

**Report by S.P. Bunting on 4th Congress of Comintern,
[29 April 1923]¹ (Extracts)**

REPORT OF THE DELEGATE TO THE FOURTH CONGRESS
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

To the Communist Party of S Africa

Dear Comrades

At the time of leaving S Africa for Europe my wife and I had already been appointed, in February 1922, as delegates to the Fourth Congress, but it was not known when the Congress would be held. Later on, when the date was announced, it also appeared that only one delegate from the SA Party was invited, and it seemed likely that Com. Ivon Jones would be the one in the question. I wrote to him asking whether in the circumstances we were likely to be welcome in Russia. He said that Lenin had taken great interest in the Rand Revolution, and that it had been proposed that he Com. Jones should proceed to S Africa to report on it, but that as his health was not too good, and as we were already in Europe, that plan had been given up, and in fact Zinoviev had expressed a wish that I should proceed to Russia. After considerable delay in Berlin, therefore, we got our visas, having already got our passport endorsed by the British Foreign Office, and spent the months of September, October and November 1922 in Moscow. Owing to my wife's ill health we were obliged to leave for London on Nov. 30, thus missing the last week of the Congress, but I attended nearly everything which was of special interest as S African delegates. In the meantime the Party had appointed Com. Jack Campbell as alternative delegate, and in the absence sick of both Com. Jones and my wife I wrote to Com. Campbell to come to the Congress, which he did, arriving about half way through, and remaining after we left, I believe until the end of the Congress; and I think he also attended the Congress of the RILU. I do not know whether he has sent report. I may explain that the Credentials Committee allowed S Africa one alternate delegate after all, which enabled Com. Campbell to take his seat at the Congress. Our greatest regret throughout was that we missed Com. Jones who left for the Crimea two days before we reached Moscow, and owing to his comparative inaccessibility, far even from regular posts, our communications with him were all too scanty.

[...]

1. The document is Bunting's report on the 4th Congress of the Comintern to the 2nd Congress of the CPSA, 28-9 April 1923. The report is not signed. Bunting's authorship and the tentative date were established on the basis of the contents of the document.

The Congress appointed a special Commission on the Negro Question, of which I was a member, together with delegates from North America, Egypt, Tunis, Java, England, Holland, Belgium, Russia and Japan. The personnel was however somewhat weak, and in the end the chief members attending were reduced to two Americans (of whom Billing was one), myself (with Com. Campbell at the last sitting) and occasionally the Hollander and the Russian and a Yugoslav who sometimes 'blew in', and we had no common language and thus what was done in one language was often not translated into the languages understood by the others on the Commission. The Commission produced a 'Thesis' on the question which I think, as the result of some inexplicably keen manoeuvring in a purely American direction by one of the delegates, does not in its 'operative clauses' sufficiently cover the ground.² I was begged not to waste the time of the Congress by speaking on the matter, but I wrote about it to the E.C.C.I. ^{a letter to} ~~~~~ which ^{it} ~ has never replied, and having sent a copy to the General Secretary I need not cover the ground again. The clauses are:

(1.) The Fourth Congress recognises the necessity of supporting every form of Negro movement which tends to undermine or weaken capitalism or imperialism or to impede its further penetration.

(2.) The Communist International will fight for race equality of the Negro with the white people, for equal wages and political and social rights.

(3.) The Communist International will use every instrument within its control to compel the trade unions to admit negro workers to membership or, where the nominal right to join exists, to agitate for a special campaign to draw them into the unions; failing in this, it will organise the negroes into unions of their own and specially apply the United Front tactic to compel admission.

(4.) The Communist International will take immediate steps to hold a general Negro Conference or Congress at Moscow.

[...]

I understand the ECCI are expecting Com. W.H. Andrews this year, and there was some talk of asking him to transfer himself permanently from S. Africa to some wider sphere of activity.

