

MINUTES  
OF THE  
ALL AFRICAN  
CONVENTION

*December 1941*

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#### OFFICIALS.

- President :* Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu  
(Alice)
- Vice-President :* Rev. Z. R. Mahabane  
(Winburg)
- General Secretary :* S. Mac. Lepolesa  
637 Batho Location  
Bloemfontein  
(Headquarters)
- Recording Secretary :* J. G. Masiu  
P.O. Box 1320  
Durban
- Treasurer :* Dr. J. S. Moroka, M.B., CH.B.,  
P.O. Box 37, Thaba Nchu,  
O.F.S.
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- Protectorates Contacts :* Prof. Z. K. Matthews, M.A., LL.B.,  
Fort Hare, Alice.

## MINUTES.

### OF THE

#### ALL AFRICAN CONVENTION.

BLOEMFONTEIN, 17th-18th DECEMBER, 1941.

#### 69. *Present.*

The fifth meeting of the All African Convention, being an emergency meeting summoned in accordance with Minute 63, assembled in the Community Hall, Bloemfontein on the 17th December, 1941, there being present the office-bearers: Professor D. D. T. Jabavu (in the chair), President; the Rev. Z. R. Mahabane, Vice-President; S. Mac Lepolesa, General Secretary; and Professor Z. K. Matthews, Officer for Protectorates Contacts; the following members of the Executive Committee: I. B. Tabata, (Cape Town); J. O. Sitela (Cradock); S. P. Sesedi (Kimberley); Rev. R. M. Tunzi (Graaff Reinet) for the Cape; R. G. Baloyi, M. R. C. and J. B. Marks (Jo'bg) for the Transvaal; Rev. J. S. Litheko (Kroonstad) and J. Ll. Lobere (Bfx) for the O.F.S. and M. L. Kumalo (Inanda) for Natal, and delegates mentioned in the appendix.

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. J. Maplanka. Mr. Don Moikangoa, B.Sc. was appointed to act as Recording Secretary. A credentials committee was appointed, composed of Rev. J. Calata and S. P. Sesedi. Reporters for the press were chosen thus: *Ilanga lase Natal*, M. Kumalo; *Umteteli*, M. Sondlo; *Bantu World*, J. D. Ngojo; *Imvo*, C. Sigila; *Standard and Sun*, B. M. Kies, M.A.; *S.A.P.A.*, D. Moikangoa.

70. *Presidential Address.*

In his opening remarks, the President said the Convention was meeting under a cloud of war fraught with untold difficulties with the entry of a new naval power, Japan. Africans had not enlisted as they would have liked by reason of the colour discrimination policy even in the army. The end was not known yet, but constant vigilance and preparation were required from all including Africans, Coloureds and Indians who were playing their part. This was a time of developments and changes. For instance the Native Affairs Department had outlived its tradition of acting as police and tax-collector only. Its interest in human welfare was shown by its creation of commissions on kaffir-beer and on urban African social betterment, while its head was chairman of the medical aid committee that explored means to improve the health of the people. In the field of education there were more aided schools, more children going to school, more money even though we had not yet reached the *per caput* ideal system. Trade and business vocations as well as co-operative societies among Non-Europeans were all means towards an independent existence. It was the Convention's primary responsibility to foster these movements—an objective that could be considerably furthered by co-operation between Church and lay organisations, on a basis of mutual help so that as far as possible our money, small as it is, shall circulate within the colour. Let us pay more attention, Mr. Jabavu appealed, to constructive thinking, planning and working rather than spending much valuable time casting aspersions on the organisations of our rivals. In the past six years the Convention had endeavoured to coordinate the activities and proposals of the various bodies with a view to final

common recommendations to the powers-that-be. If it had failed, through being diverted to nebulous discussions, nevertheless the cause might be patiently pursued for the ultimate good of the race. Critical self-examination by individuals should be used as a more effective measure of that failure, a most difficult but more constructive procedure. Let us avoid the mistake of regarding politicians as the only leaders to be recognised. A due sense of proportion will force us to see that true leaders can be found in the humblest walks of life without press megaphones, in genuine service to the community as teachers, ministers, sportsmen, traders, social workers, and so forth. There was room for every one to work harmoniously with others, with mutual respect and sympathy for the good of all.

