

being received, shall be available. In this connection I am particularly anxious to have a number of all of the reports of the All African Convention, and I shall see to it that you will receive a number of the reports of the meeting of the National Negro Congress which was recently held; likewise, any documents which we find here relative to the South African conditions or which contain information about American conditions which in our judgment will be helpful to you, we shall make available for you. In this exchange of information is one of the services which I am inclined to think is worth while, and I shall try to develop it as affectively as possible.

May I here again express my deep regret over my inability to be present at this particular meeting of the All African Convention. I have made it clear in letters to the President and the Secretary, as well as other members why I am unable to leave America at this time. Also I have made it clear that I shall let nothing stand in the way of my coming to the meeting which will be held six months from December meeting. I recognize that the meeting now in session is important, and I hope that the delegates will take such a serious view of it that no great mistake will be made, on the questions upon which they are to act.

I have already made it clear that in the event you desire me to continue the work which I am trying to carry on in the interest of our larger cause, I shall be glad to do so. I do not need to tell you that though I am separated from you by ten thousand miles, I feel none the less close than was true when I was actually amongst you. Let us, then, in unity go forward against

oppression, against starvation wages, against hunger and nakedness, against landlessness, against the violation of human rights; let us unite for freedom; for the right to live and grow; for a happier South Africa; for the good life for all.

Yours faithfully,

MAX YERGAN

Secretary for External Relations.

Dr. A. B. Xuma also writes thus:—

London, England

December 2, 1937

*Delegates of the All-African Convention and Fellow Countrymen*

*Greetings:*

You will find before you the Constitution of the All African Convention for ratification. In the articles of the constitution you will find much that you can criticize with justice.

I want, however, to emphasize to you that the Constitution will develop in time through your reasonable amendments and suggestions provided they are made in the right spirit and right attitude with a sincere desire to help build the unity of our people. You must realize that this constitution is merely the basic authority for our united action. It calls for a united front, a common objective.

You do not have unity because you write a beautiful constitution on paper. Unity must be written in your hearts and minds. It must mean unselfish service for your people. It must mean faith in yourselves, faith in your people and their leaders.



All of us must surrender personal ambition for national unity.

By speaking with one voice, acting unitedly, we will be serving South Africa as a whole.

Anyone who will endeavour to wreck the principle of unity that gave birth to the All African Convention will be doing so for personal reasons and will be a traitor to Africa.

As your vice-president and chairman of the Executive of the All African Convention, you have always given me your ear and your full co-operation, for which I thank you.

Six thousand miles away, I appeal to you to ratify the Constitution and show the world that you mean to stand together at all costs.

Besides, you must decide upon a definite practical policy and programme of action upon which all elements can join hands in putting it over.

A. B. XUMA

Vice-President A.A.C.

Chairman of the Executive of A.A.C.

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### Appendix 5.

(By the General Secretary)

The problem, of organising the All African Convention is essentially a question of how to strengthen, vitalise and consolidate existing organisations. The Convention depends for its existence on the active participation and co-operation of the various organisations in that it is the central body which provides a common platform for exchange of views and mutual helpfulness in matters national in character. It recognises the right of each

organisation to exist and to enjoy an undisturbed autonomy, provided that each organisation in turn appreciates and lives up to the ideal that it is a part of an organism or a lever in a mechanism where it contributes its vital share to the life of the whole. The principle involved is that every organisation exists for a definite purpose the ultimate end of which is to serve the best interests of the people it represents and who compose it. But all organisations, whatever their objectives, are so interdependent and so closely connected in matters of daily life and other material opportunities that they need and require a central platform for a fair exchange of views and mutual consultation in matters affecting the whole.

The question of how to organise the All African Convention would not have arisen if we were sure that the existing organisations do actually exist and that they are what they affect to be. I believe it is an admitted fact that existing organisations, on the point of actual membership and scope, exist only in name. If we mean business we must face facts and admit them and then proceed to devise ways and means of putting our house in order. What I find in actual practise is a number of enthusiastic workers for unity who instead of doubling their individual efforts towards the strengthening of their organisations spend their energies in vilification, acrimony and mud-throwing at the next man, squabbling over mere names and leadership to the detriment of the cause of which the organisations stand. The Convention, created with the consent and approbation of various organisations, provides a bridge over this gulf of misunderstanding and vilification, so that each organisation may concentrate as never before on proving its existence and playing its part in the



organism of our national life harmonising with the aspirations of all other organisations.

