

INTRODUCTION: THE DOCUMENTS IN VOLUME II

The archival collection of 1930s documents differs from that of the 1920s in that in the 1920s the majority of the documents came from the CPSA, while in the 1930s the bulk of the documents derive from the Comintern itself, mostly from the ECCI. The explanation for this is to be found in the work of the South African Commission which resulted in the biggest single collection of South African documents.

The Commission worked for two and a half years and had three sessions of meetings: at the end of 1935, at the end of 1936 and in March 1937. Among its documents there are stenos of presentations by representatives of the CPSA and by members of the Commission, as well as by the top officials of the British and French communist parties who were involved in its work.

A significant proportion of the materials of the Commission presents analytical memoranda on the situation inside the CPSA. These were prepared by the officials of the ECCI and used by the leadership of the Comintern who were not experts in South African affairs and often could not understand the intricate twists of debate and conflicts within the CPSA. Much of the preliminary research and analysis was carried out by Robert Naumann. He was also the author of the majority of the memoranda and, most probably, of André Marty's speeches and of the resolutions of the Commission.

The nature of the archival collection was inevitably reflected in the editorial selection of documents. However, the editors attempted to present a more balanced picture by including as many documents that originated in South Africa as possible and adding personal files and correspondence of several personalities key to this period. A significant number of documents in our selection reflects the process of the "bolshevisation" of the CPSA and the internal struggle within the party during and after it.

Several documents were included to show the changed nature of relations between the Comintern and the CPSA. This is reflected in the documents which reveal the increased Comintern demand for compliance, obedience and unanimity, its attempts at a mechanical transfer of Soviet realities onto South African soil, its invariably arrogant approach to South African problems and in some cases its blatantly criminal treatment of people involved.