETY

The Pass laws are therefore not only just one of the Nationalist Government's oppressive measures, but fundamentally a slave measure

deeply rooted in the economic system of South Africa. Hence a struggle against this system is both political and economic. It is a struggle against white domination and exploitation; a challenge to the ruling class, the Nationalist Government, and in no less way, to the mining and industrial groups, and the big farmers. Once we have grasped this fact, we shall be in a better position to understand the full implications and the full significance of the present anti-pass campaign. No short cut measures, therefore, no dramatic moves alone can advance such a struggle.

THE NAZIS AND THE JEWS

In spite of the various commissions that have had to be appointed to enquire into the whole system of the pass laws, and in spite of the fact that almost all of them have indicated that the pass laws are a cause of friction between black and white in this country, the Nationalist Government, instead of easing or abolishing this system, have consolidated and co-ordinated it; extending pass laws to women and children, and to other racial groups.

This system is designed to serve two purposes:—

1. To continue, in the case of Africans, to force them into the chains of farm and mine-owners, and to keep their wages down forever at the lowest possible level.
2. In the case of other racial groups it is a measure to entrench the herrenvolk policy; to classify each section into a racial group **for the purpose of discriminating against and oppressing certain groups**; just as the Nazis made every Jew wear a badge to identify him as a Jew. Can one claim this identification is in the interests of the group concerned? Was it in the interests of the Jews to be so distinguished from 'true aryan's'? Can such race classification ever be for any purpose but the oppression of one group by another?

A NEVER-CEASING STRUGGLE

It should be remembered that the pass laws and land question are the two issues which Congress vowed never to let rest until they had been uprooted. There has thus been a continuous struggle against the passes since the formation of Congress, waged in various forms and at different times. Deputations, demonstrations, passive resistance, strikes, up to the 1952 Defiance Campaign, are the various forms of struggle which have been used in the past.

There has been shooting and imprisonment in this struggle, but the fight against the pass laws has never been lost. Every campaign which has been conducted on this issue has had its own effect on the rulers, especially when we consider the struggle of women against the passes, a struggle which has at all times come out victorious. The women have had to suffer by going to gaol, some expectant, some with their babies on their backs, to defeat the introduction of passes to women.

BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED

It would, however, be very wrong to imagine that we will do exactly what was done in 1913; and not to realise that times are different, and

that the methods of the oppressor are not exactly the same as they were in the past.

Although fundamentally there may be no change, yet it cannot be doubted that the tactics have changed. The Government's fear of the people is greater today than it has ever been. On the other hand, the hatred for passes and the political consciousness of the people have both grown. But methods of organisation have also been made more difficult. We would be foolish to minimise the strength of the enemy, to underestimate its propaganda. In other words, to take the campaign lightly, and to be carried away by emotion and sensationalism.

There is a tendency, especially on the part of the leadership, to ignore the preliminary stages necessary for the carrying out of an effective campaign; and at times to become extraordinarily militant, not so much in their work as in their words, thus misleading those who look to them for guidance.

It is, admittedly, very difficult to ignore in any campaign the traditional approach of the people, yet it is equally dangerous to conduct a struggle on traditions only, often with less regard for the changing situations; hence the question of waiting for an announcement of the date of action, or even by implication to give an impression that the leaders will mysteriously come out with the solution, can have serious setbacks on the entire movement.

What type of action is proposed in this campaign?

FAITH IN THE PEOPLE

Obviously, the present campaign must be properly planned, and provided the leadership at all levels correctly and honestly carries out daily activities, house-to-house campaigns, and discusses with the people every aspect of this nation-wide anti-pass campaign, together with the problems and difficulties which arise, then our struggle shall have been raised to a higher level.

In this campaign, we should place implicit faith in the abilities and intelligence of the mass of the people, and be inspired by their response in our protest meetings and demonstrations. We need, in such a campaign, both men and women who are not only courageous, but who are also determined, disciplined, and above all have a clear understanding of the task which faces them.

There are no short-cuts. There are no easy answers. There are no complete formulas. Only continuous campaigning among the people, with continuous response to their own activities, taking them a step forward each time, can lead us to our goal.

This is the only way to achieve our purpose.