The African people, taken as a whole, are a working class of the type popularly spoken of as proletariats. By the laws of the country they have been reduced to a rank of a citizen of the sixth or lowest class. Their closest problems are economic problems. Their politics are essentially bread and butter politics. The diversity of the channels through which they eke out a kind of existence amounting to keeping the wolf away from the door, opens up numerous fields for organisational work which call for specialised efforts on the part of organisers to treat each group as a separate entity concentrating on the problems germane to its peculiar sphere. To my mind, our people do not fully understand such high politics as involve individual rights or political disabilities. I make bold to say that in actual fact the masses do not understand what is meant by political rights, but they are easily susceptible to any form of agitation or instruction dealing with their immediate needs and requirements. If they are workers they want to know how they can improve their earnings. They understand the Colour Bar not in its political significance but as a means designed to close all avenues for better pay. The Convention, therefore, seeks to neutralise high politics for the concern of the highly intelligent, that is, the leaders of various organisations acting as a unison on a common platform, and to leave well alone matters affecting individual groups except give such counsel and to lend its material and moral support where required.

Similarly, a section of our people is gradually awakening to the recognition of the potentialities of a much im-

proved modern system of agriculture and others are keenly interesting themselves in commercial undertakings, usually very risky and intricate. Their politics consists of the problems of how to make good. These people are a great asset and of incomparable benefit to the working class in that by their industry as farmers and storekeepers they relieve the glut on the labour market. But they have been thrown on their own resources, all without education, guidance or any kind of assistance. They are crying out for organisers and instructors. They want new markets for their produce and the storekeepers seek supplies. This reminds me of a passage in the Great Book which says "the harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few." In every sphere of occupation our people are thrown on their own resources to make or mar their progress. They seek advice and guidance. The Convention is committed to a policy of lending a helping hand to these people by evolving a system of organisation capable of strengthening all existing organisations and to organise other essential groups. I have already said that the Convention does not intend nor is it there to compete for membership with any other organisation. All it asks is that organisations should identify themselves with it.

While the Convention may desire to keep out of any competition for membership, there are several delicate problems in connection with organisational work which it must solve. There are today several communities and individuals who have a conscientious objection to some of the older organisations by reason of past experiences and yet want to belong to some organisation. I do not believe that the Convention would be justified to compel these communities and people to join the



organisations they disapprove. It seems to me clearly obvious that these communities and individuals should be organised somehow and given some form of guidance. I have already said that the Convention seeks to neutralise high politics for the concern of the more intelligent and that the politics of the masses is bread and butter politics. It follows therefore that the Convention should organise the people occupationally and to insist upon a group engaged in a particular occupation to join an affiliated group representing that occupation; and if none exists to constitute one. For example, the Farmers Association of the Cape and operating in the Reserves may through the agency of the Convention spread its activities so as to embrace all African farmers throughout the Union Reserves, private and Trust lands. Similarly, the farm labour organisation, if non-existent, should be organised and spread throughout the Union.

To do this, the Convention must establish a Central Organisation and Publicity Council consisting of not less than fifteen Divisional Organisers and Publicity Officers under the chairmanship of the General Secretary. This means that the Union should be divided into 15 Divisions, each to have a Divisional and Publicity Committee composed of district organisers within its jurisdiction. All officers of the Council to be paid on results. Enrolment of members to be effected by means of application forms giving the full name and address of applicant, his occupation and desires as to organisation. Receipts for enrolment fees to be given by means of Convention 2/6 Stamps duly numbered. Applicants seeking membership in affiliated bodies to be transferred thereto forthwith, and, if in unaffiliated bodies, they should be linked up

with their affiliated occupational organisations. Where an occupation has no organisation same may be organised independently. Applicants should pay an enrolment fee of 2/6 to be distributed as follows:—

1/- for the Convention.

1/- for affiliated organisation or occupational organisation formed.

6d. Commission for canvassing.

