

18. S.P. Bunting's pamphlet.
19. Endré Sik, KUTV lecturer.
20. The KUTV building today.
21. The Soviet Union's first Africanist experts in 1934. Alexander Zusmanovich is second from the left, back row; Ivan Potekhin is first from the left, middle row; Endré Sik is at centre, between the front and the middle rows; Dmitry Olderogge is first from the right, front row, Igor Snegirev is in the middle, front row.

INTRODUCTION: SOCIALIST IDEALS AND BOLSHEVIK REALITIES: SOUTH AFRICA AND THE ARCHIVES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The collapse of state communist structures in the Soviet Union had an enormous impact around the world – sometimes in spheres far removed from contemporary politics. One of the side effects of this event was the opening of several formerly top secret Soviet archives, of which the archives of the Communist International were one.

The Communist International (the Comintern) – a worldwide organisation of communist parties that operated from Moscow from 1919 until 1943 – may seem to belong to a very distant era. Even among historians few would remember that each member party was, in fact, a section of the Comintern, that its official name was 'The Communist Party of [a country]. Section of the Communist International', and that Comintern officials at the centre often referred to it as 'our party'.

However, if communism as an ideology, as a political, economic and social system and as a factor in world politics is to be recognised as one of the most important phenomena of the twentieth century and as one of the central features of its history and legacy – as we think it should be – then the Comintern was without doubt one of the most important global organisations ever to have existed. Its influence proved even greater than it seemed at the time, and the ideals and methods that it so vigorously spread around the world have already outlived several generations. Yet until recently it was next to impossible to study the Comintern, for it was not only one of the most powerful organisations in the world but also one of the most secretive.

The 'open' activities of the Comintern, such as its seven congresses and its affiliation with legal communist parties, were only the tip of the iceberg. Underneath there existed a diversified and secret network of communications, invisible chains of command, information and espionage, ramifying outwards from Moscow. It functioned under the guise of banks, industries, trade companies, youth, sports, women's and community organisations and depended on outright illegal activities. Secret emissaries of the Comintern travelled all around the world. Secret schools taught multiple disciplines relevant to the communist movement as it was then, from ideology to party building to military training and subversion. The Comintern's publications, funds and instructions were secretly delivered, even to the most remote parts of the world.

However, except for the memoirs of a few apostates who left the Comintern and wrote about their engagement with it many years later, there were no

documents to shed light on what the Comintern actually did and how it functioned. Stalin's era held those who worked in this organisation and survived the purges in such fear of repression that very few were willing to share what they remembered. It is in this light that the significance of the Comintern archives should be viewed.

During the Soviet era the documents and materials of the Comintern were preserved in the Archive of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). After the collapse of the Soviet Union the Party Archive was reorganised and renamed the Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History (RTsHIDNI). In 1999 it was again renamed, becoming the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI).

At the end of 1991 RTsHIDNI opened many of its documents to researchers, the Comintern archives among them. However, these archives had not remained intact. Many documents had been destroyed at different times for a variety of reasons, mostly during the Stalin era. In October 1941, when German troops were at the outskirts of Moscow, the Party Archive was evacuated to Ufa, the capital of Bashkiria, 1,200 km to the east of Moscow. The evacuation was rushed and some losses were unavoidable. Though the archive is now open to researchers, access to its materials is not unlimited: a sizeable part of the documents has not been declassified, and of those that were some have been closed again for various reasons.

Nevertheless, the mass of Comintern documents that survived and has been declassified is enormous. The picture of the activities of the Comintern that emerges from them may be incomplete in every detail but it is full enough to be considered comprehensive. Several publications of documents from the Comintern archives and of studies based on them have already appeared, the majority on the activities of the Comintern in Europe, in the USA and in China. This is, however, only the beginning of a long process of incorporating the phenomenon of the Communist International into world history.

For this publication we have selected a broad range of documents from the South African part of the Comintern archives.

SOUTH AFRICA IN THE COMINTERN

South Africa was not the most important country for the Comintern but it was important enough to enjoy much attention. The number of documents pertaining to South Africa in the Comintern archives – many thousands – is testimony to this. The reason for this interest was the Comintern's preoccupation with colonial and dependent countries, which it perceived as potential allies of the communist movement in the struggle against capitalism.

Of all the African countries, South Africa was of the greatest interest to the Comintern. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Union of South Africa was the most industrialised and urbanised country on the continent. It had a more

developed, numerous and better organised urban working class than any other African country. The main purpose and goal of the Comintern was the preparation of world proletarian revolution, so, naturally, it saw the urban proletariat as the most revolutionary force. It was hoped that the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which was later renamed the South African Communist Party (SACP), would spread communist ideals throughout the African continent, thus pulling it towards the world revolution.

The founder of the Comintern, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, showed much interest in events in South Africa.¹ At different times and in different circumstances, many well-known Comintern leaders were in one way or another connected with South Africa or had to deal with problems of South Africa's communist movement. Among them were Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, Grigori Yevseievich Zinoviev, Dmitri Zakharovich Manuilsky, André Marty, Georgi Dimitrov, Willi Münzenberg and Solomon Abramovich Lozovsky.

There is no straightforward answer to the question of which institutions and organisations within the Comintern were responsible for South African affairs. Diversified and complicated, the Comintern system was highly fluid: its internal structures changed continually, and at different times the same set of functions was attributed to different bodies. The names and chains of command of these bodies also changed and it was often difficult to identify the exact function performed by each part at any given time. It is clear, however, that the departments of the Comintern most closely involved in South Africa at different

1. Lenin was interested in South Africa from a very early stage of his political career. South Africa and the Anglo-Boer War were mentioned twice in the very first issue of the *Iskra*, the Marxist paper that Lenin began to edit in 1900. Lenin included many events in South African history in his 'Essayed Summary of World History Data after 1870' and 'Table of Colonial Seizures and Wars' (V.I. Lenin. Notebooks on Imperialism. In: V.I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, (in Russian), vol. 32, pp. 246–7, 286, 305, 341, 425, 451, 453, 459, 471, 483–5, 487, 511–15, 520, 522, 554, 562, 688–705, 710). He also included several books on South Africa in the reading list that he made for himself (*Ibid.*, pp. 40, 76, 459). He made extensive notes from these books with his own addenda and comments. Lenin was particularly interested in the strike movement and in the Indian movement in Natal. He was also fascinated by the Nama and Herero uprising against the Germans in 1904–7 and even copied the words of a Herero song: 'Whom does Hereroland belong to? Hereroland belongs to us' (*Ibid.*, p. 682).

In November 1920, soon after the Comintern was formed, Lenin asked for Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu's book, *The Black Problem. Papers and Addresses on Various Native Problems*, to be ordered for him from London. Jabavu's book was among the first (perhaps, the very first) to be published by a black South African after World War I. Lenin received it a month after its publication. (See: *Biograficheskaiia Khronika Lenina (Biographical Chronicle of V. I. Lenin's Life)*, vol. 9, Moscow, pp. 495, 534).

Lenin stressed that the Rand Revolt of 1922 deserved the close attention of the Comintern and wrote about it several times. The South African communists David Ivon Jones and Sam Barlin took part in the 3rd Congress, and Sidney Percival Bunting in the 4th Congress of the Comintern in both of which Lenin participated. S.P. Bunting published an article 'Lenin: Personal Impressions' in the *International* (Johannesburg, 25 January 1924). This was the only personal recollection about Lenin published in Africa. David Ivon Jones published many articles about Lenin's works (See: A. Davidson. 'Lenin on South Africa'. *The African Communist*, 1982, Fourth Quarter, no. 91).

times were the Eastern Secretariat and the Anglo-American Secretariat. Both reported to the Political Secretariat and to the Presidium – the highest bodies of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). Formally, the highest authority within the Comintern rested with its congresses, but in practice the policy of the organisation was defined by the Politsecretariat and the Presidium of the ECCI.

Besides these permanent bodies there were several temporary or ad hoc commissions that dealt with South Africa. The most important among these were the South African Commission (the so called 'Marty Commission', named after its head, the French communist André Marty) and the Negro Commission. The Comintern's affiliates, such as the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), the Peasant International (Krestintern) and the International Red Aid (IRA), were also involved in South African affairs.

The forms and the intensity of the involvement of the 'centre', as the ECCI was often referred to by communists around the world, in local party matters, South African among them, varied but it was always the ultimate and final authority. The ECCI worked out a general line for the communist movement as a whole, as well as strategies and tactics for each member-party, and helped to introduce and implement these strategies, often reverting to direct imposition of its ideas. It supplied the parties with propaganda materials, and with funding for publications and remuneration of top officials, as well as for special tasks and operations. One of its major preoccupations was the leadership cadres of member-parties. The ECCI was the final authority behind the appointment of the parties' leading figures and sometimes offered its own candidates, charging them with a particular set of tasks. Future leaders were educated, studied and selected in ECCI's secret schools in Moscow, sent back to their own countries and were often recalled back to Moscow for instructions – and sometimes for punishment. The ECCI settled internal party squabbles, intervened in ideological debates and attempted to control even the day-to-day practical work of each member-party – some times more so than at others.

The directives to member-parties were prompted by the interests of these parties only to the extent to which they coincided with the global plans and concrete regional ideas of the 'centre' itself at any given moment. These latter were dictated by the interests of the Soviet Union, which was seen as the ultimate and most valuable achievement of the international communist movement. Even so, Moscow needed detailed information about the concrete situations within each party and country. This information was obtained from official reports sent to the ECCI by member-parties, reports by foreign communists who visited Moscow on ECCI's invitations or orders, representatives of member-parties at the Comintern congresses and at the ECCI, correspondence with member-parties and individual communists, from students who came to study at ECCI's schools and from secret agents whom the ECCI had sent as advisers to (and informers on) member-parties.

