

petition, but to the enormous number of signatures which it is hoped to obtain.

We need hardly say that there is NO OBLIGATION WHATEVER ON ANYONE TO JOIN THE LEAGUE or pay any subscription or donation to it or to buy its badge. Signing the petition is one thing and joining the League another. It is, however, desired that the League shall be a real and permanent body, and, as you will see, the constitution provides for membership, local branches, etc., as well as for affiliation of other bodies.

The League will have important work before it for years to come and will need all the strength derived from a rank and file membership, for, as you will see, it is a democratically controlled body, especially with regard to its finances. You will therefore, we hope, invite anyone who has signed the petition to become a member of the League also. The subscription, 1/- per year, is put designedly low in the hope of attracting thousands to join. Every individual member on paying his first shilling becomes entitled to the League's badge, and we send herewith ..... badges accordingly, which you will please issue only against payment of the shilling in cash.

The subscriptions (i.e. proceeds of sale of badges) will constitute the only funds of the League, and will be used solely for furthering its objects and in particular for sending out organisers to canvass for signatures for the petition and to hold meetings. The more members the larger the funds available for this work.

If a branch of the League is formed in your locality, half the amount of the subscription will be retained by the branch for these purposes, only the other half being sent to headquarters. If no branch is formed the whole amount should be remitted to headquarters. We ask you to make a point of seeing that remittances to headquarters are made promptly by Postal Order (payable to S.P. Bunting) as soon as £1 is due to headquarters (after deducting necessary postage, cost of Postal Order and other petty disbursements).

Please write the letter M in the margin of the petition in front of the name of every signatory who becomes a member of the League. If a branch is formed the branch secretary should copy out from the petition the names and addresses of these members. These will make up the branch membership roll.

The holding of mass meetings, demonstrations, etc., must necessarily be left to local effort by yourself and your friends, but you will appreciate the tremendous value of the simultaneous and unanimous demonstrations on Dingaan's Day in particular, to which all other meetings held should lead up as a climax; and we ask you to make all necessary arrangements accordingly in your district. Of course it will be at meetings that signatures will be most quickly obtained.

Please advise us as soon as you require a further supply of petition forms and badges.

In the hope that you will see in this arduous but important work the very best service that can be rendered at the present time to the subject people of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

We remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
A. NZULA.  
E.R. ROUX.  
Joint Secretaries.

RGASPI, 495/64/85/12.

Original in English.

Printed.

Stamped: 3900 - 27.NOV.1929

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**Report of D.G. Wolton to ECCL,  
20 September 1929**

REPORT ON SOUTH AFRICA

September 20th, 1929

Shortly after the conclusion of the 6th World Congress of the C.I. the 7th Annual Conference of the C.P.S.A. was held in Johannesburg.

At this conference the new Party line, as approved by the C.I., was laid before the delegates after a wide, though incomplete, preparatory discussion by all Party organs.

After the opening of the Conference, the Credentials Committee reported the presence of 18 native delegates and 10 white delegates, representing an aggregate party membership of 3,000.

During the discussion on the C.I. resolution, which lasted for a whole day, practically all the delegates participated. The whites for the most part opposed the resolution, partly through unclear understanding and the rest through a social-democratic outlook. The native delegates, whilst not following all the intellectual hair-splitting of some of the white delegates, supported the resolution on race grounds. Ultimately the resolution was put, and only four votes were cast against. Thus it was carried by a big majority.

3. There is a single line in pen in the left and right margins opposite this sentence in the original.



Since the Conference it can be said that some of those against the resolution have come over and now support the Party line.

The 7th Annual Conference of the C.P.S.A. was a big advance on the previous conferences, chiefly because of the developing participation of natives and because it revealed the crystallising of the new Party leadership in the form of a number of capable leading native elements.

