

in her wedding dress when granny gave her a hit with a broom stick from that day mother was the outcast of the family.

When she divorced father she married another detribalised Basuto.

Granny who educated those three white sons of her including mother's sister took care of them and shared her property with them only. Thus leaving mother out the 'will'.

Mother who became invalid when I was 13 became worse from year to year. During this time she broke her right leg after which she was laid up in bed for seven years before she died without putting her foot of the bed. During this time she broke her left arm and one of her right ribs.

Thus I was left the only dark child in the family from mother's side. Mother's three brothers who were in the army in the 1914 war who had a European education live amongst Europeans receive European wages and are entirely strangers to me.

RGASPI, 495/279/65 (Personal file: B. Henderson).

Original in English.

Handwritten.

Inscriptions: 1) Found in Henderson's room after her departure in 1936. A. Brigader  
2) to personal file.

## 58

### Autobiography of L. Bach,

10 February 1936<sup>1</sup>

a) I was born in 1906 in Latvia. My father at that time had a leather shop. Later the family emigrated to Smorgon (now Poland) where we lived till 1914. In 1914 with the approach of the front we emigrated to Rostov on Don where we lived till 1920. From 1920 till 1929 we lived in Latvia and from the end of 1929 in S. Africa. My parents were well to do people and the conditions of life in the family were good. In Rostov on Don, and in Riga, also in S. Africa my father was a factory owner.

I began to work in 1928 when in Latvia when our family was impoverished. Have worked on the docks and in a leather factory. Prior to that I studied being provided for by the family. Haven't served in the army and have not taken part in the civil war. Also none of the family and nearest relatives have served in the army or taken part in the civil war. Neither of them has been in any government service and do not belong to any political parties. My nearest

---

1. Most probably, Bach wrote this document soon after his arrival at KUTV. It is obvious that he was handed a list of questions for guidance.

relatives (with the exception of the father) – brothers etc. are employees. I am single and have no dependants.

b) Studied in high school and finished it. In 1928 entered University in Riga and the pedagogic institute but didn't continue studies owing to lack of means. As far as Party political education is concerned have studied in the KUTV of which I am still a student. Prior to this I have studied independently reading book on Marxism-Leninism – have read a number of books of Engels, Lenin, Marx, Stalin, Plekhanov. (Anti-Dühring, Origin of family, What to be done? Left wing Communism, Foundations of Leninism, etc.). But real studying have done only in KUTV. I have experience of propagandist and literary work – worked as a propagandist in Latvia also in S. Africa and participated in the work of the Party press in S. Africa. I know the following languages – English, Russian, Latvian, Jewish, also know to a small extent – German and Boer.

c) Before I joined the C.P., I did not belong to any other Party. My political life starts with joining the C.P. of Latvia (in 1929), prior to which I worked in the revolutionary trade unions in Latvia (Leather workers and Butchery Unions) and in the students' Communist organisation. Have joined the Latvian C.P. in 1929 and have worked in Riga as a propagandist at illegal mass meetings, factory gates meetings. Have also done open propaganda work in the above named Unions and the student organisation and also in the Jewish Workers' Club in Riga. ~~In 1929 our family Since the Latvian Party is~~ Have also worked in my Party nucleus.

~~Since the Latvian Party was illegal we had no membership cards.~~ Of the names of the Comrades who know about my work in Latvia, I remember Com. Aaron Leitman, who, I believe, know in Moscow.

At the end of 1929 our family due to bankruptcy left for S. Africa. I also left without the permission of the Party. Upon arrival to S. Africa I joined the Cape-Town branch of the C.P. Not knowing the language and being in a country district I could not participate actively in the Party work. At the beginning of 1931 I broke off all the relations with my family (because of political differences), left my job and came to C. Town to do full time Party work. Have worked in the C. Town District Committee till July 1931 when I was sent as a delegate from C. Town to the C.C. Plenum in Johannesburg. At the instructions of the C.C. I remained to work in Johannesburg.

