

**Official Report of First Congress, CPSA.
30-1 July-1 August 1921 (Extracts)**

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS. HELD AT
NO. 20 PLEIN STREET, CAPETOWN ON JULY 30TH, 31ST & AUGUST 1ST
1921. ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE OF THE PARTY.

The Congress met at 20 Plein Street, Capetown and Comrade D.H. Dryburgh welcomed the following delegates: -

International Socialist League.

W.H. Andrews, S.P. Bunting, M. Barlin, A. Goldman, R. Rabb, F. Robertson, J.J. Hornstein, C.H. Traub, M. Youngelson.¹

Communist Party, Capetown.

J. Pick, C.F. Glass, W. Green.

W.H. Harrison.

Comrade W.H. Harrison was elected to represent the members of the I.S.L. and United Communist Parties who are not attached to any branch.

Comrade D.H. Dryburgh was elected Chairman of the Congress and W.H. Andrews minute taker.

The report of the unity committee which had already been circulated was taken as read, and Comrade S.P. Bunting explained that the Marxian Club Durban and Jewish Socialist Society (Poalei Zion) Johannesburg, had not been able to send delegates owing to the expense.

The Unity Committee Report was then adopted.

The following resolution was then moved by Comrade C.F. Glass and seconded by J. Pick.

That this Congress of delegates from the United Communist Party Capetown, Marxian Club Durban, International Socialist League (S.A.), Jewish Socialist Society (Poalei Zion) Johannesburg resolves to form and hereby constitutes itself the United Communist Party, South African Section of the Third International.

1. The identities of several people mentioned in this document could not be established. For additional information on some founder-members of the CPSA see document 14, vol. I.

It was pointed out by Comrades W.H. Andrews and S.P. Bunting that the passing of this resolution would involve certain financial commitments by the parties who were about to amalgamate.

Comrade M. Barlin then moved and A. Goldman seconded that the word 'united' be struck out of the motion. It was pointed out that a group in Johannesburg existed which was called the Communist Party which fact might lead to confusion.

The amendment was put and carried.

Comrade S.P. Bunting pointed out that although the I.S.L. was already affiliated to the Third International it would be necessary if the resolution is passed for the new party to apply for affiliation.

The motion was then put and carried without dissent, all standing and singing 'The Red Flag'.

Rules of the Party.

The draft rules and amendments were then considered.

Rule 1. was moved by Comrade C.F. Glass and seconded by J. Pick and carried unanimously.

At this stage it was agreed that all members of the party present should have the right to take part in the discussion but only delegates to vote.

2. Adoption moved by A. Goldman and R. Rabb. An amendment by C. Glass and J. Pick that sub-section (a) be deleted was lost.

An amendment to sub-section (b) moved by M. Barlin and R. Rabb. 'That candidates be not admitted to the party until they had been approved by the Central Executive was lost'.

Sub-section (c) The Marxian Club amendment to this sub-section was moved by S.P. Bunting & M. Barlin but was lost.

Sub-section (d) The amendment in the name of the United Communist Party (C.P.) was moved by J. Pick and C.H. Traub and considerable discussion took place. The necessity of an assured income to the official organ being emphasised.

The amendment was lost by eight to three.

[...]

The Party press.

Under this heading a long discussion took place on the question of the official organ and many useful suggestions were made. It was decided on the motion by J. Pick seconded by M. Barlin that the 'International' should be the official organ of the Party and retain its name with the addition of words, Official Organ of the Communist Party of S. Africa (Section of the Communist International).

Elections of officers.

Comrades W.H. Andrews, C.F. Glass and S.P. Bunting were nominated for office of editor. The two latter declined and Comrade Andrews agreed to stand pro tem hoping to be relieved at an early date, and was elected.

The financial position of the I.S.L. general and printing press funds were given by S.P. Bunting and of the U.C.P. by C.F. Glass.

The literature department I.S.L. was explained by Comrade R. Rabb.

Their reports were accepted.

Chairman of the Party.

S.P. Bunting and C.B. Tyler nominations.

Comrade Bunting was reluctant to stand and hoped not to be elected. On a vote C.B. Tyler was elected by eight to five.

Secretary of the Party.

W.H. Andrews was the only nomination and was declared elected.

Treasurer.

S.P. Bunting was unanimously elected.

It was resolved to recommend to the C.E. to take into consideration the payment of £35 to the Secretary.

Central Executive.

The following were nominated Comrades:

G. Arnold, Mrs. Bunting, J. Den Bakker, R. Gelblum, H. Glaser, A. Goldman, J. Kearney, H. Lee, J. Benjamin, E.M. Pincus, J. Snadler, A. Feldman, R. Rabb, E.R. Roux, T. Chapman, G. Somerville.

