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FRIENDS OF AFRICA.

- Report by -

W. G. BALLINGER.

(Adviser on African Native Industrial & Co-operative Organisation).

As you are aware, I came to England in June 1934 to give an account of my work during the last six years in connection with Native organisation and research into Southern African economic, social and political conditions. During my visit I addressed, lectured or gave brief talks on my work to some 46 organisations in England, Scotland, Geneva and Paris. Included among these organisations were:-

The Women's International League.  
Woolwich Social Service Club.  
Ruskin College, Oxford.  
London Co-operative Society,  
Co-operative Union.  
Representative Group of Trade Union Officials.  
York Trust.  
London School of Economics.  
The Executive Committee of the W.E.A.  
The Adult Educational Association.  
Lincoln Workers' Educational Association.  
Advisory Committee of the Labour Party.  
Society of Friends - London and Geneva.

In addition I discussed aspects of Native questions with:-

Mr. W. Citrine, General Secretary B.T.U.C.  
Mr. Schevenes, General Secretary I.F.T.U. (Paris).  
Officials of the I.L.C. (Geneva).  
Mr. Dov-Hos of the Labour & Co-operative  
Movements of Palestine.  
Mr. R. F. Palmer, General Secretary, Co-operative  
Union.  
Mr. J. May, Secretary, Co-operative Alliance.  
Mr. Malcolm Macdonald, Under-Secretary for the  
Dominions.  
The Earl of Athlone.  
Lord Lothian.  
Lord Lugard.  
Lord Sanderson.  
Lord Balfour of Burleigh.  
Sir Alan & Lady Pim.  
Mr. Fraser of Achimota, Gold Coast.  
Mr. Strickland, Co-operative Expert.  
Mr. Tom Jones, York Trust.

and others.



The principal objects of my visit were to:-

- (a) Inform people in Europe of certain aspects of the Native question.
- (b) Enlist support for the spread of Co-operative ideas among the African Natives.

I was ably seconded in all my activities by Miss M. L. Hodgson (Senior Lecturer in History, University of the Witwatersrand), who was on "long leave". Miss Hodgson has since become my wife and, in view of this change in her state, the University has decided to dispense with her services as from the end of the year. In the circumstances, she proposes to devote her time more fully after this year to this Native work.

#### Assistance in Work.

I received every assistance in my work whilst in Europe - especially with regard to its clerical and contact aspects - from Miss Winifred Holtby, Miss Anderson, Dr. Norman Leys, Mr. John Fletcher, Sir John Harris, Mr. A. Creech Jones, Mr. Roden Buxton, Mr. Ernest Green, Mr. & Mrs. Macgregor-Ross and the Secretary and Treasurer of the Friends of Africa - Mr. Julius Lewin and Mr. Frank Horrabin. I should like to record that this assistance was often given at the expense of the loss of valuable time and leisure.

I should further like to record the deep debt of gratitude I owe to Miss Margery Abrahams (Dietician, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London) for giving me, during my stay in England, accommodation and hospitality.

#### Results:

The first results of these efforts were:-

- (1) I think I may say an extended interest in the problems of race contact in Southern Africa as they affect the Natives, and the possibilities of Co-operation as a policy for Africans.
- (11) The guarantee of £250 in five grants or donations for the next three years to carry on the work.



Return to South Africa:

My wife and I left England to return to South Africa on Tuesday, 8th January 1935. We joined the Italian Liner, S.S. "Guilio Cesare" at Marseilles on Thursday, 10th January, and travelled via Gibraltar and Dakar (French Senegal) to Cape Town, where we arrived on Thursday, 24th January.

We took advantage of the call at Dakar to get what impressions we could of French administration. Should opportunity offer, we should like to follow up this visit by a more detailed investigation at some future date, since we are more and more convinced that it is essential to co-ordinate the experience of different parts of Africa in the interests of any planned development for the African Natives.

Cape Town: Meeting, Lecture & Conference:

I remained in Cape Town for 16 days in order

- (a) to discuss with Miss Eleanor Hawarden and others the possibilities of forming a Cape Town Branch of the Friends of Africa;
- (b) to attend several meetings, and to discuss co-operative possibilities in Cape Town with Natives and Europeans.

Miss Hawarden and her friend, Miss Boyes, organised a meeting, which was attended by a number of Africans and Europeans. After I had addressed the meeting, it was decided to form a branch of the Friends of Africa. A Committee was elected to carry out the work on the lines set forth in the manifesto issued in England last year. Bishop Sims of the African Episcopal Methodist Church expressed his willingness to preach co-operation to his congregations, and one of the Europeans present, an accountant, offered his services to Natives wishing to form Co-operative Societies.