The first report from South Africa reached the Comintern in April 1920, before the creation of the Communist Party of South Africa. It was brought after a long trip, involving enormous difficulty and self-sacrifice, by a South African socialist of Russian origin, Michael Wolberg. The 3rd Congress of the Comintern (June–July 1921) was attended by two South African delegates, David Ivon Jones and Sam Barlin. One of them, Jones, was co-opted to the ECCI as a representative of South Africa, even though the Congress took place before the founding congress of the CPSA.

Jones actively participated in the work of the Comintern until his death in 1924. He died of tuberculosis in a sanatorium in the Crimea and is buried in Moscow. Another leader of the CPSA, Sidney Percival Bunting, was a delegate to the 4th Congress of the Comintern (November–December 1922). At this Congress the Chairman of the CPSA, William (Bill) Andrews, was elected to the ECCI. S.P. Bunting, his wife Rebecca Bunting, and another prominent South African communist, Edward Roux, participated in the 6th Comintern Congress (July–September 1928). Jones, S.P. Bunting and Roux wrote several reports and letters to the ECCI, and Jones published many articles in the Comintern's periodicals, some of which exist only in Russian. The South African trade unionist and communist Solly Sachs spent the last months of 1925 and the first months of 1926 in Moscow,² working in several organisations of the Comintern. He submitted a memorandum to the ECCI on how the Comintern should build its work with the CPSA and published a long article on South Africa in a Russian academic journal.³

In 1927, James La Guma became the first non-white South African communist to come to Moscow. He reported to several departments of the ECCI, including its presidium, and, as we shall see, his visit resulted in significant political developments. On his second visit during the same year he brought Josiah Gumede, the president of the ANC, with him.

In 1928, a new subdivision, the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, was created within the Red International of Labour Unions with the task of spreading the Comintern's propaganda among black workers in the USA, West Indies and Africa. The Committee published *The Negro Worker*, at first as a bulletin with a limited number of copies, and from 1931 as a monthly journal. *The Negro Worker* was prepared mostly in Moscow and printed in Europe and in the USA: initially in Hamburg, then in Copenhagen, Antwerp, New York and Paris successively. Some issues of the journal were published in a way which was specifically designed for distributing it illegally. The cover bore the title, *The Missionary Voice. The Way of the Cross. Mouthpiece of the A. M. E. Missionary Society, London*, and the first page carried only the slogan, 'Hark! Ye tired and oppressed with various evils!'. Only

2. RGASPI, 495/64/49/1–2.

3. E.S. Sachs. 'The Union of South Africa'. *Novyi Vostok*, no. 1, 1922.

at the second page did the reader see the real title, *The Negro Worker*, and the communist slogan 'Workers of the World, Unite!' The South African communists Albert Nzula, Edwin Mofutsanyana and John Gomas were members of the editorial board together with communists from the USA and the West Indies.

In 1928, the first South African communists came for a course at one of Comintern's schools, the International Lenin School (MLSh), and during the 1930s several future leaders of South Africa's communist party studied at MLSh and at another Comintern's school, the Communist University of Toilers of the East (KUTV). The last to come was Bettie du Toit, who arrived in November 1936 and left on 31 December 1937. The students' trip to Moscow, their stay there and their departure were strictly secret; the schools themselves existed in conditions of strictest secrecy. The majority left South Africa illegally, all had to use aliases while in Moscow, and even their families knew nothing of their real whereabouts. In many cases, it was extremely difficult to find out personalities behind the aliases. Some would have remained unknown even now had they not been disclosed to Apollon Davidson by former lecturers of the Comintern when he interviewed them in the 1950s.

We have established that the South African students who studied at the Comintern's schools were William Kalk (aliases Victor Brown and N. Brown), Victor Danchin (alias William Johns), Molly Wolton (Molly Gordon), Albert Nzula (Tom Jackson), Moses Kotane (James Warren), Edwin Mofutsanyana (Greenwood), John Marks (Max Raymond), Nikin Sobia (Jack Hilton), Johannes Moses Beyers (Henry), Josie Palmer or Mpama (Beatrice Henderson), Lazar Bach (Jakov Yuzhin or Jacob Eugene), Maurice Richter (Marian Bicher), Paul Richter (Matvei Yugov), and Bettie Du Toit (Mary Davidson). As far as we know, this is the complete list of students – but not of their aliases.

Some people in the list used several aliases. For example, during his second stay in the Soviet Union and his second course of studies, in 1935–6, Moses Kotane was 'Rio Gurleigh', not 'James Warren'. Kotane also used other aliases: Pilane, John Gurleigh, and J.W. Macauley. In other cases, two people may have used the same alias. Thus, according to personal files and many other documents Maurice Richter was at KUTV as Marian Bicher and his brother Paul, as Matvei Yugov. Yet in some documents 'Matvei Yugov' was clearly Maurice, not Paul. Despite strict regulations there was also a considerable degree of confusion and disorder in the Comintern documents. Some people had several personal files that contained conflicting information, some were listed under their real names, others under aliases.

The majority of students from Africa, South Africans among them, studied at KUTV which became the centre of African studies (at that time mostly South African) at the Comintern and in the Soviet Union. No systematic study of Africa had been undertaken in the Comintern and generally in the Soviet Union before. The situation changed after the 6th Congress dealt with Africa specifically and introduced the slogan of an independent native republic as the

official policy of the Comintern for South Africa. The leadership of the Comintern needed to know more about Africa, South Africa in particular. KUTV officials commissioned a Hungarian communist, Endré Sik, to prepare a paper on the socio-economic situation in Africa. In April 1929 the paper was presented and in 1930 it was published in one of the Comintern's journals, the *Revolutsionny Vostok*.⁴

From that time on, the South African situation and the prospects of the revolutionary movement in the country became an important element of academic and political activities at KUTV. A new department – 'section' – for African and African-American students was created, its name undergoing frequent changes, and the African laboratory was formed at the Academic Research Association for National and Colonial Problems (NIANKP), itself part of KUTV.⁵ The students of the department, their lecturers, several outside researchers who worked at the laboratory and those South Africans who studied at MLSh but came to KUTV for specialised regional courses collected and studied materials on Africa, held seminars, presented papers on various problems of the African continent, published articles and surveys of events in Africa in the Soviet media and in other communist periodicals, such as *The Negro Worker*, the publications of the British communist party and the CPSA's newspaper, *The South African Worker*. As a rule, the authors used pseudonyms. Thus KUTV lecturers Alexander Zakharovich Zusmanovich and Ivan Izosimovich Potekhin often signed their articles as Manzu and John Izotla.

Although education at the Comintern's schools was highly ideological it still offered a valid and in some respects advanced training of the kind that students could not get in their own countries. In Moscow they were specifically educated and trained as professional politicians and exposed to a broader international scene. Their fellow students came from many countries and from various backgrounds. There were personalities of significance among them, not all necessarily communists, such as Jomo Kenyatta, the future first president of Kenya, and George Padmore, editor-in-chief of *The Negro Worker* and the future ideologue of the Pan-African movement.

The Comintern's schools gave South African students opportunities to publish, first of all, in *The Negro Worker* but also in other journals. In 1933 Albert Nzula, the first black secretary of the CPSA published a book about conditions of labour and the labour movement in Africa, co-authored with

4. A. Sik. 'Chernaia Afrika na revoliutsionnom puti' (*Black Africa on the Revolutionary Road*). *Revolutsionny Vostok*, no. 8, 1930.

5. To demonstrate how complicated the structure of the Comintern was it should be mentioned that in 1936 the NIANKP was renamed the Academic Research Institute of National and Colonial Problems (NIINKP) and that simultaneously KUTV itself became part of the new organisation. This did not mean much in practice, of course, because at that time KUTV was already the object of repression and its work was completely disrupted.

Potekhin and Zusmanovich.⁶ This book was first published in English by the London Zed Press only in 1979. More often than not even the authors themselves saw these publications as propaganda materials or at least as 'applied' studies useful for the cause – rather than as the result of serious academic research. However, they contributed a lot to the emergence of new approaches in African studies far beyond Moscow. Suffice it to say that it was at KUTV that the debate on the existence of an African bourgeoisie and, more broadly, on the nature of social structures of contemporary African societies, began.

For the Comintern leadership, however, the main value of the department was not its academic achievements but the information that it could supply. One of the tasks of the staff of the department was to write closed assessments of the students, including their leadership qualities and the levels of political work at which they could be used. Some of these assessments proved quite astute. Student 'Joken', for example, was reported to have come 'to the School as a completely convinced national reformist'. Student 'Hamilton' was considered 'more secretive' than other students, and it was thought desirable 'to find out much more about his political complexion'. Student 'Raymond', on the other hand, required much attention, for, the assessment ran, 'a party leader grows here'.⁷ 'Joken' was Kenyatta, 'Hamilton', Padmore, and 'Raymond', as it has already been mentioned, J.B. Marks.

The staff also provided the leadership of the Comintern and its committees with background information and analytical material on various countries and events in Africa. The analyses were mainly carried out by the three successive heads of the department, Nikolai Mikhailovich Nasonov, Zusmanovich and Sik, as well as by Potekhin, on the basis of the 'bourgeois' press from African countries. From South Africa the department received not only the main national newspapers but also regional and even vernacular newspapers.

