

7th November, 1934

Box 3301,
Johannesburg
5. 11. 35.

Dear Com Koston,

Enclosed find
B. K.'s one pound for "Spark". Also
10/- each sale.

Please send six copies of
Spark no 3 at your earliest
convenience.

Fraternally

M. Kalu.

11 November, 1935

P.O. Box 3301
Johannesburg
7th November 1935

Dear Koston,

It is not entirely from inertia that I have not written for so long a time. There is in fact nothing to add to the news contained in our minutes.

Schrire has come and departed and will probably give you an account of the C.P. split in his own inimitable manner.

The S.C. is slowly picking up and we hold the first meeting of the Spartacus Club, Alexandra tonight, so that we will be celebrating the anniversary of October with deeds as well as words.

Please change the notice of the Spartacus Club, Johannesburg to read "Lectures every Wednesday evening."

Yours,

R. K.

WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

P.O.Box 1940,
CAPE TOWN.

11th November, 1935.

The I.S.,
I.C.L. (B.-L.).

Dear Comrades,

We have received the letter of Comrade Dubois, dated 12th October, and have considered it with great attention both here and in Johannesburg. After full deliberation, we have come to the decision that we must reject Comrade Dubois' proposal for unity between the Workers Party and the Communist League.

It will help you to understand the position here if we say a few words about it. Both the Workers Party and the Communist League are small groups. This is undeniable. But there is an important difference between them. When we were together in one organisation, we could not work. All our energies went in trying to hammer into the heads of individuals what we knew to be the correct line. It was in the course of this struggle that the principled differences on all the most fundamental questions became clear. Now, as a separate group, we are able to work, we are able to face outwards towards the workers instead of facing inwards among ourselves.

The war question was one of the real principled differences between us. It still is. In our articles in our "Spark" we made clear our position on the war question. On the 6th October we issued 4000 leaflets on the Italo-Abyssinian Conflict. If you will study this leaflet you will see that it is a clear exposition of our international line on the war. The leaflet was drafted and issued before we had received any materials from the I.S. or any of the sections. You will notice that this leaflet attacks the S.A. Labour Party and the Trade Union bureaucracy which take up a position similar to that of the British Labour Party and T.U.C. The S.A. Labour Party has pledged itself to support the Government. This is to be expected. What is not to be expected is the fact that the Communist League opens the pages of its organ, the "Workers Voice" to one of the leading members of the S.A. Labour Party. We are sending you a copy of the Workers Voice and of the Spark.

It is because of the immediate tasks, because of all our tasks, that we cannot entertain the idea of uniting with the Communist League. We know that this group is doomed. Some of its members will go to the S.A. Labour Party where they belong. Others will go to the Stalinists. Although we are small we feel that we have a future and that while they are also small, they have no future. To unite with them will mean an end to all real work.

With communist greetings,

for the Central Committee

221

WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA
(Cape Town Branch)

P.O.Box 1940,
CAPE TOWN.

11th November, 1935.

The Hon. Secretary,
Spartacus Club,
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Comrade,

I have the pleasure of forwarding to you the following resolution which was passed unanimously at a meeting of our Branch held on the 9th November;-

"The Workers Party hereby records its warm appreciation of the high value to the revolutionary movement of the dramatic performance "The Disinherited" provided by the Spartacus Club for the Celebrations on Nov. 7th. Especially the Party desires to express its deep gratitude to the writer and the producer and to all who helped to make this new departure an outstanding and memorable success."

With fraternal greetings,
General Secretary.

WPSA

141 Longmarket St.,
CAPE TOWN.

11th November, 1935.

The CC,
WPSA,
Johannesburg.

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are receipts, Minutes of our Meetings of the 9th Nov., Dubois' letter, reports, etc.,

With regard to Dubois' letter, our attitude is made clear from the Minutes and from the draft reply enclosed. We are sending you this draft for your consideration. Please let us know soon whether you agree, if you have alterations to suggest, etc.

