

As a member of the Committee on the "ATLANTIC CHARTER" and the Africans or Post-war Reconstruction plans by Africans for themselves, you are urged not to fail to attend a meeting of the Committee at Bloemfontein on December 13th and 14th and it will be appreciated if you can remain for the regular session of the Annual Conference of the African National Congress on December 15th and 16th.

The Africans themselves must tell South Africa and the world what they want for themselves and work for that through their organisations.

You will be glad to know that we have already received a copy of a completed document from West Africa entitled "The Atlantic Charter and British West Africa "Memorandum on Post War Reconstruction of the Colonies and Protectorates of British West Africa." In the introduction to this memorandum they say "It has become clear to us in British West Africa that unless we make known our feelings and aspirations, we may be left in the lurch in post-war days to come."

I think that most of us in South Africa feel the same and we must get together now and produce our document before it is too late.

Yours for the freedom of the African,

A. B. Xuma.

ORGANISING SECRETARY, ATLANTIC CHARTER
COMMITTEE.
PRESIDENT-GENERAL, AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, CALLS THE PEOPLE!

To All African Men and Women.

GREETINGS!

You and organisations and any public-spirited Africans are invited to send delegates to the meeting of the Committee on the "Atlantic Charter" or Post-War Reconstruction at Bloemfontein December 13 -16 including the annual Conference of the African National Congress.

All races are preparing or have prepared their case for consideration at the peace table. ~~Our National Committee on the Atlantic Charter~~ We must not be left behind. Our National Committee on the Atlantic Charter meets at Bloemfontein on the 13 - 16th December inclusive and make your contribution on the plan for our freedom.

Our people are still suffering disabilities of landlessness, desfranchisement, economic and social insecurity, educational restrictions, lack of freedom under the Pass Laws, Liquor Act, Poll Tax and persecution under Section 17 Urban Areas Act, refusal of trading rights, lodgers permits and many other disabilities. School children of all races except African children are enjoying a school meal during school hours. Our soldiers have sacrificed and died not to maintain the present conditions.

Come to help us work out a plan for the abolition of these disabilities. This is no time for academic debates. This is time for Actions and Deeds.

If you fail to join us, you have failed the cause of our people.

Yours For African's Freedom,
Jas. A. Calata,
(Secretary-General, African National Congress)
A. B. Xuma.
(President-General, African National Congress)

In a recent debate on Colonial affairs the British Government through the mouth of the Colonial Secretary stated that the goal of British policy was still self government for the people of the colonies. In the light of past experience in regard to the gradual achievement of self government in the British Empire, the question may be raised as to who are to gain this self government, the Europeans resident in the colonies or the Africans or both the Europeans and the Africans? Perhaps as far as Africans are concerned, self government as a political ideal means no more than local control or local autonomy be it of the type of Indirect rule or ^{of} Local Councils.

We believe that local councils, provided for on a fairly general scale are an essential scheme for the political training of the Africans in matters of government such as the control of finances, the provision of public services, debates and ~~discussions~~ discussions of laws and bearing responsibility. It is also a good thing for the central Government to surround itself with a number of bodies which it is constitutionally bound to consult and who can raise points for redress in a constitutional manner. It would seem however, that the powers that be are not very anxious to provide the Africans with this means of political education and that the interests of the many are being sacrificed to the prejudices of the chiefs who are a disappearing institution having regard to the needs of the times.

African leaders have not hitherto shown marked enthusiasm for local autonomy or local councils because, very often, the promise of local councils has been made as a substitute for the claim for representation in the body politic at large. Local Councils should not be confused with the question of political representation. Europeans have their Divisional councils and their municipal councils where local autonomy in regard to certain matters prevail and yet they still have the vote and parliamentary representatives. Why should Africans be sidestepped in their claim for political representation by the promise, the very tardily fulfilled promise, of local councils? The question may also be raised whether the conditions of South Africa in particular and of Africa in general do afford the necessary territorial and financial basis for the successful establishment of local councils?

Apart from local autonomy of a type which is conceded even for the African, the political relations between Europeans and Africans in this continent are governed by the concept of TRUSTEESHIP. As far as the Union Of South Africa is concerned trusteeship is a retrograde policy for the Africans have outgrown, thanks to white civilisation itself, the conditions of political tutelage. In the Cape the possession of the franchise by the Africans meant that they were not children any more but grown up citizens; that condition had been in existence since 1854. In Natal as far back as 1805 it was provided that Africans could outgrow wardship by taking out letters of exemption and on the basis of these letters acquire the franchise itself. In the Orange Free State the existence of large urban African populations is inconsistent with tribal wardship. The existence of the Witwatersrand with its industrial relations and its large urban African populations also means a serious breach in the general application of trusteeship to the Africans in the Union of South Africa. The question arises whether a trustee such as the Europeans who have a vested interest in the inferior status of the ward such the Africans can exercise genuine trusteeship.

It would seem that the facts of tribal life in certain parts of the country justify placing the Africans under the trusteeship of the Europeans. It might further be argued that tribal existence means a certain type of citizenship which does not involve the right to vote which may be conferred by the state on conditions approved by it. By way of an answer to these points it should be stated that when Europeans came to this country tribalism as such was being superseded by Nation forming influences; tribalism was disintegrating and it was the Europeans who revived it under the symbol of the Supreme Chief for their own advantage. The Supreme Chief who is the trustee in chief is no longer amenable to the political controlling influences of the tribe or of African opinion. Tribal citizenship, if it can be called that, means that the tribal Africans are at a disadvantage compared to the citizens who vote and can bargain for superior rights.

The condition of the African people calls not for more government, not for more legislation of a restrictive or prohibitive kind but for measures of economic advancement as part of a fully worked out economy of South Africa and for political education. The African people should be given those opportunities and responsibilities by means of devolution which would prepare them for self government in the true sense of the word. More avenues of employment should be given to educated Africans in order to provide African communities with leaders and thinkers who know African needs and can do something constructive about meeting them because they are in positions of guidance, direction, power and experience.

It is clear therefore that wardship is doing injury to the Africans as a rising group. It is clear that the Native Affairs Department should become a positive educational nursery for the Africans instead of being mostly regulative of African affairs in the interests of a policy designed to ensure their permanent political weakness. It is clear that schemes for the indirect representation of Africans such as have existed before 1930 and after, whereby the Africans cannot place their own needs and points of view before the powers that be and are not supposed to know what is good or bad about themselves are a hindrance to the growth of the Africans and subject him to humiliation and exploitation by groups that have direct representation and better bargaining power.

As far as the Union of South Africa is concerned some attempt has been made to give the Africans a direct voice in the conduct of affairs in the local councils and in the recent system of political representation and it is now proper that we should endeavour to evaluate the system of local councils and the scheme of parliamentary representation. We begin with remarks on local councils.

- (a) Actually there is no real self government through the local councils firstly because the Africans are advisory to the Native Commissioner and not ~~him~~ to them. secondly because the Africans have no executive functions and thirdly because the system of government by proclamation vitiates discussion and self initiative by local councils.
- (b) There is machinery for the democratic election of the members of local councils and Advisory Boards but the majority are still nominated by the Government or the Municipalities. Thus the Africans are even denied a voice as to which Africans shall represent them.
- (c) Many Native areas are so interlocked with areas that it would be very difficult to delimit an area which would come under the exclusive jurisdiction of a Native councils where such might be otherwise desirable.
- (d) Native farm labourers are excluded from participation in ~~any~~ scheme of local self government.
- (e) The practice of nominating chiefs and headmen to local councils, persons who are subsidised by the Government and generally under government supervision places many local councils also under the indirect control of the Government and this denies the councils independence and freedom of action and opinion.
- (f) The Transkei General Council has as yet no legislative and financial autonomy.

We have to work for the removal of these difficulties and for an improvement in the system of Local Councils and Advisory Boards, the latter bodies especially being without an effective voice in Municipal Native Affairs. Let us now turn the searchlight to the new system of political representation.

- (a) The spirit that animates the new system of political representation is that of the Northern provinces under the leadership of the Transvaal of Boer Republican days - No equality between Black and White in church or state.
- (b) The new structure of representation affords no effective political power to the Africans. It cannot restore that balance to the political structure in the Union which is essential to the alleviation of social and economic maladjustments.
- (c) Denied of the weapon of the franchise, ~~as~~ the Africans are handicapped for the social and racial attitudes of most Europeans definitely circumscribes any improvement and betterment of the citizen status and living conditions of Natives.

(d) The new political structure, far from lessening race tension and bringing the Africans under a New deal in matters educational, social and economic as was the hope of General Hertzog, has led to new sources of tension and disharmony and greater underprivilege in these matters.

Our whole argument leads to the conclusion that satisfaction can only be accorded to the Africans under an adequate scheme of political representation based on ~~the~~ franchise in which the Africans have a share. For, as Professor Harold Laski puts it, "Whenever the body of voters is limited, the welfare realised excludes that of the persons excluded. No test has been devised which enables us to limit the franchise in such a fashion and at the same time equate civic virtue with the possessors of the franchise." Our claim is therefore one of full democratic rights and adequate parliamentary representation. So far for the situation in South Africa.

We shall end our memorandum by a few remarks concerning British Colonies in Africa.

In several British colonies 'home rule' for the Africans takes the form known as Indirect Rule. Some one has said that the essence of Indirect Rule is contained in the words, "find the Chief" and use him in governing Africans." In keeping with this policy we find that Colonial Governments have by legal and political measures very much strengthened the chiefs against their people and have tried to develop educational facilities only for chiefs and their sons, *+ civil servants*. We feel that colonial governments should work not only with chiefs but with all sections of the people; all sections of African opinion should be brought into active political cooperation with the European government.

The basis of successful local autonomy is economic strength and in this connection we feel that efforts should be made to develop the economic life of the African areas, not in isolation from the rest of the developments outside their areas, but as part of an integrated economy for the whole colonial area, or a whole group of colonies situated *in* such *that* inter colonial trade is possible. It is not sufficient to develop an African peasantry unless the people have an outlet for commercial crops to markets from which they could get the necessary cash for satisfying needs of a money economy of which they are a part.

In educational matters the record of the colonial administrations in British Africa is very unimpressive indeed. If the people are to keep in step with government developments, if they are to participate in an intelligent way in the economic development of the colonies it is essential that they be given more education than has been the case hitherto. It is not sound policy to educate only a few persons as chiefs and civil servants and neglect the potentialities of the masses. All the people should be educated.

It should also be possible in these territories to provide educated Africans as the rising leaders of their people with occupational opportunities which will give them experience and responsibility, and thus render them proper interpreters and advisers of their people. There is room for African doctors, Veterinary surgeons, African district commissioners, African prosecutors, African artisans and African tradesmen of various types.

With regard to political relations we adhere to the statement of policy of the British Government with regard to Native Policy, 1929. viz
"The goal of constitutional evolution, in Kenya as elsewhere, is admittedly responsible government by a ministry representing an electorate in which every section of the population finds an effective and adequate voice."

With regard to the franchise..... His Majesty's Government are of the opinion that the establishment of a common roll is the object to be aimed at and attained with an equal franchise of a civilisation and educational character for all races."

We feel that post war policy should implement this policy.

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