

# Garment Workers' Union

PRESIDENT

ANNA SCHEEPERS

GENERAL SECRETARY

E. S. SACHS

NATIONAL ORGANISER

JOHANNA CORNELIUS

13 to 18. PROGRESS BUILDINGS

156. COMMISSIONER STREET

JOHANNESBURG

TELEPHONE: 23-7941/2

SOUTH AFRICA

P.O. Box 6779

# Klerewerkersunie

PRESIDENTE

ANNA SCHEEPERS

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NASIONALE ORGANISEERDSTER

JOHANNA CORNELIUS

13 TOT 18. PROGRESSGEBOU

COMMISSIONERSTRAAT 156

JOHANNESBURG

TELEFOON: 23-7941/2

SUID-AFRIKA

P.K. BUS 6779

9th October, 1950.

Mr. J. de V. Louw,  
Liquidator: Act 44 of 1950,  
Department of Justice,  
Palace of Justice,  
PRETORIA.

Sir,

Re: SUPPRESSION OF COMMUNISM ACT : LISTING OF  
PERSONS.

On Wednesday, 20th September 1950 at about 3 p.m.,  
I was served with a letter signed by you and addressed to  
me, reading as follows:-

"11th September, 1950.

Sir,

Having been directed by the Honourable the  
Minister of Justice in terms of Section 4 (10) of  
Act 44 of 1950, you are hereby afforded a reasonable  
opportunity in terms of the proviso of the abovementioned  
section, to show why your name should not be  
included in a list of persons who are or have been  
office bearers, officers, members or active supporters  
of the Communist Party of South Africa which has  
been declared an unlawful organization by Section  
2 (1) of Act 44 of 1950.

Should you desire such reasonable opportunity  
you are requested to submit in writing such  
representations as you desire to make to reach me at  
the above address on or before the 3rd October, 1950.

Evidence has been placed before me to show  
that you were a member and active supporter of the  
Communist Party of South Africa.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

(SGD). J. DE V. LOUW.  
LIQUIDATOR: ACT 44 OF 1950."

Your letter is couched in courteous language; it  
is nevertheless a clear demonstration of the Fascist Police  
State in action.

The representations I desire to make would be based  
on truth, reason and logic. Those who rule South Africa to-  
day spurn all three. They only know the irrational, thrive  
on ignorance, extol bigotry and revel in causing human misery.

I have had some experience in making representations  
to commissions appointed by the Nationalist Government,

-- namely --

namely the Garment Workers' Union Commission of Inquiry and the Industrial Legislation Commission of Inquiry. In both instances I came away convinced that the inquiries served not the interests of the country or its people, but only the sinister ends of the Nationalist Party.

And who will deny that most of the other commissions appointed by the Nationalist Government serve a similar purpose? At this stage I find it impossible, futile and legally unnecessary to avail myself of the "reasonable opportunity" which you so graciously grant me to make written representations to you. I shall utilise the occasion however to reply to your letter, not to defend myself but to apprise the people of South Africa of the grave dangers facing them. The chain of justice is as strong only as its weakest link, and once the humblest of citizens is subjected to lawlessness and tyranny, no one is safe. The threat to my liberty and livelihood contained in your letter constitutes a dire menace to every other citizen. If, to maintain themselves in power for an indefinite period, the band of unscrupulous politicians who rule South Africa to-day want to destroy the last vestige of human liberty, let them do so openly, so that the people may know the truth, and let them not mask their perfidy under the hypocritical guise of suppressing communism. To destroy a nation's liberty is at all times wicked; to do so by trickery is a gross infamy.

MY REPLY.

1.

I recently spent about three months in Europe. While in London I was invited to tea by Mr. Hannan Swaffer, one of the most popular columnists in England. In the course of conversation I casually asked him whether he would like to visit South Africa. His prompt reply was, "Sachs, I never enter prison voluntarily." Mr. Swaffer's observation flashed through my mind immediately I read your letter. In passing I may mention that everywhere in Europe I found a warm affection for the South African People, and a sincere appreciation of the problems facing them. For the present rulers I found only universal contempt and hatred.

Apparently you imagine that you are engaged merely in compiling a harmless list of people similar to a Voters' Roll or a Telephone Directory. It is highly probable however that you, like many others, have consciously or unconsciously become a victim of the wave of lawlessness which the Nationalist Government has introduced.

Permit me to remind you that you are engaged in compiling a list of victims upon whom the Minister of Justice can arbitrarily and capriciously inflict endless hardships and irreparable ruin.

2.

In order that you and others should appreciate fully the dire consequences which may be visited upon persons who are included in your list, let me quote the provisions of Sections 5 (1) of the Act. These read as follows:-

"The Minister may by notice in writing require any person whose name appears on any list .....