Yours fraternally

RGASPI, 495/64/16/19, 26-7, 34.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

2. Most probably, the 'inexplicably keen manoeuvring' was done by Billing – Otto Huiswoud who was to come to South Africa as an emissary of the Profintern in 1932.



3. Bill Andrews, a founder member and leader of both the International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa. Andrews was also a member of the Comintern Executive.



4. Rebecca Bunting, a founder member of the International Socialist League and a prominent communist. Rebecca Bunting was a delegate to the 6th Congress of the Comintern.



5. David Ivon Jones, a founder member, leader and theoretician of the International Socialist League and of the CPSA. Jones was also a member of the Comintern Executive and South Africa's representative on the ECCI. He died in Moscow where he is buried.



Альберт Нзула

5 апр. 53.

И. Потехин

*Эпо эгмехенас бееф
гратозпагис Нзула. Тоннуны
Смпоуатиле Септе и ун бее
е Септе ерестиле депузон б Сун-
уантунт ерест
5 апр. 53.*

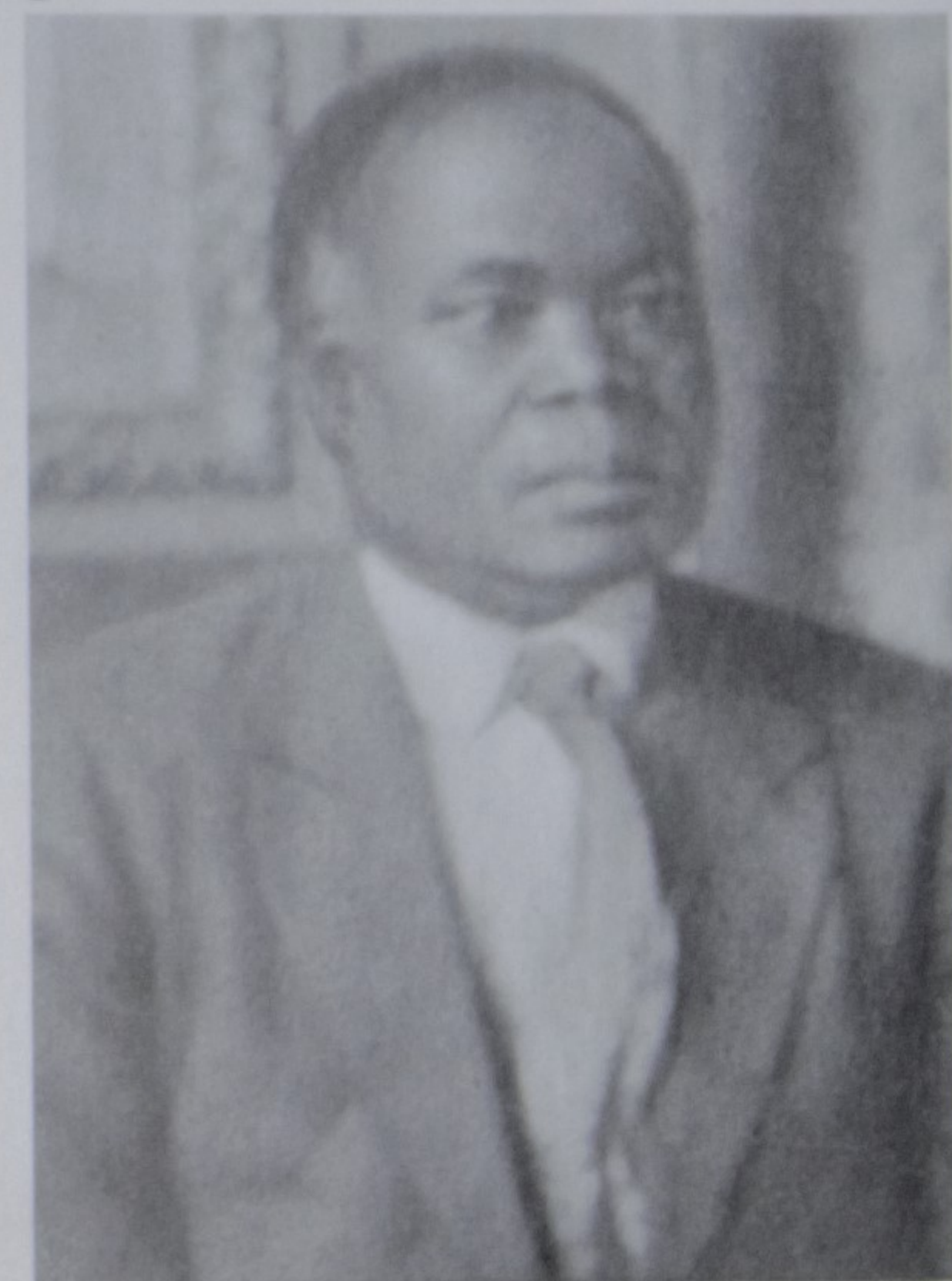
И. Потехин

6. Albert Nzula, the first black secretary of the CPSA, who studied at the Lenin School. He died in Moscow where he is buried. Nzula's photograph is pasted to a piece of paper with the following note by Potekhin: 'Albert Nzula. I. Potekhin, 5 April 53. This is the only photograph of Nzula in the USSR. For this reason to be looked after with greatest care and in any circumstances to be returned shortly. 5 April 53. I. Potekhin.'

7. Johannes Nkosi, the hero of the CPSA, killed during its pass-burning campaign of 1930.



8. Josiah Gumede, a founder member of the Natal Natives Congress and of the South African Native National Congress (the ANC), and later the president-general of the ANC.





9. Bill Andrews (centre) among the workers of the Moscow factory 'Dinamo' (1923).

10. S.P. Bunting's Election Address.

ADVERTISEMENT

Mr. S. P. BUNTING'S Election Address.

ELECTORS OF TRANSVAAL.

I am standing for Parliament under the banner of the Communist Party of South Africa, which has its head office at 41(a), Fox Street, Johannesburg.