The level of discussion was theoretically low, and many delegates fresh from the back veld<sup>1</sup> participated in discussions which, though halting and unclear, were alive with practical everyday experience of the struggle. A number of the native delegates were women and the conference revealed the fact that the women were playing their part in the forefront of the struggle and showed equal heroism and determination and courage in the daily fights. Many of the delegates had come great distances in order to be present at the Conference and their arrival was made the occasion of a big demonstration of over a thousand workers in procession.

The working class of Johannesburg followed the proceedings with considerable interest and attention.

The most important factor that emerged from the Conference was that the natives as such were on the move and commencing to exercise their proportionate functions in the life of the Party.

A native assistant general secretary was appointed, who, shortly after the conference was called upon to largely take control of the Party machine in Johannesburg,<sup>2</sup> and this step has been responsible for the crystallising of a fairly strong section of native workers in the Party operating with a conscious responsibility.

With the close of the Party Conference, the Parliamentary election campaign became imminent, and it was decided to contest two seats in Cape Province constituencies (where native voters exist) and Comrade Bunting for Tembuland and Comrade Wolton for Cape Flats were selected by the Party. These two campaigns were conducted for approximately three months, during which time important gains were made by the Party. (A copy of short report made by Comrade Wolton to the Executive Bureau of the C.P.S.A. is herewith enclosed).

Comrade Bunting stood in a three-cornered contest against an S.A.P. and Independent candidate and secured 283 votes against 1100 of the S.A.P. winning candidate, and thereby secured the return of his deposit, which is lost if less than one-fifth of the winning vote is secured. Comrade Wolton secured 93 votes in a four-cornered contest against the winning SAP Nationalist and Independent. This was less than one-fifth of the 1700 votes of the S.A.P. candidate and accordingly the deposit was forfeited.

1. The author means rural areas.

2. A. Nzula.

The campaign of Comrade Bunting was conducted in the virgin soil of the Transkeian territories, where the Communist Party was entirely unknown and where no other form of organisation of the people exists.

The mass of the native peasants exist as a reservoir of labour for the gold and coal industries, and these peasants ARE THUS in turn drawn into industry for period of twelve months or less.

The early stages of Comrade Bunting's campaign saw tremendous enthusiasm generated in favour of the Communist Party, and the persecution instituted against the candidate only served to intensify this enthusiasm. Masses of peasants came to join the Communist Party who had never been organised before. It was necessary to develop leading elements from amongst them who could be left to hold together the organisation nucleus round which the mass groups rallied.

This created a very serious problem for the Party in that local Party groups had to be left in control of elements completely inexperienced in elementary understanding of Party work. In some cases endeavours were made to supply experienced comrades from other areas in order to hold together the newly created groups, and where this could be done, success was the result, but in the other cases the Party influence was lost after the propagandists had left the areas concerned.

This was a problem found in the more backward areas and the whole constituency of Tembuland was made up in this way. After the election one of the Party propagandists was left in the territory to tour the areas and endeavour to keep the local Party groups together. It was considered that the votes received by Comrade Bunting constituted a fairly solid backing for the Party, and the enthusiastic following of non-voters revealed the fact that the Party had made serious inroads into this reservoir of Chamber of Mines labour.

In the Cape Flats Comrade Wolton secured large meetings of workers and enthusiastic support from native workers in particular. A separate report of this candidate, submitted to the Executive Bureau of the C.P.S.A. is attached herewith and gives further details of this campaign.

The Party during the last twelve months has maintained its influence in the native trade union movement, endeavouring to consolidate the gains made since the formation of the independent unions. Practically no new ground has been covered, largely due to the fact that little success has accrued from the efforts made to develop a group of native functionaries from the Unions. In order to keep the individual unions together Party members have had to act in a supervisory capacity and the strength of Party members experienced in organisational work is very limited. Despite this fact, however, the native trade union movement in South Africa has been kept under Party leadership, the reformist groups of the various sections of the I.C.U. have steadily declined in strength and influence. Some definite progress has been observed since the leading Party position has been occupied by a native and it can be expected that this factor will do much to



develop the initiative and independence of native Party members and trade unionists.

