

achievements stands out the fact that the previous agitation of native nationalists for a 'Black Africa' have met with complete failure. Now, in the words of one of our most advanced Native organisers, 'we are asked to preach black racialism although we have hitherto condemned every kind of racialism – black or white'. Another point is that as far as British imperialism, as such, is concerned, there is the curious position that, owing to the Native policy pursued by Britain while administering the Cape, England is regarded as a 'friend' by large masses of the natives. Furthermore, in the present circumstances, it is extremely probable that if the Party propagates the slogan it will be brought 'within the law' of 'setting black against white', and its legal existence made impossible. The Party is too weak as yet to go 'underground' and fight illegally, and if it is outlawed it would be forced into extinction. All these difficulties can, however, be avoided by pursuing the Party's present day policy of concentrating on the building up of mass organisation of native workers, and overcoming the prejudices of the white workers. When the achievements are reached the South African proletariat will form a force to be reckoned with politically and an invincible power industrially. As against these arguments the protagonists of the slogan (who number three on the Central Executive, two of these being whites) contend that, owing to the white working class forming an 'aristocracy of labour', unity between black and white labour is impossible, and that our policy on these lines should be abandoned in favour of an 'all-black' policy.

The matter came to a head when our delegates left for the Sixth World Congress of Communist International, when the Central Executive Committee decided (by the above-mentioned majority) to oppose the thesis of which the slogan forms a part and to submit a counter-thesis to the Congress for its consideration. A statement of the minority views was however, also to be put before the Congress. When the news reached South Africa that the Congress had adopted the original thesis and slogan, with some slight modifications, the general feeling in the Party was to withhold further criticism and discussion until the delegates returned and reported fully, but the opposition to the slogan was undiminished. The delegates were due in South Africa about the middle of November, since when, of course, we are without news as to further development of the matter.

Another urgent need of the Party at the moment is an adequate number of trained and capable native propagandists and organisers for work among the native masses in town and country. More branches could be opened, and existing branch activities extended, if the suitable man power could be obtained. The Party conducts an evening school at its hall in Johannesburg, where about eighty adult pupils, mainly drawn from the industrial workers in the town, receive training in the English language, arithmetic, Communism, etc. Good result have been achieved, ex-students of the school now being in charge of the Party branches at Potchefstroom and Vereeniging, but much more should be done in this direction. The invitation received some time ago

to send ten native comrades to study at the Moscow Oriental University² was therefore welcomed by the Party as an important step towards creating a great expanse in its activities. Owing to passport and other difficulties, however, it has, up to the present, been found impossible to send the students overseas. The attempt has, however, not been abandoned, and it is hoped that in the very near future the first contingent will go forward.

Danchin and Kalk

RGASPI, 495/64/74/2-3. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/64/74/1-3.³

Original in English.

Typed.

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Letter from Anglo-American Secretariat, ECCI, to Central Executive Committee, CPSA, 14 December 1928

The CEC of the
C.P. South Africa.

December 14, 1928.

Dear Comrades,

The two comrades for the Lenin School¹ duly arrived a few weeks ago. Everything has been fixed up for them and they are quite comfortably installed in the School. We have to acknowledge receipt of your CEC minutes which they brought. On looking through the minutes, a number of questions arise which we would like to raise with you.

First of all, we notice from the minutes that there is a certain amount of unsettledness with regard to the work of Comrade Laguma. We are particularly interested in the overtures made to Comrade Laguma by the ICU, especially in view of the definite anti-Communist policy of Kadalie and the ICU. We should like to have fuller information on the situation and some

Doc. 67

2. KUTV.

3. KUTV. A slightly different version of the same text is found at RGASPI, 495/43/48-51.

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1. Victor Danchin and Willie Kalk.

indication the line of the Party is pursuing with regard to the ICU. It would appear from the minutes that the CEC is not completely united on the question of bringing about a unified native trade union movement. This was revealed in the differences on the question of unity of the Native Trade Union Federation with the ICU. The resolution of the 6th Congress makes quite clear that one of the objects of the Party is to strive for a united trade union of native workers. The decision of your CEC 'to maintain friendly relations' is not a correct interpretation of the spirit of the Congress resolution. It may be you have since had the resolution before you and are clear and united on the policy that should be pursued. If so, we shall be glad to hear what is your decisions on this question.

