

11. There remain the other parts of Africa, such as Kenya, Uganda, and Portuguese Africa. In the last named region there exists a pro-negro Social Revolutionary Party which would undoubtedly help to organise the Congress, and line itself up with Moscow in the process. In the British East Africa colonies and line itself up with Moscow in the process. The C.P. of South Africa has aforementioned we have no connections. The C.P. of South Africa has correspondents in the Belgian Congo with its fifteen million natives. But we have no connections with British Nigeria and the Gold Coast, nor with the French Congo, unless this can be worked through the French Communist Party.

12. Our experience in South Africa is that as soon as a Negro attains any measure of education he becomes spoilt as a proletarian and loses touch with the negro working masses, because he is immediately snatched up to be a lawyer's or agent's tout, or to be a parson. Hence great care will have to be exercised to select working-class delegates in touch with the labouring masses. The point here is that all this requires many months of preparation for the congress, which should be decided upon quickly if it is intended to hold it at the same time as the Comintern Congress. In that the short RADIO Call should be deferred till later, and the special manifestoes sent out now more privately for translation and circulation among Negro Masses.

D. Ivon Jones  
(South Africa)

RGASPI, 495/155/3/1-3.

Original in English

Typed. Copy.

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**Letter from D.I. Jones to ECCI,  
23 March 1923**

FURTHER NOTE ON THE PROPOSED NEGRO CONGRESS  
MARCH 23RD 1923

I wish to supplement my note of the 8th January on the above with further consideration which suggest themselves against to idea. The former note contains information regarding problems of organising said Congress which may be yet useful.

I believe that some kind of a Congress of radical negroes for America and the neighbouring islands might be of value. But we have to regard the negro

race as a permanent section of the American population, and the encouraging of ideas of repatriation, 'back to Africa', has a confusing effect upon the classes, just as the 'back to Palestine' cry has had that effect upon the Jewish proletariat in the past. Garveyism depends on this diverting of the attention of the negro masses from the immediate class struggle to the distant hope of free Africa.

This danger is still more apparent in the case of South African natives. These natives have no highly developed intellegenzia like the American negroes, and practically no bourgeois class. It is a race of labourers newly emerging from tribal communism, individually uncultured but possessing a high sense of communist solidarity. Their emergence into industrial life breaks down their tribal animosities. But this break down of tribal animosity takes place in the actual necessities of the class struggle. For example, a few years ago, faction fights between tribes, in which fatal casualties occurred, were frequent among the natives working on the Rand mines. In 1920 all these natives in one mass upheaval forgot all their tribal distinctions and struck work to the number of 80,000 as fellow workers.<sup>1</sup> The Communists were blamed for this as for all other manifestations of awakening among the natives. There are two native newspapers subsidised by the Government which carry on a bitter warfare against the Communist propoganda of solidarity of labour irrespective of race, colour or creed. And the one antidote which they purvey to this class propoganda, and encouraged by the Government, is precisely this one of Garvey, solidarity with negro races against the white men. Garveyism is invading Africa. And the Africans are made to look to America, just as the Americans are made to look to Africa.

Before this lesson is properly learnt, that not the white man, but the capitalist, is the enemy of the negro, and before some measures of alliance has been achieved between the white and black on the international field, it would be a source of confusion to have a racial congress.

Therefore I think that we should limit ourselves to urging the Communist Parties to send negroes in the delegations whenever possible. In Africa, owing to the lack of Communist funds, the newly formed native Unions are in danger of being pocketed by bourgeois agents. If the Communist Party could retain control of these Unions and also have the means of a Native newspaper to fight the Government subsidised ones, it would have far more effect in the fight against Imperialism than any Congress. It seems absurd to speak about Congresses when we are not prepared or notable to this preparatory spade work. If Mahomed cannot go to the mountain, the mountain will surely not go to Mahomed. In Africa we witness a struggle where it is touch and go whether Imperialist Capital is going to win field for expansion. A little attention to these native masses in the past on the part of the International might have proved a

1. The strike of African miners on the Rand in February 1920 was the biggest African industrial action until 1946. The number of strikers involved quoted by Jones is approximately correct.

different result. It is still time to stiffen up the negro masses in Africa by work on the spot.