The African people cry for education and enlightenment. No organisation can be maintained if its members are kept in ignorance of their interests and rights. If the Convention seeks to lead an intelligent and well-informed public, it must create one by embarking upon a form of publicity capable of infusing knowledge on the various aspects of our lives. This can be done effectively by means of leaflets and pamphlets printed in the vernacular and any other language understood by the people. The revenue derived from such literature, if any, to be devoted to organisational work and grants to weak organisations. I feel that publicity of this kind will greatly enhance the prestige of our official representatives in Parliament, Senate, Provincial Council and Representative Council who need the backing of a strong intelligent African public opinion behind them to counterbalance prejudiced European public opinion. In the circumstances, I suggest that the Convention make an appeal to them for a liberal contribution towards a publicity fund and that a similar appeal be made to African chiefs and leaders.

In conclusion, I suggest further that the Convention appoint a small Committee of three to define the boundaries of the fifteen divisions of the Union and to recommend a



method by which Divisional Organisers and Publicity Officers may be appointed.

H. SELBY MSIMANG

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### Appendix 6.

Telegrams received :—

R. G. Baloyi, Johannesburg : “ May God bless Convention in struggle for African National emancipation. Regret inability to attend.”

Siwundla, Qumbu : “ Armadillo for ethical rights.”

James Molebaloa, Cape Town : “ President’s fearless and manly address received with applause in Peninsula.”

Communist Party of South Africa, Johannesburg : “ Greetings and good wishes ; build Convention into mighty mass movements ; unite all African people.”

African Workers Union, Johannesburg : “ Best wishes deliberations, fight for right to organise and for increased wages.”

National Liberation League, Cape Town : “ Hold the torch of truth so that those in darkness can see the light for equality, land and freedom.”

Gomas, Cape Town : “ Cape Town Communists, wish Convention becomes National Liberation leader.”

P. Jafta, Qumbu : “ Regret unable to attend through ill-health, wishing Convention success ; have wired 10/- registration fee Qumbu Community.”

G. Makabeni, Clothing Workers Union, Johannesburg :  
“Owing to unavoidable circumstances unable send delegates support you morally; workable programme most essential.”

Paramount Chief Mshiyeni ka Dinuzulu, Pretoria : “In spirit am with you; and may God Bless your deliberations which have Bantu interests at heart. The Native Representative Council here are in turn looking after welfare of Africans in general.”

Dumakude, Queenstown: Greetings still interested in your affairs.”

And a letter from Advocate D. B. Molteno, M.P., Cape Town, who regretted being unable to attend as he was inextricably detained by pressing business but was still going to come before Convention dispersed if freed. Then he says “I desire, in case I am unable to attend, to express through you my greetings to the delegates and my sincere good wishes for the success of their deliberations. As you are aware, I have wholeheartedly supported the All African Convention from its inception. Its tasks and its responsibilities are greater than any that an African organisation has ever before been faced with; because by its work it has earned itself the title to speak for the African People as a whole. In the days that lie ahead of us wise leadership will be the factor that will count more than any other in the future of the African People. Please assure the delegates of the deep interest and sympathy with which I regard their work.”

The document of the Executive Committee's report somehow got lost at the Convention; while several



speakers who had been specially requested to address the Convention and had done so with much acceptance have failed to send in their papers to the Secretary in time for this publication. If these happen to reach us late, they will, under the circumstances, be published in the next record of the Convention.

J. G. MASIU.

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### Appendix 7.

## THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH AND ATTENDANT SOCIAL EVILS.

*Being an address given by S. S. Rajuli, B.A., to the A.A.C. at Bloemfontein, December, 1937.*

As a result of the Native Bills which have now become the law of the land against the strongest opposition of this Convention and the Natives of this country, the All African Convention assembled here to discuss ways and means of political salvation and economic self help by the Native people. Consequently the Convention and its followers launched upon a huge but noble task of educating the people about methods of self uplift. This year encouraging reports of what has been done since 1935 and what is hoped for are being given. While the Convention is thus fully occupied battling against political policy of segregation and suppression, it has not forgotten the foundation stone of a peoples' life and status, namely the Youth and its problems, a question which is causing a great deal of anxiety and distress among the people. It is impossible for one to give in the limited space allowed, a full and detailed analysis of cause and effect of

these problems ; but a few salient features may give a ray of light and guidance as to what might be done for the salvation of Native youth.