The most valuable information, however, came from the Comintern's emissaries who were sent to South Africa, as well as to many other countries. Their task was to study the situation in the CPSA, to advise its leadership and assist it both organisationally and ideologically and to send back reports and to provide recommendations to the Comintern. Their reports were so highly regarded that they went straight to the top leadership of the ECCI, and at least one – directly to Stalin.

The names of three of these emissaries had been known before the opening of the archives. Eugene Dennis, later the leader of the Communist Party of the USA, was sent to South Africa in 1932 as 'Russel'. Two British communists, George Hardy and Peter Kerrigan, supervised the affairs in the CPSA in 1936

6. A. Zusmanovich, I. Potekhin, T. Dzhekson. *Prinuditelny trud i profsoiuznoie dvizhenie v stranakh negritianskoi Afriki (Forced Labour and the Trade Union Movement in Negro Africa)*. Moscow, 1933.

7. RGASPI, 532/1/440/2, 32, 48.

and 1938. It has been difficult indeed to establish the names of other emissaries but as far as we can judge we have found them all. It turned out that the first emissary to be sent to South Africa was Boris Idelson, a Russian communist, who came out in 1929. He operated mainly as 'Louis' but used other aliases as well. In 1930, another Russian, Georgi Shkliar, came to South Africa as 'George Clark'. Otto Huiswoud, a West Indian born American communist, was sent to South Africa in 1932 by the RILU.

From 1931 to 1936 another Comintern official, Bonio Dimitrov Petrovski, worked in South Africa. He was a Soviet representative in AROP – the Soviet-South African Oil Company and in this capacity he dealt strictly with business. Secretly, however, he dealt with Comintern business as well, such as receiving Eugene Dennis during the latter's 1932 visit.

The identities of Idelson and Shkliar presented a particularly difficult case. Idelson's identity was covered twice: not only by his aliases but by his pseudo-real name as well. Not only the South African security service – which discovered the fact of the Comintern representative's visit only after he had already left the country – but many in the Comintern itself and even the most thorough historians thought that 'Louis' was a prominent German communist, Paul Merker. Even years later, in 1944, a South African communist, Ben Weinbren, referred to the visit as being by Merker. Merker never objected or wrote anything to the contrary. It was, however, somewhat odd – to say the least – that he could be in South Africa while simultaneously organising the First All-German Convention of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition. The solution to this riddle came in the form of a letter written by the same Weinbren in August 1929, in which he reported to the Comintern on the activities of its representative. In it he carelessly put 'Idelson' in brackets after Merker's name.⁸ The problem with Shkliar-Clark was his double identity. He was an American communist, George Clark, who worked and lived in America and had a father there, and whose first language was English. And he was also a Soviet communist, Georgy Samuilovich Shkliar, who worked and lived in Russia, whose first language was Russian and who had a mother in Moscow and a sister in Kharkov. It took Valentin Gorodnov a long time and much effort to find the real identity of 'Louis' and to piece together Shkliar's story.

The fate of Moscow's South Africa – of those whose work at the Comintern was connected with South Africa – was tragic, as was the fate of the majority of the officials and staff of the Comintern generally. Georgy Ivanovich Safarov, Ludwig Magyar and other leaders and ideologues of the Comintern who formulated its strategy on national and colonial problems, Grigory Zinoviev, the first chairman of the ECCI, Nikolai Bukharin who participated in the discussion on the slogan of an independent native republic in 1927 and who, perhaps, was its author, were all executed. David Petrovsky who, under the

8. RGASPI, 495/155/80/47.

alias 'Bennet', spoke at the 6th Comintern Congress, insisting on the adoption of this slogan, and who closely supervised its implementation did not escape the same fate. Nor did Idelson, the first emissary of the Comintern to South Africa.

Almost all officials of the African department of KUTV and of the African laboratory were casualties of one sort or another. Some were executed, others exiled. Yet others got away with party reprimands or with an expulsion from the Comintern system, or from the party, or from both – which effectively ended their careers. Nasonov, Elsa Karlovna Richter,⁹ a staff member of the laboratory, and Georgy Yevgenievich Gerngross who was closely connected with it, were either executed or died in the GULAG. Fiodor Stepanovich Gaivoronsky, a staff member of the laboratory, was arrested and tortured. Zusmanovich and Potekhin were expelled from KUTV with party sanctions. Endré Sik was expelled from the party and from the Comintern system.

Robert Naumann, who was particularly active in 'purging' the department and the laboratory during the term of the Marty Commission did not escape persecution himself. He was accused of a 'lack of vigilance in relation to the enemies of the people Patak and Nikolau among his surroundings in his flat and in his block of flats'¹⁰ – but he survived.

The staff of the department and of the laboratory was persecuted for various individual reasons. One excuse, however, was a lecture presented to Comintern's Africanists by George Sacks, a Cape Town journalist, in 1935. To locate his name in the South African context it should be mentioned that Sacks was the husband of Betty Radford, who in 1937 started a well-known left weekly, *The Guardian*.¹¹

After his departure a rumour spread in the Comintern that Sacks was a Trotskyist which meant that Zusmanovich and Potekhin had offered a platform for Trotskyist propaganda – and not in any ordinary place but within the Comintern. This was a death-threatening pronouncement in the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. Zusmanovich was dismissed with immediate effect. Potekhin followed soon thereafter. Sacks safely returned to South Africa, and in 1941 joined the CPSA. It seems that he never found out that he had been branded a Trotskyist in Moscow and that several people were persecuted on account of their acquaintance with him. A few years later, during the war, Sacks met the Soviet Consul General in South Africa, Ziabkin (the Soviet consulate was

9. Not a relative of the two Richter brothers.

10. An excerpt from the Minutes no. 4 of the meeting of the Party Committee of the staff ('apparat') of the ECCI Party Branch of 20.01.1938. Personal File no. 11 830 (Registration Section of the Staffing Department of the ECCI), list 90. Patak and Nikolau were obviously either staff members or employees of the Comintern.

11. *The Guardian* existed in South Africa from 1937 until 1963 under different titles: *The Guardian*, *The Clarion*, *The Advance*, *The New Age*, *The Spark*. The new names were used to renew the weekly every time the authorities banned it.

opened in 1942 and lasted until 1956). At that time Sacks edited a journal, *The Democrat*, and published Soviet materials offered to him by the Consulate. During the meeting he criticised many of these, saying that they were not interesting enough for the South African reader. Ziabkin obediently passed on his criticism to Moscow, obviously also unaware of Sacks's previous record there.¹²

As our documents show both Zusmanovich and Potekhin were very lucky to have been punished in this way – but they did not know it then.

THE COMINTERN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of the CPSA began long before its first congress which met on 30 July–1 August 1921 in Cape Town. In 1915 the South African Labour Party split. Members of its left wing, calling themselves socialist internationalists, objected to South Africa's participation in the world war. They left the party and founded a new organisation, the International Socialist League of South Africa (ISL). The League started a weekly paper, the *International*. The position of the League was close to that of Lenin and Karl Liebknecht, the German socialist leader, both of whom called on their respective parties to oppose the participation of their governments in World War I.

In 1917 the International Socialist League unconditionally supported the Bolshevik revolution. With the creation of the Communist International in 1919 it immediately resolved to join it. The official resolution about the application for membership was passed on 4 January 1920 at the ISL's meeting in Johannesburg. When the message from this meeting to the Comintern was read out at the 2nd Congress of the Comintern on 4 January 1920 it was met with applause.¹³

In 1920 a small group of ultra-left socialists proclaimed itself the Communist Party of South Africa and began to publish its own newspaper, *The Bolshevik*. This Party rejected any participation in parliamentary activities. This stand ran counter to the conditions of admission to the Comintern.

Another condition for admission (all in all there were 21 conditions) was that there could be only one communist party in each country. It was just such a united party that was created at a congress held in July–August 1921. Several regional and national Marxist organisations joined it. The proposed name of the new organisation was the United Communist Party of South Africa, but the congress decided to drop the word 'United', so the Party was called 'The Communist Party of South Africa, Section of the Communist International'.

12. The Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 145/4/4/3.

13. *Protokoly kongressov Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala. Vtoroi kongress Komintern, iul'-avgust 1920 (Minutes of the Congresses of the Communist International. The Second Congress of the Comintern, July–August 1920)* Moscow, 1934, pp. 78–80.

During the first years of its existence the *International* continued as its official organ. Later it was renamed consecutively *The South African Worker*, *Umsebenzi* and *Inkululeko*.

Both the ISL and at first, the CPSA, were organisations of white socialists and workers. The first black member to join the ISL and then the CPSA was T. William Thibedi, a trade union leader. However, already in 1916 at the first conference of the ISL S.P. Bunting presented a 'Petition of Rights for the Native'. In 1918 Bunting and his followers assisted the 'bucket strike' of African workers. During the strike of African miners in 1920 the ISL published an appeal to white workers, also written by Bunting: 'Don't Scab'. Another leaflet, 'To Bantu Workers', explained the idea of the class struggle and the need for proletarian unity. Soon after its formation the CPSA opened a Sunday school for African workers.

In the mid-1920s many black leaders who were to occupy important positions in the party for a long time to come joined its ranks. John Gomas, James La Guma, Albert Nzula, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Gana Makabeni, John B. Marks and Moses Kotane were among them.

