Students of the black labor movement in South Africa have long been familiar with the history of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa, best known as the ICU, which was first told at length by the late E. R. Roux in his *Time Longer Than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom*. In 1967 S. W. Johns III furnished a considerable amount of additional information about the foundation of this union, in particular its participation in an attempt in 1920 to establish a nation-wide black general workers' union. At Bloemfontein in July of that year, Johns tells us, a conference of representatives from various towns and organizations in the Union of South Africa was convened by H. Selby Msimang, who had led a movement for higher wages for unskilled workers in the Orange Free State capital and founded a union there, and Clements Kadalie, the secretary of the eighteen-month-old ICU, which had attracted attention at the end of 1919 with a dock strike of some importance at Cape Town. To that conference went among others Samuel M. M. Masabalala, a labor leader from Port Elizabeth, where the black and Coloured workers were also dissatisfied. At Bloemfontein the delegates established a new union to embrace the existing ones and called it the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa, distinguished from the ICU of Cape Town by the initials ICWU. But Msimang and Kadalie fell out; Msimang eventually withdrew from the movement, and after a period of collaboration with the Bloemfontein leader Masabalala threw in his lot with Kadalie.

Following the appearance of Jonns's paper, H. J. and R. E. Simons

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brought out their book, *Class and Colour in South Africa*, which added some further detail. It showed, for example, that Selby Msimang had brought his Bloemfontein organization into the ICU before the conference of July 1920. Both the Simonses and Johns used reminiscences confided to them by Msimang.

The present paper hopes to throw further light on the relationship between Msimang and Kadalie before the Bloemfontein conference, and to correct two errors in earlier accounts. The Simonses and Johns have suggested that the split between Msimang and Kadalie took place at, or immediately after, the Bloemfontein conference, and that after Msimang’s withdrawal from the ICWU it was taken over by, or its branches surrendered to, Clements Kadalie. The facts are, however, that the ICWU-ICU split occurred only after a lapse of some weeks, and that the ICWU maintained a separate existence for a number of years.

That much is clear. What is more difficult to establish is why and when Clements Kadalie and Selby Msimang parted company and also why and when Samuel Masabalala entered into alliance with Kadalie. The references to the Bloemfontein conference, which Kadalie passes over in silence in his autobiography, are few and far between, so that inevitably conclusions must be somewhat speculative. Speculation also has to enter into any discussion of the composition of the Bloemfontein conference itself. Why did no representatives from the Witwatersrand, which experienced much publicized unrest in 1918, 1919, and 1920, attend? Why did the great seaport in Durban have no black labor union to represent it at Bloemfontein? Indeed, one might well speculate conversely upon the reasons for the prominence of Bloemfontein, a city of few industries, in the postwar labor movement. Some possible explanations are adumbrated below.

**The Kadalie-Msimang Alliance of 1919**

The one big union movement originated in an exchange of correspondence early in 1919 between Clements Kadalie and H. Selby Msimang. At the end of February, as a result of his agitation for a
minimum local wage of four shillings and sixpence a day (at least double what was commonly paid to African unskilled labor in Bloemfontein at the time), Msimang was arrested for incitement to public violence, and Kadalie was prompted to send him a telegram of support. From Bloemfontein came the reply:

I thank you for your kind message of sympathy which gives me encouragement. I have begun to organise but I am working single handed and would be glad if you could send me your constitution and again to send an Organiser from Cape Town to help me.10

Kadalie sent a copy of the constitution, and in establishing a general union known as the Native and Coloured Workers’ Association Msimang not only adopted it, but also intimated his wish to amalgamate with the Cape Town ICU. Msimang was acquitted, and in August 1919 he visited Cape Town at Kadalie’s invitation. On the ninth he gave a talk in the city hall on the organization of labor, and was introduced as “an organiser of the I.C.U. in the Free State.”11

During Msimang’s stay in Cape Town negotiations went on to confirm the alliance with the ICU and to include other African and Coloured industrial organizations, notably the Industrial Workers of Africa, a general union begun in Johannesburg in 1917 under the aegis of the International Socialist League, a precursor of the Communist party of South Africa.12 The leaders of the IWA were H. Kraai and R. Cetyiwe. These men had been unsuccessfully prosecuted in Johannesburg in July,13 and had moved to Cape Town to start a branch of their movement in Ndabeni.14 There seems to be little doubt that Bloemfontein and Cape Town joined forces under the name of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of South Africa.15

10. Ilanga lase Natal, 20 January 1922.
11. Ibid. This is Kadalie’s version of events, but no protest followed its publication, and there seems to be no reason to dispute it.
13. This was the celebrated trial held shortly after the alleged general strike of 1 July, when the crown’s case against certain members of the IWA, the ISL, and the South African Native National Congress collapsed when the chief prosecution witness retracted information. See Cape Times, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18 July 1918.
15. In March 1920 Msimang submitted evidence on behalf of “the Free State Division of the Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union of South Africa” to the interdepartmental committee inquiring into the pass laws. Cape Times, 8 March 1920.
Amalgamation with the IWA was less easy, however, because of its marked differences from the ICU. The IWA was a political more than an industrial organization, dedicated to bringing about a revolutionary change in society rather than to winning improved pay and working conditions in specific situations. Moreover, unlike the ICU, which maintained links with the white labor movement in Cape Town, it was hostile to Europeans.\textsuperscript{16} Although Msimang apparently was able to allay the racial suspicions of the IWA leaders and "a basis for the amalgamation of the two Unions was arrived at,"\textsuperscript{17} the IWA in fact followed its own path.

Returning to Bloemfontein, Msimang threw himself into the task of organizing the Orange Free State, and at the annual meeting of the ICU in Cape Town in January 1920 (which Msimang did not attend) Kadalie reported a membership of over a thousand in Bloemfontein alone and the opening of other branches in the Free State.\textsuperscript{18} By that time the union was claiming a total membership of over four thousand. Cape Town had three daughter branches, Luderitzbucht in South West Africa and Simonstown and Langebaan in the Western Province of the Cape.\textsuperscript{19} The expansion was the result of the ICU's leading role in the Cape Town dock strike of December 1919; the strike failed to achieve its objectives, but it earned the union considerable prestige nonetheless.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{The Composition of the Bloemfontein Conference of July 1920}

The conference held in Bloemfontein in July 1920,\textsuperscript{21} styled the "first annual general meeting of the Industrial and Commercial Workers'
Union of South Africa," seems to have originated in a suggestion made by Selby Msimang. His choice of venue was deliberate, for he claimed to demonstrate African solidarity in an Afrikaner stronghold, in Kadali's words, "to crush the Dutch spirit." The South African Native National Congress then took up the suggestion. It apparently invited African labor leaders to its annual conference of 1920, held that year at Queenstown in May, immediately after the conference of the Cape Native Congress, and devoted part of its deliberations to labor questions. Kraai of the Industrial Workers of Africa attended the SANNC conference, and moved to demand of employers throughout the country a minimum wage of ten shillings a day. In the event of refusal, he proposed that a general strike be called for 31 July. While it is not clear whether this resolution, which met with considerable opposition, was passed, the SANNC did give its blessing to the projected labor conference and resolved to send representatives of its own. In actuality, however, neither the SANNC itself nor any of the provincial congresses into which the SANNC was divided was reported to have sent an official delegation, and although many, probably most, of the delegates at Bloemfontein were members of the congress, they appear with possible rare exceptions to have been at the conference solely as representatives of labor organizations.