Mr. Kadalie moved a vote of thanks for the address, and was seconded by Mr. Litheko. Discussion ensued on various points, Mr. Sondlo and Dr. Gool and others taking part.

71. *Minutes.*

After some points raised by Miss Gool and Mr. Kadalie were answered, the minutes of the 1940 meeting were unanimously adopted on the motion of Mr. Ngojo.

72. *Reports on Committee Proposals.*

The Chairman called for reports on the recommendations issued by the Joint Committee of the All African Convention and the African National Congress (Appendix 3 of 1940 Minutes, p. 25) arising from Minute 56. The Cape Peninsula bodies replied on behalf of the Rate-Payers Association, the Vigilance Association, the Voters' Association, the Whittlesea Workers' Union, the Young Ethiopia Society, the Co-operative and Burial Societies.

Their reply was that they felt that the A.N.C. was in the position of a political party, while the A.A.C. was a parliament, the only parliament the Africans could aspire to. They therefore rejected the recommendations as such. The Cape Native Voters' Convention also rejected the recommendations on the ground that the Convention organised in 1935 with the approval of all the then existing bodies stood as father to both the A.N.C. (an elder brother) and the Voters (a younger brother), and a younger brother was not competent to settle a dispute between his father and his elder brother.

A somewhat warm debate ensued, the speakers being Messrs. Tabata, Sigila, Rajuili, B.A., Gama, Ncwana, and the lunch hour brought about adjournment till 2.30 p.m.

At the afternoon resumption the Meeting was visited by the Mayor of Bloemfontein accompanied by the Town Clerk and the Acting Manager of Locations. The President formally welcomed them, and after the Mayor had addressed the meeting conveying his welcome and good wishes, thanks were returned by Mr. V. V. Mbobo, B.A., seconded by Mr. Mahabane, and the guests departed.

Telegrams were read from Mrs. Ballinger, M.P., Senator Rheinallt-Jones, the National Council of Women, the Cape Bantu Property Owners Society, and Lennox Mangesa, Lusikisiki.

Hereafter the pre-lunch debate was resumed, and the following spoke: Messrs. Gama, T. Mapikela, M.R.C., Rev. E. Mngqibisa, R. G. Baloyi, M.R.C., Ngcayiya, Sesedi, Marks, Sondlo, Kies, Dr. Gool, Mfenyana, Rajuili, Rev. J. Calata, Tabata, B. Ncwana, Rev. Z. Mahabane, S. M. Lepolesa, V. Mbobo, L. Ntlabati, B.A., Z. K.

Matthews and Misses Janub Gool, B.A., and H. Ahmed, B.A. Various shades of opinion were expressed: some thought the co-existence of two bodies with apparently similar claims confused the public; others regarded the A.N.C. in the light of a political party with the A.A.C. the practical parliament of the people; others again felt there was room for the parallel existence of these bodies each with a clearly demarcated sphere of activity. The debate was again adjourned at 6 p.m.

Discussion was continued in the evening session at 8 p.m.; and the meeting proved very animated indeed, at times feeling running high. The following were the speakers: Miss Gool, Miss Ahmed, Dr. Gool, Mr. Kies, Mr. Tabata, Mr. Jayiya, Mrs. Benjamin, Mr. Mfenyana, Rev. R. M. Tunzi, Mr. Sigaba, Mr. Kadalié, Messrs. Kotane, Lepolesa, Sondlo, Kumalo, Ntlabati, Lobere, Gama and Rev. E. Mngqibisa.

Eventually it was decided to vote according to organisations, when nine constituencies voted against the recommendations, and four in favour. Thus the long day closed at 11 p.m. with the position being that of the A.A.C. continuing as the coordinating body.

