

Pohitno - General 20/4/23 XUMA
NS.2

PRICE 6d N

CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AFRICAN
PEOPLES
ORGANISATION

President :

Dr. A. Abdurahman, M.P.C.

Senior Vice-President and Treasurer :

S. Reagon.

Gen. Secretary :

P. J. Poole.

HEADQUARTERS :

42A, LONG STREET, CAPETOWN.



CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AFRICAN PEOPLES ORGANISATION

—O—

Revised and adopted at the General Conference
of the Organisation, held at Capetown,
April 1923.



CONSTITUTION.

Name

I. That the Organisation be known as the "African Peoples Organisation"

Aims and Objects.

- (a) The promotion of unity between the Coloured People of South Africa.
- (b) The attainment of better and higher education for our children.
- (c) The defence of the social, political and civil rights of the Coloured people.
- (d) To get the names of all Coloured persons who have the qualification to be registered as Parliamentary and Municipal Voters, on the Voters' lists at the registration of voters.
- (e) The general advancement of the Coloured People in South Africa.

Officers.

II. That the management of the Organisation be vested in the following Officers, viz., President, Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-Presidents, Executive Officers, Secretary and Treasurer, who, shall form the General Executive Council and shall be elected at the Annual General Conference.

Headquarters.

III. That Capetown shall be the Headquarters of the Organisation.

- (a) The General Executive shall, as far as possible, be elected from Members belonging to the Branches nearest the Headquarters.
- (b) The President, together with the Members of the General Executive residing at the Headquarters of the Organisation, shall be empowered to act and make representations on behalf of the Organisation in case of urgent necessity.
- (c) Should any officer be absent from three consecutive meetings after receiving due notice to attend, without sending a satisfactory and reasonable apology in writing to the General Secretary, he shall be considered as having vacated his office.
- (d) When an office becomes vacant by death or resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the General Executive shall have the power to elect a member from one of the nearest branches to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term of office.
- (e) In the event of one or more of the Executive officers leaving Headquarters for more than three months, the remaining officers may select one or more members from among themselves or a member from one of the nearest Branches to act during the term of absence.

Duty of General Secretary.

IV. It shall be the duty of the General Secretary to keep correct Minutes of all Meetings and proceedings of

the General Organisation together with letters and accounts, and to furnish a true report of affairs at every General Conference.

- (a) He shall receive monies and give receipt for same, and shall hand the amounts together with details over to the Treasurer, who will grant him a legal receipt for same.
- (b) He may receive a monthly salary as shall be determined from time to time by the General Executive.
- (c) The General Secretary shall act under the instruction of the General Executive; he shall, if paid, have no voting power either at Conference or at Executive meetings.

Forming of Branches.

V. Branches of the Organisation may be formed anywhere in British South Africa, after permission has been obtained from the General Secretary.

- (a) No Branch shall consist of less than ten Members.
- (b) No Branch shall be dissolved as long as ten Members remain on the books.
- (c) The Organisation shall consist of an unlimited number of Members.

Local Bye-Laws.

VI. Every Branch has the right to frame its own Bye-Laws, provided they are not in conflict with the recognised principals of the Constitution of the Organisation.

Membership.

VII. All Coloured men who have been born in South Africa, or who have adopted it as their country and have become naturalised British subjects, as well as Europeans married to Coloured women, are eligible for Membership.

- (a) Members living five miles or more from the place of meeting of the nearest Branch shall be entitled to join a roll to be called "Roll for scattered Members." Such roll to be controlled by the General Executive of the Organisation.
- (b) In the event of the membership of a Branch falling below ten Members, that Branch shall *ipso facto* dissolve. The remaining Members of such Branch may affiliate themselves to any other Branch they desire.

Capitation Tax.

VIII. Each Branch shall pay annually to the General Executive a Capitation Tax at the following rate, viz., sixpence per Member, with a minimum of £1 from each Branch.

- (a) The Capitation Tax shall be used for the purpose of defraying any expenses which may be necessarily incurred in the management of the Organisation by the General Executive.
- (b) The General Executive may after having given notice four weeks previously, withhold the privileges of Branches which are in default of payment.

Local Office-Bearers.