Among the bodies that dispatched delegates to Bloemfontein were the Cape ICU, Msimang's organization, the Native and Coloured Workers' Union of East London, Port Elizabeth, and Aliwal North, and the Industrial Workers of Africa, apparently the Cape Town branch and not that of Johannesburg. If the assumption that the

24. *Queenstown Daily Representative and Free Press*, 27 May 1920. This report says that the delegates included "leaders of the labour movement among the Bantu people."
25. *Queenstown Daily Representative and Free Press*, 27 May 1920; *C. A.*, Justice 3/127/20, Inspector P. J. Whitaker, S.A.P., Queenstown, to Deputy Commissioner, S.A.P., Grahamstown, 2 June 1920. According to Inspector Whitaker, the motion calling for a minimum wage of ten shillings a day was opposed "chiefly on the part of the Cape Natives," which seems incredible in view of the current agitation for ten shillings in Port Elizabeth. The agitation was led by S.M.M. Masabalala, himself an official of the Cape congress.
26. *Friend*, 7 July 1920; *Eastern Province Herald*, 7 July 1920; *Cape Times*, 7 July 1920.
27. The Reuter's report that appeared in the press on 7 July is ambiguous. "There will be present delegates from the Industrial Workers of Africa... two unions from Cape Town."

Although this seems to indicate that the IWA was an addition to the two unions from Cape Town, it is difficult to see what those two were except the ICU and the IWA, especially as Kraai, now resident at Cape Town, was certainly there. It is just possible that the two unions mentioned were the ICU and the Cape congress and that the Johannesburg IWA was still alive. In May of the previous year the latter had applied for representation at a labor conference organized by the white South African Industrial Federation at Bloemfontein, and according to a police report still
IWA delegate or delegates came from Cape Town is correct, then in the absence of any representatives of the Transvaal Native Congress, the only other body attempting to organize black workers there, the Witwatersrand was represented solely by Charlotte Maxeke, who attended on behalf of the Bantu Women's League of South Africa. This failure of the Rand to participate in the conference can be explained partly by the attitude of the president of the Transvaal congress, S. M. Makgatho, who was also president of the national body, the SANNC, at the time, but more probably by the collapse of the labor movement in the Johannesburg area. It is very likely that Makgatho, who did not attend the Queenstown conference (chaired by Chief Stephen Mini, president of the Natal Native Congress) and therefore was not party to the decision to take part in the Bloemfontein labor conference, was opposed to the formation of a separate industrial organization, as Johns suggests. The surprising fact remains that the Rand had been unable to sustain a labor organization comparable with the ICU at Cape Town.

The ICU owed its success to its firm grounding in the black and Coloured labor force of the dockyards. On the Rand, however, organization of the only large concentration of black labor, the mine workers, had failed. Outside the mines black labor was dispersed among small industrial enterprises, domestic service, the municipal service, stores and warehouses, and the railways. Many of the workers engaged in such employment had left their villages on contract. As a result, they were on the one hand indifferent to the long-term advantages of industrial organization, and on the other vulnerable to reprisal. An examination of the labor unrest of the Witwatersrand immediately after the war shows that apart from the minor so-called Bucket Strike of sanitary workers in June 1918, and agitation against the pass laws in March 1919, the trouble consisted of spontaneous and ill-organized protests in the mines. Clearly the penetration of the

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29. Mrs. Maxeke probably attended the Queenstown conference of the SANNC. In any case, the Bantu Women's League was represented there. Queenstown Representative and Free Press, 27 May 1920.
32. Labor unrest in the Transvaal is discussed by Roux, Time Longer Than Rope; R. C. Cope, Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W. H. Andrews, Workers' Leader (Cape Town, n. d.);
gold mines by the Transvaal Native Congress and the Industrial Workers of Africa, which was closely tied to it, was slight. The International commented on the largest of the disturbances among the black miners, that of February 1920: "The strike is undoubtedly an instinctive mass revolt against their whole status and pig level of existence. The Native Congress has had very little to do with the movement, other than to hold a watching brief."35

Even if it had been possible for the national congress to organize the mine workers easily, cut off as they were in their compounds, it is doubtful whether as a middle-class political pressure group the congress was the most suitable body to lead a labor movement. The same might be said of the IWA, linked to both the International Socialists and the congress and lacking organization as a trade union. The congress had only a small membership;34 moreover, the failure of a mission sent to Europe in 1919 to win support for the African cause at Versailles and London35 and its indecisive leadership in the wage disputes between June 1918 and February 1920 served to discredit it.36 Apparently the congress and the IWA had sufficient influence and energy to forestall the emergence of a genuine labor movement on the Rand without having the capacity themselves to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the war and postwar situations.

Also strangely, Durban was not represented at the Bloemfontein conference. It was the only major seaport that did not produce an African labor union in the postwar period. The blacks there (mostly Zulu) were curiously quiescent at this time, and even as late as 1924 Kadalie found them apathetic, "so tame and ready to submit to anything the official European suggested to them."37 Yet two years later under the leadership of A.W.G. Champion they were the most enthusiastic and generous of ICU supporters. Since Champion, unlike Kadalie, was a Zulu, the people of Durban may have remained quiet because no Zulu leader had come forward to arouse them from their...
lethargy until the advent of Champion. No agitator or demagogue, however, can conjure up a popular movement unless the material for one lies at hand. Moreover, able Zulu leaders were not lacking. True, the elder statesman of the Natal Native Congress, the Reverend John Dube, displayed little interest in labor questions (and when Kadalie arrived in Durban in 1924 admitted as much), but other congress leaders were more aware of popular feeling in the towns. One of these was J. T. Gumede, who invited Kadalie to Natal in 1924 and gave him every assistance. The explanation of Durban’s failure to give birth to a black union must surely lie primarily in the composition of its black population and its relations with other racial groups.