The problem of youth and its consequent social evils is rooted, in the first place, in the present state of organisation of Native tribal life. The present Native tribes are terribly disorganised and chaotic ; the chiefs have lost their ancient social status ; and in truth they have come to be regarded as figure heads and puppets who minister to the desires of the Government to the total neglect of what is really the good of the people over whom they are supposed to exercise jurisdiction. They have lost control of the people ; and that almost divine respect which encircled chiefs and indunas has become a thing of the past, and with it the power which controlled tribal life and youth. The advent of European rule with its policy of detribalisation has further increased the problem.

Secondly, the tremendous increase of population ; the coming in of European farmers into Native areas, taking extensive portions of fertile land and thereby dividing and scattering the tribes into smaller groups independent of each other ; all these factors have decreased the land and compelled poverty to lay its merciless grip upon the very souls of the people, forcing fathers and mothers to scatter to work centres, to an atmosphere which does not make for the good moral upbringing of their children. While the parents are busily engaged doing the will of their employers the children find themselves parentless and their unguarded footsteps find their way into hovels of sin, and immorality. Furthermore the small wages paid to Native labourers of every description,



particularly to Native women servants, a wage not sufficient to keep body and soul together, has forced the young women to fall into sin in order to eke out their earnings. In some towns municipal regulations do not allow women who have no husbands to live in locations, and if such are discovered by the location superintendent they are locked behind prison bars or heavily fined. Urged by hunger to leave their country homes, and to escape the inhuman regulations operating in some work centres, young Native girls are compelled to seek protection under any willing man, and together they live temporarily as husband and wife, Alas! I need not tell you what family atmosphere there is in such a home. The man may be a youth come to work or a father of a family left away in the reserves.

Then there is the prison system. Both young and old are huddled together into the same cell; the age-long criminal whose every blood-vessel is full of crime lives side by side with an innocent boy who forgot to carry his pass when he went into town that morning; and what is more the punishment meted out for such a case, has in several cases no relation with the wrong committed.

Native tribal life, its customs and ritual, its tribal institutions which gave training for social life to the youth; the sanctity of maidenhood and the pride of youth; the chief and his personification of Native tribal law and order; all these have become things of the past and are labelled uncivilized and barbarous!

To me it seems the Convention must fight for better wages for Native labourers; for the repeal of evil municipal regulations such as that mentioned above; for the re-organisation of the prison system; the Convention must

demand more land for the people; reinstate the chiefs and restore their power; organise the people and create national pride and self-consciousness; and take full interest in the education of its youth.

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## Appendix 8.

### AFRICAN LABOUR AND WAGES.

(By E. T. MOFUTSANYANA.)

In order to draw a positive picture of the African labour and wages it is necessary to analyse the conditions obtaining amongst the Africans and point out the existing differentiations in our society. South Africa being an agrarian country, the majority of our people even amongst those who are living in the industrial areas still have some ties with the country. We have no homogeneous proletariat; those who for a number of years have not been between town and the agricultural are characterised as "detrified Natives," by the rulers of this country. These so to speak are the people who have acquired the urban methods of living and are rapidly becoming National conscious. As a result of this the South African Government fears the growth of this section in as much that they have to force them to renew their connection with the country by means of segregation, Native Laws Amendment Act and other laws of discrimination. The reserves, kraals, etc., have to be turned into camps of supply for cheap labour for the farms and mines more and more.

On the other hand we have the overwhelming majority of the semi-peasant proletariat always between the industrial centres, and the country. This is so because we are



deprived of our land and all forms of taxation are imposed upon us which compel all to leave the congested reserves and protectorates to work for low wages. As the towns pay better than the farms, naturally the majority choose the towns as places of work. Of late years there has been an influx of African labour into towns and as a result the farmers, whom the Government represent, began to complain that their monkey-nuts were rotting in the fields, so that they forced the Government to rush through parliament the most unreasonable law in the form of the Native Laws Amendment Act.

