

About Gavin Williams:

Since 1975 Gavin Williams has been a Fellow of St Peter's College and Lecturer in Politics at the University of Oxford. His research interest is in the empirical study of politics and society, in political and social theory and in the impact of ideas, good and bad, on social and political action, areas on which he has researched, written and taught on for more than 35 years. In Oxford he influenced generations of students through supervision and teaching in Comparative Government, Political Sociology, Theory of Politics, African Politics, Marxism and Sociological Theory, in particular the work of Max Weber. He has published widely on politics, political economy and land and agricultural policies in Africa, particularly Nigeria and South Africa, and is currently studying the history of the wine industry in South Africa.

The role of Dr AB Xuma M.D., B.Sc. (USA), L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S. (Edin), L.R.F.P. & S. (Glas), DP.H. (Lond), in the South African liberation struggle.

Alfred Bitini Xuma was born in 1893 in the Transkei. After qualifying as a teacher, he received a scholarship to study Medicine at the Tuskegee Institute which was established by Booker T Washington for African American educational advancement. Xuma returned to South Africa in the late 1920's and practiced Public Medicine in Johannesburg. His political activism in the period of the 1930's revolved around the organization of opposition to the removal of blacks from the Cape franchise, leading to his election as Vice-President of the All-African Convention (AAC) in 1935. Between 1940 and 1949 Xuma served as President-General of the African National Congress (ANC).

Xuma wrote extensively on the welfare, education and health of Africans, exposing and actively campaigning on the effects of segregation (and later apartheid) on the social welfare of blacks. In the decade of the 1940's the ANC was transformed under Xuma's presidency from a largely moribund, petitioning organisation into a national, democratically constituted, accountable and increasingly campaigning organisation with equal membership rights for women (influenced to some considerable degree by his wife Madie Xuma). Xuma was responsible for two notable policy initiatives. The first was the 1944 document African Claims, which contained a Bill of Rights which for the first time articulated full citizenship rights, including social and economic rights, as the key objective of the national liberation movement. This document was the precursor of the Freedom Charter adopted in Kliptown in 1955, and in its inclusive, rights based approach can be regarded as strongly influencing the current South African Constitution. The second initiative was the Joint Declaration of Co-operation also known as the Three Doctors' Pact of 1947. The Doctors' Pact was made between A. B. Xuma and two

leading Indian community leaders: Dr. G.M. Naicker (President of the Natal Indian Congress) and Dr. Y.M. Dadoo (President of the Transvaal Indian Congress). This promoted non-racial political alliances between the various liberation movements that were opposed to segregation and apartheid and who were campaigning for a full unqualified franchise for all South Africans. Xuma continued his activities in public medicine in Johannesburg after he lost his position as president of the ANC in 1949. He died in 1962 in relative obscurity.

The AB Xuma Memorial Lecture is being held in memory of the significant contribution that he made to the transformation of South Africa, and to his contribution to South African social policy as a result of his unambiguous commitment to full and equal civil, political and social citizenship.