It is admitted on all hands that this election is being fought on the "native question." But as between the other parties (including the so-called S.A. Labour Party) even the Chamber of Mines organ, *Untoteli ya Bantu*, confesses (29/1/29) that

"The contest for Parliamentary seats will not revolve around the straight issue of native freedom or native oppression, but each party will bid for public favour by showing in what manner it would continue the repression of native progress so as to ensure the continuance of white superiority and supremacy in State and industry."

Apart from a vulgar scramble for office, the chief bone of contention between the two bigger parties is merely as to which shall control the exploitation of the native labour force of South Africa, the farmers or the mining and commercial capitalists, Afrikaner or British imperialism, in neither case, of course, for the benefit of the native but for the profit to be made out of his toil. "White capital and black labour" is the common economic background of the world-wide imperialist system of government of subject people, who as the result of it, in glaring contrast with the colossal technical achievements, prosperity, and privilege enjoyed by the conquering ruling class, are still, after centuries of colonisation and civilisation, relegated to an outer darkness of their own, yelling poverty and ignorance, backwardness and deterioration, enslavement and terror, miscealed contentment for the masses, and condemning even the more favoured non-European to a galling inferiority and ostracism. As Professor D. D. T. Jabavu—now strangely enough a supporter of Mr. Hanning, one of your two S.A.P. candidates and an apostle of "no change"—wrote at a time when the S.A.P. had had at least 10 years of power in which to remedy matters: "They are landless, voteless, helots; social outcasts in their fatherland with no future in any path of life. Of all the blessings of this world they see that the white man" (say rather the ruling class) "has everything, they nothing."