Before 1928 the Comintern seldom intervened in the internal affairs of the CPSA. The party followed the general line of the Comintern but in its everyday life it did not feel much pressure from Moscow. The situation started to change in 1927 when James La Guma visited Moscow and spoke at a meeting of the presidium of the ECCI. A complete about turn began after the 6th Congress of the Comintern when the ECCI took the CPSA under its direct and permanent control. This control took different forms: letters demanding adherence to Comintern directives, interference in internal party struggles, the sending of emissaries to South Africa and finally the creation of the commission to study the situation within the party and to decide its future fate.

The slogan that the Comintern put forward for the communist movement in South Africa in 1927-8 was that of an independent native republic. Historians have argued as to whether the idea of this slogan was first originated by La Guma or by the ECCI - more particularly, by Bukharin. We have not resolved this puzzle definitively. What we have discovered is that La Guma presented a report about the situation in South Africa and in the Party to a meeting of the presidium on 16 March 1927 in which Bukharin also participated and argued that the CPSA must demand 'a Negro republic independent of the British empire' with 'autonomy for the national white minorities'. On his departure La Guma received 'verbal instructions' neither the contents nor the nature of which are clear. A resolution incorporating the slogan was then prepared within the ECCI and sent to the CPSA on 9 August 1927, and in August-September 1928 the 6th Congress finalised and confirmed it.

But there was still no clarity as to what the slogan actually meant. Did it imply a national democratic (that is bourgeois) state that would guarantee the interests of the minorities and develop into a socialist state at a later stage or was it an outright socialist state that would cater for the class interests of

workers irrespective of colour? If an independent native republic were a national democratic state should the CPSA work to create a broader class coalition within the black population to achieve it and what classes or parties would such a coalition include? If the republic were a socialist state would white workers, at the time the only class conscious and politicised proletariat in the country, not be alienated by its 'native' character? Where does one find a class-conscious black proletariat and how could black workers be attracted to a party which was overwhelmingly white? These questions were to preoccupy the mind of the CPSA for years to come. The slogan became and remained the main issue in the intense internal struggle inside the CPSA from 1928 until 1936 and in the relations between the party and the Comintern throughout the 1930s.

The ECCI used utmost pressure to make the CPSA accept the slogan. The problem was not only the lack of clarity about its nature but the way it was introduced. There was no consultation even with the top leadership of the party: the decision about the slogan came unilaterally from the Comintern. Those who had doubts were accused of 'white chauvinism', Trotskyism and opportunism and in 1931 were kicked out of the party.

The slogan had a drastic effect on South African politics. It aimed at attracting black workers to the party and was, indeed, in part responsible for the realisation of this goal. It was, however, accompanied by the 'bolshevisation' of the party. In fact, the imposition of the slogan on the CPSA and the struggle against 'white chauvinism' and Trotskyism within its ranks was simply the particular form that the 'bolshevisation' of the CPSA took. The party that emerged from this process was certainly much darker in complexion but it was also more dependent on Moscow, more dogmatic, divided and sectarian. It lost much of its following, as well as its contacts with other organisations, most notably, with the African National Congress. Just how dependent and sectarian the party became is clear from the episode concerning the League of African Rights. This was a broad-based national front organisation which the CPSA attempted to create in 1929 together with the ANC. The attempt was immediately stopped on ECCI's demand: black workers were supposed to join the CPSA, not a loosely organised nationalist body with an uncertain leadership.

As far as the Comintern was concerned, the slogan was just a part of its global strategy. The idea of an independent native republic was formulated in the same vein as a similar slogan, 'self-determination for Negroes in the Black Belt' (the southern states of the USA), which the Comintern put forward as a policy for the CPUSA. Both slogans were introduced in order to create yet another opposition front to the ruling circles of Great Britain and the USA.

No wonder the ECCI never bothered to explain what an independent native republic actually meant: its line for the CPSA was shaped less by South African realities than by its global interests. Despite what the slogan itself might lead one to believe, the specific situation in South Africa was hardly taken into

consideration any more than it was anywhere else. The essence of ECCI's directives to the CPSA and to the communist parties of Europe and Asia were the same. 'Bolshevisation' and campaigns against 'Trotskyists', social democrats, 'opportunists' and 'revisionists' were the core of its policy. An independent native republic in South Africa or a self-determination for Negroes in the Black Belt in the USA were different expressions of that core. Both slogans were easily dropped as soon as the political situation in the world changed and new tactics were required.

The internal situation within the CPSA merely reflected world-wide tendencies in the communist movement. Under the banner of 'bolshevisation' the centre in Moscow was tightening its grip over the international communist movement. The creation of a strong but obedient political force ready to protect Soviet interests world wide and within each country, and ultimately to destroy bourgeois governments was just one aim of the 'bolshevisation' campaign. Its other goal was getting rid of the old generation of communists in foreign communist parties.

Unlike Trotsky, Zinoviev and Bukharin, Stalin had not been involved in the creation of the international communist movement. He did not know the leaders of foreign parties, did not trust them, and did not like the fact that many of them had independent followings. Having asserted his power within the Soviet leadership by 1928 he decided to get rid of the 'old guard' of communists and to substitute his own cadres for them. 'Bolshevisation' was announced as the official policy of the Comintern at its 5th Congress in 1925 but the pressure for its implementation gained momentum only gradually. It began with the biggest communist parties of Europe, America and Asia and reached the CPSA by the end of the 1920s.

The policy had devastating results everywhere. Hundreds and hundreds of foreign communists disappeared into the GULAG, sharing the fate of their leaders. Many old scores were now settled and careers at the centre were quickly built, often at the expense of the lives of former comrades. Politically 'bolshevisation' weakened all member parties and in at least one case contributed to a global tragedy. Its authors decreed that socialists were the main evil in the world and put a ban on any alliances of communists with other parties. As a result the refusal of German communists to create a united front with socialists against fascism in the late 1920s and early 1930s helped Hitler to come to power.

In South Africa the effect of 'bolshevisation', though less dramatic, was quite sufficient to ruin a small and weak party. In 1930 Douglas Wolton, a British communist with a South African background was sent from Moscow to South Africa to 'bolshevisate' the CPSA. He proceeded with zeal and with a total lack of consideration for broader party interests and for the people involved. A year later his wife, Molly, joined him after finishing her course at MLSh. She displayed even fewer scruples than he had in dealing with the old party cadres. The Woltons, together with Albert Nzula, the first black secretary of the party,

and Eddie Roux, later on joined by Moses Kotane, were the main victors in the struggle for 'bolshevisation'.

1931 was the turning point in the relations between the Comintern and the CPSA and in the history of the South African communist movement itself. The ECCI asserted its authority by 'purging' the CPSA of some of its best cadres. The founder members of the party, S.P. Bunting and Bill Andrews, were expelled on accusations of 'white chauvinism' and 'Trotskyism'. T.W. Thibedi and Gana Makabeni, the first Africans to join the party, followed, accused of 'Buntingism'.

The slogan of an independent native republic was now unequivocally accepted as were all the other demands of the ECCI, however inappropriate some of them seemed in the context of 1930s South Africa (for example, organisation of 'factory cells', 'village cells', and so on). This did not, however, stop the struggle within the party. The main problem now lay with the implementation of the slogan – and here the lack of clarity of its meaning came to the fore. Kotane, Roux and John Gomas saw an independent native republic as merely a first, democratic, stage of the forthcoming revolution, while the Woltons and then Lazar Bach, J.B. Marks, Edwin Mofutsanyana and Nikin Sobia believed in its socialist and class nature. The differences resulted in a heated debate on the existence of the African bourgeoisie. If the republic was not socialist then it could only be capitalist – but was there any African capitalist class to speak about?

This was by no means a purely academic question. If there was no 'native' bourgeoisie, then the 'native republic' could only be a socialist one – in which case the activities and influence of African nationalist (that is bourgeois) organisations, such as the ANC, ran counter to the goal of creating an independent native republic. If the African bourgeoisie did exist, then should the CPSA not establish closer ties with African nationalist organisations in order to build an independent native republic? The methods of the struggle were also a far cry from an academic debate: both factions were not short of words, labelling one another as 'left sectarians' on the one hand, and as 'right deviationists' on the other. Both sides accused one another of factionalism and of splitting the party and both complained to Moscow calling for sanctions against the opponents. The climax of this struggle came in 1934–5.

In a letter to the party dated 23 February 1934 Moses Kotane wrote: 'the Party is beyond the realm of realities, we are simply theoretical'.¹⁴ He called on the leadership to do away with sectarianism, to get closer to the masses and to reject a mechanical transfer of the European experience of class struggle to South African soil. The ECCI which until then seemed to have had no preference for either of the factions decided in favour of the one led by Bach, Marks and Mofutsanyana. Both Marks and Mofutsanyana were at that time in

14. *South African Communists Speak. Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, 1915–1980.* London: Inkululeko Publications, 1981, p. 120.

Moscow and, most likely, received instructions to remove Kotane from the position of party secretary – which was done by the end of 1934. In October 1934 the ECCI invited both Kotane and Bach to Moscow. Bach set off immediately and at the beginning of 1935 was enrolled as a student at KUTV. Kotane wisely postponed his visit.¹⁵

By the middle of 1935 almost all day-to-day work in the party stopped. Its newspaper was neither distributed nor sold. The party had only a few dozen members left – and its leadership still could not achieve consensus. In September Marks's faction used its majority in the Politburo to expel Kotane's following from the party. Had this happened a few months earlier it would have meant a final defeat for the faction and for Kotane personally. As it was, the situation in Moscow was changing dramatically by mid-1935. The 7th Congress of the Comintern, which opened on 25 July and lasted until 20 August, put forward a new and drastically different line for the movement. The Congress was convened at a time when fascist aggression had become a real and present danger, and the Comintern called on communists to work with all other anti-fascist forces, socialist and bourgeois parties included, in order to create a united popular front in every country. As before, the new line had to be applied everywhere from China to France to South Africa and with immediate effect.

