

South African Communist Party 1935

Fight the New Fascist Bill — Defend the Cape Native Franchise

Source: *Umsebenzi*, May 18, 1935.
Transcribed: by [Dominic Tweedie](#).

The new Native Representation Bill (summarised before in this paper) is another blow at the rights and liberties of the Native people in South Africa. If it is passed it will be another step towards fascism.

The new bill proposes to abolish the Cape Native franchise, which has been in existence since 1854. If it does this it will do away with the only remaining democratic right possessed by the African people in the Union. It will reduce the Bantu people of the Cape to exactly the same slave status as the people of the other three provinces.

As alleged 'compensation' for this encroachment on their liberties, the bill proposes to set up a so-called 'Native Representative Council.' This council will be a mere puppet council, with no real powers or authority. It will not even be representative of the Native people. Of the 21 members, five will be white and officials of the Native Affairs Department. Four of the sixteen Native members will be appointed by the 'electoral colleges.' What are these 'colleges'? They will mostly be made up of chiefs, headmen, etc — all paid agents and nominees of the Government. The only 'democratic' element will be the members of the advisory boards, who in turn will be elected by a limited number of the location residents (those who have paid their rent and are in good standing with passes, taxes, etc.) But in any case the members of the advisory boards will only form a small minority in the electoral colleges. It therefore stands to reason that even the 12 'elected' native members of the 'Native Representative Council' will not be put there by the people and will not reflect the views of the people but only those of the Government that pays them to keep their people in slavery.

The four white senators chosen by the electoral colleges, in view of the undemocratic nature of the said colleges, are not likely even to be good champions of the Native cause, apart from the fact that they will have no power to do anything except talk. There already exist four members of the Senate who are supposed to represent Native interests. An indication of their utter failure to do anything at all is the fact that nobody has ever heard of them or their activities. All that the new bill will do will be to increase the number of the impotent nonentities from four to eight.

This new bill must be fought tooth and nail. The Communist Party calls upon all Native national organisations and upon the Native people as a whole and the white workers to rally to mass demonstrations of protest against this new fascist measure.

Against the new fascist bill!

In defence of the Cape Native franchise!

For democratic rights and complete equality for all Non-European people in South Africa!