And in its policy towards the submerged millions one "boss party" is no better than another. Even as regards the franchise "S.A.P." and "Nats" are in fact divided only on tactics. General Smuts would rather welcome the disfranchisement "by agreement"—i.e., doubtless, with the connivance of a handful of "National Scouts" or intimidated "Bungas"—while General Hertzog makes a frontal attack, coupled only with a specious sop to coloured voters on the principle "divide and rule." That is all. "Let the natives keep their paltry vote at any rate until after the election," says General Smuts, in effect. It is quite insignificant in proportion to their numbers while practically every white man is a voter, it gives them not a title of power, and in any case we will never extend it to a wider circle of voters or to other provinces; on the contrary should it ever threaten our white domination we will raise the qualification." And Bullock, Port Elizabeth, S.W. Africa; Bloemfontein, and the Rand remind us that his has been by far the bloodiest administration towards both native and white workers.

The Communist Party differs from the other parties as day from night. It has no reason to distort or conceal the real nature of the "native question." In the words of "Untoteli" it does indeed stand for "native freedom" as against "native repression," for it is the recognised policy of the Communist Party at all times and in every country to champion the cause of the exploited



11. Lazar Bach, a prominent South African communist who studied at KUTV, was accused of Trotskyism and died in the GULAG.



12. Josie Mpama (Palmer), a prominent South African communist who studied at KUTV. (The editors are grateful to Professor R. Edgar who gave them a copy of this picture.)

13. Participants of the 5th Congress of the CPSA (Bill Andrews: front row, first from the left, S.P. Bunting front row, second from the right).





14. George Clark, a Comintern emissary in South Africa (1930).

15. Boris Idelson, the first Comintern emissary in South Africa (1929).



16. Bonio Petrovsky, head of the Soviet oil trading company (AROP) in South Africa (1931-36).



17. The CPSA's weekly newspaper, *The International*.

More Bolshevik Atrocities
By GEORGE LANSBURY

MOSCOW.—"All Soviet Russia will become a united All Russian Co-operative Society of Workers—that is our aim," said Lenin the other day, addressing the Central Executive Committee of the Party.

I have gone through several state factories here, where miners, hatters, and carpenters are being built. There would be no limit to the number of workers during the period of trouble before the revolution Russia was dependent on the outside world for nearly all her machinery, and parts were brought here from all over the world. Now, from her own raw material, she is building airplanes, motors, and bicycles.

I have seen toolmakers, fenders, workmen, machine makers, carpenters, woodworkers, all at work, with machines at full speed, and have mentally compared them with those I have seen by the thousand in England and France. The only difference, and it is a vital one, is that the men here are their own employers. They are working not for a boss or to produce rent, profit, or interest, but for the Soviet State, which is themselves.

Their idea of the organization and direction of their industry. The day before we visit they had met their representatives on the Moscow Soviet, and by large majorities had chosen national workshops, Guild Socialism, and workshop control, have national workshops and workers' control as their actual operation.

People in England often talk of waste in government and municipal enterprises. In these national workshops, the waste contrary to the man. Every scrap of raw material and stone coming in is carefully registered and accounted for. The stores are kept in a model of neatness, and every scrap is accounted for. The products of the factories are all carefully inspected before sent and stamped or stamped work is rejected.

As much for state factories. At the Moscow waterworks the workers have peaceful control, and they show extraordinary initiative and enthusiasm. They have helped the fuel shortage by new methods of heating, which is better in great quantities over Moscow, and in the construction of their own initiative of a narrow gauge railway which enables them to get fuel with less labour and in large quantities. It is impossible that the red armies could have been fed, equipped, and the nation kept alive, except by this sort of enthusiasm which not only believes but works.

It is impossible that the red armies could have been fed, equipped, and the nation kept alive, except by this sort of enthusiasm which not only believes but works.

Every post is open to them. Women working on day rates are allowed the same wages as men, even though their production falls 15 per cent. below that of the men. On piece work there is always a minimum wage, which, of course, is the same for men and women. Such a minimum wage is paid for at least and unemployment are paid for at full rate, and the sick extra food and medicine are also supplied.