As far as South Africa was concerned the slogan of an independent native republic was scrapped as sectarian – the only logic behind this, obviously, being that of the 'Buntingites', that is that the slogan alienated whites, whether workers or not. Left sectarianism was generally denounced at the Congress – no doubt much to the relief of Kotane's faction.

News of this change must have reached South Africa even during the Congress. On 14 September Kotane, Roux and Gomas sent a telegram to the ECCI: 'Please intervene South Africa sectarian leadership conducting mass expulsions ... we prepared help unity party basis seventh congress decisions'.¹⁶ Marks's faction also sent a telegram but the expulsions were stopped. On 23 September the ECCI sent new orders to South Africa summoning two members of each faction to Moscow, Marks (at that time the secretary of the party) and Sobia from the Politburo, and Kotane and Roux from the opposition. This time Kotane arrived as bidden. Marks, on the other hand, having got as far as Paris, wisely decided not to proceed. Sobia and Roux found reasons to refuse the invitation, and the Politburo sent Maurice Richter, a South African communist of Russian origin, who was Bach's and Marks's supporter but not even a Politburo member.¹⁷

Soon after the 7th Congress the ECCI appointed a South African Commission with the task of reassessing the situation in the CPSA. André

15. RGASPI, 495/14/349/145, 162.

16. RGASPI, 495/14/347/3.

17. RGASPI, 495/74/11/3–4.

Marty, head of the Anglo-American Secretariat of the ECCI, was appointed its head but much of the background work was done by Robert Naumann. Judging by the volume of the materials that the commission studied and the detail with which it conducted its interviews with the available South African communists it really did a thorough job. At the end of March 1936 it produced a detailed programme of action for the CPSA which contained everything from new slogans to methods of party work. The programme was full of minute local details – yet it seems even further removed from South African realities (or any economic realities, for that matter) than other Comintern documents dealing with South Africa. Suffice it to say that it proposed the 'confiscation without compensation' of the land of big farmers and the repayment of funds that they had received from the government as subsidies, the provision of free grain for poor farmers, black and white, the provision of full employment and 'social insurance' for the whole population, the introduction of a 40-hour working week and so on. In the context of South Africa during the Depression years such demands were wholly utopian.¹⁸

Neither of the factions was allowed to triumph: the Commission decreed that the old leadership, irrespective of their stand in the party struggle, relinquish their positions and that new leaders be selected from amongst the comrades who had not been involved in the squabbles, preferably from amongst the trade union leadership. The names of particular individuals were proposed. The party was to stop its internal struggles immediately and to start working with the 'masses' through trade unions.

The Commission met well into 1937 and even after this Marty remained the final authority on South African affairs, although the British communist party was charged with the task of supervising the affairs of the CPSA. Late in 1937 Marty met the new leadership of the CPSA in Paris and at the beginning of 1938 reported on this meeting to Georgi Dimitrov. But the Commission was the swan song of the Comintern's involvement in South Africa. By 1939 there was nobody left in the ECCI to supervise the implementation of the resolutions of the Commission.

The conciliatory stance of the Commission was reserved for factions in general, viewed as abstract notions, but not for the personalities involved. It would have been extremely unusual in the late 1930s if a Comintern commission set up to look into an internal struggle within a communist party did not discover Trotskyist influence in its midst. And so it proved. Several South African communists fell victim to accusations of Trotskyism. The Trotskyist movement was, indeed, well entrenched in South Africa and during the 1930s Trotsky gave it much thought and sent two letters to his South

18. RGASPI, 495/20/662/137–48.

African followers.¹⁹ But the Comintern's choice of 'Trotskyists' among the South African communists was totally unjustified.

Lazar Bach was the first to attract the attention of the Commission. During the 7th Congress Bach was in Moscow, at KUTV. He attended the sessions of the Congress as a delegate with a 'consultative vote'. There was only one South African delegate with full voting rights, Josie Mpama, another KUTV student. She sat on the presidium of the Congress and made a speech on behalf of the CPSA. In the eyes of the Comintern leadership the speech was a disaster, for although Mpama did mention the popular front it was, according to her, just a route to an independent native republic. Questioned by the Commission how such a serious political mistake could have occurred she revealed that the speech was written for her by Bach and Zusmanovich.

No communist would have consciously challenged the Comintern's line from its most public platform – certainly not by the middle of the 1930s. Both Zusmanovich and Bach were experienced politicians who could not have failed to understand what the consequences of such a move could be. There is hardly any doubt that if they did oppose the Comintern's line, they did so unintentionally. The turn in the policy of the Comintern was so abrupt that most probably they simply failed to understand fully what was happening. After all, even before 1935 a united front had been mentioned as part of the official policy of the Comintern – together with the slogan of an independent native republic – but it was never taken seriously. While preparing the speech for Mpama, Zusmanovich and Bach must have miscalculated the magnitude of the change and simply did not understand that the slogan of an independent native republic was to be scrapped completely.

Mpama escaped unscathed. Zusmanovich was removed from his position as head of the African department. Later that year he was dismissed from the Comintern for organising Sacks's lecture and thus escaped further sanctions. Bach, on the other hand, got into the net. He, together with the Richter brothers, was held in Moscow until the end of the work of the Commission.²⁰

During his term on the Commission Robert Naumann wrote several reports accusing Zusmanovich, Potekhin, Bach and the Richters of Trotskyism. A letter of 26 August 1936, for example, ran:

I would like an investigation to be launched into whether a counter-revolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist group consisting of Zusmanovich, Potekhin, Yuzhin, Richter, Yugov et al. and connected with Madiar²¹ and Safarov existed in the South African

section of KUTV.

The group defended Trotskyist-Zinovievist views on South African questions. These views have been stated in a number of articles ... in teaching materials at KUTV and in the Soviet press ... They had regular meetings at the School. At the sessions of the Secretariat of Com. Marty which investigated the question of factional struggle in the CPSA they unanimously took a factional stand. A white general²² and wives of Trotskyists²³ were employed at the African laboratory of KUTV. A lecture by a Trotskyist who came on Zusmanovich's invitation ... was organised there.

The essence of their position was that they ignored one of the most important allies of South Africa's proletariat, the oppressed colonial peoples. They aimed at the immediate introduction of the dictatorship of workers and peasants and the creation of Soviet power ...²⁴

The letter went on to say that Bach's father was a factory owner, that in 1931 Maurice Richter had left South Africa without the permission of the party, that Zusmanovich was expelled for inviting a Trotskyist, and that all five persisted with their dissidence. In the late 1930s one such text was sufficient to land the accused in the GULAG – and Naumann was a prolific political reporter. Fortunately for Potekhin and Zusmanovich they had already been ousted from the Comintern and were thus out of sight at the time when there were many more potential victims to keep the executions machine busy. But Bach and the Richters were still in the Comintern system, and the accusations against them mounted.

Paul Richter had had nothing to do with the South African factional struggle. He had spent only two years in South Africa in 1929–31 and then returned to the Soviet Union. He worked in several Soviet organisations in Moscow and had a family there. Yet it was he who became the main culprit, for it was he who had introduced both Bach and Maurice Richter to Jakov Berman, brother of the German communist Berman-Yurin, who had been executed together with Zinoviev and Kamenev. This acquaintance became the main accusation against all three but their 'factional' activities within the CPSA also weighed heavily against them.

On 28 October 1936 the case of Bach and the Richters was heard by the International Control Commission of the Comintern – a kind of internal Comintern court which considered the most serious cases of disciplinary action. The Commission pronounced Bach and the Richters guilty,²⁵ and on the night of 10 March 1937 all three were arrested. They were sentenced on the basis of the dreaded Article 58 of the Soviet criminal code that dealt with

19. B. Hirson. 'The Trotskyists of South Africa, 1932–48'. *Searchlight South Africa*, vol. 3, no. 2 (no. 10), 1993; '1932 Letter of Trotsky to South Africa'. *Think. A Review of International Struggles*, no. 5, April–May 1996. See also: A. Drew, ed. *South Africa's Radical Tradition. A Documentary History*, vol. 1. Cape Town: Buchu Books, Mayibuye Books, UCT Press, 1996.

20. RGASPI, 495/14/349/145, 162; 495/279/51.

21. Magyar.

22. The author meant G.Ye. Gerngross.

23. The reference is not clear.

24. RGASPI, 495/20/660/30–3 (Original in Russian).

25. *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional (Communist International)*, 1937, no. 2. (English edition: *The Communist International*, 1937, no. 3–4, pp. 263–4).

participation in counter-revolutionary organisations, counter-revolutionary agitation and propaganda and assistance to the international bourgeoisie.²⁶

Bach and the Richters were sent to the GULAG's concentration camps on the Kolyma river in the Far East. This was not, however, the end of the Richters' encounter with the Soviet law. The administration of the camp where the Richters were held discovered a 'secret terrorist anti-Soviet organisation' among the prisoners of which both brothers were allegedly part. In March 1938 they were both executed. Lazar Bach died in a camp on 10 February 1941.²⁷

Bach and the Richters were not the only South African communists to disappear in the GULAG. A young communist, Joe Glazer, who had moved to the USSR in 1932, died in the camps in 1936. S.B. and S.G. Davydovs, a married couple, who had left Russia at the beginning of the century and lived in South Africa for 18 years, participating in the socialist and communist movement, returned to the Soviet Union in 1921 with a letter of recommendation from Bill Andrews, at that time chairman of the CPSA. They were sent to work in Archangel where somebody soon reported that they had accepted food presents from British sailors. This accusation, absurd as it was – particularly, in a starving country – was never proved but the Davydovs were expelled from the party. Their file in the archives ends in the late 1920s by which time they had become the subject of correspondence between the Comintern officials and the OGPU.²⁸ It is difficult to believe that they could have survived.