An attempt has recently been made to extend the influence of the unions to the farms, and the nucleus of an agricultural workers' union has been set up – Party members in farming areas forming this nucleus and attempting to rally the workers round simple elementary demands. In addition, contact has been established with a peasant organisation in Basutoland – 'Lekhotla la Bafo' – and Party members have been responsible for launching a proposal and resolution summoning a conference to convene a 'League of Protectorates', (i.e. Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland). Attempts are now being made to link up the Transkeian territories and plans are being made for the convening of an all S.A. Conference of non-European organisations upon the initiative of the S.A. Federation of non-European trade unions.

Due to the impossibility of European comrades entering mine compounds and the weakness as yet of native functionaries, the Party has completely failed to get a footing in the basic industry of S.A. (gold mining), but this question is in the forefront of Party tasks and will be undertaken immediately native comrades are available.

The decline of the I.C.U. is almost complete and despite the government's backing given to the IInd International<sup>3</sup> man, Ballinger, he is retreating all along the line and rapidly becoming an unimportant figure in S.A. working class life.

For some years past, European members of the Party have been occupying important positions in the white trade unions and some good work has been done in efforts to bridge the gulf between white and black trade unions, but this was work of a very indefinite character until the new Party line was adopted. It is in this section of Party work that the right wing danger reveals itself most clearly, when under spurious slogans of unity of black and white workers, the revolutionary workers tend to lose their independence and become an appendage of the reformist machine.

#### The Present Position of the Party

With the adoption of the new Party line under the slogan of an 'Independent S.A. Native Republic, with equal rights for all national minorities as a stage towards a Workers & Peasants Republic', important right wing tendencies and deviations have become manifest, but conversely a powerful impulse has been released towards the creation of a proletarian Party leadership. This predominantly native leadership is imperative in order to lead the native masses along the road of revolutionary struggle. The masses had been hovering round the Party, but the traditional distrust of the white man and the

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3. Second International.

absence of the direct race appeal to the natives prevented any support of anything more than isolated cases.

Since the adoption of the new Party line, it can be said that the masses are stirring and are attracted in masses to the Party.

The immediate tasks of the Party are to fight this right danger, and to train and equip the new leadership which is coming forward.

This latter is a task of considerable magnitude in view of the almost complete inexperience of natives of elementary organisational work and yet in individual cases astoundingly rapid progress had been made.

There is within the Party now a cadre of capable experienced native comrades who are rapidly extending Party training over a wider area, and conducting successful recruiting. Both amongst the masses and amongst the students of the educational institutions.

It is found that white members joining the Party are almost entirely ignorant of the race issue which is of such great importance in South Africa. On the other hand the Party's task amongst natives joining is to teach the class issue which is very little understood by them. A somewhat common distortion of the race outlook in South Africa is the understanding of having nothing to do with the Party because it contains some white men. It is sometimes said that natives would join the Party if it were an entirely black party as they cannot trust a single white man, no matter what his professions or actions may be.

This obviously is the outlook of only a small section and not that of the masses.

With the raising of the national revolutionary issue in South Africa the face of the Party is definitely turned towards the masses and it becomes for the first time a clearly independent revolutionary party.

It can be said that important gains have been made since the adoption of the new Party line. Wide masses of workers and peasants have for the first time heard the Party message and considerable recruiting has been achieved. To transform this mass adherence into concrete organisational achievements is the immediate task of the Party.

It can be reasonably expected that only a section of these masses will be definitely retained in the Party machine, due to the enormous obstacles of finance, experienced functionaries and the like, and also due to the rapidly increasing persecution now being met by the Party.

There are a number of native comrades who are capable of taking the Oriental University<sup>4</sup> course, and it is of paramount importance that the<sup>5</sup> should be brought over for this purpose. The difficulty of obtaining passports in South Africa has prevented this being done from that end. This question is in the forefront of the requests of the Party in South Africa in asking that efforts be

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4. KUTV.

5. they.



made at this end to secure that one or more native comrades shall be able to leave.

