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| 1) The Work of the RA ¹ of South Africa | - Com. Rio |
| 2) Draft letter on the reorganisation of the work in England. | - Com. Patterson |
| 2) Draft letter on the reorganisation of the work in USA. | - Com. Jones |

Please make arrangements to attend this meeting. We are enclosing written materials.

Comradely yours
H. Stassova

Enclosure: 1

RGASPI, 495/64/151/23.

Original in English.

Typed.

56

**Report of M. Kotane to Anglo-American Secretariat,
31 December 1935**

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE RED AID SOUTH AFRICA. TO POINT I.
ON THE AGENDA CLOSED MEETING OF THE SECRETARIAT ECIRA¹
DECEMBER 31, 1935, 4:30 P.M.

In order to understand the 'Ikaka' as it is, it is essential to give a brief account of its activities since its inception.

The Ikaka was formed in February, 1931. It was formed primarily as a defense and relief organisation. At that time it succeeded in obtaining the affiliation of one organisation – the 'Independent African National Congress' and a very few individual members. Rightly or wrongly we soon lost our affiliated members, and the Ikaka became a sect composed of a few Communists.

In 1932–33 Comrades were charged with the task of recruiting members for Ikaka and plans were made to make it a mass organisation. Figures were given to be fulfilled within a specified time and they were fulfilled in so far as they were but figures. The real people – human beings we did not get into the

Doc. 55

1. 'RA' – Red Aid, i.e. IRA's South African branch, Ikaka la Basebenzi.

Doc. 56

1. Executive Committee of the International Red Aid.

organisation. Sometimes there were even names and addresses but to get the people to answer for these names was an unsuccessful effort.

Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that we worked chiefly among the Native unemployed workers, who, owing to the pass laws, are constantly being transferred from town to town and back to the village. Or owing to the fact that the people saw no difference between the Ikaka and the Communist Party of South Africa. But whatever might be the cause, the Ikaka was never a mass organisation. More so was this the case in the period between 1931 to the first half of 1933 than it is today.

Today we have a membership of over 500 for the whole Union of South Africa, distributed along the following centres:-

Johannesburg, Cape Town, Brakpan, Cradock, Tarkastad, Krugersdorp, Randfontein, Pretoria and individuals here and there. The majority of this membership is concentrated in Johannesburg. We were only able to recruit this group of 500 at the campaigns against the 'Pick Up' Vans² and beer raids³ in the native locations.

In these campaigns, the Ikaka committed a big deviation by promising to fight the 'Pick Up', Passes and beer raids both in the law courts and otherwise. We promised to defend the victims of these punitive expeditions before the capitalist court. It was only after the instructions we received from the International Red Aid that we changed our line in propaganda. Masses were just then flocking into the ranks of the Ikaka thinking that the Ikaka will defend them against the police brutality – that Ikaka will fight their cases when they are arrested for making or brewing Kaffir beer,⁴ by the Pick up and when arrested for Special Passes. This we quickly stopped and the influx into the organisation also stopped.

We stopped the promise for legal aid to the victims of the punitive expeditions and concentrated our propaganda and agitation on the following:

Ikaka defends the workers when they struggle against wage-cuts, evictions, high rents, and unemployment, it fight for government relief to the unemployed and the poor. It defends those fighters who are arrested in the struggle for National freedom...

Ikaka 'believes in protest demonstrations, deputations, etc. believes in the united struggle of the people against the oppressors'.

The Ikaka carried out many campaigns among which are the following:

Scottsboro, Anti-'Pick-Up' and Police brutalities, Thaelmann Release, Rakosi, Anti-Evictions, Roux's, Austrian victims and sent £11.11 and some clothing; Brakpan and for unemployed relief. We held many protest meetings

2. See footnote 3 to document 34, vol. II. 'Pick up vans' – Police vans.

3. 'Beer raids' – police raids to African locations with the purpose of uprooting beer brewing by African women. See footnote 1 to document 80, vol. I.

4. 'Kaffir beer' – African beer brewed everywhere in rural areas but outlawed in cities. See also footnote 1 to document 80, vol. I.

against various things among which are the following: a) Against Italian invasion of Abyssinia b) the shooting of the native strikers in Northern Rhodesia and c) Against the shooting of Natives and Europeans in the Union of South Africa.⁵

Resolutions passed at these meeting were forwarded to the proper quarter – to the authorities concerned. Many deputations were organised to interview the Native Affairs department about the food and passes for the unemployed. We got some food and an extension of the period to seek work. There are many insignificant individual cases which the Ikaka won for Natives (Negroes).

In a way we did fulfil our obligations in that we defended many toilers, supported, though in a limited way their dependants and have financially contributed to the workers strike funds.

Finances.

Financially the organisation is in a very bad position. It is living from hand to mouth. Membership dues are very irregular and some workers are cut of employment. Yet there is a constant growth as far as the demand for our obligation is concerned. At the beginning of the year 1934 we only had 1/2 on hand. We succeeded in getting about £137 by the end of the year. This, as everybody will agree, is nothing compared with the demands of the organisation and therefore the work of the organisation has suffered.

There have been occasions when we were called out by workers in the outside places but could not go because the money was not there. Through lack of funds we have missed many important opportunities (Indwe, Bloemfontein, Cradock, etc.). This question of finance is a fetter hampering the work of the organisation. With the further growth of the struggle in South Africa, this problem, if not solved, will in turn cause the fall of the organisation. It is of no use telling the people that you are defending them or supporting them when actually they know that you are not! Thus lack of funds is an obstacle in the way of Ikaka. There are some obstacles besides this but I shall not mention them here.

Shortcomings.

a) The organisation is almost a Native organisation, about 95% of its membership is Native.

b) We have not been able to set up groups and when established to get them functioning.

c) Our Campaigns are conducted in very haphazard way. Our campaigns are not well planned and properly carried out.

d) We have never understood the instructions of the I.R.A. correctly; and

5. Kotane lumps together local South African events and protest campaigns in Europe supported by the Comintern. Some of the local references are unclear, e.g. 'Roux's' and 'the shooting of Natives and Europeans in the Union of South Africa'. For some other issues on the list see: footnote 4 to document 14, footnote 4 to document 20, footnote 3 to document 34 (all – vol. II).

e) We are very sectarian in our agitation and propaganda. For example though we adopted a decision in the National Committee to approach reformist organisations and the Native churches for joint action we somewhat defeated this decision of not seeing to it that it was properly carried into effect.

Further there is a break in our communication with Headquarters.⁶ We have received no letters from the I.R.A. since, or about October 1934. Letters were written to us, as I have seen from the copies here but the Ikaka did not receive them, though they are received in South Africa.

Since there are fundamental issues involved, regarding the future of the organisation, which will be discussed soon I refrain for the time being to say anything further until the matter is properly dealt with.

R. Gurlleigh.

RGASPI, 495/64/151/24-6.

The original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Inscriptions: 1) Gur/ew/6

26/XII/35

2) Ben Randolph.

6. There is a typed-over word after 'Headquarters'.