- (a) to comply, while he is an office-bearer, officer or member of any organisation specified in the notice, or a member of any public body so specified or while he holds any public office so specified, with such conditions as may be prescribed therein;
- (b) to resign as an office-bearer, officer or member of an organisation specified in the notice, within a period so specified, not again to become an office-bearer, officer or member of that organisation and not to take part in its activities;
- (c) not to become an office-bearer, officer or member and not to take any part in the activities of any organisation specified in the notice or of any kind of organisation so specified;
- (d) not to become a member of either House of Parliament or a provincial council or the Legislative Assembly of the territory of South-West Africa or any public body specified in the notice or to hold any public office so specified or, if he is such a member or held such an office, to resign within a period so specified, as such member or from such office and not again to become such a member or hold such office: ....."

3.

As far as I personally am concerned, if you include me in your list the Minister would have the power to prescribe a standard of conduct for me. Knowing the Minister as I do, I feel that he might require me to cease all trade union activities, prescribe what books I should read or whether I should read at all, what friends I should have or whether I should have any friends whatever. He would also have the power to require me to resign as Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union and to have nothing to do with that Union which I have served loyally for nearly twenty-two years - or with any other organisation. He could deprive me of my livelihood and to all intents and purposes prevent me from earning a living in the future. I would be in a less privileged position than a convict who is imprisoned for the most serious crime, for the convicted criminal is at least protected by Prison Regulations and is provided with food and shelter; also if he happens to be a Native, he may enjoy the additional privilege of being housed in one of those newly-built private gaols to which the Minister of Justice has given his warm blessing, and of working for some farmer in the district of Bethal or Leslie. My conduct would be governed entirely by the whims and caprices of the Minister and, since I have no other profession than that of a trade union Secretary, which profession I would be prohibited from practising, my dependants and I would have to starve. Should I disobey any of the injunctions of the Minister, I would become liable to three years' imprisonment with hard labour.

4.

What I find even more revolting is the fact that

not only will the few hundred people already listed by you become prisoners of the Minister, but no citizen will be secure and the whole country will become one vast potential prison, with the Minister as the gaoler. Indeed, many people might find actual imprisonment, harsh as it is, more tolerable than having to live in a state of constant fear, not knowing when the "policeman's knock" on the door may come.

I do not know the extent of your knowledge of the law. I do not mean law as practised in the Magistrate's Court, or the subject about which lawyers quibble. I mean the Law and the Rule of Law in the broadest sense of these terms, as distinguished from rule of dictatorship, tyranny and oppression. In all countries, except those ruled by barbarians or fascists, citizens are entitled to a fair public hearing by an independent competent and impartial tribunal in the determination of their rights and obligations and of any charges preferred against them. They also enjoy all the guarantees necessary for their defence when charged with a breach of the law, including a clear statement with full particulars of the charges they are called upon to meet. They are entitled to hear in full all the evidence and arguments in support of the charges, to cross-examine witnesses, to bring witnesses and evidence of their own and to present argument to rebut the charges. No citizen is held guilty of any offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute an offence at the time when it was committed. No one may be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy or home, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation, and everyone has the right to the protection of the Law against such interference. No citizen may arbitrarily be deprived of his livelihood or personal liberty.

The first essential for the proper administration of justice is that every party should have an opportunity of being heard. It is of equal importance that proceedings should be held in public so that the public should know whether justice is being done and also have guidance to their own conduct.

For these elementary liberties people all over the world throughout the ages have fought, suffered and died. To preserve these fundamental human rights, ten thousand noble South Africans and millions of others only recently gave their lives. Your Minister of Justice treats liberty and justice with contempt, and the people of South Africa to-day are denied even those rights which the people of Europe exacted from their tyrant kings in the Middle Ages.

Obviously your magnanimous offer of a reasonable opportunity to show why my name should not be included in your list is either a mockery, or you do not know the meaning of the term "reasonable opportunity." I have not the faintest idea of what crime I am supposed to have committed, nor of the evidence which has been placed before you in support of any allegation against me. Yes, I was a member of the Communist Party until the 4th September 1931 when I was expelled from that Party, and I have never rejoined it. I attach a copy of the resolution of my expulsion. Your omniscient Mr. C. R. Swart, the Minister of Justice, claims to know everything about the activities of the Communist Party of South Africa. Indeed he is so well informed that, as the debates in Parliament show, he even knows of things that did not happen, for instance the "sinister" plan of the Communists to poison the wells of the country. Surely he and you - since you have the files of the Communist

Party which the police seized in 1946 - must know not only that I was not a member of the Communist Party or an active supporter of that Party for the past nineteen years, but moreover that the Party has always, to say the least, been highly critical of my policy and activities. I am neither apologising nor explaining to you or to your Minister. I am merely stating facts.

7.