Many workers, being in the orthodox church, and desiring to enjoy the many holidays prescribed by that organization, in consequence of this workers are given the opportunity of one church holiday each year. In addition, there are eight public holidays during the year, and Sundays and Saturday afternoons are given as days. Two weeks' vacation are given yearly, and where needed there are no Sundays. British workers will note that all these are real holidays, as they are paid for.

Overtime is paid for at time and a half rate for the first two hours, and at double rate afterwards. Much overtime is being worked at present, and a good deal of voluntary work is also being done. This latter means that people work at occupations other than their normal ones in order to save the nation.

A big wave of enthusiasm is rising among the people, who talk now of "the bloodless front," meaning thereby the industrial field. But on everyone's tongue there is one question when they are told I am from England: "When are you British workers going to make your government let us live?"

THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL.
We have received two communications from Comrade S. J. Rutgers, the secretary of the Amsterdam sub-committee of the Third International, which puts South Africa in touch with the left wing movement in Europe and elsewhere.

ANOTHER OUTRAGE.
Jim Larkin's indomitable resistance of five to ten years' hard labour for "criminal anarchy" is one of the most heroic struggles yet recorded by the ruling class of America. Jim Larkin was the leader of the great Dublin strike in 1913. The union endeavor to stir up prejudice against him by describing him as the "leader of the Dublin strike mob." This latest outrage should cause repeated letters throughout the world to demand his immediate release.

LENIN.
The man of the moment in Europe.

Our London municipal workers could learn a great lesson from these Moscow men and women, who know that they work for the state and feel they are working on behalf of their whole class, and want therefore to do their very best, even though constant conflicts are at hand. There are some who grumble, they say that all the world is against Russia, not a single person I have met, though I know that things would be other than such were under any other government than the present.

The position of women in industry here would give complete satisfaction to every leader of the women's movement at home. Women work in industry side by side with men, and are recognized on

18. S.P. Bunting's pamphlet.

"Red Revolt"

THE RAND STRIKE
January-March, 1922.

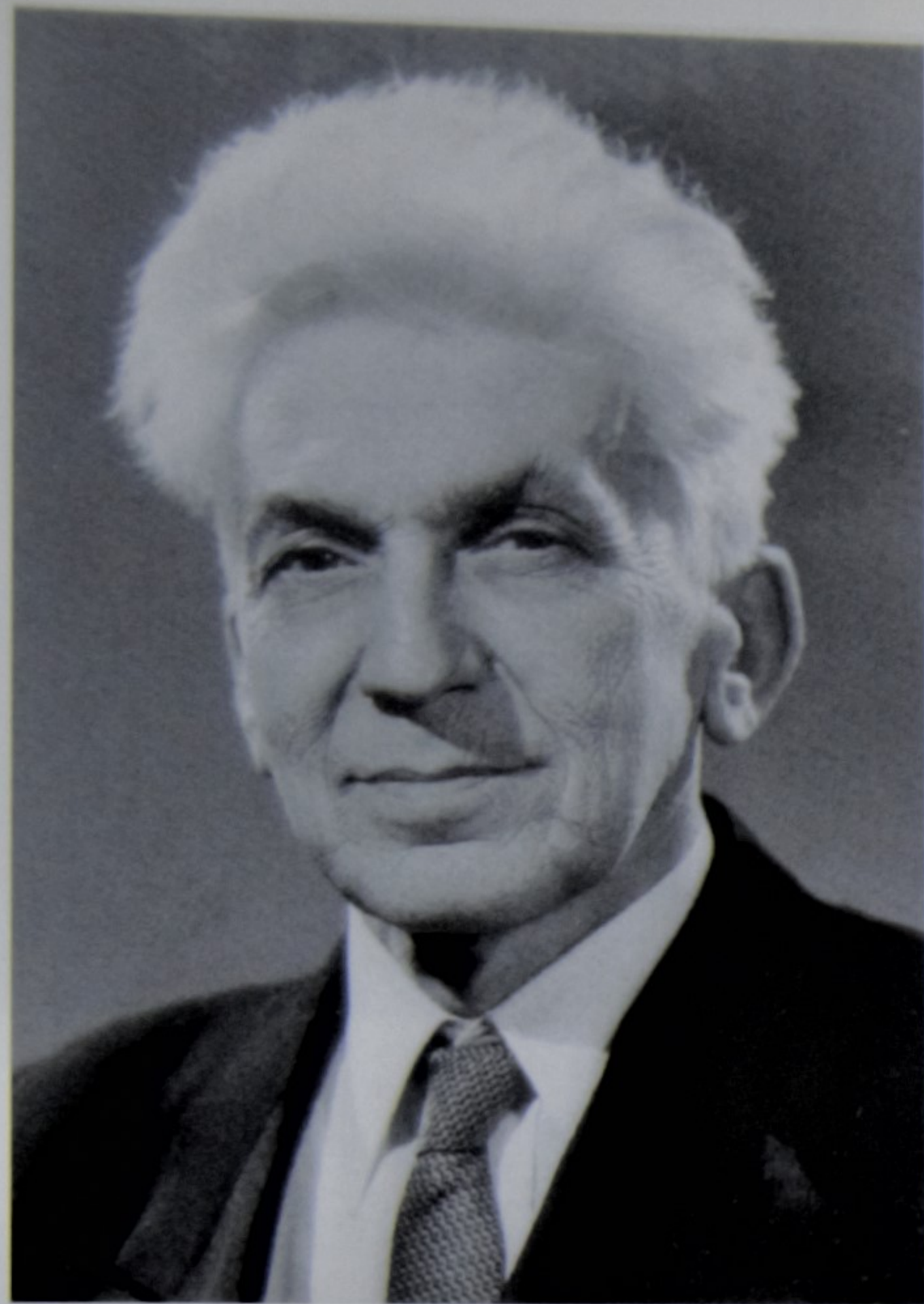
The Workers' Story.