There is little doubt that a similar fate would have awaited John Marks had he proceeded from Paris to Moscow. On 15 June 1936 a closed meeting of the collegium of the International Control Commission discussed his case (referring to him by his alias, Raymond) and resolved:

On the basis of the information at the disposal of the Apparatus of the ECCI [he] is suspected of ties with the enemy ... Raymond is at the moment in Paris ... Given that M. Raymond's presence is necessary for investigation of charges that are of serious importance for the whole CP of South Africa, the matter is to be postponed.²⁹

This damning information at the disposal of the ECCI must have been old rumours about Marks being a police spy. Back in 1930 Marks had been

26. News about this reached the South African press. See: 'Union Nationals Face Death in Russia. Secret O.G.P.U. Coup'. *The Sunday Express*, 18 July 1937.

27. A prominent Soviet historian, Victor Moiseievich Dalin, told Apollon Davidson that he was Bach's fellow prisoner. In 1939 he was allocated a plank-bed next to Bach and got to know him well. Dalin said that Bach was extremely well educated. For example, he was able to tell Dalin about the latest fiction publications in the UK even though this information was not readily available in the Soviet Union. Dalin's opinion of Bach coincided with that of his comrades in the CPSA, i.e., that Bach was a very well informed but politically a very dogmatic person.

28. S.B. Davydov, S.G. Davydov. Personal file no. 48, the ECCI, Personnel Department.

29. RGASPI, 505/1/43/33, 35.

approached by the police who invited him to work for them. He had agreed because, in his own words, he 'was at that time unemployed and starving' – but never did so. Moreover, he had immediately reported the episode to the then leadership of the party. Since Marks's return from the Soviet Union in 1934 the rumours about his work for the police flared up, were discussed by the Politburo and dismissed.³⁰ Yet they must somehow have reached Moscow and put Marks's life in very real danger.

It is not clear if Marks found out the actual wording of the resolution of the International Control Commission about him or if he knew about its existence at all. According to him, he was strongly advised against proceeding to Moscow by several leaders of the French communist party. However, he did not return to South Africa either. Marks spent seven months in France and when he finally got back he immediately blew his cover, making a claim for a lost piece of luggage – a gramophone bought in France where he had had an illegal passport – in his real name.

An absurd absent-mindedness? Perhaps. It is more likely, however, that Marks had decided to make further illegal trips impossible for himself for some time to come, even though he ran the risk of detention on the one hand and of party sanctions on the other. He was duly expelled from the party for this breach of discipline and information about this was sent on to the International Control Commission. By then, however, not only the Anglo-American Secretariat but the International Control Commission itself had lost many of its staff to purges. Of the five members of the Commission who had taken the decision on Marks a year earlier, three had already been executed. Marks was reinstated in the party less than two years later by the same Politburo which had expelled him in 1937.

There is room for argument about the Comintern's role in the international communist movement in the 1920s. Perhaps one could even find arguments in favour of the 'bolshevisation' of the communist parties in the late 1920s and early 1930s. There is no doubt that the 7th Congress of the Comintern made a valid, albeit belated, contribution to the struggle against fascism. But there can be no doubt whatsoever that Stalin's 'great terror' was a campaign of self-destruction both for the CPSU and for the international communist movement in general. In 1937 the Red International of Labour Unions was disbanded. KUTV ceased to function in 1937 and was closed in 1938. The Comintern itself was officially dissolved ('dissolved itself') on 15 May 1943 but in effect it died much earlier. In 1936–8 it lost most of its staff. Its foreign officials were sacked, imprisoned and executed together with dozens of their Soviet colleagues and millions of other Soviet citizens. By 1938 the Comintern was not even a shadow of the formerly powerful organisation it had once been.

30. RGASPI, 495/64/145/43.

The saying that 'the revolution, like Saturn, must devour in turn each one of her children' could, perhaps, dismiss the fall of some of the leaders of 1917. But Stalin's purges, in which millions died, were something quite different. Nobody has a theory adequate to explain this phenomenon. Even more compelling is the question why the grim Soviet reality did not divert believers in the socialist system away from the Soviet Union. How could it be that, with millions executed or rotting in Stalin's prisons and camps, for many contemporaries Moscow still remained the hope of mankind? Not just communists, nor, indeed, just the uneducated 'masses' that could easily fall for the unsophisticated propaganda.

Thus the South African poet, William Plomer, who was by no means a communist, wrote: 'And ... Moscow, of all places, was the sole source of light.' Bernard Shaw, Romain Rolland and Leon Feuchtwanger thought of it in exactly the same terms. Why should South African communists have been any different? In the 1920s and 1930s Soviet ideals and hopes for a brighter future were the only utopia on offer in a world affected by fascism and depression. The rest of the world did not have them at all. The realities of the Comintern would seem surrealistic if one forgot about its ideals.

In the late 1930s foreign Comintern officials who lived in the Hotel Lux in the centre of Moscow could not sleep at nights. At three or four in the morning there would be a sound of a car stopping at the entrance and heavy steps of NKVD guards would echo in the long empty corridors leading to one or two doors and then returning with the arrested victims. People behind the closed doors sat fully dressed listening: whose door would they go to today? Sometimes their nerves gave way, and, unable to take the terrible waiting any longer, they shot themselves. Some jumped to their death from their windows into the courtyard far below. Always into the courtyard, never into the street where Soviet passers-by might see the suicide and get the wrong idea. Soviet citizens' ideals had to be protected at all costs, and the internal courtyard was safely surrounded by the hotel walls. In the end the courtyard windows were grilled, and the suicides stopped.

On the eve of the Second World War what little was left of the Comintern communicated with the South African party only through the British communist party. Small delegations from the trade unions and the society 'Friends of the Soviet Union' came to the USSR on visits organised by the CPSA. In October–November 1937 Bill Andrews, now forgiven, arrived for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the October revolution. He was met by Naumann who tried to persuade him to rejoin the CPSA. By 1938 the pressure from Moscow completely ceased and the CPSA was left to its own devices and to the assistance of British communists. The Soviet leadership was no longer interested in 'colonial' questions for it was now mainly preoccupied with the threat of war.

The CPSA was plunged into a new crisis when a non-aggression pact was signed by the USSR with Nazi Germany in August 1939 – an act which the

leaders of the South African party chose to support. The majority of its followers neither understood nor supported this move, and the party's following dwindled even further. However, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union and the Soviet struggle against the German invaders swelled the ranks of the CPSA and dramatically increased its influence. This was a clearly expressed comment on the fact that despite the collapse of the Comintern both the CPSA itself and the public at large saw the South African party as an expression of Soviet policy – and as Soviet prestige grew, so did the CPSA.

It was true, however, that from 1941 all contacts between the CPSA and the rump Comintern ceased and even the contacts between the Soviet party and the CPSA stopped. The congress of the CPSA, which took place on 4–5 January 1947, received greetings from the communist parties of Britain, France, Italy and some other countries – but not from the CPSU.³¹ A different kind of link, diplomatic relations between the USSR and South Africa, came into existence in mid-1942. Some staff from the Soviet consulates met with South African communists, either covertly or on public occasions, and reported to Moscow about these meetings. The CPSA was useful in mounting campaigns of solidarity with the Soviet Union through such organisations as Friends of the Soviet Union, Medical Aid for Russia, and so on. It was obvious, however, that direct party ties were far from the centre of the attention of Soviet diplomats. The Soviet leadership focused entirely on the USSR's struggle for survival and victory.

THE DOCUMENTS

The history of relations between the Comintern and the CPSA is reflected in a number of publications on the history of the CPSA. First to appear were memoirs and biographical accounts. The most important of these were R.K. Cope's book on Bill Andrews, Edward Roux' book on Bunting and memoirs by Edward Roux and Wilfred Harrison.³² Alex La Guma's biography of Jimmy La Guma is the most recent addition to this biographical–autobiographical genre.³³ Roux also published the first study of African nationalist movement in South Africa.³⁴ Sheridan Johns' doctoral thesis was the first academic study of

31. *The Guardian*, 9 January 1947.

32. R.K. Cope. *Comrade Bill: the Life and Times of W. H. Andrews, Workers' Leader*. Cape Town: Stewart Printing Company, n.d. [1943]; E. Roux. *S.P. Bunting: A Political Biography*. Cape Town: African Bookman, 1944; W. Harrison. *Memoirs of a Socialist in South Africa, 1903–1947*. Cape Town: by the Author, 1947; E. Roux, W. Roux. *Rebel Pity: The Life of Eddie Roux*. London: Rex Collings, 1970.