We notice in your Minutes of the 11th October that you are sending copies of the "Spark" to Durban, Amanzimtoti, etc. We suggest, to save expense, that the posting be done straight from Cape Town. This would save postage and rewrapping. It would be necessary for you to send us the ~~xxxx~~ number of copies needed, etc.

In your Minutes of the 18th October, we notice that Com. Thomas mentions the necessity for a bulletin in Native languages. Comrade Tabata here is fluent in Xosa, could translate "Spark" articles, could write new ones. What are your possibilities of procuring articles and translations in other languages? Please open this question at a Party Meeting. A start should be made. If you could type the stencils (Gestetner), we could run off the paper here. Our study class, comrades Kobus, Nguni, Mama, etc., would write for the paper.

The Spartacus Club Nov. 7th Celebrations were very successful. We put on a play at the Friendly Hall. There were about 200 people present, more than half Natives. The play has caused a stir. There has been nothing like it before in S.A. It was worth the labour and time, two rehearsals a week for two months, put into it.

Yours fraternally,

WORKERS PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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With communist greetings,

for the Central Committee

Proposed letter

Nov. 12th 1935
PR

35, Waterkant Street,

CAPE TOWN.

12th November, 1935.

The Secretary,
Workers ' Party of South Africa,
CAPE TOWN.

Dear Comrade,

As you are aware, the I.S. has forwarded a letter to your organization and ours, in which they request us to make a serious attempt to achieve unity in the ranks of the Fourth Internationalists of this country.

That the time for such a move is opportune is evident from a study of the objective conditions in South Africa to-day. The Stalinist C.P. lies shattered and split into four warring factions. What little authority and prestige it has left is speedily disappearing. There is a grave danger that the Stalinist rank-and-file, disillusioned by a decade of misleadership and betrayal, will seek a way out by turning to organizations like the Africa National Congress or the A.P.O. This is inevitable, UNLESS THERE IS A STRONG COMMUNIST PARTY IN EXISTENCE, READY AND ABLE TO GIVE A REVOLUTIONARY LEAD. Already a section of the Stalinists are considering breaking away from the C.P. and creating a National Liberating Movement on the lines of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights in the U.S.A. There is no doubt that unless there is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party to give a lead to the workers disillusioned with the Stalinist version of "Communism," such a movement will achieve considerable success.

The Italian-Abyssinian War also presents a grave danger to the working class. British Imperialism is frantically trying to capitalise the anti-Italian feelings of the masses for her own interests. The C.P. and S.A.L.P. as well as the Congress and similar bodies, have basely betrayed the workers by supporting the cry for League "sanctions". Your organization and ours are the only ones in South Africa which have given a correct lead on this question, but, owing to our split forces, we have been unable to achieve as much as we could and should have done.

It would be stupid to deny the difficulties in the way of achieving unity between the W.P. and C.L. Our relations in the past have been in no way amicable or comradely. The time has come, however, when it is essential to discuss our differences in a comradely fashion, and see if it is not possible to achieve some form of cooperation between the two organizations. United action, for instance, on the war question should not be an impossibility. This may serve as a preliminary to organizational unity.

In the past you have been hostile to all attempts on our part to achieve unity. Perhaps you have felt that our overtures were not put forward with sincerity. Comrades, I can assure you that nothing is nearer our hearts than to see a strong, united section of the Fourth International in South Africa. We are prepared to sacrifice a great deal to achieve this. Our forces are too small to be scattered in a myriad of warring factions

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Prok
Chairman

COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA

35 Waterkant St.,
CAPE TOWN.
12th November, 1935

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{Signed) J.Pick
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WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

{Signed) J.Pick
Chairman

55, Hofmeyr Street,
CAPE TOWN.
13th November, 1935

Dear Comrade Lambley,

I received your letter of the 11th inst. and read it with interest. As a communist, I always welcome criticism and I take it that you will have no objections if my reply is somewhat critical in tone.