In Nazi Germany thousands of people were imprisoned, tortured and executed for acts which were perfectly lawful at the time when they were committed, but these savageries were perpetrated in the name of the Fuehrer and not under any hypocritical pretexts of acting under cover of the law. From the contents of your letter it seems abundantly clear to me that it is really a matter of "Sentence first, Verdict afterwards" or "the Verdict has been pronounced and will be executed - come and try to set it aside!"

Fortunately for the people of South Africa, the insidious efforts of your Minister and his coterie have failed to extinguish all the lamps of liberty in the country. One lamp still shines all the more brightly in contrast with the otherwise enveloping darkness - I refer to the Supreme Court. We shall argue the meaning of the term "reasonable opportunity" and other legal matters before a competent tribunal presided over by people who not only know law but who also have a profound respect for it.

8.

My political views and trade union activities have for years been deliberately misrepresented and distorted by the leaders of the Nationalist Party and I have been used as a scape-goat by them - all to mislead the less intelligent people, more especially of the Platteland, and to disrupt the trade union movement. I find it necessary therefore to present my political beliefs clearly and to give a brief account of my trade union activities. I want my fellow citizens, even the less intelligent ones, to think well of me and if they are to condemn me, to do so for what I have said or done and not on the basis of the slander, vilification and distortions of unscrupulous demagogues.

9.

Already in my early youth I had become a confirmed Humanist and my love for humanity developed as I grew older. I always wanted to see human beings - all human beings irrespective of race, colour or creed - live in happiness and prosperity. I always hated oppression, exploitation and race-hatred. I look upon people who promote inter-racial strife, no matter what excuses they may offer, as enemies of mankind and as barbarians. I have always loved the beautiful and the wholesome in Nature and humanity, and detested the hideous and the squalid. My intellectual development was very much influenced by the great historical events which stimulated the forward march of mankind, and by the men and women who, possessed of genius, noble characters, a spirit of

sacrifice, a love for freedom or other qualities, served as the torch bearers of human progress. I never had any other ambitions in life except to make my humble contribution to the happiness of the people among whom I lived and worked. Neither Mr. Swart nor a hundred like him, with all the oppressive laws they may enact and the prisons they can build, will make me alter my fundamental outlook on life.

10.

I was elected Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union in November 1928. In that position I had an opportunity of studying closely the lives of the several thousand garment workers, the overwhelming majority of whom were decent, hardworking Afrikaner women, driven off the land by poverty. They lived mostly in slums, very often four or five of them sharing one small room. They earned starvation wages and hundreds of them literally had not enough to eat. In the factories, organisation was of a most primitive kind and employers tried to exact the maximum of work for the minimum of wages. The Industrial Agreements were treated as scraps of paper by most employers and for some inexplicable reason we always found it very difficult to get prosecutions against employers for breaches of the agreements. Nobody except the Union cared about the misery and sufferings of the factory slaves. If they came out on strike against intolerable conditions, the police were always there to protect the employer. When workers were unlawfully deprived of their legal wages, the police never interfered. There was no social security of any kind and hundreds of workers, most of them not having a shilling with which to buy food, would come to the office of the Union looking for work which was not readily available.

In the misery of the thousands of workers with whom I came into daily contact, I saw the tragedy of hundreds of thousands of people termed "poor whites", whose lives were filled with despair, misery and hopelessness.

In 1931 and 1932 we had two general strikes against attempts to lower wages in the Clothing Industry on the Witwatersrand. The first strike was comparatively peaceful, but in the second strike Mr. Pirow, who was Minister of Justice, employed most ruthless methods to crush the strike. The workers were defeated, and our Union was substantially destroyed. I was served with a banishment order under the Riotous Assemblies Act by Mr. Pirow, on what I considered a frame-up, and this made me all the more determined to fight injustice. I have tasted to the full the bitter cup of tyranny and lawlessness, and I know from personal experience the difference between law and arbitrariness, and the utter contempt which Nationalist Ministers have for Law, Justice and Human Decencies.

11.

I embraced socialism because of its humanity and the hope of a better and happier world which it held out to mankind. But as a result of a deep study of social, economic, political and historical conditions in South Africa, I have long since come to the conclusion that the correct policy for South Africa at its present stage of development and for many

decades to come, is one of Progressive Capitalism, and this policy I have consistently advocated. The country must be freed from all forms of Colonialism, feudal backwardness and Herrenvolkism, and must become a truly Democratic State.