When the meeting resumed on Thursday 18th December it transpired that Mr. Moikangoa, on account of illness, could not continue as Acting-Recording Secretary, and Mr. Tatius N. Sondlo was unanimously appointed to replace him.

### 73. *Obituary.*

The conference, with all members standing, passed votes of condolence with the families of *a.* Paramount Chief Seeiso Griffiths of the Basuto nation; *b.* Chief

Songo Kama of the AmaGqunukwebe tribe ; and *c. S. P.* Matseke, President Transvaal African Congress.

The President paid a glowing tribute to the memory of all the three deceased, and was supported by the Vice-President and the Rev. E. Mngqibisa.

#### 74. *Secretary's Report.*

The Secretary read a written report of his year's work. This was in summary. He fully explained the difficulties he had to face due to the previous office records being absent along with their names and addresses, as well as the duplicating machine which had been retained by his predecessor.

In the course of this explanation the Secretary commended the President's keenness in the whole work and his help in many ways, and also help from the press through the medium of which he was able to keep pace with the Centres.

The President also explained that the Office was in a quandary because the ex-General Secretary had retained the property of the All African Convention.

Those who discussed the report at length were Dr. Gool, Messrs. Gama, T. I. N. Sondlo, Sesedi and Keiser and Misses Gool and Ahmed.

Through a motion by Mr. Sesedi seconded by Mr. Keiser, the report was adopted.

#### 75. *The Convention's Property.*

Following advice given by Miss Gool, it was unanimously agreed that a letter be written to the ex-General Secretary demanding the A.A.C. property in his possession, and further steps to be taken if necessary.

#### 76. *Correspondence.*

Among the correspondence read were the following :—  
Letters from the Conference of National Business of

Africans' Association, for the Transvaal and the Orange Free State on the Election Policy. The Glen Adelaide Co-operative Society Glen Grey, C.P. and The Council of Non-European Trade Union of Pretoria all the three affiliating to the Convention.

#### 77. *Constructive Work Reports.*

As regards to new ideas on constructive work by Centres, only two Centres or two newly formed branches from the Cape reported.

Mr. I. B. Tabata in his capacity as chairman of the Convention Committee for Western Province which governs the two newly formed branches, gave report of constructive work by his Committee. He stated that the aims of the Committee included 1. Getting complaints and needs of the section of the people in that area as representing the Convention.

2. The teaching of the spirit of Convention in actual work by Executive and members at their different Centres.

Dr. Gool, Misses Gool and Ahmed encouraged embarking on constructive work against civil war which existed amongst people as the essential thing and emphasised the necessity to spread the ideals of the Convention.

The report of the Convention Committee for Western Province was thereafter unanimously accepted.

A copy of a letter written to Mrs. V. Ballinger by the President requesting her to take action in regard to colour discrimination in Trade was read. An explanation by the President followed substantiating the Cape report and was an indication of the help the President was enthusiastic to give to the matter.

#### 78. *Trade Unions' Council.*

As a result of a letter asking for Affiliation to the Con-

vention, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions-Pretoria was unanimously accepted for registration. Its Secretary, Mr. Solly Mokuoa reported the membership total to be 1,070.

79. *Glen Adelaide Co-operative Society.*

After the reading of a letter from the Glen Adelaide Co-operative Society of Glen Grey, Mr. Mfenyana, its Secretary, gave an outline of their policy in the newly formed Society. This was supported by the Rev. R. M. Tunzi, Rev. Tshabangu, Messrs. Mngqibisa, Sigila, Gama and Yenena. The Convention unanimously encouraged the idea.

80. *Non-European United Front.*

Dr. Gool initiated the discussion on the Non-European United Front and gave a historical review of its formation. He touched at length the shelving in 1927 of the Native Bills by General Hertzog and attributed this action to the fear (by the then authorities) of the power the Bantu had, particularly by the I.C.U. He concluded by appealing for unity of the Non-European—namely Coloured and Bantu races, stating that there is no Non-European United Front without the inclusion of the Bantu in it.