In the early 1920s most Africans living in Durban were day laborers, \textit{togo} workers, who did not think it worthwhile to bring their women with them. The census of 1921 showed that while there were over 25,000 men in the city there were hardly more than a thousand women, and fewer than one and a half thousand children. The men who had no families with them lived in barracks provided by the town council — regarded as a model at a time when urban locations were notorious for their squalor — or on the premises of their employers, in both cases insulated with relative ease from influences regarded by the authorities as undesirable. However, as Africans entered Durban in increasing numbers (38,000 by 1929), competed for employment, and settled down to a prolonged or indefinite stay, they became dissatisfied with the lack of family accommodation and other amenities, resentful of the regulations imposed by the municipality, and discontented with the insecurity of employment. By the end of 1925, when Champion arrived in the town to head the local ICU branch, there were plenty of grievances for him to exploit.

Of importance also in explaining the tardiness of the black workers

42. "Report of the Commission of Enquiry — Native Riots at Durban, 29th July, 1929" (unpublished manuscript, Forman Collection, University of Cape Town [hereafter Forman Collection]).
43. By 1929 togo labor was so rare outside the docks that Justice de Waal supposed that togo was a corruption of \textit{dock}. \textit{Ibid.} No doubt dock workers themselves were not togo by choice, but rather because casual labor was the general rule for that type of work in South Africa, as elsewhere.
there is the fact that, unlike Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, where the labor movement embraced both African and Coloured workers, Durban had few people of mixed blood, and the Indian people, as Kadalie was to discover in 1924, were as prone to racial prejudice as the whites.44 The black labor movement was all the weaker for that.

Of the other major towns of South Africa, Kimberley, East London, and Port Elizabeth45 supported labor organizations and were represented at Bloemfontein.46 Kimberley had a branch of Msimang's organization, but apparently had produced no spontaneous union of its own.47 There were some stirrings in the town, but not much industrial unrest. The De Beers Diamond Mines, the principal employer, took steps to safeguard its workers against the effects of the rising cost of living by selling food and clothing at a loss in the compound stores and by increasing wages.48 The fact that its men were in compounds, even (or perhaps especially) well-run ones, tended to discourage trade union ideas spreading from the outside. East London, on the other hand, had a long history of labor strife going back to 1911, although no labor unions appeared until January 1920, when the East London Native Employees' Association was founded, claiming a membership of two thousand.49 What happened to that union is a mystery.50 It may have been absorbed into the Native and Coloured Workers' Union of East London, Port Elizabeth, and Aliwal North51 that was represented at

45. The ten biggest South African towns, measured by size of European population, were Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, East London, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg, Germiston, and Kimberley. At Pretoria, which was the administrative capital and had no industry, the Transvaal congress was evidently influential, but later it had an active ICU following, as did Germiston on the Rand and Pietermaritzburg, the provincial capital of Natal. The remarks above about Johannesburg and Durban would also apply to some extent to Germiston and Pietermaritzburg respectively.
46. Friend, 14 July 1920, published an incomplete list of delegates attending the Bloemfontein conference, including four delegates from Kimberley and one from neighboring Westminster. Curiously, no delegates from East London and Port Elizabeth are mentioned, but there is indirect evidence of Masabalala's attendance. See Friend, 22 July 1920.
47. Tailors and carters supported Coloured (or perhaps open) unions. C. A., Justice 3/1064/18, Commissioner, S.A.P., to Secretary for Justice, 27 August 1920.
48. Cape Times, 8 July 1919.
50. Ibid., 160-161.
51. Aliwal North, with its African and Coloured population of fewer than 3,000, could have been of little importance, and its unexpected prominence can have been due only to some chance, such as a particularly enterprising local leader or one who had personal ties with the seaports of the eastern Cape.
the Bloemfontein conference and it seems reasonable to assume that it was, but there is no way of telling. However, not East London but Port Elizabeth saw the important events during 1920. There a four-thousand-strong general union made its appearance early in the year, when new leaders came to the fore, notably Samuel M. M. Masabalala.\footnote{For events in Port Elizabeth in 1920 see Union of South Africa, \textit{Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Causes of, and Occurrences at, the Native Disturbances at Port Elizabeth on the 23rd October, 1920}, printed annexures to the \textit{Votes and Proceedings of the House of Assembly}, Ann. 143 (Pretoria, 1921).} As treasurer of the Cape Native Congress,\footnote{\textit{Abantu-Batho}, 28 October 1920.} Masabalala probably attended the conferences of the Cape NC and the SANNC at Queenstown in May, which would account for his attendance at Bloemfontein.

\textit{The Bloemfontein Conference and the Foundation of the ICWU}

The first item on the agenda of the Bloemfontein conference was the formation of a single labor union for "all the non-European workers of Africa, south of the Zambezi." A lengthy discussion gave birth to the following resolution:

That it is the opinion of this representative Conference of non-European workers to form one great union of skilled and unskilled workers of South Africa, south of the Zambezi, and that it be an instruction to all unions represented in this Conference to carry out this great principle and recommend or approach all other unions not represented with a view thereto.\footnote{\textit{Friend}, 14 July 1920.}

The new organization to be commended to participating unions was given the cumbersome title of the Industrial and Commercial Coloured and Native Workers' (Amalgamated) Union of Africa, or the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (ICWU) for short. Since its code of rules has passed unrecorded, in what ways it paralleled the ICU's constitution is unknown, but we can surmise that the ICWU was a confederation of the organizations sending delegates to the Bloemfontein conference, not a single union, and that a draft constitution was not drawn up until July 1921.\footnote{\textit{Cape Times}, 23 July 1921.}

The ICU of Cape Town did not affiliate with the ICWU or, rather, it seceded shortly after it joined. Although it was not apparent at the time, Kadalie left Bloemfontein a disgruntled man. "From the beginning to the end," he wrote in 1922, "the Conference was a
failure." As an attempt to form a union for all African and Coloured workers in southern Africa it was indeed a failure, producing only dissension that persisted for several years. Kadalie was probably put out by the dominant role played by Selby Msimang, who acted as chairman at the conference, who was elected president of the new union, and whose newspaper, Morumioa-Inxusa, was adopted as its official organ. The chief cause of the dispute, however, was the unexpected rejection of Kadalie's candidature for the secretarvship of the new body. He wrote later, "The self-centred intellectuals led by a well-known political opportunist...objected to my having been appointed General Secretary of the movement on the grounds that I could not speak any of the South African Native languages." The "political opportunist" most probably was Conan Doyle Modiakgotla, who had some prominence in the last years of the ICU. The man preferred to Kadalie was Impey Ben Nyombolo. Kadalie could not forgive Msimang for what had happened and stored up other grievances that would no doubt have been forgotten if their amicable relations had remained undisturbed, although it is rather unlikely that the flamboyant Kadalie and the sober Msimang would have worked in joint harness for long. Afterwards the former complained that the conference had been a plot contrived by Msimang. The idea being that the local people at Bloemfontein would place him in power...Mr. Selby Msimang informed Cape Town which has been originally the headquarters of the I.C.U. that he had organised over twenty-five branches in the Free State with a membership of nearly 15,000. What did our delegates find at the Bloemfontein Conference? The only statistics produced was only 700 members and worst of it all we found that there was a great discontentment between the people and the leader. We tried our best to make the Conference a success, but achieved nothing for the race which is so desired, seeing that everyone who

