

press on the express assurance that the C.P. is not interested in the press!), resulting in the collapse of our press and consequently of our weekly paper, the central activity of our party, for we cannot afford to print our paper elsewhere. But even if our manager could be replaced by another without disillusioning the public as to the proprietorship, the second obstacle is that he would of course take his dismissal unkindly, and he has in fact declared that if dismissed he will at once sue for his £400. (which indeed he wants paid even if not dismissed), and we cannot risk our plant being sold in execution of a judgement for this sum, nor can we raise the money or anything near it.

Matters are thus dragging on at a deadlock, and meanwhile the I.C.U. has naturally taken up a hostile attitude owing to the refusal to print its paper, although other causes (counter-revolutionary influences, etc.), are certainly contributing to that hostility, and this particular grievance is to a certain extent being merely exploited to excuse that hostility. Nevertheless it is clearly our urgent duty to remove any such excuse.¹

Apart from pressure by all other creditors, therefore, we very urgently need £400. in order to be able to pay off and replace² the manager as soon as we can discover a suitable successor and a suitable occasion for installing him without disclosing the true position to the public (even then we still run a risk of the ex-manager himself disclosing it out of revenge, but we do not think he will do this).

We, therefore, ask you for a loan of £1000 (one thousand pounds) which we would hope to repay by instalments spread over five years beginning from January 1928, out of the profits of the press.³

Will you put this before the Committee and advise us as soon as possible whether and to what extent you can help?

In reply please communicate with our 'representative' here:-

Mr. A E KAHN
~~~~~  
Box 5778  
~~~~~  
Johannesburg
~~~~~

Yours fraternally,  
THE COMMUNIST PARTY (SOUTH AFRICA)<sup>4</sup>

S.P. Bunting  
~~~~~  
Secretary.

RGASPI, 495/64/48/1-4.

Original in English.

Typed on the letterhead of the CPSA.

Stamped: 3629 - 30 DEC. 1926

(in German)

1. There is a single line in pencil in the left margin opposite this paragraph.
2. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite the part of this sentence beginning from 'very urgently ...').
3. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite the first two lines of this paragraph.
4. Stamp.

**Report by J. La Guma to Anglo-American Secretariat, ECCI,
10 March 1927¹ (Extract)**

INFORMATION MATERIAL ON SOUTH AFRICA.
PREPARED BY COMRADE LA GUMA MARCH 10TH 1927

THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF SOUTH AFRICA.

1) The South African Party - The opposition in the House of Assembly. Led by General Smuts. The Imperialist and high finance Party, supported mainly by big business, English speaking bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.

2) The Nationalist Party governing in coalition with South African Labour Party. Led by General Hertzog. Predominantly Dutch or Afrikaner, as they are usually termed. Composed of Dutch Farmers and landowners. Derives its support mainly from rural areas.

3) The South African Labor Party. Led by Colonel Cresswell, and built upon individual white (only) membership of both English and Dutch speaking white workers in industrial centres. A recent proposal to organise coloured (as

1. James La Guma, the first coloured member of the CPSA to visit Moscow, prepared this report for the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Comintern. La Guma travelled to Europe as the CPSA delegate to the Congress of Oppressed Nations organised by the Comintern in February 1927 in Brussels to mobilise support among national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Then he visited Moscow on the invitation of the Anglo-American Secretariat to inform the Secretariat about the South African situation. While in Moscow, he apparently prepared this report and participated in discussions on South Africa at several meetings: two meetings of the Secretariat held on 10 and 16 March; a meeting of Politsecretariat of the ECCI held on 11 March; a meeting of the Presidium of the ECCI held on 16 March. The meeting on 10 March resolved to establish regular contacts between the CPSA and the CPGB and worked out a short resolution that was to be presented to the meeting of the Politsecretariat the next day. The meeting on 11 March decided not to consider the resolution and instead asked La Guma (who was in a hurry to get back to South Africa) to prolong his stay to participate at the meeting of the Presidium on 16 March. A further meeting of the Anglo-American Secretariat on 16 March discussed the resolution but was unable to reach an agreement about it. It also discussed 'practical instructions to be given to Com. La Guma (verbally)' (see document 43, vol. D). Finally, the meeting of the Presidium decided against any resolution on South Africa except the one connected with the expulsion of communists from the ICU (see document 42, vol. D). Apparently, La Guma left for South Africa immediately after this.

