



## **Time Travel Bloemfontein 1912**

### **Goal**

Awareness of a historical turning point in South Africa  
Reflect on issues of democracy and human rights  
Promote the Time Travel method

### **Facts**

South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was formed on 08 January 1912 at Wesleyan School Church in Waaihoek, Bloemfontein. This was as a result of a number of grievances from blacks, including the South African Act of 1910 which established the Union of South Africa; black treatment during the South African War; exclusion of blacks during the Vereeniging Treaty and numerous laws that controlled and restricted black movement and labour.

During the eight years of negotiations to form a union it became apparent that the white delegates of the four provinces were determined to forge a settlement that excluded Africans from meaningful political participation in the envisaged unified South Africa.

Between 1902 and 1910, many political functions emerged including the African People's Organisation, Orange River Colony Vigilance Association and the Transvaal Vigilance Association. In 1909, a South African Native Convention (SANC) met in Bloemfontein to discuss their objections to the draft South African Act, and Union constitution. This convention was the precursor to the SANNC. The SANC continued until late 1911 when then a need for a national body to represent all blacks, was realised.

Different men from different provinces (four at the time) met in Bloemfontein in January 1912 to form the SANNC. The founding of the SANNC was in direct response to injustice against black South Africans at the hands of the government then in power. Key role players were Josiah Gumede, John Dube, Pixey ka Isaka Seme, and Sol Plaatje including chiefs, community representatives and church organisations. The idea was to bring all Africans together as one people to defend their rights and freedoms with the aim of fighting for the rights of black South Africans. It can be said that the SANNC had its origins in a pronouncement by Pixley ka Isaka Seme who said in 1911, "Forget all the past differences among Africans and unite in one national organisation." The SANNC was founded the following year on 8 January 1912.

The organization was renamed the ANC in 1923. The organisation, from its inception represented both traditional and modern elements, from tribal chiefs to church and community bodies and educated black professionals, though women were only admitted as affiliate members from 1931 and as full members in 1943.

## **Scenario, Meeting at Wesleyan Church School to prepare for the formation of SANNAC, 6<sup>th</sup> January 1912**

The dissatisfaction from the black people in South Africa has grown. They fought in the war, but they were not part of the treaty. When the union was formed two years ago Africans were not involved, only whites. Numerous laws have been enforced to control and restrict black movement and labour.

The last ten years several political organizations have been established in the country to fight for black influence and Africans of mixed race. More than two years ago, a South African Native Convention (SANC) met in Bloemfontein to discuss the South African union. Now there is a need for a national body, to bring all Africans together to defend their rights and freedom. The planning for this meeting have been going on for months. And in two days' time it will happen. Men from all over the country are coming to the Wesleyan school and church in Bloemfontein: community representatives, political organizations, church leaders, traditional leaders, kings and chiefs.

In the Wesleyan church school the preparations for the meeting are in full swing. Women, men and children from the local community are working together. The school hall must have enough chairs and benches. And it has to be neat and clean and nicely decorated. The food must be prepared. The agenda for the meeting will be discussed and developed. Thomas Mapikela, carpenter and activist in Bloemfontein, is leading the preparations.

As the same time as working people discuss. Why is there no influence for black people in the country? We need our rights, rights to land, rights to schools, rights to vote, equality. What to do? What is the benefit of organizing one national body to fight for our rights? What will be the agenda for the meeting in two days? What do we want to achieve? And how to do it? Everybody is affected of the injustices, so everybody has an opinion. Pixley ka Isaka Seme said: "Forget all the past differences among Africans and unite in one national organisation to fight for the right of Africans."

Today Alfred Mangena, the well-known lawyer and political activist, will arrive and check that everything is in order and also give the latest report of the situation. Everybody is curious and have mixed feelings of frustration and hope.

### **Roles**

Men and women, boys and girls from the local community.

Men from provinces

Thomas Mapikela, Alfred Mangena

Everybody keeps their age and sex

### **Key Questions**

What are the struggles in the country? How does it affect us?

What is the benefit of various groups and organizations working together?

What do we want to achieve?

### **Activities**

- Set up chairs, clean the venue
- Make decorations
- Playing games
- Prepare for an agenda
- Make simple food
- Prepare with the choir

### **Time Plan**

- 08.00 Prepare the site
- 09.30 The Time Travel method, Introduction to the Time Travel event
- 10.30 Rules, characters, name tags
- 10.45 Initiation (Thomas Mapikela)  
Activities and discussions  
Arrival of Alfred Mangena
- 11.45 Meeting
- 12.20 Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica  
Time Travel ends
- 12.30 Reflection, evaluation
- 13.00 Lunch

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Bridging Ages team

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