

crises hit London and Paris first and only after that roll to South Africa. At the same time a national capital is coming into existence. But generally South Africa, as well as India, is only a fractional factor of the British capitalist hegemony, the field of cheap labour for England. Our proletariat fully depends on the fluctuations of the London stock exchange and it feeds the White Guards of West End,⁴ rather than the South African bourgeoisie.

We have in Africa a relatively small well paid white proletariat and a relatively big poorly paid native proletariat. They co-exist side by side in the same way as it can be seen on the world scale: a united European industrial proletariat and huge masses of African and Asian producers of raw materials.

Economic crises that you mention in your questionnaire do not exist in South Africa as an independent phenomenon of its capitalist economy because there is neither the capital nor the slaves subordinate to it.

In Britain the awakening up of the proletariat is the result of the economic crisis.

In South Africa economic and political crisis will be the result of the awakening of the black proletariat.

In Britain workers will be awakened by the bankruptcy of capitalism.

In South Africa capitalism will go bankrupt because of the awakening of the proletariat.

South African natives are cheap labour. All the gold mining industry rests on this cheap labour. Their ludicrously small salaries of 2 shillings a day cannot be in any way substantially raised without a panic on the London gold shares market.

This mass of cheap workers owns no property whatsoever and has no desire to own any. The emancipation of white workers of South Africa depends upon the awakening of the native proletariat which will also be a significant factor in advancing the collapse of the world capitalism. These native workers are a perfect material for the Socialist revolution. But they are all illiterate and for this reason they are out of reach of the Communist propaganda. Their mental awakening demands educational institutions of either Capitalism, or Communism – whoever will be the first.

The white proletariat of South Africa is for the most part impenetrable for the revolutionary propaganda, while the native masses are still sleeping. The Chamber of Mines facilitates political, economic and mental development of the natives to increase their chances to compete with white qualified workers. But it is afraid of any radical reforms in this direction. It is afraid to balance living conditions of white and black proletariat the result of which could be the creation of a homogeneous toiling mass and giving white leaders to the dispossessed native masses.

4. This phrase refers to the British bourgeoisie.

But the Comintern should not have any doubts. Native workers are beginning to understand and master the idea of a Workers Organisation (see the report to the Congress⁵) abandoning their hunting and military valour and their spears and javelins as weapons of emancipation. But a workers organisation in the midst of the dispossessed can only be revolutionary. All they need is Communist education and then their awakening will become a powerful factor in the World Revolution.

With greetings from South Africa
Yours D. Tom Jones.
2/6.21

RGASPI, 495/64/2/4-6.

Original in Russian (Comintern translation of an English original text that has not been found in the Archive).

Typed. Copy.

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**Letter from S. Barlin and D.I. Jones to M.V. Kobetsky,
11 June 1921**

Hotel Lux, No. 284,
Moscow.
11th June 1921.

The Secretary,
Communist International.

Dear Comrade Kabetsky,

In accordance with resolutions passed at yesterday's meeting of the Executive of the Comintern we wish to state that Comrade Ivon Jones will serve on the Executive Committee for South Africa with decisive or consultative vote according to the decision of the Bureau, (the strict meaning of the resolution provides a decisive vote for South Africa, but we do not press the point if the Comrades consider it disproportionate).

5. Jones's report to the 3rd Congress of the Comintern.

2. Comrade Ivon Jones will also serve for South Africa on the Oriental Committee.

3. Comrade Barlin will sit on the Theses Committee on the 'World Crisis'.

We remain
Fraternally yours,
Sam Barlin
D. Ivon Jones

South African delegation for The Communist Party of South Africa.

RGASPI, 490/1/35/18.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 1) Archives of the Comintern

No. 380.

Moscow

2) 32.

(in Russian)

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Statement of South African Delegation to Comintern, 16 July 1921

MEMORANDUM TO THE SMALL BUREAU OF THE COMINTERN ON THE SITUATION IN AFRICA

The South African Delegation has already submitted a report on the state of the Communist movement in that country. Suffice it to say here that a United Communist Party¹ has now been formed by the linking of the ~~the~~ various groups with the International Socialist League, which was the Left Wing of the South African Labour Party that broke away from the latter body in 1915.

In the reports and articles already submitted by us to the International comrades, we have tried to emphasize the peculiar conditions of the South African Communist movement, namely:

(1). The presence in South Africa of two streams of the proletariat, white and black, performing complementary industrial functions, with two widely different standards of life.

(2). The very primitive character of the Negro race, just emerging from the tribal system, and the consequent exclusively white character of the Communist Movement.

1. Communist Party of South Africa (see footnote 1, document no. 5, vol. D).

(3). The Communist Party is forced by the logic of the class struggle to place the question of solidarity with the native workers in the forefront of its propaganda among the white workers. This principle is the touchstone of Communism for us. Nevertheless, owing to the slow development of the Native Labour Movement, the occasions on which this slogan can be made a burning issue are not so frequent as they otherwise might be with an accelerated native movement. A native strike gives the Communists ideal opportunities ^{of} placing the revolutionary test before the white workers, either to side with their masters ^{or} with their black fellow workers. But while the native workers remain unorganised, the white workers lag at the stage of Class Collaboration; and between the two, the Communist movement hangs fire.

(4). Normally, all the activity of the South African Communists is among the whites, although the subject matter of propaganda largely includes the native labour question. Our members and supporters find themselves in white Trade Unions, and are preoccupied with the fight against class collaboration there. There are hardly any native linguists among the white Communists.² The common medium of expression between whites and natives is 'Kitchen Kaffir', a very inadequate kind of native esperanto. On the occasions when we have issued leaflets in the native languages we have had to depend on native translators. All Communist activity among the native Africans has to be mainly illegal. For this, the Communist Party organisation, besides ^{being} inadequate, is wholly unsuited.

(5). South Africa is the entrance to the great territories further north. We have to consider not only the negro population of the Government of South Africa. The railway line runs right up for two thousand miles to the Belgian Congo. Members of the South African Communist movement are to be found there also, although no Communist Group; and one member was recently expelled from the territory for Trade Union agitation. For this vast native population, however, the Communist movement can only draw on white sources for financial and other support. All natives are under the strictest passport control. The few educated natives are easily lured away by the enticements of social equality and an assured existence equivalent to their education. Thus, as the native population of South Africa, (to say nothing of territories outside the Union), outnumbers the whites by six to one, the task of the Communist Party is beyond its resources at least in that proportion; in addition the presence of a slave cast side by side with white skilled labour makes the latter an unfavourable recruiting ground for obtaining the necessary minimum of Communist workers.

We would therefore suggest that, in a country like Africa, the small white working class should be regarded more as a purchase-hold for the direct action of the Comintern, than as wholly responsible for the Communist movement

2. White communists with the knowledge of African languages.