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**Draft telegram, CPGB to CPSA,  
10–11 December 1929**

DRAFT OF CABLE TO COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Strongly support E.C.C.I. cable regarding League<sup>1</sup> emphatically condemn white chauvinism expressed such intermediate organisation for politically immature elements unanxious have in party (stop) Reformist programme and petition not equivalent mass revolutionary agitation but correct form united front from below for immediate issues mass struggle as seen League against Imperialism (stop) Suggest make Conference demonstration with native republic slogan leadership Communist Party postponing organisation League African Rights we deny agreement stated your letter to ECCI writing.<sup>2</sup>

RGASPI, 495/64/85/13.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

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Inscriptions 1) England

(in Russian)

2) 1929

(in Russian)

3) 10/11 Dec 1929

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**Letter from A. Nzula to ECCI,  
11 December 1929**

Communist Party (S.A.).

Johannesburg.

11 December 1929.

E.C.C.I.

Dear Comrades,

Since we wrote to you in reply to your letter about <sup>the</sup> League of African Rights, matters of some importance have taken place. The new minister of

1. League of African Rights.

2. See Roux' reference to his discussions with the Colonial Department of the CPGB (document 79, vol. D).

Justice, Mr. O. Pirow, catering for the most savage slave driving backveld<sup>1</sup> Dutch (and English e.g. Durban) vote, has launched a reckless campaign to stop Communist propaganda.

With the silent consent of his Cabinet colleagues he has by a few weeks' display of 'the jackboot in native affairs' as a local Daily called it, intensified the always latent ferocity of whites to blacks quite 100 per cent, indeed he has even disgusted the more liberal elements of the white bourgeoisie and has thus perhaps <sup>shattered</sup> General Hertzog's scheme of a united white front against blacks, for the Rand capitalist papers have attacked him pretty severely. The labour party, both sections, however has been silent and so have the usually negrophile churches, even the Trade Unions (white) have been rather<sup>2</sup> sluggish in the matter compared with Pirow's bourgeois opponents. These latter, however, unite with him in condemning the Communists in any event, though they correctly add that the right way to deal with agitators is to remove grievances.

Pirow, with <sup>the</sup> blessings in advance of his political opponent Smuts who in the last Parliament said that the sedition clause in the Native Administration Act, reduced to tatters by judgements of the Supreme Court, would have to be strengthened came out for it with amendments to the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1914 (itself a panic measure following on the general (white) strike of that year, which ended in 9 deportations, whereby appeals to the Courts will be barred and the opinion of the Minister himself will henceforth be the conclusive test of sedition on the strength of which anyone can be imprisoned, lashed and, if not born in South Africa, deported – the avowed object being especially to get at some of the white communists whom the Dutch hate above all others. Public meetings will be made impossible for the natives if the Bill becomes law.

This measure, which is to have precedence in the Parliamentary session which opens on the 17th proximo, at once called forth a united native protest in Johannesburg, and at our suggestion Pirow's effigy was publicly burnt – a procedure which seems to have shocked even Pirow's opponents into an equal denunciation of us and of Pirow. Pirow's reply was a staggering armed attack on Durban in the form of a<sup>3</sup> raid for unpaid taxes. A Government Commission following on the raids admitted that there was no communist 'plot'. As a matter of fact there was no rising but merely a prolonged boycott of municipal native beer halls.<sup>4</sup> Our Party branch there only has a few devoted comrades but its influence is growing, all over S. Africa. Finally, Pirow has announced a new bill imposing a tax of £5, and lashes on any native (with certain exceptions) who does not work at least 3 months in any year, the

1. The reference is to rural Afrikaners.

2. There is a typed-over word before 'rather'.

3. There are typed-over letters before 'a'.

4. See footnote 1 to document 80, vol. I.

3 months not to be worked consecutively but to be worked piecemeal whenever the master chooses, throughout the year.<sup>5</sup>

These bills and the Durban raid have secured some support not only from Dutch farmers but also from the British jingoes of Natal and British farmers elsewhere, although against these must be set off the shock given to the humanitarian or libertarian sentiments of others, especially English elements, leading to a running controversy in the press led by the Joint Councils of Europeans and Natives.

But there is more than mere vote catching in Pirow's 'madness', he is expressing the inevitable tendency of modern imperialism to fasten ever heavier chains of slavery on the colonial peoples. After all it is he who is the exponent of 'normal' capitalist development, his liberal critics in asking for a relaxation, while adhering to imperialism are showing themselves<sup>6</sup> to be merely sentimental and anachronistic. Nevertheless we must use these liberal tendencies to split the white anti-native front.<sup>7</sup>

We have noted with some amusement Comrade Ford's attack on us as social democrats and a disgrace to the Comintern (also<sup>8</sup> echoed in an interview<sup>9</sup> on S. African affairs with Bessedowski, as published recently in our papers in which Bessedowski said that Comrade Piatnitzky and others expressed themselves very contemptuously about our Party – though sending us £12,000 a year?) as contrasted with the laudation of our Party and of the Comintern as having provided it with new life at the VIth Congress, which was <sup>cabled</sup> as alleged extracts from Pravda as ~~as~~ food for overseas or backveld consumption, about riots in Durban. As a matter of fact we have been quite active in proportion to our resources, throughout, and our course and policy have suffered no change before or after Durban riots. Even now with <sup>the</sup> cloud of threats gathering even thicker over our heads, we do not feel at all sure that the Government will be able to suppress our movement very materially.

But we would ask you not to be always seeking occasion for vilification of us on the one hand or public laudation of yourselves at our expense on the other. It is not impressive nor is it comradely. We know the forces we are up against and our ~~dwingling~~ <sup>limited</sup> resources in men and money; and we do not only do our best but better than, if we may say so, you can teach us to do when it comes to local details. Today we have a certain moral leadership of the native movement, somu much so that those who want to fill their pockets out of it find it pays them to do so under our aegis, though we ourselves cannot do it.

5. There is a double line in pencil in the left margin opposite this sentence starting from 'Finally, ...'.

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

7. There is a double line in pencil in the left margin opposite the last two sentences starting from 'anachronistic ...'.

8. There is a typed-over word before 'also'.

9. There is a typed-over word after 'interview'.

However they all help to swell the storm of protest, though as we anticipated it will not be possible to carry out your suggestion of a general strike on the 14th inst of which Pirow, quoting your cablegram (tapped through the Post Office) made such a feature in his speech. And by the way we think all our letters are being tapped. Yours fraternally

A. Nzula,  
on behalf of Ex Bureau CP. S.A.

RGASPI, 495/64/85/50-1.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Inscription: Archives X

(in Russian)

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**Letter from Krestintern to Maphutseng Lefela,  
2 February 1930**

No. 58 2.II-30.

Mr. Maphtusing Lefela,  
Lekhoting la Bafo,  
Mapoting, box 33  
Ficksburg, O.F.State  
South Africa

Dear Friend, –

We recently learned<sup>1</sup> about the existence of your organisations, and according to the scanty information, which we have been able to obtain, we are under the impression that your organisation is pre-eminently peasant in character. In view of the fact, that the International Peasants' Council,<sup>2</sup> in whose name we are writing to you, is an organ that unites revolutionary peasant organisations of all countries and of all parts of the world, it is, consequently, very much interested to establish connection with your organisation. We shall therefore, be very thankful to you if you send us

**Doc. 83**

10. See documents 79 and 81, vol. I.

**Doc. 84**

1. Obviously, from the Secretariat of the Profintern. See document 76, vol. I.

2. The official name of the Krestintern.