56. Ilanga lase Natal, 20 January 1922.
57. Friend, 14 July 1920.
58. Clements Kadalie, "Manifesto to the Members of the I.C.U." (unpublished manuscript, Ballinger Papers, University of Cape Town [hereafter Ballinger Papers], 9 July 1928).
59. The same man "drafted the manifesto on behalf of the 'Clean Administration Group,"' which was an anti-Kadalie group in 1928. Ibid. He might be identified as either Modiakgotla or Alex Peddie Kajno Maduna, who also attained some importance in the ICU. These were the two who apparently fathered the Clean Administration Group. A.W.G. Champion to Members of the National Council, ICU, 26 June 1928, Forman Collection 1928/53; Ballinger Papers. Of the two, only Modiakgotla was at the Bloemfontein conference. Friend, 14 July 1920.
60. According to Johns, "Non-White Unionism," 182, Kadalie was "defeated by a delegate from Kimberley," whom Simons and Simons, Class and Colour, 241, identify as M. Mocher. The most likely explanation is that Kadalie was rejected on the motion of a delegate from Kimberley, that is, Modiakgotla.
attended that Conference aimed at being on top of the ladder.... What is it then when a man of intellect such as Mr. Selby Msimang does not realise courtesy? What vindicates the idea of ignoring your own recognised mother? Without any hesitation Mr. Msimang during the Bloemfontein Conference deliberately showed that he was not a member of the I.C.U. and he even ignored what this Organisation had achieved for them and for the race in general.... It has also been often mentioned that at this Conference we decided that Bloemfontein was the headquarters of this so-called one big union formed, the writer being a prominent delegate at the Conference emphatically denies the truth of these criticisms and self-made decisions....

We are now confronted as to what made the Bloemfontein Conference a failure. I could only sum it with this fact that self-aggrandisement was the main reason.61

Even Msimang’s chairmanship of the conference was, Kadalie argued, the usurpation of a function that properly belonged to the president of the ICU, J. G. Gumbs.62

Undoubtedly mere pique had something to do with the ICU’s subsequent refusal to collaborate with the ICWU. Yet it is not difficult to see also a pronounced divergence of interests between the Western Province of the Cape and the Orange Free State which would help account for the breakdown of cooperation between the two. The difference in conditions between Cape Town and Bloemfontein is so striking that it is a wonder that an incipient black trade union emerged at all in the latter place.

The establishment and survival of the ICU occasions no surprise. Cape Town had the docks and a large Coloured population thoroughly urbanized and familiar with trade unionism. In its formative years and especially during the 1919 dock strike the ICU derived sympathy and assistance from the local white — or rather nonracial — labor movement and drew a substantial proportion, perhaps a majority, of its leaders and rank and file from the Coloured stevedores. The black population at Bloemfontein, on the other hand, was still peasant in background and outlook to a considerable degree, and engaged in domestic service and in unskilled work for small employers (even the railways and the municipality employed relatively few men). The very atmosphere was rural in the Bloemfontein location of Waaihoek, where the residents built their own houses, had their families, and lived a village-style life. Yet Bloemfontein always tended to be turbulent, first rallying to Selby Msimang and later, from 1923, turning out in crowds to listen to Kadalie and other ICU speakers.

61. Ilanga lase Natal, 20 and 27 January 1922.
62. Ilanga lase Natal, 27 January 1922. Actually, Gumbs was not president of the ICU in 1920, but vice-president.
The appearance of a black labor movement in the Orange Free State can be attributed to two factors: the sharp but temporary rise in the cost of living in the years between 1918 and 1920, and the impact of the Natives Land Act of 1913, which seems to have affected that province more than any other. One of the provisions of the act, the embargo on the black purchase of land outside the areas already set aside for Africans or those — the so-called scheduled areas — to be set aside in the future, had few repercussions in the Orange Free State. With one unimportant exception, the province had never permitted such purchases. However, that part of the act that forbade white landowners to take on black tenants paying either a money rent or a share of the crops had serious consequences for the Africans. Those independent black farmers who could not crowd into the three small African reserves — the reserves comprised only 245 square miles, about 0.5 percent of the total land area of the province — and would not submit to a lowering of their status and accept employment on white farms as labor tenants — these were farm workers remunerated by a varying mixture of rights of residence, cultivation, and pasture, and payments in cash and kind — had no choice but to reconcile themselves to urban life. As a result, Bloemfontein, Kroonstad, and other Free State towns experienced an influx of discontented peasants. These new location dwellers maintained close links with the countryside and would gladly have exchanged their condition for independent farming or even for less harsh labor tenancies.

In July 1920, when the Bloemfontein conference was held, the cost of living had passed its peak (although this could scarcely have been apparent at the time), while the effects of the land act were increasing.

63. The index of retail prices of food in Bloemfontein rose from 1365 in 1918 to 1505 in 1919, to 2009 in 1920, dropping to 1548 in 1921, based on the weighted average of nine towns in 1910 being 1000. There had been a similar sharp rise in 1917 (to 1339 from 1172) superimposed on the long-term rise from 1910. Since the trend of price movements was no different in Bloemfontein than that in South African towns where no labor movement made an appearance, the cost of living could not have been crucial to the emergence of one there. Union of South Africa, Official Yearbook of the Union No. 7 — 1924 ( Pretoria, 1925), 274.


65. Apparently a substantial movement of displaced peasants into the towns did not take place until the 1920s. Union of South Africa, Report of the Select Committee on Native Bills, S. C. 10 (Pretoria, 1927), 221: “Our experience of the 1913 law was not that there was a great exodus of natives to the towns” (evidence of H. J. Wessels of the O.F.S. Agricultural Union); Ibid., 300: “I am aware that the Bloemfontein and Kroonstad locations have increased tremendously in the last five or six years” (evidence of the Reverend Z. R. Mahabane of the African National Congress; my italics). Nevertheless, the act undoubtedly constituted a grave disturbance of African rural life in the province. By 1917, twenty-five to thirty thousand Africans there had had “their previous existing right curtailed and required to be provided with land.” Ibid., 224.
as share tenancies lapsed and were not renewed. Thus it was that in the Orange Free State, where the rural problem predominated, grievances were markedly different from those in the Western Province of the Cape. The ICU, composed as it was largely of urban proletarians, was primarily concerned with the problems of wages, hours of work, and recognition by employers, whereas its northern allies were preoccupied with the wages and conditions of labor tenants. There was another issue, too, that tended to divide Cape Town and Bloemfontein. The pass laws, which were of keen interest to African and Coloured people in the Orange Free State, were only slightly so to the Coloured members of the ICU in the Cape Province, who were entirely outside the pass system, and even to the Africans there, who were relatively free of the detested documents. Only recently the police in the Orange Free State had given up demanding passes from African women, many of whom had been punished just before the war for refusing to carry them.