Prominent in the discussion were Miss Gool, Messrs. Tabata, Kadali, Lepolesa, Kotane, Sondlo, Chatfield, Keiser and Gama. In reply to a question as to his solution of the matter, Dr. Gool advised that the Cape Convention Committee be allowed the same latitude that was allowed in its Committee work because the majority of the Coloured was or is in that area of the Cape. This was unanimously agreed upon.

81. *Parliamentary Committee.*

Mr. Clements Kadali moved :—

That it is the considered opinion of this Convention to appoint an African Parliamentary Committee from its members to attend at Cape Town while the House of Assembly is in Session with a view to watching Parliamentary legislation affecting our Non-European groups and to contact themselves with our Parliamentary Representatives of the House of Assembly and those of the Senate House and the Native Representative Council. That this Committee of the Cape Town Group be given power to act and add desirable and approved members to their Committee.

The Rev. Z. R. Mahabane seconded and was supported by Mrs. Bhola, Messrs. Mngqibisa, Sigila and R. M. Tunzi. The President threw light on the necessity for a Lobbyist or Lobbyists to act when the House of Assembly, House of Senate and Native Representative Council are in Session. Mr. V. V. Mbobo seconded by Mr. Keiser moved the adoption of the idea and it was unanimously agreed upon.

*Personnel of the Parliamentary Committee.*

Added to the Cape Town Group, to form the Parliamentary Committee were the names of Messrs. Clements Kadalie, and the Rev. R. M. Tunzi.

The personnel of the Parliamentary Committee therefore is :—

Messrs. S. V. Coto, M. Kotane, J. Mbuqe, Dr. G. H. Gool, I. B. Tabata, S. P. Dhlomo, J. Malangabi, S. A. Jayiya, Clements Kadalie and the Rev. R. M. Tunzi.

82. *Post-War Re-Construction.*

This subject was only put forward by the President and not discussed owing to other matters crowding its place.

### 83. Finance.

In the absence of the Treasurer Dr. Moroka, who had been invited to Johannesburg to give evidence before the Medical Aid Commission, the present state of the finance of the Convention was reported by the President as follows.

#### *Income.*

Balance (per Minute 57) £92/7/8; Balance at Bank £22/18/2; Affiliation Fees (9/6/1941) 10/6; (1/12/1941) 5/- (17/12/1941) New Era Fellowship 10/6; Cape African Congress 10/6; Cape Town Voters' Association 10/6; African National Business Association 10/6; Karroo Bantu Community 10/6; Young Ethiopia Association 10/6; Heilbron Community 10/6; Cape Town Co-op. Workers' Burial Soc. 10/6; Zenzele Women's Association 5/-; Communist Party of South Africa 5/-; Glen Adelaide Co-operative Society 5/-; Industrial Commercial Union (I.C.U.) 5/-; Orange Free State Congress 5/-; Natal Congress 5/-; Literature Sales £1/0/1; Total £122/15/11.

#### *Expenditure.*

General Secretary's Honorarium, (1940) £10; Executive Committee Subsistence £13/16/5; Bank Ledger 5/3; Cheque Book 1/6; Minutes Printing and Letter Heads 14/16/6; Commission on cheque 1/6; Rail Fares—Pretoria Deputation—Dr. Moroka £4/19/6; Mr. Lepolesa £4/12/6; Hall Hire £3/3/-; Advertisement in *Umteteli* £1/6/3; General Secretary-Office expenses £2/10/1; Bank Cash Exchanges and charges £1/13/3; General Secretary's Honorarium (1941) £5; President's Rail Fare £3/5/; Vice-President's Rail Fare 14/3; Executive Committee Subsistence Allowances £9/8/9; Credit Balance at 18th December, 1941 £47/2/2; Total £122/15/11.

As this was a Special Conference, it was decided to defer the financial report for formal consideration at the next ordinary Conference in December, 1943.

### NOTE BY THE PRESIDENT.

As the present Balance falls below the £50 limit stipulated by Minute 57, it will be necessary for the Convention to restore the minimum of £50 plus the £10 ear-marked for co-operative work.