We are also concerned with the apparent lack of harmony among the CEC members as revealed in the minutes. We consider that, with the immense tasks before the Communist Party of South Africa, where the Party is so small, it can ill afford to spend sessions of the Executive Committee in personal recriminations. By this we do not wish to minimise the importance of self-criticism; we must frankly and boldly analyse and criticise our weaknesses and shortcomings, and do everything possible to overcome them.

We notice that the Secretary was preparing a report on Party organisation. We should be glad to have this as early as possible, as it is apparent from the CEC proceedings that there is need for a certain reorganisation which will eliminate many small questions coming before the CEC and leave their hands free to concentrate on the political tasks before the Party.

We have taken the opportunity of the arrival of the Lenin² students to have a report from them on the general situation in your country and in the Party. On the basis of their report it appeared to us that it was desirable that your conference should be postponed to allow the membership to discuss the South African Resolution adopted by the World Congress. From the attitude taken up by many of your members towards the slogan of a Native Republic, there is a need for considerable ideological clarity on this question. A purely mechanical acceptance of the slogan, or acceptance with reservations would not be beneficial for the Party, but indeed harmful. We fully understand the implications of this slogan and the difficulties which the Party will have to overcome in advocating it, but we think the arguments in our resolution are so convincing, that if the members are given an opportunity to discuss this resolution, they will fall into line and be united with the C.I.

In conclusion, we understand you are having some difficulties in sending the quota of native comrades for the Lenin School. We have gone into the question of rendering assistance, but we consider the main part of the problem is at your end. If you can arrange for the students to reach Europe, we will be in a position to assist them. We have to remind you that the last provision made

2. Obviously, students who came to the International Lenin School, i.e. Danchin and Kalk.

was for the native students only, and must on no account be utilised for any other purpose.

Yours fraternally,
For the Anglo-American Secretariat.

RGASPI, 495/64/77/12-13.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 3125 - 18.XII.1928

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Letter from T.W. Thibedi,¹
7 January 1929

COPY OF LETTER RECEIVED FROM T.W. THIBEDI, GENERAL SECRETARY,
S. AFRICAN FEDERATION OF NATIVE TRADE UNIONS;
DATED JOHANNESBURG, 7TH JANUARY 1929.

Our C.P.S.A. conference has ended last week. The majority are still not satisfied with the new slogan, the South African delegates to the 6th World Congress of the C.I. are trying to convince the majority for that slogan, but all in vain. The new Slogan has and still is doing the Revolutionary Movement a lot of harm. The C.I. should quickly reconsider their decision on the matter. The R.I.L.U. can do us good² by considering the Black Republic more especially from a revolutionary Trade Union point of view. Tell Comrades Losovsky, Bucharin, Stalin and the C.I. Secretariat for dealing with the Negro problems, also the 'Agitprop'. The Federation of Non-European Trades Unions, representing about 2,808 black workers, consider the Black Republic slogan a mistake, and that a 'Workers and Peasants Republic' would really rally the black and white workers in this country. Since this new slogan many workers seem not interested, white as well as black.

Comrade J.A. La-Guma, who was elected several times to official positions in the Party, and whom we all trusted, has left for Cape Town some months ago, he never informed the Trade Unions nor the Party of his departure, he left the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions without a word of good-bye. He is no longer active in the Trade Unions or the C.P. he has opened a business, a Tea-Room or something like that, in Cape Town. I have been elected General Secretary of the Federation; during La-Guma's time the Trade

1. There is no addressee on the copy of this document found in the archives.

2. [good?] unclear word in the original.