D. Ivon Jones

RGASPI, 495/155/3/4-5.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

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**Report of EC to Second Congress, CPSA,  
28 April 1923**

THE COMMUNIST PARTY. (SOUTH AFRICAN SECTION OF THE  
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL)  
REPORT OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE.  
FOR PERIOD AUGUST 1ST., 1921 TO MARCH 31ST., 1923.

Comrades,

At the inaugural Congress of the South African Section of the Communist International it was decided to hold the next Congress in Durban during Easter, 1922.

This decision the Central Executive was unable to carry out owing to the strike and subsequent proclamation of Martial Law, involving death to one of our members and arrest and imprisonment of others, including the general secretary-editor.

The Central Executive, after taking the feeling of the Branches and members in the various centres, decided to use the power given it under Rule 6 (b), to call a Congress at the end of April this year. We therefore have a period of twenty months to review.

This will be done as briefly as is consistent with the importance of the period under examination. We are handicapped somewhat in making this report by being deprived of the use of our Minute Book, which is in the hands of the C.I.D., Johannesburg; consequently, we are unable to give so detailed an account of the activities of the Party as would otherwise be the case.

The Central Executive.

It will be noticed that of the original members elected to the Central Executive only four remain, viz: - Comrades H. Lee, R. Gelblum, R. Rabb and the general secretary-editor. Comrade J. Den Bakker, A. Goldman and T. Chapman resigned, G. Arnold left the Party during the martial law period. Comrades S.P.

and Mrs. Bunting vacated their seats when they left on delegation to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow. Comrade Sydney Ward assumed the treasurership in place of Comrade Bunting, but the office of Chairman of the Party has remained vacant since the resignation of Comrade C.B. Tyler when he was appointed national organiser of the B.W.I.U.<sup>1</sup> E.M. Pincus never took his seat on the Committee as his society, the Paoli Zion, refused to become part of the Communist Party. Comrade Mrs. Bourke, who was elected to the Executive under Rule 5 (c), left for Australia.

The members of the Committee which presents this report are Comrades J. First, C.F. Glass, H. Lee, R. Rabb, R. Gelblum, S. Schurin, J. Righthouse, B. Blumkamp, S. Ward, J. Oates, S. Barlin and W.H. Andrews.

The attendances of the Committee cannot be given for the reason above stated.

It may be noted that from March 10th. until May 12th. 1922, the period of Martial Law, no meetings were held of which minutes were kept, although several informal meetings were held between those dates.

The work of the period has been, as heretofore, largely of a propaganda character, and we in South Africa have felt the effect of the general offensive of the capitalist class and of the subsequent retirement of the revolutionary wave which started in 1917.

The stagnation in trade has not been without its effect, not only on our finances, but also on the personnel of the Party.

The shrinkage of the number of subscribers to the Party organ and of our membership, resulting in the disappearance of the Durban, Krugersdorp and Springs branches during the early part of the period under review, culminating in the cessation of our activities on the Rand during the Martial Law period, marked the most critical period of the Party's history.

Since then there has been a gradual recovery. The list of subscribers to the 'International', always an index of the state of the Party, again shows an upward tendency, and the increasing membership is a reflection of the greater activity of the Party and the growth of revolutionary opinion of workers.

Russian famine relief.

The Russian Famine in 1921-22, and the consequent appalling suffering and loss of life, led to the formation of the Russian Famine Relief Committees, with headquarters in Johannesburg.

The very greatest difficulty was experienced in getting an organisation going, but mainly owing to the efforts of the Communists and a few friends a considerable amount of mealie meal, beans and some clothing was despatched to the starving Russian people. £1,300 in cash, besides 867 bags of Maize, 820

1. Building Workers' Industrial Union.