At that July Plenum I was elected to the C.C. of which I am still a member. At the instructions of the C.C. I have worked in various places of S. Africa, predominantly in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Have done mostly organising work among the native workers and peasants – in Durban at the docks and railways and in the native villages round Durban; in Johannesburg – amongst the native miners, white miners, bakers and garment workers and also amongst the unemployed. Have led and participated in a number of strikes (Capetown garment workers, native firemen in Durban, railway workers in Durban District, chrystalisers strike in Johannesburg) and unemployed

demonstrations. Have also worked in the Party press (Umsebenzi) and in white reformist trade unions (Miners, Bakers, Garment workers).

As regards the inner Party position have fought against the line of Bunting who denied the national and agrarian character of the revolution – the slogan of ind. native Republic – and for the programme laid down in the C.I. letters of 1930 and 1931. In 1933 I raised a number of points of disagreements with majority of C.C. on questions of United front, the tasks of the Party in the antiimperialist movement, the interpretation of the slogan Independent native Republic. These questions are enumerated in my statements to the P.B., copies of which I have forwarded in 1934 to the C.I. These questions are now being discussed by the C.I. Commission of the Anglo American Secretariat. Have not been expelled from the party and have not received any reprimands.

During my work in the Party, I have participated in 3 C.C. plenums (1931, 1932, 1933) of the C.P.S.A. Have also participated in the VII Congress of the C.I.

d) I have never been a member of any factory committees. Am a member of Leather workers 'Union in Johannesburg and of the I.L.D. Have organised and was in charge of the T.U. oppositions in the Bakers Union and Garment Workers Unions (1931–33) and the rank and file Miners Reform Movement (1934).

Have contacts with the workers of these industries as well as with the workers in Durban amongst who I worked as stated above.

Haven't been a member of Parliament or Municipal Council.

e) Have been arrested in Capetown in 1931 for leading the Cape Garment Workers strike. I was at that time a Party functionary. Was tried and sentenced to a seven days hard labour and released after serving the sentence.

In prison with me was another functionary of the Party – La Guma who was sentenced for the same matter and for a similar period. Wasn't tortured. Whilst in prison it was impossible to study.

g) 1928–29 – did temporary work at the docks in Riga as a sampler of wood. Also worked in father's leather factory. 1930 – worked in Leather factory in S. Africa (Paarl). Later in 1931 my father became owner of the factory. Since 1931 I am being supported by the Party.

h) In addition to Com. A. Leitman of Latvia, ~~all the leading~~ the period of my party activity can be confirmed by all the leading comrades of the C.P.S.A.

L. Bach  
(Eugene)

10 February 1936

### Supplementary Questions

My father was born in Latvia. Prior to the revolution he lived in Latvia (Rezshica), Smorgon and Rostov on Don. After the revolution – till 1920 in Rostov, from 1920–29 in Riga, from 1929 in S. Africa.

He was owned leather factories in Smorgon, Rostov on Don, Riga and S. Africa. Was arrested by the Soviet Authorities in Rostov on Don in 1920 for, I believe, speculation. Was sentenced to deportation to Achagelsk,<sup>2</sup> but the sentence was afterwards changed for deportation to Latvia. The rest of the family left, I believe, in terms of the peace treaty.

During Soviet Latvia I was in Russia. Have never been approached by the police to work for them neither in Latvia nor in S. Africa.

L. Bach (Eugene)

10 February 1936

RGASPI, 495/279/30/12-14

Original in English.<sup>3</sup>

Handwritten.

# 59

## **Draft Resolution Prepared by ECCI for Adoption by 9th Congress of CPSA,<sup>1</sup> 25 February 1936**

### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE INNER PARTY SITUATION IN THE CP

Strictly confidential

The 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of South African wholly and entirely subscribes to the decisions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CI.

On the basis of the fact that the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CI put before the Communists in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the necessity of working to form an anti-imperialist people's front, as one of the most important tasks, and taking into account the growth of the fascist danger in South Africa and the big changes that have taken place all over the country among the workers, the poor whites, the Native peoples, etc., the Party Congress

#### **Doc. 58**

2. Archangel.
3. The archives contain Bach's autobiography in Russian dated 3 November 1935 and signed 'L.Yuzhin'. (RGASPI, 495/279/30/11)

#### **Doc. 59**

1. Both the Russian original and the translation were, most probably, prepared by the Secretariat of A. Marty. The English text was obviously intended as an official document of the 9th party congress.