This conference of the All African Convention meets at a psychological moment when the government is putting into operation the Native Laws Amendment Act. Through the urban authorities the government intends carrying on a wholesale deportation of the African people from the industrial areas. The Africans everywhere are looking up to this conference for a lead.

Speaking about the African labour and wages we have to consider first and foremost the basic industries, and mines in particular. South Africa is a country that produces more gold than the rest of the world put together. But what are the wages of the African mine worker? In 1897 the mine magnates arrived at an agreement fixing the wages at 1/- to 2/- a shift. (Report of the Industrial Commission 1897). Before that the average wages were 3/- per shift. In 1913 this average wage was  $1/11\frac{1}{2}$ d. per shift, in 1930 it was  $2/1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in March 1936 it was  $2/1\frac{3}{4}$ d. Production, however, shows a considerable development of the African in doing the work. In 1914 the production figure was 250 tons and in 1930 it was 800 tons. The miners have to pay transport from the various reserves

and protectorates to the places of work. After they have paid for this transport and for their underground miners' boots and lamps, they generally remain with 33/7 to 40/-. The international labour conference which met at Geneva in 1936 adopted a resolution that in the case of recruited labour the employers have to pay for transportation, but this has not been followed up yet in any part of the British Empire. The conditions under which the African workers live in mines are shocking. They have no freedom of movement, sleep on cement floors, they have no sick pay and so on.

In other occupations we find the African earning in domestic service from 10/- to 20/- a week with food, while the unskilled manual workers' wages range from £3 to £4 a month. The total number of Natives employed in the whole of the Union in 1933-4 was 850,000 of whom 52 per cent were earning from £27 to £30 per year, 46 per cent from £40 to £44 and the remaining 8 per cent were earning from £52 to £62 a year. The highest paid Africans earn £5 a month. The railway workers earn 15/9d, per week.

Those Africans who live in the locations, for instance in Johannesburg, three thirds to half of their wages go for rent, that is 25/- a month and in some cases more. This it must be understood is out of the average wages of £3-10-0. As the locations are far from the towns 12/- a month goes for transport. In order to meet tax an African worker has to save 1/8d. a month. After paying all these he is left with £1-11-4d. for himself and his family. The minimum for food can be estimated at £3 per month.



### *The farm labour.*

In 1900 the wages for the Africans (the shepherds) were 10/- to 20/- a month with mealie ration. The 1932 Economic Commission shows that cash wages for the farm labour vary from £2 to £27 per year in different districts. Many people get their wages partly in money and partly in kind. Can it be surprising that the idle rich farmer has no Africans to exploit ?

The facts we have before us are a clear proof that there will never be any improvement in the conditions and wages of the Africans until we learn how to unite as a race. What are the obstacles in organising the mass of our people politically and industrially at the point of production ? In the urban areas the workers cannot have a victorious struggle against their employers for a living wage and better working conditions, because the employers are safeguarded by the Government against the workers. The minute there is industrial dispute the police with pick-up vans are immediately on the scene, and the first pretext of arresting the workers is the Master and Servants Act, which prevents them from leaving the place of employment without taking a discharge. In this way the workers are encouraged by the laws of the country to have no confidence in themselves and their trade unions. In the reserves in order to stop the growing desire for unity it is contravention of the law for more than 10 people to meet together and discuss matters affecting the people without first obtaining permission from the magistrate. We have the Native Administration Act of 1927 in the Union, the Riotous Assembly Act. All these laws are made with the sole aim of putting as many obstacles in

the way of organising and uniting the African people. In the mines where the Africans live like the animals in the Zoo no organiser dare enter the Compound. Does this mean that the Africans cannot be organised? Certainly not. I mention this in order to show the amount of sacrifices we have to undergo.

It is the task of the All African Convention to encourage the Africans to form trade unions everywhere. In order to build up the All African Convention which will have a real support of the Africans, it is necessary that local committees should be formed in every locality composed of members of every organisation and influential individuals, which will deal with the immediate burning demands of the people and win them over to the existing organisations which will turn the All African Convention from an empty shell into a representative of the whole nation. We have to pass from a group of leaders of pious resolutions into an active body representing the interests of our oppressed and exploited people.

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