IX. The local Officers shall be elected annually at a special general meeting of the Branch specially called for the purpose.

- (a) Should any Officer resign, or be removed from office, the local Executive shall have the power of appointing another in his place until the next election of Officers.
- (b) Should any Officer be absent from three consecutive meetings without sending a satisfactory apology in writing to the local Secretary, he shall be considered as having vacated his office.
- (c) The Office-Bearers shall continue in office until their successors shall be appointed, and shall hand over to the latter within twenty-four hours all the books, documents and funds of the Organisation in their charge.
- (d) The retiring Officers and Members of Committee are eligible for re-election at the end of their term of office.

Branch Meetings.

X. Every Branch should hold a General Members' Meeting at least once a month for the purpose of transacting ordinary general business.

Special Summoned Meeting.

XI. The majority of Members present at a regular Branch meeting may decide to call a summoned meeting of the Branch should it be considered that the nature of the business demands the calling of such meeting.

Members' Right to Appeal.

XII. Any Members dissatisfied with a resolution passed at an ordinary meeting can appeal against such resolution at a summoned meeting of the Branch, or refer the matter for final decision to Headquarters.

Members and Delegates.

XIII. No Member may belong to more than one Branch. But every Branch shall be at liberty to delegate any Member from another Branch as its representative to any Conference or meeting in connection with the Organisation which demands its representation.

- (a) It shall be necessary before delegating a Member from another Branch to inquire from the Secretary of the Branch to which such member belongs whether he is in compliance.

Parliamentary Elections

- XIV. (a) Circle Committees shall be established in every Electoral Area for the purpose of promoting the interests of the Organisation in connection with the elections for Parliament and Provincial Councils. Every Committee shall consist of a delegate from each Branch in their respective Electoral Area.
- (b) It shall be the duty of the Circle Committee to decide upon the best candidates to support.
- (c) Selections shall be made without regard to any political party.
- (d) No Branch may send a delegate unless such Branch is recognised by the General Executive, and unless it has fulfilled its financial obligations towards the General Executive.

- (e) The vote of each delegate shall represent a number equal to the number of ordinary Members of the Branch that has delegated him, as shall be verified from the minutes of the last meeting of the General Executive, and for which Members Capitation Tax has been paid.
- (f) The absolute majority of the number of delegates entitled to attend shall form a quorum at all Circle Committee meetings.
- (g) The Candidates who receive the majority of votes shall be selected, and every Member of the Organisation shall abide by the decision of their respective Circle Committee.
- (h) The General Executive shall define the areas of the different Circles.

Dissolution of Branches

- XV. (a) If, and when, the General Conference, or General Executive, is satisfied that the Branches have in any one or more districts come under influence which is detrimental or hostile to the Organisation, it may, by resolution, dissolve such Branches, and take steps to re-organise the Branch upon a healthier basis.
- (b) The General Executive of the Organisation shall have the power to dissolve any Branch not acting in accordance with the rules laid down in the Constitution.
 - (c) When a Branch is dissolved in accordance with either preceeding Sections. or any other article of this Constitution, the books and moneys shall forthwith be handed over to the General Executive of the Organisation and shall be held in trust until a new Branch be formed. Unless a new Branch is formed within twelve months, the money and books, etc., shall become the absolute property of the General Executive of the Organisation.

- (d) That the General Executive shall be empowered to take legal proceedings against any officer who refuses to hand over the books, funds, etc., in accordance with the preceding section.

Members and Other Societies

XVI. That no Member of the African Peoples Organisation shall be allowed to be a member of any political body.

Expenses of Officers

XVII. That the travelling and incidental expenses incurred by the following Officers, viz., President, Senior Vice-President, General Secretary and Treasurer, in connection with their attending the Annual General Conference, shall be borne by the General Fund of the Organisation.

Duty of General Executive

XVIII. The General Executive shall :—

- (a) Attend to the collection and disbursement of all moneys under its control.
- (b) Hold supervision over all Branches and subordinate Committees.
- (c) Call Conference together at least once in two years, and before its dissolution appoint place for its next meeting.
- (d) Upon the written request, or with the written approval of no less than ten Branches, the General Executive may convoke a Conference of all Branches when they consider that specially important circumstances demand it, giving reasonable notice of time, place and purpose to all Branches.