Joint Council:

I also attended a meeting of the Cape Town Joint Council of Africans and Europeans which was addressed by



Mr. Payn, M.P. for Teppuland. Mr. Payn spoke on facilities for Native trading, the Native Land Bill and the Franchise Bills which have been before Parliament since 1927. He made it clear that, although he was in favour of Natives being given facilities for trading within  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles of the present stores in the Transkei, most of which are European owned, he thought that the Natives had neither the capital nor the business ability to succeed as traders. (The present law is that trading stores in the Transkei must be five miles apart). He also claimed that the land in the Transkeian Native Reserve was over-stocked and inefficiently farmed.

He informed the meeting that the Native Bills as now about to issue from Select Committee would embody direct Native representation in Parliament. Questioned on the form of direct representation, Mr. Payn indicated that it would probably be the election of six Europeans to Parliament by Natives. I pointed out that this was not direct representation but the elimination of the Non-European franchise or "Cape Native Vote".

Cape Fabian Lecture: On the invitation of the Cape Fabian Society, I gave a lecture on the British Protectorates. I pointed out their present economic and administrative dependence on the Union of South Africa, the fertile field they present for co-operative developments of all kinds, and the desire of the Union of South Africa to have Bechuanaland as a settling ground for landless Union Natives and thus somewhat tardily to implement the promises of the 1913 Land Act.

Imperial Press Conference:

I attended the opening meeting of the Press Conference, and later took Mr. George Crossfield, Junior, of the "News Chronicle" to see the Cape Town Native Locations or



Townships known as Indabeni and Langa. Mr. and Mrs. Mears acted as guides and gave Mr. Crossfield valuable information on the conditions in these locations.

Return to Johannesburg - I.C.U.:

I left Cape Town at noon on Saturday, 9th February, and arrived in Johannesburg on Sunday evening, 10th February. An accumulation of correspondence occupied me for several days after my arrival. Then a number of matters connected with the Industrial & Commercial Workers' Union (I.C.U.) administration and industrial questions kept me busy. Office equipment, including a typewriter, has been removed from the I.C.U. premises. The matter has been reported to the C.I.D. There is, however, very little likelihood of the recovery of the missing articles. This is the fifth typewriter removed from the I.C.U. Headquarters since I came to South Africa in 1928. There can be little doubt that the location of the I.C.U. office, which is near to the Government Pass Office in a slum district, is responsible for the disappearance of properties. The Pass Office is at present the rendezvous of Natives unable to get work, awaiting various Pass documents, or those preying on their fellows.

Progress of Western Native Co-operative Society:

*This Society which was opened in 1931, has recently added a butchery department and now has a staff of 15.* → The firm of Messrs. Howard Pim and Hardy continue to act as auditors to this Society, and I have been re-accepted as adviser to it. The Society has had a difficult year, owing to competition, but has survived it satisfactorily. In June 1934, the privately owned stores in the Location decided on a price-reducing policy designed to freeze out the Co-operative store. They reduced their prices below cost. The members of the Co-operative store stood firm, however,



and as none of these private stores has a great deal of capital to work on, they were unable to keep up their price-cutting policy for very long. This combination of circumstances saved the Co-operative store, and its position has steadily improved since this acute competition was lifted, so that this year it expects to resume the payment of dividends, which was suspended last year through trading losses in 1933.

When the delegates to the Imperial Press Conference were in Johannesburg, I took Mr. Crossfield (Senior) of the "News Chronicle" to see the Store and the Native Township.

#### Industrial:

(a) I have had several conversations with officials of the European Trade Unions relative to the necessity for the organisation of Natives in the Trades and Industries in which Europeans are organised. I hope to meet the South African Trades & Labour Council in connection with this and cognate matters at an early date.

(b) Last December an Industrial Council Building Trade award was gazetted, whereby the skilled workers in the Building Trade received an advance of 6d. per hour, making their wages 3/4d. and 3/6d. per hour. Certain semi-skilled workers also had their rates stabilised at a minimum of 1/- per hour. The unskilled workers (Natives) were placed on a minimum of 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per hour, which is an actual reduction on the previous daily wage of from 3/- to 3/4d. for an eight hour shift. There were five European Unions and Employers parties to the negotiations. Only one of the Unions is affiliated to the South African Trades & Labour Council. The representative of this organisation protested against the treatment being meted out to the Natives, and suggested that the minimum for unskilled work should be 5d. per hour. He failed to



find any support for his proposition. In an interview given to the Johannesburg "Star", I have publicly protested against this treatment of workers who <sup>were</sup> are not represented in the negotiations. (Press cutting enclosed).

Minimum Wage:

At the time of my return to South Africa, the most important piece of Industrial Legislation before the House of Assembly was the Minimum Wage Bill, sponsored by the Minister of Labour. This Bill is designed to establish a minimum rate of pay of 1/- per hour for certain classes of unskilled and semi-skilled work, with the object of making this work worth while for European labourers. The Bill has met consistent hostility from the European employers, but the Trade Unions have also tended to regard it with disfavour. The Miners' Unions have openly sided in the matter with the employers. I took occasion to see a number of members of the Executive of the Trades & Labour Council, and urged them to support the measure in the belief that it will involve an improvement in general working conditions and will not have the effect of driving out Native employees to any great extent, while equality of treatment for those who remain in must be beneficial to race relations as a whole. Subsequently the Trades & Labour Council issued a statement in favour of the Minimum Wage Bill. (Copy enclosed).