Not surprisingly, since Orange Free State delegates predominated at Bloemfontein, the proceedings of the conference tended to reflect their interests. Of the thirty or more delegates who attended, two-thirds represented branches established by Msimang or under his influence in the Orange Free State, the northern Cape Province, and Basutoland. The Cape Town representatives were heavily outnumbered — Clements Kadalie, Joe Paulse (the first president or chairman of the

66. Despite a rural problem and rural discontent in the Eastern Cape, the province was not much affected by the 1913 act, partly because it was unusual there for Africans to rent or lease European land, partly because the restrictions imposed by the act on black land purchases were held to be outside the scope of the law. Natal and the Transvaal, where black cash tenancies upon white land persisted much longer, were also less affected by the act than the Free State. See H. M. Robertson, “The Economic Condition of the Rural Natives,” in I. Schapera, ed., Western Civilisation and the Natives of South Africa: Studies in Culture Contact (London, 1954), 144.

67. In the Cape Province, the Native Reserve Location Act. No. 40 of 1902 provided for the issue of identification cards to Africans residing in a government-run Native Reserve Location. There were two of these, one at Cape Town (Ndabeni) and the other at Port Elizabeth (New Brighton). It also prohibited the employment of any African unable to produce an identification card, and further required the carrying of passes by location residents outside during curfew hours (section 11, subsections 12 and 13). In practice, since neither Ndabeni nor New Brighton could provide accommodation for all those wanting it, many Africans lived illegally in the more insanitary parts of the town without any identification documents. In addition, there were of course Africans exempted from the limitation upon free choice of place of residence (chiefly parliamentary voters) and those who lived on their employer’s premises. In the O.F.S., however, an African required a pass to do almost anything, and the province was unique in requiring Coloured people to carry passes. See E. Hellmann and L. Abrahams, eds., Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa (London, 1949), 281.

68. Ibid.

ICU), J. G. Gumbs and S. M. Bennett Ncwana of the ICU, Kraai and Cetyiwe of the IWA, and I. Ben Nyombolo, whose affiliation is unknown. Yet there were no sharp differences of opinion at Bloemfontein. If the delegates demanded a minimum wage for rural workers, they naturally wanted one for urban workers too, and they deliberated about subjects of interest to all, such as black representation at the International Labour Conference, the cost of living, and education. The significance of the proceedings at Bloemfontein was not that they led to a split between the ICU and the ICWU, but that they illustrated a certain lack of community of interests. For one thing, the ICWU wanted to bring into the movement farm laborers, in whom the ICU had hitherto displayed no interest, including labor tenants, a class unknown in the Cape Province. For another, the conference's resolution on the pass laws did not express a point of view altogether acceptable on the Cape.

This Conference is of opinion that registration offices, to meet identification purposes, could be established where required, where registry could be carried out. Natives can be taxed as in the case of Europeans, without having to be subjected to the indignity of having to produce, under compulsion and a pain of imprisonment, on demand by any policeman, any receipt of payments made or papers of identification.

Although simple registration might have been a great improvement on the existing system in the Free State, with its multiplicity of passes and its police harassment, the Cape Africans were to be highly critical of similar arrangements provided for in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. Under the circumstances — a disparity of interest and the great distance between them — a severing of ties between Cape Town and Bloemfontein is not to be wondered at.

The Secession of the ICU

However disappointed Kadalie was with events at Bloemfontein, there was no immediate repudiation of the decision to combine the separate unions in the ICWU. The July 1920 conference was rated in

70. Kraai, Ncwana, and Nyombolo were reported present by the South African police. C. A., Justice 3/1064/18, Commissioner, S.A.P., to Secretary for Justice, 30 November 1920.
71. Eastern Province Herald, 7 a. 16 July 1920; Cape Times, 30 August 1920.
73. Ibid.
74. Cape Times, 26 February 1924.
the ICU canon as its first congress, distinct from the annual general meetings held at the beginning of 1920 and 1921. When Kadalie and Nyombolo, the general secretary of the ICWU, addressed a meeting at Ndabeni location in Cape Town and the latter spoke of the Bloemfontein conference and the establishment of the ICWU early in August, there was no hint of disagreement. Bennett Ncwana of the ICU published a report of the proceedings of the conference in an early number of the Black Man, a newspaper, which he edited. On the other hand, it was clearly Ncwana who precipitated the secession. At an ICU executive meeting he proposed that the conference resolution be rejected and that the ICU preserve its separate identity. Although no record of the proceedings or even the date of the meeting has survived, it is certain that the motion was carried.

Secession must have sprung from fundamental discord between the Cape and the Orange Free State; it may also have been encouraged by an obscure squabble over the ICU's handling of wage demands in Cape Town in August and September 1920. Some thought that Kadalie acted with too great an independence and militancy when he threatened to call a strike. Selby Msimang was not directly involved in the affair, but Simon Jordan, branch secretary of the Cape Congress at Ndabeni, complained that Kadalie had failed to consult the other unions and the general secretary of the ICWU. Evidence suggests that the IWA sided with the ICU in the disagreement, and ultimately coalesced with it.

Events in Port Elizabeth, 1920

In Port Elizabeth, Samuel Masabalala remained loyal to the Bloemfontein agreement, running what was now a nominally local branch of the ICWU. On his return from the conference he plunged into a further bout of agitation for higher wages. In August his union held its annual meeting, where, after being reelected president, he delivered a speech larded with scriptural allusions and expressions of
loyalty to the empire and reiterating the demand for pay raises.81 The following month the employers offered an additional sixpence a day, bringing the minimum daily rate from 3s. 6d. to 4s., but this was still far short of the demanded ten shilling rate. Mass meetings continued, and a great deal of talk about striking went on. Feelings ran so high that on Sunday, 17 October, at a public meeting an assault was made on Dr. Walter Rubusana, a well known and respected Congregational minister from East London. Rubusana was also vice-president of the Bantu Union, and therefore a renegade from the locally supported Cape Native Congress who had sought to use his influence on the side of moderation. On Monday the union announced a strike to begin on November 3 should its wage demands not be met.82 Early on Saturday, October 23, Masabalala was arrested without a warrant and at the initiative of the district commandant of the South African police, ostensibly because of the assault on Rubusana, in fact undoubtedly in an attempt to intimidate and demoralize his supporters.83 The arrest aroused great excitement and attracted hundreds of demonstrators and spectators to the station where the prisoner was being held. During the course of the afternoon, police and armed civilians opened fire, killing twenty-three African and Coloured members of the crowd and wounding at least forty-six others.84