### 84. Election Policy.

Mr. Sigila was called upon to read a resolution passed at the Voters' Association Conference as follows:—

“The Cape Native Voters' Convention held at Queens-town on the 16th December, 1941 resolved unanimously to have all the Parliamentary members both European and African returned un-opposed, with but one exception in the case of Mr. Burman in the Provincial Council whose fate is pending on a Committee, at the request of the Transkei Electoral Circle.”

Another resolution was from the Conference of African National Business Association—Transvaal and Orange Free State—submitted by Mr. L. E. S. Gama (Delegate) signed by Mr. J. B. Marks, dated 18th December, 1941, and was as follows:—

Basner of Johannesburg—Senator, M. K. Molepo of Pietersburg—M.R.C., P. R. Mosaka of Johannesburg—M.R.C., Dr. Moroka of Thaba Nchu—M.R.C.

Those who discussed at length on the matter were the Rev. R. M. Tunzi, Rev. Maplank, Rev. Z. R. Mahabane, Prof. Z. K. Matthews, Dr. Gool, Messrs. Kadalie, Sesedi, Kotane, Tabata, Jayiya, Yenana, Mngqibisa, Lobere and Mrs. Bhola.

It was finally decided that the Convention give its support to and identify itself by voting for the following names.

### SENATORS.

Mr. J. D. Rheinallt Jones—Orange Free State and Transvaal.

Dr. E. H. Brookes—Natal.

Mr. W. T. Welsh—Transkei.

Mr. C. H. Malcomess—Cape (Ciskei).

### HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Advocate D. B. Molteno—Cape (Western).

Mrs. V. M. L. Ballinger—Cape (Eastern Circle).

Mr. G. K. Hemming—Transkei.

### M.P.C.

Messrs. Moultt and Burman.

### M.R.C.

Mr. T. M. Mapikela—Transvaal and O.F.S. Urban areas.

Mr. A. J. Sililo—Natal Urban Areas.

Mr. R. H. Godlo—Cape Urban Areas.

Messrs. R. G. Baloyi and R. S. V. Thema—Transvaal Rural Areas.

Messrs Sakwe, Qamata and Moshesh—Transkei.

Messrs. Xiniwe and Jabavu—Cape Province.

Dr. J. J. Dube, Mr. W. Ndhlovu—Natal Rural Areas.

85. *Notice of Motion to amend the Constitution*—by W. Jayiya.

Amendment to Constitution.

I move that the constitution of the All African Convention be amended as follows :

(1) Section 3 . . . . . add sub-section (e) to read as

follows : “ The aim of Convention being to represent all the African people, to bring together and organise those Africans who are not members and for are unwilling to become members of any of the existing organisations affiliated to the Convention . . . . with this in view, to open branches of the Convention, especially in the rural districts where such Africans can join the Convention in the capacity of individual membership.

(2) Section 8. sub-section (a) insert the phrase “ or branch ” after the word “ organisation ” wherever it occurs in this section.

(3) Section 10. to read : The Convention shall meet every year provided :—

In sub-section (b) of section 10. insert “ one month ” instead of “ three.”

In sub-section (c) of section 10. after the words “ shall meet ” insert “ every three months but not less than six months.”

85. *Report of Deputation to the Government.*

### APPENDIX.

#### LIST OF DELEGATES.

Officers : Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu, President.

Rev. Z. R. Mahabane, Vice-President.

Mr. S. Mac Lepolesa, Gen. Secretary.

Prof. Z. K. Matthews, Protectorates Officer.

*Cape.*

*Cape African Congress.*

Mr. S. M. Ncwana, Cape Town.

Mr. G. Nongauza, Cape Town.

Mr. S. P. Sesedi, Kimberley.

Mr. J. D. Ngojo, Queenstown.

Mr. J. O. Sitela, Cradock.  
Rev. J. A. Calata, Cradock.  
Mrs. E. D. Ndollo, Cape Town.

*New Era Fellowship.*

Dr. G. H. Gool, Cape Town.  
Mr. B. M. Kies, M.A., Cape Town.  
Miss J. Gool, B.A., Cape Town.  
Miss H. Ahmed, B.A., Cape Town.