Co-operative Enterprises:

I addressed a meeting of the Gamma Sigina (Native) Club at the Bantu Men's Social Centre on the subject of the Friends of Africa and Co-operation as a policy for Africans. The address gave rise to a long and careful discussion, and the idea of Co-operation has since been widely canvassed



among the Native people. They are greatly stirred by the possibilities of such enterprises as Bazaars run on Co-operative lines as a means whereby they can counter the Government's anti-Native policy, and certain Chiefs are being approached to lend support, both moral and practical, to efforts in this direction.

Mr. Paul Robeson's Visit:

The Natives are also tremendously interested in the possibility of Mr. Paul Robeson visiting the Union. The proposed visit is also exciting considerable speculation among the Europeans, the majority of whom will accord Mr. Robeson a good reception, especially if his visit combines a desire to see the life and conditions of the Natives and an opportunity to hear him sing. There will be no lack of travelling facilities and hospitality for him.

Native Sport:

The Native Sports Club, known as the Johannesburg African Football Association, to which 68 Clubs are affiliated, asked me to help them in establishing an Accident Fund. I was successful in getting the interest and advice of Mr. Conrad Kops, sometime Lecturer in Actuarial Science in the University of the Witwatersrand, now Secretary and Actuary in respect of the Provident Fund granted last year by the Chamber of Mines to the Miners' Unions. Mr. Kops has drawn up a scheme for the Association which will be put into operation at an early date.

I would add that the headquarters of the Association are an extensive piece of ground donated by the firm of Messrs. Howard Pim & Hardy. It comprises two football fields, several tennis courts, facilities for other sports as well as a Club House and Office. It is controlled by a group of trustees, of whom I am one.



Protectorates:

(1) In a statement to the Press, I protested against the threat of economic strangulation of the Protectorates by the Union in the event of Britain's refusal to hand them over, implied in an address by Colonel Denys Reitz, Minister of Lands, to the Imperial Press Conference. I took the occasion to put together certain recently published facts which served to show how hardly the Natives in the Union had suffered during the depression, and how little they have so far gained by the revival of prosperity consequent upon the gold boom.

(11) I forwarded recently to the Secretary copies of a Memorandum prepared by my wife and myself on "The Protectorates, what might and what should happen if Britain decides not to transfer them to the Union". These were accompanied by press cuttings.

Transvaal Workers' Educational Association:

My wife and I have resumed our connection with this Association, she having been asked on her return to take over the Presidency from Professor Haarhoff, who leaves South Africa at an early date to take up a temporary appointment in Cardiff.

Under the auspices of the Association I am arranging a symposium on the question of the Minimum Wage Bill now before Parliament. The symposium will consist of three addresses arranged as follows:-

- (a) That the Minimum Wage is not in the best interests of the Country: by an Employer.
- (b) Why we are against the Minimum Wage: by a Miners' Union Official.
- (c) That the Minimum Wage is both practical and desirable: by W. G. Ballinger.



General:

I have received a number of requests from various parts of the country for information and meetings on "How to form a Co-operative Society", and Mr. R. Paterson, a retired Johannesburg business man, has offered his assistance in the organisation of Co-operative Bazaars.

Press Cuttings attached. (Separate Sheet).

(Signed)

*W. G. Ballinger*

To:-

The Secretary and Members,  
Friends of Africa, Committee.

20th March, 1935.



PRESS CUTTINGS ATTACHED.

- |    |                                                                                    |                             |         |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Statement as to rock drill sharpeners on Mines - Native & White, with rates of pay | "Star"                      | 23.3.35 |
| 2. | Minimum Wage Bill -                                                                |                             |         |
|    | (a) Attitude of Mining Unions                                                      | "Rand Daily Mail"           | 28.2.35 |
|    |                                                                                    | " " "                       | 1.3.35  |
|    | (b) Views of Trades & Labour Council                                               | "Star"                      | 14.3.35 |
| 3. | W. G. Ballinger on Native position under Building Trade Agreement                  | "Star"                      | 1.3.35  |
| 4. | Address of Colonel Denys Reitz to Imperial Press Conference                        | "Star"                      | 5.3.35  |
| 5. | Two letters by W. G. Ballinger in regard to above                                  | "Star"                      | 14.3.35 |
| 6. | Letters from John N. Lee and B. R. H. in reply to Colonel Reitz                    | "Star"                      | 15.3.35 |
|    |                                                                                    | " "                         | 16.3.35 |
| 7. | Treatment of Aged Labourers                                                        | "Sunday Times" Johannesburg | 17.3.35 |



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