First, with regard to our article in the October "Workers' Voice," criticising the Spartacists. Quite possibly you are right when you state that it was a waste of space. I am inclined to agree with you that they do not deserve so much space. But if you will read that article again, carefully, you will recognise it as a reply to SLANDERS AGAINST THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE. These slanders are still being perpetuated, and in this respect there seems to be a united front between the Stalinists and the Spartacists against us. Do you advocate that we should completely ignore these malicious slanders. You consider the attack on us in the November "Spark" as very much to the point and well phrased into the bargain." Well, well, it appears that you still have to learn the difference between an attack and a criticism. One of the points raised against us was that our article was illiterate - "let us take a breath before plunging into this illiterate muck." That is quite possible, but it is certainly not a legitimate criticism for a communist to make. Unlike the members of the Spartacist Club, we have not exploited the workers to the extent that we were able to afford a university education. To the CRIME of illiteracy we plead guilty, but refuse to blush on account of it. If this is what you consider "to the point and well phrased" then your place is rightly with the dilettantes of the Spartacist Club.

Your reference to members of the Lenin Club drinking to much puzzles me. Is this another slander your friends, whom you admire so much, are spreading against us. True, one or two of our comrades do drink, and have been criticised for it openly, in the club and not behind their backs. But can it be said that the Spartacists are such a virtuous lot? Will Kosten, for instance, deny that he was the first person to bring beer to a Lenin Club function. I am just as much opposed to boozing as you are, but instead of sitting back and writing about it in sealed letters, I fight it openly. Certainly, there are just as many teetotalers in the Lenin Club as there are in the Spartacists.

You say that you quite agree with Kosten that had the W.P. been more firm and insistent at a certain stage of the struggle unity would have been achieved. I am afraid that I have no idea what you are driving at. THE W.P. THESES WERE DRAFTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A SPLIT! If Kosten and Co. were sincere, why did they not abide by the decision of the I.S. as was originally agreed to. The I.S. recommended a continuation of the discussion on the theses. We were willing to accept this for the sake of unity. Kosten, Burlak and Co. were opposed BECAUSE THEY WANTED A SPLIT, BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT UNITY.

Anyway, we have again been approached by the I.S. to approach the W.P. with a view to unity. We are acting on these instructions, and I sincerely hope unity will be achieved. Certainly, the blame will not fall on our shoulders if these negotiations fall through.

It may be interesting to write up to Jo'burg and find out why Gordon is no longer a member of the W.P. Theoretically he is still in full agreement with them, but he refuses to follow Kosten, Burlak and Lee blindly, as they demand. Fundamentally, this is the real cause of the split.

You consider it nonsense to talk of "Hammering out revolutionary theory in action." You say we must go ahead and teach an ^{and} build. How does Marxists build? By sitting in an armchair

studying books, or by taking an active part and a leading part in the class struggle? Did not Karl Marx revise his theory on the state in the light of the achievements and failures of the Paris Commune? That is what we mean by "hammering out revolutionary theory in practise." As Lenin comments on it ".....Here as everywhere, his teaching is the SUMMING UP OF EXPERIENCE,....." (emphasis in original). To be a Marxist, it is not sufficient to have a knowledge of what Marx and Engels wrote. Kautsky and all the reformists could recite "Capital by heart. It is by putting Marxism into practise, on the picket line, the soap box, etc. that we prove whether we are Marxists or not.

What surprised me most of all, is that you should have listened to slanderous stories about comrades with whom you have been associated for many years, and accept them without even attempting to hear our side of the case. If, however, you choose the road of arm chair philosophy to that of participation in the day to day struggles of the workers that is your affair. Personally, I regret losing a valuable comrade, but hope that one day the two groups may become reunited.

It is rather strange, that while you have a lot to say on our attack on the Spartacists, you have nothing at all to say on the Grey Shirt attack on us. Is it not strange that these reactionaries should pick on us when there is such a so very revolutionary body in existence as the Spartacist Club and the Workers' Party. Perhaps too, you can explain why the very revolutionary Spartacists never replied to our appeal for assistance against the Grey Shirt thugs. I suppose they are still working out the correct theoretical position in the light of Latter-Day Marxism (alias Burlakism?).

I shall be leaving for London at the end of this month, so probable will not see you again. I therefore bid you a comradely goodbye and the very best of luck.