33. A. La Guma. *Jimmy La Guma: A Biography*. Ed. by M. Adhikari. Cape Town: Friends of the South African Library, 1997.

34. E. Roux. *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1949.

the early history of the CPSA.³⁵ This was followed by books written by the South African communists, Jack and Ray Simons,³⁶ Michael Harmel,³⁷ Brian Bunting³⁸ and by Martin Legassick,³⁹ and E.T. Wilson.⁴⁰ Henry R. Pike's history of the CPSA written from an anticommunist perspective contains some very useful material, for the author, uniquely, had access to the South African security service archives.⁴¹ The most important recent publication is Alison Drew's history of the Left in South Africa.⁴²

Three publications of documents pertain to our topic: the documents of the South African Communist Party edited by Brian Bunting,⁴³ Alison Drew's documentary history of radical movements in South Africa⁴⁴ and the first two volumes of documents of African political movements edited by Thomas Karis and Gwendolen Carter.⁴⁵ However valuable for the history of the CPSA, Bunting's collection consists exclusively of the articles from official party publications and of a few official party documents. Drew has published a number of documents from the Comintern archives but as with Bunting, she does not focus on the relations between the Comintern and the South African communists. Karis's and Carter's publication is crucial for the understanding of the African political scene in the 1920s and 1930s but the communist movement is not in any way at the centre of their attention.

It is a pity that some of the most important studies of the history of the CPSA and of the relations between the Comintern and South Africa were published in Russian and are thus accessible only to Russian speakers. Apollon Davidson's book covering the early history of the CPSA was one of the first academic publications on this topic and was to a large extent based on the Comintern

35. Completed in 1965, the thesis was first published as a book only three decades later: S. Johns. *Rising the Red Flag. The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932*. Bellville: Mayibuye Books, 1995.

36. H.J. and R. Simons. *Class and Colour in South Africa. 1850-1950*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969.

37. A. Lerumo [M. Harmel]. *Fifty Fighting Years. The South African Communist Party. 1921-1971*. London: Inkululeko Publications, 1971.

38. B. Bunting. *Moses Kotane: South African Revolutionary*. London: Inkululeko Publishers, 1975.

39. M. Legassick. *Class and Nationalism in South African Protest: The South African Communist Party and the 'Native Republic'. 1928-34*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1973.

40. E.T. Wilson. *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*. New York and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1974.

41. H.R. Pike. *A History of Communism in South Africa*. Germiston: Christian Mission International of South Africa, 1985.

42. A. Drew. *Discordant Comrades. Identities and Loyalties on the South African Left*. Aldershot, Burlington et al.: Ashgate, 2000.

43. Brian Bunting, ed. *South African Communists Speak. Documents from the History of the South African Communist Party, 1915-1980*. London: Inkululeko Publications, 1981.

44. A. Drew, ed. *South Africa's Radical Tradition. A Documentary History*, vol. 1. Cape Town: Bunchu Books, Mayibuye Books, UCT Press, 1996.

45. T. Karis, G.M. Carter, eds. *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, vols. 1 and 2, Stanford, California, 1972.

archives.⁴⁶ After the opening of the archives a number of studies of the Comintern itself appeared⁴⁷ and several collections of documents were published which are of much interest to scholars of anti colonialism, revolutionary nationalism and related topics. The first selection of South African documents from the Comintern archives was included in a recently published documentary history of relations between Russia and Africa.⁴⁸

This publication offers a comprehensive selection of documents that covers the full history of relations between the Communist International and the Communist Party of South Africa. The editors' goal was to present this history through the documents, to let the documents speak, rather than use them to illustrate the editors' text. Thus the editors' text, both in the introduction and in the notes, was kept to a minimum while as much documentary text was included as was possible and necessary to allow the documents tell their story in its entirety and diversity.

One of the main principles behind our selection was to cover, as far as possible, all major topics/periods in the Comintern's involvement in South Africa. There were several of these: the communication between the International Socialist League and the Comintern before the formation of the CPSA; the formation of the CPSA and its admission to the Comintern; the Rand revolt and the Comintern's reaction to this event; the adoption of the slogan of an independent native republic for South Africa by the Comintern; the internal struggle within the CPSA around this slogan and the 'bolshevisation' of the party which involved debates on race and class issues; the U-turn by the Comintern from the slogan of an independent native republic to the policy of a popular front and the consequences of this move for South Africa; the work of the ECCI's South African Commission; the collapse of the Comintern under the weight of Stalin's purges and the persecution of several CPSA members by the Soviet authorities. Some of these topics are better represented than others in the archives but we have included documents covering them all.

Our other priority was to present the different forms that the Comintern's involvement in South Africa took, from devising the strategy for the CPSA and imposing its general line to educating and selecting the leading cadres of the party, punishing them for deviations and dissidence and sending its own emissaries to check the implementation of its decisions. Documents presenting all these and other forms of the Comintern's activities in or towards South Africa are included in our selection. Among these are resolutions on South

46. A.B. Davidson. *South Africa: The Birth of Protest. 1870-1924* (in Russian). Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1972. The archives were still closed at that time and the documents could not be either quoted or referred to but in most cases the source is clear from the contents.

47. One example of these is the book, *The Organisational Structure of the Comintern, 1919-1943* (in Russian) by G.M. Adibekov, E.N. Shakhnazarova and K.K. Shirinia (Moscow: Rosspan, 1997) - a publication to which we often referred in our work.

48. A.B. Davidson and S.V. Mazov, eds. *Russia and Africa. Documents and Materials. XVIII Century to 1960* (in Russian), Vol. II. Moscow: Institute of General History, 1999.

Africa passed by the Presidium and the Secretariat of the ECCI, by the Eastern and Anglo-American Secretariats and by the South African Commission. We also publish correspondence between the CPSA and the Comintern, reports by the Comintern's emissaries to South Africa, and so on.

Another side of the Comintern that we thought important was its internal functioning. There are several documents in our selection which show how meetings of Comintern bodies were convened, how decisions were taken, and at what level, who proposed resolutions and took decisions and how unofficial opinions were formed and rumours emerged in the Comintern circles. Among the documents of this type there are several in our selection that do not pertain directly to South Africa for we could not find their exact South African equivalents. These were selected because the procedure was obviously the same or very similar in all cases, and we wanted to show it. One such document is the minutes of the meeting of the ECCI taking the decision to send emissaries of the Comintern abroad.

The next group of documents selected for this publication presents minutes and resolutions of congresses and conferences of the CPSA. These documents are not necessarily connected with the Comintern but we reproduce several of them as fully as considerations of space and balance allow for the Comintern archives seem to be the only place where they have survived.

Finally, the history of relations between the Comintern and the CPSA is a human story – as much as any history is. We have selected a fair number of documents by, about or pertaining to the people, both the South Africans and the Russians, who formed the connection between the CPSA and the Comintern. Their correspondence, autobiographies, reports and stenos of their presentations that we include in this collection allow an insight into their ideas, perceptions and struggles – something which brings a flavour of real drama into the documentary narrative.

We have selected 183 documents. The first volume contains 90 documents covering the period of the 1920s (including 1930); the second, 93 documents covering the 1930s. This division is not mechanical but is defined by two distinctly different periods in the relations between the Comintern and the CPSA, as the documents clearly show. The 1920s were a time when South African communists enthusiastically embraced the Comintern and when the involvement of the Comintern in the affairs of their party was minimal. In the 1930s, the period of 'bolshevisation' of the party and of internal party squabbles, the intervention of the Comintern and its influence on the party became quite pronounced. This, however, was over by the late 1930s and the collapse of the Comintern. The last documents in our selection date from 1939, although formally the Comintern lasted for another five years, because there were very few documents on South Africa in the archives, let alone documents of interest, after this date.

We have attempted to make a balanced selection but this was not always possible. Some events in the history of the CPSA are covered by documents

from only one of the two factions within the party which means that the picture presented could be distorted. Equally, some important documents, such as the minutes of certain congresses of the CPSA, could not be found in the archives at all.

All our documents, except one, come from the Comintern archives housed at the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) and all, with one exception, are published here for the first time.

The importance of this publication is heightened by the fact that the archives of the CPSA itself have not survived in full. Even before the Suppression of Communism Act was passed by the South African parliament in 1950 the party was always under the threat of persecution. The CPSA dissolved itself before it was banned under the Act. It is not clear what happened to its archives at this point. There is little doubt that the South African security branch had copies of at least some party documents but their archives are said to have been destroyed before the 1994 elections. None of the collections of party documents that we are aware of (files on 'communism' in the South African National Archives, Jack and Ray Simons' archive at the University of Cape Town, Brian and Sonia Bunting's archive at the Mayibuye Centre of the University of Western Cape, and the large collection of CPSA documents housed at the Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University) contains a full or even a regular record of CPSA documents. The collection of CPSA documents in the Comintern archives may be not full either (some documents were lost in the archives or were destroyed and some were bound to be lost on the way from South Africa to Moscow; it is also important to remember that typical of the Stalin era the most important negotiations were conducted and the most important instructions were given verbally) but it is huge.

Our selection presents a diverse range of documents that we view as the most important for understanding the nature of relations between the Comintern and the CPSA, the process of policy making and decision making within the Comintern, and the history of the CPSA itself.

