

21st February, 1935
P.K.

HANDS OFF THE GARMENT WORKERS' UNION!

Disrupters must be exposed!

During the last few years there has been a clique composed of unprincipled scoundrels, political adventurers and irresponsible self appointed leaders poking their noses into the affairs of the Garment Workers' Union.

These ladies and gentlemen are not from the ranks of the workers but belong to the scum of the little boss class. They have never had the interests of the workers at heart and at all times aimed at getting their own selfish ends by hook or by crook. They always covered up their dirty disruptive tactics by revolutionary phrases. Although they call themselves revolutionaries, they have never taken part in any struggle of the workers, or assisted the workers in their struggle. They were too cowardly to fight in the ranks of the workers. Their activities consisted entirely of holding secret meetings, and by means of lies and slanders directed mainly against myself, they tried to destroy the confidence of the workers in me. They never came out with an open policy to the workers, giving the workers a clear line, teaching the workers the strategy and tactics of the struggle against the boss class. Their dirty tactics consisted entirely of calling this one crook, the other traitor, etc.

To strengthen their influence in the Union, these rats some years ago organised a "fraction" in the Union consisting exclusively of foremen, scabs and traitors. The scoundrels who prostituted the revolutionary movement were hated by the big mass of workers, who knew them too well. There was not a single honest worker in their ranks. Their tactics, directed by Mr. Bach behind the scenes, filled the workers with disgust, and very soon the fraction went out of existence.

Later on a few of these became Committee members, and the sincere and loyal members of the Union will remember the disgusting behaviour of these self-styled revolutionaries. The real workers who come from the ranks of the broad masses were never allowed to express their opinions and were always treated like dirt.

When they saw that they did not meet with any success, as the workers soon found them out, they allied themselves with the reactionaries, the little bosses, the bosses pimps, and the scabs, and formed a united front against all those who stood for the rights of the thousands of down-trodden half-starving inhumanly exploited women-workers in the industry. They tried to get complete control of the Union for their own advantage. When they failed in their plans, they caused a split in the Union.

This happened in July last year, and since then we have for the first time in the history of the Union started to ~~we have seen the big great success of the real proletarians and in this~~

organise the big masses of the real proletarians, and in this we have met with great success. But the cowards and disrupters, the enemies of the workers, although outside of the Union, are still trying to carry on their dirty work in the Union.

As the workers know them too well, they are trying to find "agents" to do their dirty work for them. They have given up the open fight and are carrying on "Snake" tactics. They try to pal on to the leading members of the Union, and to gain their confidence by nice words. They are trying to be active in the Physical Culture classes, at Socials, Dances, etc. and we have a strong suspicion, even in the Political Training Classes. They know that I am their greatest enemy, and they hate me as the devil hates the holy waters.

WORKERS! BE ON YOUR GUARD! You know the Union has suffered from the activities of these people. Do not allow yourselves to be led into a trap by nice words and gentlemanly behaviour. They have destroyed the revolutionary working-class movement, and unless they are severely rapped over the knuckles, they will destroy the Union.

Of late certain "arrivists", gentlemen who do not come from the working class (names will be mentioned if necessary) have tried to poke their noses into the affairs of the Union, and we have a strong suspicion that they are not acting on their own but on instructions from the "man behind the scenes". They know nothing about the working class movement or about trade unionism but will give very forceful advice on everything.

Consciously or unconsciously those people by their tactics are trying to split the union and the ranks of the workers. One of them has been particularly active in the sports section. He is calling meetings of workers and carrying on propoganda against the Secretary, and is trying to split the ranks of the workers by forming a new sports club. This gentleman who was always treated in a most comradely spirit by the Secretary and the leaders of the union, is now abusing the hospitality shown to him, and is carrying the tactics of the former disrupters. They tried to split the union by slandering the Secretary, and similar tactics are being followed now. They held secret meetings and secret meetings are being held again. They were great revolutionaries where others had to do the battling, and now we have the same thing again. They branded me as a dictator, and their cry is being raised once more.

Comrades! The election for a General Secretary for the Union took place recently. Did I appoint myself or was I elected by the workers? A central committee of 12 workers was elected by ballot of the workers. The majority of the members of the committee are old tried comrades who have for years given up everything for our union. They know what they want, and it is an insult to their intelligence to say that I dictate to them and to the union.