These details are important for it was during La Guma's stay in Moscow that the slogan of independent native republic as the Comintern's line for South Africa emerged.

For minutes of the meeting on 10 March see: RGASPI, 495/72/24/7; for the minutes of the meeting on 16 March see: RGASPI, 495/72/24/9. Important details about these meetings are found in Petrovsky's Memorandum to the Presidium of the ECCI (document 43, vol. D) and in his report: RGASPI, 495/64/64/1-2.

distinct from native) workers into its ranks is finding favour. Efforts are at present being made in that direction.

4) The Constitutional Democratic Party. One member in House of Assembly (M. Alexander) who has solid support of Jewish community in his constituency.

POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS OF NON EUROPEANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

1) Indian National Congress membership derived from petty traders. Communist Party has no influence in this organisation.

2) Chinese Kuomintang Party² on very good terms with Communist Party. Sent strong fraternal greetings to recent Party Congress.

3) African National Congress (South African Aborigines). Is representative of all South African Native Tribes. A large but loosely organised organisation. Several native comrades belong to this organisation, but no nuclei have been organised within it to my knowledge. Communist Party steadily gaining influence with this organisation. The CP also greatly assisted them with dispatch of delegates to Brussels Conference.³

Brussels Conference. From statement made by the Vice President of African National Congress at Brussels Conference to this effect 'We have been a long while looking for our true friends in South Africa and I think we have found them in the Communist Party' and from other conversations it appears that the C. will have his support within this organisation.

INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS OF NON EUROPEAN WORKERS.

The Industrial Commercial Workers Union (ICU) founded in Cape Town in 1919. At present has 32 branches spread over the Union of South Africa, with a membership of approximately 45,000. Its principal achievement was the procuring of a 50% increase of wages for the Dockworkers of Cape Town. This was obtained after a strike of fairly large magnitude. Its original militant policy has been very much diluted by the reactionary majority on its Executive, and strong Communist influence within this organisation has been responsible for the recent destabilisation – the expulsion of Communist officials and a further recommendation to the Annual Congress 'that no member of the ICU shall be a member of the Communist Party'. This act is totally at variance with the policy of the rank and file who are essentially militant and have on several occasions

2. No information on this party could be found. It could be a branch of Kuomintang, the party in China headed by Chiang Kai Shek and allied at this time with the Communist Party of China.
3. Congress of Oppressed Nations (see footnote 1) was attended by J. Gumede, at that time – Vice President of the ANC.

in different parts of the country demonstrated the fact by lightning strikes, demonstrations etc., without consulting the official leadership. Congresses of this organisation are held Annually in April.

Nucleus of the CP function within this organisation. In fact there has been a concentration of the Party's efforts upon this organisation to the exclusion of all others.

COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANISATION. The 400 members of the Party spread about the 4 provinces of the Union. The bulk of its membership being concentrated in the two cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg. The Johannesburg branch, where the Central Executive is situated being the larger.

The Johannesburg aggregate comprises three groups: 1) Central 2) Ferrieratown 3) Jeppes. A further No. 4 group Doornfontein was in process of formation. These are area groups. Members of these groups meet in their respective areas once per week when reports are taken from individual members, discussed and decided upon. The Organ of the Party (South African Worker) is also distributed at these meetings to be sold in warehouses and factories as the case may be.

[...]

RGASPI, 495/64/66/67-8.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 1) ORG. DEPARTMENT (in German)

2) Return to Secretary after completion

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Statement of J. La Guma to Presidium, ECCI, 16 March 1927

PRESIDIUM, MARCH 16 1927¹

Comrade LAGUME:

Chairman, comrades: No doubt you have already been informed that the Communist Party of South Africa is a very small one compared to many others

1. According to Minutes no. 88 of the Meeting of the Presidium of the ECCI on 16 March 1927 (RGASPI, 495/2/71a/120-1) members of the Presidium present during La Guma's statement were: Bukharin, Piatnitsky, Petrovsky, Lozovsky, Idelson, Manuilsky, Reesema, Duncan, Pepper, Katayama, Angaretis, Stepanov, Stasova, Humbert-Droz, Schatzkin, Bela Kun, Murphy, Treint, Kachan, Vasiliev, Shubin, Abramov.