After Masabalala’s removal from the scene, the local African leaders summoned Msimang by telegram from Bloemfontein to represent their interests. The ICWU president arrived at the end of October, and his first act was to persuade the local union to withdraw its strike threat. When this had been done, he led the employees’ delegation to a joint conference with the employers chaired by the mayor on 9 November.85 Msimang did not argue a very convincing case to the employers, partly because he was in an unfamiliar situation, partly because he was clearly uncomfortable with the demand for ten shillings to which the Port Elizabeth leaders were committed. He would have preferred a more realistic six shillings, which itself had no chance of acceptance. Fearful of further disturbances, the mayor was anxious that

85. *Eastern Province Herald*, 3 and 10 November 1920. Msimang made a good impression on the whites. "The Mayor said that he found him a very reasonable man, and that he seemed anxious to put matters here right" (3 November).
the employers make an offer, but they were most unwilling to do so. In fact, they went no further than agreeing to the appointment of a joint committee of employers and employees to examine the real cost of living of working families.86 The outcome was the offer of another sixpence, bringing the minimum daily wage to four shillings and sixpence. Later in November Masabalala was released on bail and returned to Port Elizabeth, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by two thousand supporters. Carried away by the excitement of the occasion, the crowd spurned the four and six minimum and decided to persist in the ten shillings demand. But this was more unrealistic than ever, because the high wartime prices responsible for so much unrest were in fact beginning to fall. The chairman of the commission of inquiry into the October disturbances later expressed the view that 4s. 6d. was not unreasonable, and even though his two colleagues did not share that view, they thought that the ten shillings demanded had been "rather excessive and unreasonable."87

As the cost of living declined, anger and resentment at Port Elizabeth subsided. By the end of the year the police were able to report that the "native position" was back to normal.88 Masabalala was committed for trial at Grahamstown, only to be released when Dr. Rubusana withdrew charges. He next became absorbed in politics, with comic and curious results.

Masabalala blamed the South African party government of General Jan Smuts for the Port Elizabeth massacre, and in his hostility he lent a willing ear to the blandishments of one of the Cape branches of the Nationalist party, which sought to exploit his presumed popularity with the African and Coloured voters in the general election of 1921.89 He caused his new allies no little embarrassment during the course of a speech delivered in January at Enon, a Coloured mission station near Uitenhage, by reportedly saying, "God could not help the natives and coloured people, nor could his angels; but only the Nationalists could do so . . . If the Nationalists got into power the coloured people would be given rifles and the Kaffirs and Boers would unite."90 When the Nationalists issued a denial, a delighted South African party gathered affidavits from members of the audience who swore that what they had heard Masabalala say. But if the Nationalists were

86. Eastern Province Herald, 10 November 1920.
89. Qualified black voters in the Cape Province were at that time on the common electoral roll.
90. Eastern Province Herald, 29 January 1921.
embarrassed, so were Masabalala’s colleagues. What Msimang, who was in Uitenhage with him, thought of it all remains unrecorded, but Alfred Sidzumo, the ICWU secretary in Port Elizabeth, claimed that it was all a mistake in a letter to the Eastern Province Herald.

The wording of Reuter’s report is not correct. I think they must have misunderstood my interpreting the speaker’s speech that the natives are going to get rifles from the Nationalists if they are in power, etc. That is a wild statement, Sir; I don’t think a man who was not insane would make such a statement.91

Whether his Enon speech was correctly reported or not, the mere fact that Masabalala had lent his support to the National party scandalized many African and Coloured people, not least Kadalie, who threw up his hands in righteous horror at the Uitenhage affair. “It is advisable,” he wrote to the Cape Times,

at this juncture to declare under the instructions of my executive that the I.C.U. entirely discredit such idiotic and obnoxious action adopted by Mr. Masabalala in advising the natives and coloured electors to vote for a Nationalist Government…. If the Nationalists tell us that in their Government the black man shall possess rifles in defence of himself I may just as well tell them the black men seek no dominion of man over man as they are aiming at, but seek a voice among the peaceful civilised people.92

In Port Elizabeth a schism occurred in the ICWU ranks which can plausibly be ascribed to distaste among some of its supporters either for Masabalala’s style of oratory or for his espousal of the Nationalist cause. Adherents and critics engaged in an exchange of anathema and excommunication repeated in other places and times all too often in the history of the ICU. In March 1921, Masabalala’s opponents met to deprive him of his presidency; a few days later another meeting expelled, or at least suspended, the expellers.93

The Second ICWU Conference, 1921

On Wednesday, 20 July 1921, the second annual conference of the ICWU was opened at Ndabeni, Cape Town, by the location superintendent. The meeting had several odd features. For one thing, unlike the Bloemfontein conference, where delegates from the Orange

91. Ibid.
92. Cape Times, 31 January 1921.
93. Eastern Province Herald, 17 and 31 March 1921.
Free State predominated, the Cape Town conference apparently had no representatives at all from that province; even Selby Msimang, who presided, represented several Cape “constituencies.” It was overwhelmingly a Cape function. Although the change of meeting place partly explains this, the total absence of Free State representatives does not point to the survival of a very vigorous organization. The published, although probably incomplete, list of delegates included only fifteen names. One was Msimang himself, and one was J. W. Dunjwa of Johannesburg, a distinguished member of the Native Congress who was not attached to any labor union as far as I know. He may simply have chanced to be in Cape Town. All other representatives were from the Eastern and Western Cape. Another perplexing feature was the inclusion in the list of Clements Kadalie of the ICU, who had broken with the IWCU, and of C. H. Meyer. Meyer was a member of another predominantly Coloured union of unskilled workers in Cape Town, the South African Workmen's Co-Operative Union, which had never belonged to the ICWU. This suggests that the conference was a renewed effort to establish one all-encompassing union. Certainly in his opening address Msimang “held out the hand of good fellowship to all who might desire to build up one great union of coloured labour throughout South Africa. Whether you are an enemy or a friend, we say to you come. Come and help us solve these troubles of ours.” While there is no evidence that Kadalie attended, a reference to the “S. A. Union” does hint of Meyer's presence. S. M. Bennett Ncwana, who was in the Kadalie camp, definitely attended and spoke in favor of cooperation and unity. Apart from Msimang, Dunjwa, Nyombolo (the ICWU's general secretary), and Masabalala, the delegates were undistinguished, and even for the Cape not widely representative. Of the fifteen listed, a third represented the Cape Town area. Two came from Port Elizabeth, but none from East London or Aliwal North.