*African Women's Self Improvement Association, Zenzele.*  
Mrs. R. H. Godlo, East London.

*Karoo Bantu League.*

Mr. A. W. Ranana, Graaf Reinett.  
Rev. R. M. Tunzi, Graaf Reinett.

*Cape Voters Association.*

Mr. A. R. Yenana, Cape Town.  
Mr. Sigaba, Cape Town.

*Young Men's Ethiopian Society (Cape Town).*

Mrs. M. Bholo, Cape Town.  
Mr. I. B. Tabata, Cape Town.

*The Co-operative Workers and Burial Society (Cape Town)*

Mr. W. Jayiya, Cape Town.  
Mr. C. B. N. Rhoxo, Cape Town.  
*Glen Adelaide Co-operative Society.*  
Mr. J. S. Mfenyana, Lady Frere.

*I.C.U.*

Mr. Clements Kadalie, East London.

*Transvaal.*

*African National Business.*

Mr. R. G. Baloyi, M.R.C., Johannesburg.  
Mr. J. B. Marks, Johannesburg.

Mr. J. I. N. Sondlo, Johannesburg.  
Mr. L. E. S. Gama, Johannesburg.  
Mr. V. V. Mbobo, B.A., Pretoria.  
Rev. E. Mngqibisa, Butterworth.

*O.F.S. African National Congress.*

Rev. J. S. Litheko, Kroonstad  
Mr. J. L. Lobere, Bloemfontein.  
Mr. T. M. Mapikela, M.R.C., Bloemfontein.  
Mr. J. P. Machumolotsa, Bloemfontein  
Mr. M. L. Kabane, B.A.                    "  
Mr. J. G. Mpinda,                         "  
Mr. S. P. Molatedi,                        "  
Mr. J. J. Chatfield,                        "  
Rev. P. T. Tshabangu,                    "  
Rev. C. Mocumi,                            "

*I.C.U.*

Mrs. E. L. Benjamin, Bloemfontein  
Mr. L. K. Ntlabati, B.A.                "

*S.A. Native Farmers Congress.*

Mr. S. S. Rajuili, B.A., Harrismith.

*Natal African Congress.*

Mr. M. Kumalo.

*Communist Party of S.A.*

Mr. M. M. Kotane.

**APPENDIX 2.**

Mr. President and Delegates,

The deputation appointed last year and consisting of your Treasurer, Dr. J. S. Moroka and myself to interview the Government on Trading Rights for Africans met the Hon. the Minister of Native Affairs, Col. Deneys Reitz on Tuesday 14th October, at 10 a.m. Mr. Selope Thema did

ot join the deputation as had been previously arranged with him.

Dr. Moroka fully presented the case of the Convention and was supported by your Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Native Affairs received the deputation sympathetically and replied as follows :

(a) As a member of the Government he could not defend the attitude of the Free State Municipalities in refusing Trading rights to Africans.

(b) On principle he and his Government had more than indicated to the O.F.S. municipalities their desire to see Africans given Trading Rights in the Province. He read to the Deputation a memorandum submitted to the Government by the Bloemfontein Town Council advising the greatest caution on the matter.

(c) However much the Government regretted the attitude of the Free State Municipalities on this question they could not at present proceed against them for fear of injuring or even wrecking their war effort.

(d) The Minister appealed to the A.A.C. to bear with the Government for a while. He assured the deputation that the whole Cabinet was in agreement on the principle of Africans trading among their own people both in urban and rural areas and promised that he would use all the influence he has with the Town Council of Bloemfontein to grant Trading Rights to Africans.

Signed J. S. MOROKA.

S. MAC LEPOLESA.

*N.B.*—In a further communication to the President, the Secretary for Native Affairs informed the President that the Minister had subsequently taken up the matter

with the Bloemfontein authorities and found a feeling of sympathy that gave hope that something would eventually emerge to the benefit of the Natives.

D.D.T.J.

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