Besides this, our documents, together with other publications of documents from the Comintern archives,⁴⁹ help one to understand the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement between the two world wars, communist ideology and its mentality as a whole, the Comintern's approach to national and colonial problems and its attitude to questions of race and class as

49. See, for example, H. Klehr, J.E. Haynes, F.I. Firsov, eds. *The Secret World of American Communism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995; H. Klehr, J.E. Haynes, K.M. Anderson. *The Soviet World of American Communism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998. Several important publications appeared in Russian, most notably, *The Comintern and the Second World War*, part 1, Moscow, 1994; part 2, Moscow, 1998, *The Comintern and Latin America*, Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1998, and *The Comintern and the Idea of the World Revolution*, Moscow, Nauka Publishers, 1998.

well as to other issues which preoccupied the communist movement between the two world wars.

South African documents from the Comintern archives also reflect the internal political struggle inside the Russian communist party. The consolidation of power by Stalin, his intolerance of any kind of non-conformism and his elimination of even the smallest, real or imagined, deviation from the official political line, be it 'left', 'right', 'opportunistic', 'Trotskyist' or 'revisionist' – all had a direct and immediate effect on the generality and movement of cadres within the Comintern, and on its activities.

Our documents also shed additional light on the activity of the communist parties of Great Britain and of the United States, for many of the contacts of the Comintern with South African communists went through these parties, and ideologically South African problems were often correlated and connected with the 'Negro problem' in the United States. Some prominent British and American communists were in different ways involved in South Africa. It has already been mentioned that Eugene Dennis spent several months in South Africa as a secret emissary of the Comintern. Harry Haywood, a prominent African-American communist, was also deeply involved in formulating the strategy for the CPSA in the late 1920s and early 1930s and William Patterson, another African-American, who later became a member of the leadership of the CPUSA, and his wife (both under the alias 'Wilson') worked on African affairs in the Comintern in Moscow.

The opening of the Comintern archives caused a sensation. Unscrupulous publications of selected documents immediately followed, leading to contentious, biased and often scandalous interpretations. In many cases this resulted in political clashes and litigation over ownership of and access to the documents and in the reclassification of some documents and of some parts of the Archive's collections. As for South Africa, the first journalist who looked through some documents in the Comintern archives published an article in *Izvestia*, the biggest Russian newspaper of the time, under the title: 'The Communist Party Would Have Introduced Soviet Power in Southern Africa Already 60 Years Ago. The Comintern documents published for the first time bear witness.'⁵⁰ Such sensationalism made our research more difficult both politically and practically.

The sensitivity of the materials with which we worked and the property rights issue led us to discuss our research with two late leaders of the South African Communist Party, the successor of the CPSA, Joe Slovo and Chris Hani. Both thought that the publication of the documents of the CPSA would be important and valuable, and Chris Hani confirmed his opinion in writing. Neither made any attempt to intervene in our work.

50. Boris Piliatskin. 'Kopartiiia dolzhna byla ustanovit' na Iuge Afriki sovetskuiu vlast' ieshcho 60 let nazad'. *Izvestia*, Moscow, 30 May 1992.

МОСКОВСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
ИНСТИТУТ СТРАН АЗИИ И АФРИКИ

ЮЖНОАФРИКАНСКИЙ НАУЧНЫЙ ЦЕНТР
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South African Communist Party
Central Committee

April 26, 1992

Dear Friends,

Our Centre is working on the collection of documents "Comintern and South Africa. (1920-1937)".

We think that this publication is very important now that this theme is subject to all sorts of misinterpretation.

We would very much like to know your opinion about this idea.

Professor Davidson Apollon B. Davidson, Chairman.

Dear Professor,
Our party as in the past will benefit tremendously from the publication of the collection of documents "Comintern and South Africa (1920-1937)". I, therefore, support your present efforts to initiate this task and we are aware of your objective ~~also~~ approach to these matters.
Chris Hani

Letter from Chris Hani to Apollon Davidson, 26 April 1992.

This project took us exactly ten years. It was started late in 1991 and completed in 2001. The major reason why such a protracted period of time was needed to complete our work was the magnitude of the project and the amount of work that we had to do. There are thousands and thousands of documents pertaining to South Africa in the Comintern archives, scattered in different collections. We found them, for example, in the files of the various secretariats of the ECCI (the Anglo-American Secretariat, the Eastern Secretariat, the Political Secretariat, and so on), and in the files of the Personnel Department and the Organisational Department of the ECCI, the Department of International Liaison (OMS), the Communist University of Eastern Toilers and the International Lenin School and in the files of various Comintern affiliates, such as RILU, the Krestintern, the International Red Aid, and so on. The biggest single collection of South African documents in the Comintern archives, many hundreds of them, is to be found in the files of the South African Commission. We had to locate these documents and go through them which was not at all easy, not only because the inventories do not indicate separate documents within the files (the normal archival practice world wide) but also because of various and multiple limitations of access and usage of different materials. A preliminary selection had then to be made, and we photocopied or copied by hand what we selected. Then we studied the selected documents in order to decide which of them should go into the first computer draft. The print out was then studied again and the final selection was made.

This was, however, just the beginning of our work. Some documents had to be translated from Russian and German (Irina Filatova and Valentin Gorodnov carried out translations from Russian and Christa Johns of Duke University has kindly translated the German originals). Often we found only the translations of documents, not the originals from which the translations had been made. These were often translations from Russian originals into English (in which case the quality of translation was usually poor) and from English or German originals into Russian (in which case names, geographic place names, names of organisations, and so on were often distorted to such an extent that sometimes we could not find out who or what was meant in the original when we translated these documents back into English).

We had to identify all the individuals mentioned in the documents, a tedious and difficult task. There were people who played an important role at the time but were later forgotten, so that in many cases it was not easy and in some cases impossible to establish their real names or find any information about them. Aliases were one of our biggest problem. As we have already mentioned, one person often used several aliases, and one alias could be used by different people. In some cases a Comintern official used the alias or the real name of another official for just one particular task. There were documents in which not only the signatures but also all the names in the text were completely inked or typed over, whitened out or even cut out. Many

documents survived only in copies, often hardly readable and sometimes unsigned.

The same is true about many events and places mentioned in the text. We have attempted to clarify as many as we could but in some cases this turned out to be impossible. The spelling of place names was often distorted beyond recognition and references to certain events could sometimes not be found even in the specialised literature.

Many documents in the archives are undated. In some cases exhaustive search would reveal that the date of this or that document was mentioned in related documents or in its copy or draft that was also to be found in the archives. In other cases either an exact or an approximate date could be established on the basis of the contents of the document or of the related documents.

Some documents could not be reproduced in full because of their length and because some of their contents was neither interesting nor significant. We had to decide what should be published with cuts or in excerpts and which extracts exactly should be selected. None of these cuts was made for political or ideological considerations; we have just tried to select the most important and most interesting materials out of a sea of documents.

Much of our time and effort went into the glossaries that provide background information on the organisations and personalities mentioned in the text. We view them as an important instrument for the readers' perusal of the documents. We have kept the glossary entries short, particularly in cases when information about a particular person or organisation can be easily found in any encyclopaedia or a reference book (for example, the African National Congress; V.I. Lenin, N.I. Bukharin, and so on). Where such information is less accessible or non-existent – that is when a particular entry is based entirely on our research – we offer all the information that we could obtain – which was often scanty in any case. In some entries we used materials from Russian encyclopaedias and other reference publications which are either unknown or little known in the West. An important source of our information were Apollon Davidson's interviews with several former staff members of the African department at KUTV, as well as the general 'oral tradition' about the Comintern that we have collected in Moscow.

Finally, even modern technology could not completely eradicate the problem of communication between four editors living and working on three different continents. We had our working sessions and editorial meetings in Durham (North Carolina) in the USA, in Grahamstown, Cape Town and Durban in South Africa, in Venice in Italy and, of course, in Moscow. This took a lot of planning, organisation and time. We hope that the final result of our work justifies the effort that went into it.

* * *

Our work would have been much more difficult without the assistance of several veterans of the South African communist movement who shared with us their reminiscences and information, particularly Brian Bunting, Ray Simons and Joe Matthews. We are indebted to a number of prominent communists who have passed away – John Marks, Moses Kotane, Edwin Mofutsanyana, Solly Sachs, Ruth First and Joe Slovo among them, as well as to several former Comintern officials and lecturers, most notably Alexander Zusmanovich, Endré Sik and Ivan Potekhin. In some cases their information helped to verify what we later discovered from other sources, in other cases it was unique.

The editors express their deep gratitude to Kyrill M. Anderson, Director of the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, and to other archivists who helped us to locate and identify documents in the Comintern archives and were helpful in every possible way.

We are greatly indebted to Professor Robert Edgar of Howard University and Professor Woodford McClellan of the University of Virginia for their extremely thorough reading of our voluminous manuscript, for sharing with us their expertise and for giving us their valuable advice.

Without the financial support and the assistance of the personnel of various institutions on three continents this publication could never have been completed. The Josiah Charles Trent Memorial Foundation and the Arts and Sciences Research Council of Duke University provided crucial travel funding to the editors and support for translation services at the initial and concluding stages of the project. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) provided funding for a first visit by Sheridan Johns to Moscow for consultations and research in the archives. Major funding through a Collaborative Project Grant from the National Endowment for Humanities (NEH) permitted all the editors to devote more time to the project and provided travel funding for editorial meetings. The University of Durban-Westville contributed funds towards research support staff, travel and stationery and rendered other valuable assistance.

The editors' greatest debt is to Ludmila Kartachova of Moscow State University. Her indefatigable energy and patience while transferring documents and commentary, often scrawled nearly illegibly in three languages, from piles of notepaper to her computer for the use of the editors, was an arduous, painstaking but utterly invaluable labour. Without her this project would have been impossible.

DOCUMENTS