Yours fraternally,

Charlie van Gelderen (Signed)

Please excuse typing errors and other evidence of illiteracy

COPY OF LETTER SENT BY C.VAN GELDEREN TO COM.G.LAMBLEY

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БЮЛЛЕТЕНЬ ОППОЗИЦИИ

(БОЛЬШЕВИКОВ-ЛЕНИНЦЕВ)

BULLETIN DE L'OPPOSITION

Administration et Rédaction :

Gabrielle Brausch

44, rue Ramponneau. Paris (20^e)

BULLETIN DE L'OPPOSITION

LIBRAIRIE DU TRAVAIL

17, Rue Sambre-et-Meuse, PARIS 10^e

Paris, le 18-го ноября 1935

Дорогие товарищи,

Мы получили Ваш подписной лист № 15 и чек № 407276 на сумму в 680.80 франков.

Самое сердечное Вам спасибо за Вашу товарищескую отзывчивость по отношению к Тарову.

Как Вы, вероятно, знаете, положение Тарова очень ухудшилось, ему угрожает тюрьма или еще хуже выдача Сталину.

Ваша помощь в этих условиях приобретает совершенно исключительное значение.

Чтобы дать возможность Тарову выехать в Европу, нам нужно собрать в кратчайший срок 4.000.-франков, и мы не сомневаемся, что Вам почин послужит другим примером.

Еще раз спасибо.

С товарищеским приветом

Комиссия Тарова:

Григорьев

Tarov Subscription List

Spartacus Club (Cape Town)	£ 2:0:0
Paul Koston	10:0
S.Honikman	5:0
L.M.S.	5:0
J.Burlak	5:0
Spartacus Club (Johannesburg)	3:0:0
M.Sapire	2:6
M.Serebro	2:6
L.Sapire	5:0
R.Frieslich	5:0
D.Gosani	2:6
Bertha Kahn	1:0:0
S.Molifi	2:6
Spartacus Club (Cape Town)	1:0:0

Tarev Subscription List

Spartacus Club (Cape Town)	£ 2:0:0
Paul Koston	10:0
S.Honikman	5:0
L.M.S.	5:0
J.Burlak	5:0
Spartacus Club (Johannesburg)	3:0:0
M.Sapire	2:6
M.Serebro	2:6
L.Sapire	5:0
R.Frieslich	5:0
D.Gosani	2:6
Bertha Kahn	1:0:0
S.Molifi	2:6
Spartacus Club (Cape Town)	1:0:0

P.O.Box 3301,
Johannesburg,
South Africa,
19th November 1935

To the I.S.
I.C.L. (B.L.)

Dear Comrades,

A full meeting of the Johannesburg branch of the Workers Party of South Africa has discussed the proposals made by Comrade Dubois in the letter dated 12th October 1935, and it was decided to endorse the decision of the Cape Town group, and further to bring to your notice certain points.

There is no organised group of the Communist League in Johannesburg as far as we know, nor are there even individuals who put forward the C.L. platform; the C.L. exists only in Cape Town, one thousand miles from Johannesburg; none of the comrades in our branch have come into personal contact with Cape Town members of either group. The result is that our decision on the differences between the two groups is absolutely objective, and based on the published documents of both sides. Immersed as we are in the conditions of South African class struggle, we are able to declare that the principles underlying the accepted theses of the Workers Party are essentially the adaptation to the South African arena of the communist principles hammered out during Lenin's lifetime.

The statements of the Communist League on the other hand, demonstrate, not principles misunderstood or wrongly applied, but simply the absence of principles. This lack is made up by an opportunist use of revolutionary phraseology, as shown by the evasions with which the "Workers Voice" faces the obvious inconsistencies of its "platform."

At this stage, when the Italo-Abyssinian conflict has deeply stirred the African population, while British Imperialism hypocritically poses as the champion of the oppressed - precisely at this stage we do not dare to weaken ourselves by uniting with the Communist League and diluting our ranks with opportunist elements.

Yours fraternally

R. Lee.

Secretary (Johannesburg Branch)

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