Of course I express My views on every subject concerning the union, that is what I have been elected for. I express my

views fearlessly, and try to direct the workers along the ~~line~~ right path. I should be failing in my duty if I did not. I have a perfect right to tell the workers what to do and what not to do because for seven years I have fought the battles of the workers alongside of them, very often at their head. I did not stay and tell others what to do, but in every fight threw myself wholeheartedly in the battle of the workers. Together we have gained victories and suffered defeats, and I was never afraid of making sacrifices if necessary.

But who are those outsiders who are now coming forward with advice and slander? Can they show a single service they have rendered to the Garment workers or to any section of workers? Of course they cannot.

In the interests of the twelve thousand garment workers whom we must organize this year, and to protect the interests of the Union, we say,

HANDS OFF THE GARMENT WORKERS UNION!

We welcome in our ranks all loyal and sincere workers. We welcome the strongest criticism. I would welcome a revolutionary fraction consisting of honest, loyal, class-conscious workers, although they might attack my policy and tactics. The workers will be glad to learn. So will I!

But we have had enough of back-biting and disruption in our ranks, and we have paid dearly for it.

The affairs of the union must be decided by the workers themselves, and not by outsiders.

The outsiders, if they want to remain in our ranks, are welcome, but they must immediately abandon their splitting tactics, and stop interfering in the affairs of the union.

If it suits them we will not worry any more, and we will let bygones be bygones.

If not, we strongly advise them to transfer their revolutionary activities to other quarters.

E.S.Sachs.

Garment Workers' Union—Klerewerkersunie

(TRANSVAAL)

E. S. SACHS
SECRETARY



P.O. Box 6779
TELEPHONE CENT. 2472

BELCO BUILDINGS
153A PRESIDENT STREET
CR. DELVERS STREET
JOHANNESBURG

% Van Guard Bookshop
55 Von Branders St.
18th Dec. 1934

To Secretary
Lenin Club.

Dear comrades,

The movement up here is in a hopeless state. The C.P. must rely on the Police to defend their meetings against about 20 grey shirts. The anti-fascist League has no following, our delegates were not expelled, but the Executive committee was abolished & a secretariat of three elected consisting of Joffe, Dykes & Fanny Glass, the latter however has resigned.

The Bolshevik Leninist have only 7 members & they are disrupted by personal feuds & recriminations. Comrade Lee & his wife are certainly very keen & so are all the rest, but they are very dependent.

The Laundry Workers Union is in a bad way. Comrade Lee has been acting secret-ary whilst Purdy is still at the Sanatorium recuperating?

Comrade Lee is running a class for native workers, he has already 8 pupils, who pay 5/- per month for ⁱⁿEnglish, History etc. The money goes to the paying of the rent for the Laundry workers office.

Goppenstein was suspended for a month for attacking Purdy on Thursday night

Garment Workers' Union—Kleretwerkersunie

(TRANSVAAL)

E. S. SACHS
SECRETARY



P.O. Box 6779
TELEPHONE CENT. 2472

BELCO BUILDINGS
153A PRESIDENT STREET
CR. DELVERS STREET
JOHANNESBURG

at the meeting, which is held in Lee's room.
On Saturday afternoon, Lee, Gapperstein &
myself, put up a big sign ~~at~~ covering the
"Atlantic Petrol" electric sign which is on top of
a eight story flat & is the same size as the one
in Down. The sign read "Release Hoebmann"
& Biurski financed it. Naturally they realised
that such activities are futile & cannot replace
or be the sole activity towards building
up a real workers party.

I have not yet found a job and
am still mulling about. Sunday night
at the C.P. meeting there was a crowd
about 800. The grey shirts were
standing right next to the C.P. speakers
& shouting them down. I started picking
the grey shirts out. I was attacked by
about eight at once. I was able to
ward them off for a short period till
the police came to my assistance & made
me move off although I protested that
they had attacked me, but the police ignored
the grey shirts. ~~the~~

Please let me know how the Unemployed
Council is ~~is~~ developing. With fraternal
greetings
M. Gordon

Collection Number: AG2722

WORKER'S PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1933-1935

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is part of a collection held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa