

Unions were declining, now, since he has left, much life is shown by all. The following is our membership: Laundry Workers 800, Furniture Workers 600, Clothing Workers 400, Motor Drivers 200, Bakers 300, Transport 200, Food & Drink 100, Meat & Cold Storage 30, Dairy 60, Steel Workers Union, a new Union, 118. I may say that I intend to set up Committees in the Mines, but at present I am worried by the financial question. Kadalie, Ballinger, are always trying to smash or to capture our Trade Unions, but so far have failed. Comrade, I am busy night and day and my sole desire is to get all these Trade Unions 100% revolutionary. I wish to hear much about the R.I.L.U. and the Agitprop. Re-students I have no hope of getting a Pass-port from this Government. ??Try.

The slogan should be considered immediately. Those who pretend to be for same are only afraid that the whole of the C.P.S.A. might be off from the C.I. All the Trade Unions demand 'Workers & Peasants Republic for Africa', not a white or black Republic. Show the letter to Losovsky, Bucharin, Stalin and those of the Agitprop. Tell them and Willie³ to write to me.

Yours for a speedy revolution,
(signed) T.W. Thibedi (Native)

RGASPI, 495/64/80/59-60.⁴

Original in English.

Typed. Corrections by hand.

70

Letter from A. Nzula to R.P. Arnot, ECCI, 19 March 1929

Johannesburg
19th March 1929.

Mr. R. Page Arnot,
Room 59, E.C.C.I.,
Moscow.

Dear Comrade,

In reply to your letter of the 26 January 1929 re appointment of a Negro Comrade in South Africa to assist the Negro Bureau in the work ~~so far as~~ in

3. 'Willie' could be Willie Kalk who was doing a course at the Lenin School in Moscow at that time.

4. A slightly different version of the same text is found at: RGASPI, 495/64/80/61-2.

South Africa, the Congo etc. I am instructed by my Executive to inform you that Comrade A. Nzula, assistant-general Secty¹ of the Communist Party in S.A. and actg.² general secretary.

I shall write soon and send in my first installment of articles.

Yours Fraternally,
A. Nzula
Actg. General Secty.

RGASPI, 495/64/85/37.

Original in English.

Typed on the letterhead of the CPSA.

Stamped: CONTROL

Inscriptions: 1) Negro Bureau file

(in Russian)

No answer

(in English)

2) Received when?

By me on 23rd April.

Did it come through ordinary post?

R.P.A.

(in English)

3) AngloSax.

(in Russian)

71

Report of B. Idelson to ECCI, August 1929 (Extract)¹

COMRADE L'S REPORT ON SOUTH AFRICA AUGUST 1929

[...]

Although hatred of the white oppressor is common to all the sections of the Negro population, there is as yet no class carrying on a consistent struggle against the oppressor. This hatred is extended to all the classes of the white population: the white proletariat has not yet shown its sympathy to the black population in any way, and the CP is only beginning to win its

Doc. 70

1. Secretary.
2. Acting.

Doc. 71

1. The archives contain both the original Russian manuscript of this report and a typed copy (RGASPI, 495/19/189/2-17; RGASPI, 495/64/82/1-31). One typed copy of the Russian original was sent directly to Stalin on 31 August 1929 (RGASPI, 495/64/82/1-31). This copy has an inscription in Russian: 'To com. Stalin. Confidential, 31.VIII.29'.

sympathy. The privileged upper stratum exists in the form of the Negro intelligentsia, very weak numerically and, on the whole, backward in its political development. It was at first the leader of the struggle against whites, but was very soon converted into a tame opposition. There are of course, even now native intellectuals, for instance, teachers, in direct touch with the mood of the masses, and themselves true to the traditions of hatred to the whites. But all of them are, in some form or other, engaged in government service, they have had an English education in English schools and, apart from fear, they are all the time under the influence of the corrupting policy of British imperialism, the government apparatus and the church. Their vacillations are due to the fact that they are not interpreters of the will of an already firmly established class (bourgeois, working class or peasant). Because the Negro proletariat is developing and growing more rapidly than the bourgeois (which practically does not yet exist), it will become the class which will lead the national-liberation struggle and will bring many intellectuals to its side. But hitherto this absence of a leading class in the struggle has affected the character of the national organisation. In this situation, the bourgeoisie thinks it will be able to manage just with a thin layer of a native bureaucracy. Into its subjugation-apparatus, it includes chiefs of tribes, bestowing on them illusory administrative functions, – in the Transkei² territory a national council (Buncha)³ has been established which has no attributes of power whatever, black priests are given every possible encouragement and a staff of paid Negro politicians is being gradually selected. The Chamber of Mines has even a special newspaper in the vernacular, 'Umtatele Va Bantu' (The People's Lawyer)⁴ which is run on lines in keeping with the interests of the mining industry and British imperialism. Of the national organisations, the African National Congress (ANC) reflects the above-mentioned influences more clearly than any favourable complexion by fine words about national liberation. Considering that at the conventions of the African National Congress, chiefs (i.e. of tribes), white bishops imperialistically minded Britishers set the tune, one can well imagine what kind of 'progressive' role the ANC can play now. Its 'left' section and leaders (of the Gumede type) are entirely in the leading strings of these people, and are of some use only when oppositional language is required against the government and the Herzog Party. This explains the insignificance if the influence and popularity of the African National Congress.

There is practically the same story in regard to the national 'labour' organisations. The organisation established by Kadali, the ICW (Union of industrial and commercial workers) was the first attempt to organise the

2. Transkei.

3. Bunga.

4. The correct transliteration and translation: 'Umteteli wa Bantu' ('People's Voice').

black proletariat. But even this organisation did not spring up as a labour organisation but rather as a general-nationalist organisation, carrying on agitation in a general-nationalist spirit. This explains the extraordinary influx of members in the ICW. That Kadali developed very rapidly into an adventurer and that nearly all the leaders of the 'union' followed suit, is of course due to the fact that the Negro section of the working class is not yet a force capable of producing from its midst (or attracting from the midst of other social groups, for instance, the intellectuals), steadfast leaders with a definite ideology.

RGASPI, 495/64/82/73–5. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/64/82/44–75.

Original in English (Comintern translation of the Russian original text).

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 4694 – 4.IX.1929

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**Note by B.I. Idelson,
10 August 1929**

10 August 1929

Dear Com. ...¹

Despite the fact that the report² came out long, it could only³ general.

Please inform me if comrades who deal with these issues have questions.

I have not written in the report what my activities were because I pointed to the shortcomings in work.⁴ My task was to improve these shortcomings, as well as to carry out the main instruction, i.e. to check the implementation of the resolution of the C.I. The latter is now being implemented, of course, still at an early stage

Louis.

1. The name of the addressee is cut out in the original.

2. This document is an accompanying notice to the original Russian manuscript of Idelson's report (see document 71 for an extract from the English translation of this report).

3. [be?] Illegible word after 'only' in the original.

4. Most probably, Idelson means the work of the CPSA.