- (e) The General Executive shall grant permission for the formation of new Branches.
- (f) It shall also attend to the general advancement of the Organisation.

Annual Report

XIX. Each Branch shall render annually a report of its transactions to the General Executive, failing which a fine of two shillings and sixpence shall be imposed.

Representation at Conference

XX Branches shall be entitled to representation at General Conference on the following basis :-

Up to 99 members	2 delegates
100 to 149 „	3 „
150 to 249 „	4 „
250 and over „	5 „

Expulsion of Members

XXI If the General Conference or the Executive is of opinion that any Officer or Member has come under influence which is detrimental to the "General Welfare of the Organisation," it may by resolution discharge such Member from office, or entirely deprive him of the privilege of membership.

Branch Functions and Entertainments

XXII. No Branch shall give any Concert, Social, or public function or issue subscription lists for the purpose of raising funds in connection with the A.P.O. without first obtaining permission in writing from the General Executive. The purpose for which the funds are required must be stated when application is made to Headquarters. Within 14 days after the holding of such function or the closing of such subscription lists a detailed statement of all receipts and expenditure shall be made on printed form to be obtained from Headquarters.

Travelling Certificates

XXIII. No Member in possession of a travelling certificate or letter of introduction shall under any pretence be allowed to solicit subscriptions or apply to Branches or its members for financial aid or other relief. A travelling certificate shall only be deemed valid when signed by the President and General Secretary or their recognised Deputies.

Yearly Function in Aid of General Fund

XXIV. That each Branch shall give a Concert, Tea Meeting, Social, or other function during the month of February in each year and that the proceeds of such function be devoted to the General Fund of the Organisation. That the Women's Branches co-operate with the Male Branches for that purpose.

Special Funds

XXV. That an amount equivalent to 15 per cent. be deducted from the gross amounts raised in connection with any special fund. Such percentage to be credited to the General Fund for administration charges.

Purchasing of Landed Property

- XXVI. (a) Branches are hereby empowered to purchase and to hold landed property in their names.
- (b) That all such properties shall be vested in the names of not more than three trustees.
- (c) No Branch shall be permitted to purchase any landed property without the sanction of the General Executive at Headquarters, or of the Conference.

- (d) No landed property owned by any Branch shall be mortgaged or sold, or in any way alienated without the consent of the General Executive at Headquarters, or of the Conference.
- (e) In the event of a Branch ceasing to exist for a period of twelve months, the property shall become the property of the African Peoples Organisation in general, and its final disposal shall be left in the hands of the Conference.
- (f) Whenever any Branch disposes of its property, the proceeds of such sale shall be handed to the General Executive, who shall hold the same in trust for the Branch, and such proceeds shall be utilised for the purchase of another property or such other purpose as agreed upon by the General Conference.

Finance

- XXVII. (a) That all moneys received be banked in the name of the African Peoples Organisation, the names of the President, Treasurer and other officers authorised to sign cheques being notified to the bank.
- (b) On no account shall money be expended without the consent of the General Executive.
 - (c) No moneys exceeding £5. shall be in possession of the Treasurer for a period exceeding 48 hours.
 - (d) The Treasurer shall find security in a bond of an amount to be decided by the General Executive
 - (e) The Treasurer shall be required to present an Annual Balance Sheet duly audited at the Annual General Conference.

Arrears.

XXVIII. Any Member failing to pay his annual subscription, etc., in accordance with the Bye-laws of his Branch, shall not be permitted to join any other Branch until he has financially cleared himself with the Branch he is leaving.

Resolutions.

XXIX. All resolutions for consideration of the General Conference shall be forwarded to the General Secretary at least 30 days before Conference assembles, and it shall be the duty of the General Secretary to frame an Agenda paper, and send the same to all the Branches a fortnight before Conference assembles.

Amendments to Constitution.

XXX. Any amendments or alterations to this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary, at least one month before the date of the General Conference, who on receipt of such notice shall send Copies to all Branches for consideration.

J. W. Ernstzen.
11a, Sydney Street
Cape Town

Collection Number: AD843

XUMA, A.B., Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers Research Archive**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.