The right wing danger in the Party is not a serious danger affecting Party propaganda, but is more of an academic character, conducted by intellectual European elements and it maintains itself in the form of a small group which does not actually participate in the main work of the Party, and is tolerated by the rank and file chiefly because of organisational assistance it can render during the present stage towards a stronger native cadre in the Party.

The difficulties of language constitutes another great obstacle for the Party, and literature needs to be printed in four languages, English, Sesutu (the Basutoland tribes), Zulu and Xosa (the tribes of the Transkeian territories).

The Party is woefully short of elementary pamphlets. It has only two pamphlets done in a native language. This is largely a question of resources to cover the necessary printing costs. Although considerable progress has been achieved since the four languages have been utilised in the Party paper, 'the S.A. Worker', it is very important that arrangements be made for the issuing of regular pamphlets in the different languages.

The present membership of the Party is approximately the same, namely 3,000, but if based on financial standing the number would barely reach 300. It has been found extremely difficult to secure the regular payment of dues, apart from cases of misappropriation, natives have objected to paying dues to 'white officials at Head office'.

The poverty of members is no argument, witness the phenomenal contributions by natives to I.C.U. funds. Under the circumstances it is exceedingly difficult to gauge the actual Party membership.

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In conclusion, many of these weaknesses have received close attention and the measures introduced through the developing new leadership will correct them.

Enormous revolutionary struggles lies ahead of the South African masses in the immediate future, and the growing consciousness arising out of the sharpening contradictions will make very favourable opportunities for the Party in South Africa to place itself at the head of the revolutionary struggles of the masses.

(sgn) D.G. Wolton<sup>6</sup>

RGASPI, 495/64/81/125-9.

Original in English.

Typed.

Stamped: 1) CONTROL

2) Unclear

(in Russian)

(in Russian)

6. Despite the word 'sgn' there is no original signature in the text.

**Report of B. Idelson to ECCI,  
25 September 1929 (Extract)**

Confidential.

REPORT OF COMRADE X (ECCI REPRESENTATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA).

In accordance with the development of the labour movement since the imperialist war, our Party has gone through ~~a number of~~ <sup>certain</sup> stages <sup>of development</sup>. The first stage was that of its birth. That was in the period when the position of the white workers as a result of the war and <sup>the</sup> post-war crisis (which made itself felt also in South Africa) was greatly shattered. The labour aristocracy for the first time declared strikes against wage cuts (the railway workers in 1914, the miners in 1922), the white workers intensively began to organise. Hence the wave of passing radicalism and opposition tendencies in the organisations of the white workers – the Labour Party and the unions. At the extreme left were the founders of the future Communist Party. Neither their radicalism nor their anti-war stand as yet indicated their firmness. Not only workers who settled in the country were then anti-imperialists, but also that section of the bourgeoisie which considered South Africa its home and was not anxious to fight in the interests of Great Britain.

Thus the Communist Party originated as a Party of the white workers. When the situation improved and some categories of white workers again received higher wages (although not a single group of these workers had as yet reached its previous level of earnings), the tiny Communist Party began to melt away at a very rapid rate. A small handful of white comrades remained in the organisation. What contributed to this desertion was also the fact that for the first time the white worker began to feel the competition of the Negro and the fear of losing his position. For this reason, nothing helped so much in the cleansing of our Party as its position in relation to the Negroes, although it made a good many mistakes on this question. The chance elements that still remained in the Communist Party (in that period) withdrew from it as they could not agree with the Communists on the national question.

Then the second stage of development of the Communist Party began. That stage is characterised by the fact that the Communist Party devotes more attention to the Negroes than to the whites. The process of radicalisation of the white workers (of which I spoke above) became comparatively slow, the change of ideas in the ranks of the white workers, even the most dissatisfied with their fate, slowed down. One could not expect an influx to the Party from those quarters at the moment although many white workers undoubtedly realise that they have interests in ~~coming~~ <sup>common</sup> with the Negro labour movement and will eventually come to the Communist Party. On the other