94. The claim of one delegate that there were “delegates in attendance from the various parts of the four Provinces” can only be dismissed as exaggeration. Cape Times, 26 July 1921.
95. Yet the ICWU was active in the Orange Free State certainly as late as the previous December, when African workers at Kroonstad were threatening to strike for 10s. 6d. a day for men and 4s. 6d. for women. Eastern Province Herald, 7 December 1920.
96. Cape Times, 21 July 1921.
97. Meyer's initials are transposed, but the evidence seems to substantiate this identification. The SAWCU, founded in July 1918, was a Coloured general union that looked at one time like a serious rival to the ICU. In 1919 it came under the influence of the African People's Organization, the Coloured political pressure group. See Wickins, "General Labour Unions," 280-281.
98. Cape Times, 21 July 1921.
99. Ibid.
In his speeches President Msimang stressed the need for conciliation and moderation, and for organization "to strike heavy blows — not rebellious or violent — for a larger freedom." These sentiments were echoed by other speakers. His presidential report on the evening of the conference's second day made some harsh references to the industrial color bar imposed by the government — he called the government "a club of incorrigible magnates" — and white trade unions, and to the great gap between the wages of white workers and those of black workers. The latter, he said, were the "actual workers and producers of the country's wealth," who had to "decide whether to accept the challenge or ignore it, to extend the hand of fellowship or to reciprocate the insolence." The burden of his speech was an indictment of white rule in South Africa: "too much greed, too much Europeanisation, too much prejudice." Yet, he asked, "How much are we worth? Perhaps we suffer for our own sluggishness, foolishness, selfishness, and want of co-operation, self-help, and all those other virtues which go to the full sum of national progress," He then proceeded to warn against rash and precipitate action, however great the provocation.

We have been often tempted, or was it more force of circumstances and of economic difficulties, to force the issues when peaceful negotiations might have produced better and more lasting results. At such times when we might have concentrated upon organisation and mobilisation of those forces already at our disposal for the purpose of insisting upon our rights, circumstances had compelled issues which had lacked success by reason of disorganisation. There had been too many temptations to strike, and such strikes had been organised by people who were ignorant of the doctrines of Trade Unionism. These people were ignorant in regard to the great secrets of passive resistance. I will be failing in my duty if I do not warn you against the wild talk which serves merely to rouse the passions of the people; at any rate, for the present.

Who were the people "ignorant of the doctrines of Trade Unionism" at whom this reproach was directed? Possibly Msimang was thinking of Kadalie, who had threatened strike action the previous
September. However, since he wanted Kadalie back in the ICWU, this is unlikely. No doubt he had him in mind when in the same speech he appealed to other unions "to throw in their lot with the I.C.W.U. for the general upliftment of downtrodden races." More likely he meant Masabalala, who had uttered many wild words during the Port Elizabeth wage dispute and the 1921 election campaign. Moreover, Msimang went on to criticize the advocates of the ten shillings a day minimum wage, also an apparent reference to Masabalala. Msimang and Masabalala quarreled at or just before the end of the conference for reasons which can only be surmised. Perhaps the latter resented the tone of the presidential speeches; perhaps he was offended at not being chosen in the new elections for an official position in the union more exalted than membership in the Supreme Executive Council. Perhaps Kadalie had subverted his loyalty. The day before the conference ended at West London on Monday, 25 July, he had been received with enthusiasm by members of the ICU at a meeting where Kadalie had explained why he had taken no part in the ICWU conference, "giving as the principal reason that the I.C.U. stood for constitutionalism." This was no doubt an innuendo aimed at Msimang, whose assumption of the presidency of the new union founded at Bloemfontein was considered a breach of constitutional propriety.

On the last day of the conference Msimang, no doubt realizing that the split in the ICWU was now beyond repair, was more explicit in his strictures. He referred to "some of the leaders of the people whose system and manner of speech at public meetings seemed to take up a tone that made things difficult even for the most sympathetic of our enemies to think kindly of them." This denunciation may have been meant equally for Kadalie and Masabalala. He again emphasized the necessity of abandoning a sterile conflict with constituted authority, of seeking remedies for grievances in organization and self-help, and of avoiding "wild phrases and flowery words."

Masabalala was not alone in his defection. Six delegates from the Eastern Province waited upon Kadalie at the ICU office. They informed him of their decision to disassociate themselves from the

106. Ibid.
107. Cape Times, 26 July 1921. In the course of a typically extravagant speech, Masabalala expressed his thanks to the ICU for sending £150 to pay for his bail and "to feed the hungry" after the Port Elizabeth riots.
108. "A wise leader should think more of the dangers that might befall his people if he did not lead them safely and wisely. He should scarcely allow personal ambition to come before the sacred duty and the sacred cause he is out to win, not for himself, but for the helpless." Cape Times, 27 July 1921.
109. Ibid.
ICWU conference and to request the ICU to convene a conference at Port Elizabeth instead. With the exception of Bennett Ncwana, all six were members of the newly elected Supreme Executive Council; one was its vice-president, J. W. Stoffels of Port Elizabeth.

The ICU Conference of 1921

The competing conference at Port Elizabeth was opened on Saturday, 22 October 1921, by D. M. Brown of the South African party, a member of the Legislative Assembly. With the exception of delegates from the ICU branch at Luderitzbucht in South West Africa, all those who attended were from the Cape Province. In fact, the Port Elizabeth conference represented the establishment of a Cape Town-Port Elizabeth axis. J. G. Gumbs delivered the presidential address and spoke with moderation about the need to organize in imitation of "the white man's practical methods... In organising they did not aim at inflammatory propaganda, or conspiracy against the Government, but merely to combine with a view of alleviating the working conditions of the people who contributed most to production." 

The conference deliberated on matters of interest common to the Western Cape and the Eastern Province. Apparently the only reference to farm labor was a condemnation of the tot system (wine in lieu of wages) and the poor accommodation at the wine farms, suggesting that the ICU had attracted support among Coloured farm laborers in the vicinity of Cape Town. The main topic of discussion, as far as one can tell from the sparse newspaper reports, was the contract labor system. Among the ICU's first members were migrant laborers on contract with the South African railways and harbors administration, and as a result the union had as much interest in the system as the Eastern Province, from where many contract workers came. Since most contract labor was engaged to work in the mines, discussion naturally led to a demand for an investigation into the working conditions of black workers in the Rand mines. In addition the conference condemned the pass laws, which plagued workers from the Cape during their residence in the Transvaal. Hostility to the contract labor system, which was regarded as a device for undercutting black urban labor, was a bond that tied together the two parts of the Cape.