A ballot was taken resulting in the election of the following: –

A. Goldman, R. Rabb, Mrs. Bunting, J. Den Bakker, T. Chapman, E.M. Pincus, G. Arnold, R. Gelblum, H. Lee.

The representatives of the three provinces other than the Transvaal to be elected by the members residing therein.

Manifesto.

The manifesto of the Party with a few minor amendments was passed for publication.

A wire from the Jewish Socialist Society (Poalei Zion) was read conveying greetings to Congress and pledging itself to join the new party.

A resolution re credentials was moved by S.P. Bunting, seconded by J.J. Hornstein and agreed to, as follows: –

Credentials from the Party to the Communist Party of any other country shall consist of a letter on official party paper signed by the secretary of the branch of the party to which the accredited member belongs, stating how long he has been and continued a member in good standing of that branch, and of any branch or body incorporated in the Party, to which he may previously have belonged: such letter to be sealed with the seal of the branch if it has one, and countersigned by the secretary of the Party, and sealed with the seal of the Party if it has one. The secretary of a branch shall not so sign until thereto authorised by a vote of the branch secretary and the secretary of the Party shall not so countersign until thereto authorised by a vote of the Central Executive.

Provided however that in the case of a member not attached to a branch the signature of the secretary of the Party authorised thereto by a vote of the Central Executive shall suffice.

Next Congress.

It was on a vote decided that the next Congress shall be held in Durban at Easter 1922.

Native propaganda.

Under general business a long discussion took place on the question of how best to organise and do propaganda amongst the native and coloured workers.

At 1.30 p.m. the Congress adjourned till August 1st, 9 a.m.

August 1st.Delegates to Third International.

Business was resumed at 9.20 a.m. Letters from Moscow were read from Sam Barlin and D. Ivon Jones, the I.S.L. delegates to the Third International, and received with applause.

Parliamentary elections.

A motion was moved by S.P. Bunting, seconded A. Goldman 'That the Central Executive take into consideration the advisability of contesting a parliamentary seat in a native constituency'.

Considerable discussion ensued and all points of view were advanced, and on the question being put it was carried by 8 to 2.

General propaganda.

It was further, on the motion of C.F. Glass and J. Pick, resolved 'that the Central Executive be requested to draw up a statement of the methods of propaganda to be followed by the party till the next Congress'.

Congress closes.

At 11.40 the Chairman in closing the Congress, expressed the opinion that good and useful work had been done in the past three days by the Congress and he believed that the year to come would mark a great advance in the revolutionary Socialist movement in S. Africa.

After singing the Red Flag the Congress dispersed.

W.H. Andrews.
Conference Secretary.
C.D. Tyler
Chairman of the Party

RGASPI, 495/64/3/9, 10, 12-15. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/64/3/9-15.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

13**Letter from W.H. Andrews to Comintern,
10 August 1921**

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF S.A.

4 Trades Hall,
Rissik Street.
P.O. Box 4179
Johannesburg S.A.
August 10th 1921

The Secretary,
Executive of the Third Communist International.

Dear Comrade,

I am instructed by the Communist Party of South Africa, which was formed on the 30th July by the amalgamation of the International Socialist League, S.A.

Social Democratic Federation, Capetown, Communist Party, Capetown, Jewish Socialist Society Capetown, Jewish Socialist Society (Poalei Zion) Johannesburg, Marxian Club Durban, and which has accepted the '21 Points', conditions of affiliation to the Third International and adopted the constitution and rules, to apply for affiliation to the Third Communist International.

W.H. Andrews.
Secretary,
Communist Party of S.A.

Manifesto and Rules attached
WHA²

RGASPI, 495/64/210.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Inscription: 48B1 (in Russian)

14**Report by D.I. Jones to Comintern,
13 August 1921**

SOUTH AFRICA (SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT, 13 AUGUST 1921)¹
UNITED COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Am awaiting latest particulars of the Party statistics etc.

Re leaders:

W.H. Andrews. Secretary, and Editor 'The International'. Best known Labour figure in South Africa on the radical side. Before split of Labour Party in 1915 on war question, was its chairman, and its chief founder. Combines steady going characteristics of British Trade Unionist with a large grasp of the class struggle. Age 51. Mechanic (fitter or turner).

S.P. Bunting A lawyer in his leisure time! A graduate of Oxford. Son of Sir Percy Bunting, 'Contemporary Review'. Comrade of great energy. Came into

Doc. 13

1. See footnote 4 to document 5, vol. I.
2. Andrews's initials.

Doc. 14

1. This document is an appendix to 'Report on Workers' Organisations in S.A.' (RGASPI, 495/64/4/14-19), stamped 'No. 487, 10.V.1921' and signed 'J' under the words: 'Remarks: This report has been prepared by a S. African Comrade, not wishing to be in a limelight'.