

Conference,⁴ but the Government refused to renew my passport. My idea was to visit you and appeal for help or a loan to pay off the debts mentioned herein. I appeal to you to help me to disentangle myself, so as to be free to lead the militants, who want my leadership very much. I hold this weapon Abantu Bathu is highly desirable.⁵

Yours faithfully
Gumade

P.S. I thank you very much for the papers you occasionally send me and to our press, the Press Service of the League against Imperialism and the Negro workers.

RGASPI, 495/64/110/1.

Original in English.

Typed, many corrections and typed-over words.

Inscriptions: 1931

(in red pencil).

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**Report by J. Ford to European Secretariat, RILU,
21 February 1931 (Extracts)**

REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN SECRETARIAT OF RILU ON ACTIVITIES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE
OF NEGRO WORKERS AT HAMBURG

[...]

Political and Organisational Tasks Executed

2. Now with regards to the political and economic situation of the Negro workers which must determine the character of the work of the Negro

4. Most probably, International Negro Workers' Conference (founding conference of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers) in Hamburg (Germany) in July 1930.
5. A line in red ink is drawn opposite the last two sentences in the original.

Committee¹ and the struggles of the Negro workers, the capitalist press during the latter part of 1930 had quite a lot of news concerning the situation of Negro workers and the conditions that are leading them to struggle, particularly in South Africa and in West Africa, West Indies etc. The intended plans of the British Imperialists and the South African bourgeoisie to place greater burdens as a result of the economic crisis, upon the backs of the Native workers. This came out sharply at the Imperial conference in London² and led Hertzog on his return to South Africa to make many significant speeches with regards to unity and cooperation especially of the whites against the Natives.

Imports from South Africa were tending ^{to} drop by £ 19 million for 1930; exports, excluding diamonds one of the main export commodities, dropped by £ 6 million the drop in the price of the main agricultural products up to the end of the year was steady – maize, wool, hides and coal. Diamond production due to the crisis in the USA which was the main buyer, has been extremely bad.

The growing unemployment, affecting the white workers ~~extremely~~, is worsening the conditions of the native workers in that way that they are being replaced by white workers in every province – for road buildings etc. At Lichtenburg white workers have expressed a willingness to work on the roads for the same wage as the natives. Up to³ the near end of the year the workers in the diamond mines had dropped from 8600 to 7775. In some regions all the small diamond mines have completely closed down and all the workers discharged. In Capetown and Durban unemployment steadily increases. At Port Elizabeth, 70% of the unemployed are unskilled workers and therefore⁴ largely natives. In one instance a proposal has been made that coloured workers accept a reduction in wages of 10 shillings per month or be replaced by whites.

In the mine regions tribal wars have broken out, evidently inspired by bosses to offset struggle on the part of the natives against their conditions. At Durban on 16 December several natives were killed in the Dingaans Day Demonstration led by the Communist Party and during which time over 3,000 passes and tax receipts were burnt throughout South Africa.⁵

[...]

In this situation and in the line with the task of popularising the Hamburg Conference towards further stimulating the struggles of the Negro workers, the following has been done: a) letters have been sent to the members of the

1. International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers.

2. Imperial Conference – assembly of representatives of the self-governing members of the British Empire held every fourth year from 1907 until World War II. Discussed the issues of defence and economic problems. Its decisions had no legal effect but were of considerable influence.

3. There is an illegible crossed-out word after 'to'.

4. There is an illegible crossed-out word after 'therefore'.

5. See footnote 1 to document 73, footnote 1 to document 80 and footnote 2 to document 90 (all in vol. I). A line in dark blue pencil is drawn in the left margin opposite the three last paragraphs starting from 'Imports...'.
 1930

Executive and the delegates who attended the Conference outlining our plan of work, asking for reports on the situation of the workers in their country, the struggles of the workers and outlining tasks for struggle against unemployment; b) a letter was sent to comrade Nzula of South Africa and Comrade Small of West Africa with directions for organising a sub-committee of the Conference and for coordinating the workers organisations in their territories; c) a letter was also sent to the Negro Department of the TUUL⁶ in the USA concerning the same question and the establishment of contact with the West Indies; letters were sent also to the various organisations represented at the Conference as well as to the C.P.'s of the USA and South Africa asking their cooperation in the work of the Committees; letters were sent to organisations in East Africa, West Indies, West Africa and USA that were not represented at the Conference; d) a brief summary of our plan of work was sent to the press.⁷

[...]

4. Results Obtained

South Africa. We have a communication from Nzula, a member of the Executive of our Committee, stating that they had gone ahead with the plans outlined in my letter to him, that they were in agreement with the setting up of a sub-committee in South Africa.⁸ He says for example in his letter: 'The Federation⁹ is conducting the greatest part of its activities to the organisation of the Negro masses and for that reason I think it just the body to form a sub-committee of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro workers'. I have written him however that according to my previous letter that the Federation should be the leading force in forming a wide united front Committee of workers and organisations outside of the Federation for popularising the Hamburg Conference and that especially that this Committee should be built from below of unorganised workers and also for extending its activities into territories¹⁰ outside the South African Union in order¹¹ to built up wider contacts for us.

The letter from Nzula was encouraging despite the fact that it takes a long time for us to get news from South Africa. It at least assures us of some contact. He informs me that further information and more details will be sent later. We receive here regularly the South African Worker. I am organising a round about way of maintaining contact: through chinese seamen who regularly go there from here, as well as sending mail by reliable Comrades to be posted from

6. Trade Union Unity League – an umbrella trade union organisation created in the USA in 1929 by the CPUSA.

7. A line in dark blue pencil is in the left margin opposite this paragraph.

8. There are two illegible crossed-out lines after 'Africa'.

9. African Federation of Trade Unions.

10. A line in purple pencil is drawn in the left margin opposite this part of this paragraph starting from 'He says...'

11. There is an illegible crossed-out word before 'order'.

DOCUMENT 3

points inside the British Empire, such as West Africa, with British postage, etc. hoping that under these circumstances we may be able to get materials through without arousing suspicion as of mail coming directly from.

This will require a well worked out method of contacts and addresses. I have already written our comrades in South Africa with regards to meeting ships and also asking for suggestions as to how best they can establish contacts with seamen when they arrive at Capetown.¹²

[...]

Ford
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RGASPI, 534/3/669/93-6. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 534/3/669/93-101.

Original in English.

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12. A line in dark blue pencil is drawn in the left margin opposite the three last paragraphs starting from 'Results Obtained...'.  
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