Written for the Communist Party (S.A.)
by S. P. BUNTING,
With foreword by W. H. ANDREWS.

"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain."

Price 1/6 Post Free.

Published by the Communist Party (S.A.), 4, Trades Hall, Johannesburg. P.O. Box 4179.



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.



Letter from Provisional Secretary for Calling the Negro Conference to Executive Committee, CPSA, 23 July 1923¹

Moscow, July 23 1923.

To the Executive Committee of the CP of South Africa.

Dear Comrades:-

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern decided to hold a Negro Congress. The Enlarged Executive decided to call a Negro Conference at the time of the Fifth Congress.

After consulting with your representatives here,² we have concluded that it will be impossible to arrange the conference as originally planned. We have decided as follows therefore:

1. There shall be a conference as planned in Moscow, of Negro Communists, this conference to take place at the time of the Fifth Congress. It will be the duty of your Party, therefore, to add a Negro delegate to your delegation to the Fifth Congress.

2. The International Negro Conference (open conference) will take place either in London, Paris or New York. We consulted your representatives here, who seemed to prefer London to New York. Since that time, Paris has been proposed, owing to its being favourably disposed toward the Negro. We ask your final word in the matter.

This conference will be attended by all the delegates who have been to Moscow and about 30 or 40 others who are required for the work. We expect a number of delegates from Africa, but realize the difficulty they will have in leaving the country. This has been the chief reason for our changing our plans. There will also be a number of liberal and petty-bourgeois Negro representatives from the US, West Indies and Central America. We believe that the centre of propaganda for the Conference will be New York.

However, it will be chiefly the task of the South African Party to reach the Negroes of southern Africa. We include Mozambique, German East and British West Africa, and Rhodesia. Your delegates informed us that you would be able to penetrate these parts and possibly obtain representatives of the natives to attend the conference.

3. As it is our intention to hold a Negro trade union conference simultaneously with the general conference, we request you to have this in view when selecting your delegates.

1. This document is an unsigned copy of the original letter.
2. 'Your representatives here' would seem to refer to D.I. Jones and W.H. Andrews.