DOCUMENT 1:
Extracts from 'Keeping the Red Flag Flying: An Address to the S.A. Labour Party', pamphlet published by the War on War League (SA) in March 1915.

THE BANNER BRIGHT

Labour Parties and Congresses all over the world, and in particular the International Socialist Bureau to which the South African Labour Party is affiliated, have for many years past (and not in times of peace alone, as the declarations of Balkan Socialists in 1912-3 showed) consistently emphasized the profound opposition between Socialism and Militarism, the fundamentally Capitalist origin of war, and the essentially international character of working class solidarity. 'Workers of the World, Unite,' said the authors of the Communist Manifesto fifty years ago, a phrase ever since repeated from ten thousand platforms; and at the outbreak of the present war, the Administrative Council of the South African Labour Party, as well as the South African Industrial Federation, true to tradition, reiterated their adherence to the same principles.

THOUGH COWARDS FLINCH

It came as a shock to many, therefore, when a week or so later The Worker, the official organ of the Labour Party, began to jettison these principles as though they had never been seriously meant, and to sound exactly the same war note as the Capitalist press; while about the same time attempts were made to have the resolutions of the Administrative Council and Federation rescinded. This press-fed wave of military patriotism, indeed, grew in volume, as it did in other countries on both belligerent sides. The Labour members of Parliament at Capetown, as in London and Berlin, were swept into approval of the campaign. The Internationalists, even the 'good Europeans', were denounced as 'scabs'. We know all war is wrong and suicidal, said many erstwhile Socialists in Germany and England as in South Africa, but 'we' must 'see it through', defend 'our country,' bring 'the enemy' to his knees and - suppress and punish any expression of opinion opposed to our own. To salve uneasy consciences, the patriots of each side fastened on the misdeeds or atrocities of the other, and prayed, screamed-sometimes even enlisted-for victory, vengeance, and nationalist, or rather Imperialist, vanity.
VIVE L’INTERNATIONALE

Quantum mutatus ab illo! In English, What a come down! In every country those who refused to desert their colours, the Red Flag of the International, felt bound to protest, by every means in their power, against such a wholesale apostasy of their comrades; to remind them, in the most forcible way, of the ‘scraps of paper’ which they were now so incontinently tearing up; and to hold up to them afresh the inviolable truths to which they had just before vowed unswerving allegiance, only now to ‘deny them thrice’ in the face of what newspapers call ‘public opinion’, meaning their masters.

A REACTION AGAINST REACTION

But among the British and other European elements, too, it would have been strange, it would have been humiliating, if some such movement as the ‘War on War League’ had not sprung into existence. The League was an inevitable reaction against the attitude of the militarist members of the Labour Party; a spontaneous protest and corrective against their lapses and excesses. Had the Party stuck to its guns, there would have been no War on War League.

WITHIN ITS SHADE

Having published its pledge ‘to oppose this and any other war at all times and at all costs’, the League at once attracted to its ranks some who, while enthusiastic for Socialism, had held aloof from, and even roughly criticised or attacked, the official Labour Party in the past. Many of these have since joined the Party; and today the League more than ever consists, in an overwhelming proportion, of members of the Party, and includes, it may be fairly said, some of the Party’s ablest and most enlightened members. It stands, not on its defence— it would scorn that position— but as a representative of militant Working Class Internationalism, whose mission it is, not just to buy seats at elections, pandering to every wave of popular feeling if only votes are caught thereby; but to rally all sections of the workers, in town and country, on the farms no less than in the mines, the factories and the workshops, and in every land alike, to a practical realisation of the transcendent importance, compared with the conflicts between rival Emperors, Generals, financiers, or commercial groups, of the one great struggle in which all Labour Parties throughout the world had hitherto unquestioningly assumed themselves to be engaged—the class struggle to emancipate the workers of the world from exploiting Capitalism.

THE HOPE OF PEACE AT LAST

Had Labour persisted, unflating and united, in its normal course instead of being diverted into patriotisms, it could have prevented war last year. If it would rally even now throughout the world, it could stop war today and hereafter.
Editorial Note:

Cresswell, now risen to the rank of Colonel, returned from the campaign in South West Africa in June, 1915, and as parliamentary leader of the Labour Party issued what came to be known as the ‘See It Through’ manifesto calling for intensified support for the war effort. War fever, whipped up by the capitalist press as well as by the Labour Party’s own organ The Worker, infected more and more of the Labour Party rank and file. A general election for the Union Parliament was due in October and a special conference of the Labour Party was called for August 22 to decide the Party’s election platform. The anti-war section of the Party once again felt the need to reply to the ever more virulent attacks being made upon them.