11. *Cape Times*, 26 October 1921.
12. Ibid.
13. *Cape Times*, 26 and 29 October 1921. The conference called for ICU representation of black workers at the International Labour Conference. Referring to this, Johns, "Non-White Unionism," 186, comments: "Yet, in contrast to Msimang, Kadalie seemed to place considerable importance upon possible overseas links. Thus, a new emphasis was added with the shift of..."
As it turned out, bringing the Port Elizabeth union into an enlarged ICU was nearly frustrated by differences of political policy. The Eastern Province delegates favored supporting the Labour party, but the Cape Town people, who had supported the South African party in the previous election, were hostile to any commitment to the Labour party as long as the white trade unionists, especially in the Transvaal, refused to accept their common interest with the black workers. The ICU was no longer attached to the South African party; indeed, with or without the consent of his colleagues, Kadalie had made overtures to the National party just before the ICWU conference in July. He had written to its leader, General J. Hertzog, appealing for a contribution to an ICU fund for the survivors of the black Israelite sect, which had been bloodily ejected from crown land at Bulhoek, near Queenstown, in May 1921. Hertzog had donated a guinea, accompanied by a celebrated letter in which he had spoken in stiff and labored terms of "our common endeavors" and the necessity for "faith in and sympathy with one another" on the part of "the white and black Africander." Whatever Kadalie's private views were, however, and in spite of Masabalala's enthusiasm for the Nationalists in the general election earlier in the year, majority black opinion could not yet stomach support for Hertzog, however disenchanted it was with Smuts. After protracted debate they decided to postpone any decision on political affiliation, although even this compromise secured only a narrow majority. The final resolution not only kept the ICU clear of the Labour party for the present, but also recognized the rights and value of the South African Native National Congress and African People's Organisation. It stated

that this Organisation resolves unreservedly to dissociate itself from any political body whatever, but declares that its objectives are solely to propagate the industrial, economic and social advancement of all the African workers through industrial action on constitutional lines; and it is further resolved that this Organisation does not foster or encourage antagonism towards other established bodies, political or otherwise, of African peoples, and that this resolution be inserted in the constitution of the Organisation.
In the election of officers at the end of the conference, Masabalala became organizer-in-chief, and Kadalie secretary. Shortly after the conference, and perhaps as a result of what had transpired there, Bennett Ncwana departed from the ICU and launched a bitter attack against it in the *Black Mind* of 26 November 1921. He threw in his lot with the ICWU and in 1922, with its general secretary, Ben Nyombolo, and the self-styled professor, James S. Thaele, began the African Land Settlement Scheme, the object of which was "to assist the Government by inducing Natives living in towns to settle on the land."117

*The End of the ICWU*

How long Selby Msimang continued associating with the ICWU is uncertain. He was evidently still president as late as June 1922, but he must have relinquished control very soon afterward,118 and Nyombolo, who ran a newspaper called *African Voice*, became the dominant figure. Early in 1923 there was talk of a move to bring the ICU and the ICWU together, and it was even reported that a reunion had been effected.119 But in September 1923 the *African Voice* resumed the offensive, accusing Kadalie of being in the pay of Moscow, a charge that was indignantly repudiated.120 In later years Kadalie alleged that the rival union had been financed by "the exploiters of our people,"121 by which he presumably meant the Chamber of Mines or the South African party. Certainly anti-Communism and a servile support of the SAP seem to have been cardinal features of ICWU policy.122

117. Shortly after the conference, and perhaps as a result of what had transpired there, Bennett Ncwana departed from the ICU and launched a bitter attack against it in the *Black Mind* of 26 November 1921. He threw in his lot with the ICWU and in 1922, with its general secretary, Ben Nyombolo, and the self-styled professor, James S. Thaele, began the African Land Settlement Scheme, the object of which was "to assist the Government by inducing Natives living in towns to settle on the land." See *Ilanga lase Natal*, 20 January 1922, and *A.P.O.*, 8 April 1922, which expresses contempt for both the scheme and its initiators.

118. *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 9 May 1922. According to Kadalie, he was expelled. See Kadalie, "Manifesto." There was an ICWU conference at Queenstown in June 1922. *Cape Times*, 27 July 1921; *Ilanga lase Natal*, 13 June 1924.

119. *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 21 April, 19 May 1923.

120. *Imvo Zabantsundu*, 9 October 1923. One wonders whether Nyombolo had received information from the police, who were anxious to clip Kadalie's wings. They wrote, "Secret information has now been received from New Scotland Yard that Clements Kadalie is in touch with John Campbell, who is Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Propaganda Committee in Hamburg. I may add that Campbell has been specially commissioned from Moscow to win over the transport workers to the Red International of Labour Unions." Central Archives, Pretoria, Department of Interior 10/A/1787, Commissioner of Police to Secretary for the Interior, 23 August 1923.

121. Kadalie, "Manifesto."

122. *A.P.O.*, 8 April 1922; *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 22 September 1924.
At the fourth annual conference of the ICU, held in January 1924, Kadalie pressed for his union's name to be changed to the African Workers' Federation because certain individuals have adopted and styled their union as the I.C.W.U., a name associated and derived from that of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa — the I.C.U. This union, the I.C.W.U., which is at present non-existent, is now used for purposes of exploitation of the African workers.

The proposal met with such a hostile reception that he was compelled to withdraw it.

The "non-existent" union held its annual conference that year at Grahamstown in July. Typically, the conference passed resolutions expressing loyalty to the king and "great alarm and consternation" at the spread of Bolshevism. Later that year the ICWU followed the ICU into Natal when the latter began its propaganda there, and evidence survives that it continued as late as 1925, when Nyombolo, still general secretary with an office in Cape Town, endeavored to persuade the City Council to cooperate in the establishment of an employment bureau. When the newspapers associated with Nyombolo and Ncwana disappeared is not clear, but they evidently had gone bankrupt by 1927. By 1925, the date of the last known appearance of the ICWU, the ICU was poised for its period of great expansion. Even though Nyombolo and Ncwana continued to be a source of irritation to the ICU leadership, their union had ceased to have even the slight importance it had enjoyed since 1921.

123. The third annual conference took place in Cape Town in January 1923, and was opened by the British Communist Tom Mann. The Cape Times tended to muddle the ICU and the ICWU, so that Nyombolo was compelled to put the record right, pointing out that Mann was not "the likely person we would invite to speak at our meetings." Cape Times, 23 January 1923.
125. Umteteli wa Bantu, 26 July and 9 August 1924.
126. Ilanga lase Natal, 24 October 1924.
127. The council declined. Nyombolo was under suspicion for misuse of funds apparently collected for the prosecution of a European farmer at Standerton who had so savagely punished a black girl that she had died. Cape Archives, Cape Town, Minutes of the Meetings of the Native Affairs Committee, volume I, parcel 107, item 338; H. D. Tyamzashe to Editor, Star, undated, Forman Collection, 1927/142.
128. H. D. Tyamzashe to Editor, Star, undated, Forman Collection, 1927/142.