By progressive Capitalism I mean the following: The fundamental aim and policy of all people in all countries should be to secure the maximum measure of welfare for the maximum number of people. This object can be attained only by the economic and social organisation of a country in a manner that will attain the maximum production of wealth - in short raising the national income to the highest level - and the most equitable form of distribution. The immediate historical task of the people of South Africa is to build an industrial civilisation on a modern basis. Every phase of our economic life - mining, agriculture and industry must be re-organised on a scientific basis and industrial development must proceed on the most intensive and extensive scale. Every form of national backwardness, every obstacle which is likely to impede economic and industrial development, must be ruthlessly eradicated from our national life. Racial division and bigotry are the greatest obstacles to the development of a healthy national economy. Every worker, every citizen, irrespective of race, colour or creed, must be afforded the fullest opportunity of becoming highly efficient in his sphere. The wages and earnings of the masses of people must be raised to the maximum to ensure efficiency as well as a stable local market for locally manufactured goods. All people who have the welfare of South Africa at heart, whether they are Nationalists, United Party supporters, Labourites or non-Party, should co-operate in the progressive development of South Africa.

12.

In pursuance of the above policy, I have advocated the formation and building of a mass Labour Party in South Africa, and urged garment workers and other workers to join the Labour Party and help make it strong. It is my considered opinion that the Nationalist Party represents backward agrarian interests, wastes far too much time and energy on engendering racial strife, and is therefore incapable of serving the interests of all the people of the country. The United Party is the party of mining, financial and other Capitalist interests, and does not represent the wishes and aspirations of the masses of working people. The Labour Party on the other hand, is a truly democratic party, free from any racial antagonism, and is sincerely interested in uplifting the conditions of the overwhelming majority of the people of the country.

13.

The present policy of the Nationalist Party constitutes such a grave danger to all the people of South Africa and to the future development of the country, that I sincerely hope that all who want to see the country great and prosperous and respected by civilised people will combine to oust the Nationalist Government from power. I have the profoundest sympathy for Afrikaner Nationalism and the greatest admiration for the Afrikaner people whose short, glorious and tragic history I know well. The whole of humanity reveres the memory, the courage, the noble heroism of Paul

Kruger and Christian de Wet, but all civilised people hold in contempt and hatred the group of political adventurers who rule South Africa today, who have poisoned the entire life of the country with national and race hatreds, who are creating a volcano on the African Continent, who will bring inevitable ruin to the economic life of the country, and who have heaped shame and disgrace upon the country.

14.

The best years of my life I have spent inculcating a spirit of tolerance, of work and of humanity in Afrikaner and other workers. I urged them to concentrate their efforts on creating an industrial civilisation and securing decent standards for themselves and a happy and prosperous future for their children. I have seen tens of thousands of women and men workers elevate themselves from a starvation level to fairly decent standards. All that the tens of thousands of workers have achieved has been the result of their work, application and trade union activity, and their courage and determination to build a better life for themselves. Neither the Nationalist Party as such nor a single one of its leaders has ever rendered the slightest service to the Afrikaner or any other worker. On the contrary, the leaders of the Nationalist Party have for the past twenty years done all in their power to destroy the free trade unions, to divide the workers' ranks, to lower the workers' standards and to stultify the economic development of the country.

15.

The Suppression of Communism Act is presented by Mr. Swart ostensibly as a measure to combat communism, but it is in fact designed to wipe out all human liberties, to destroy the free trade unions, to intimidate and terrorise all opponents of the Nationalist Party, and to inflict arbitrary punishment upon those who stand for a truly democratic South Africa. On the basis of all the facts and information at my disposal, I must come to the conclusion that the ultimate object of listing me is not to combat Communism but is to be found in dishonest and malicious motives to remove me, and no doubt others, from the leadership of the Garment Workers' Union so that this proud, militant organisation may become a political football of the Nationalist Party, repeating the tragic story of the Mine Workers' Union.

16.

The following is a brief history of the sinister attempts of the leaders of the Nationalist Party to remove me from the Secretaryship of the Garment Workers' Union and to take control of that organisation:-

- (a) In 1931 gangs of drunkards, many with empty bottles in their pockets and shouting "We are Nationalists", tried on several occasions to break up meetings of garment workers in Germiston.



- (b) In 1932 Mr. Oswald Pirow, then Minister of Justice, served me with a banishment order under the Riotous Assemblies Act, alleging that I was promoting feelings of hostility between different sections of the population. Mr. Pirow knew quite well that I have all my life advocated racial amity and tolerance. The real reason for his high-handed action was that I helped to defeat the Nationalist candidate at a Germiston by-election, because he (Mr. Pirow) employed mounted and foot police against the striking garment workers.
- (c) 1934: The late Mr. Aapie Fourie, then Nationalist Minister of Labour, made a slanderous attack upon me in his newspaper and in Parliament because I criticised him strongly for not publishing, after he had promised to do so, the recommendations of the Wage Board in respect of the garment workers. The reasons which prompted Mr. Fourie to change his mind could only be explained by some coastal clothing manufacturers who had always championed starvation wages.
- (d) In the same year two gentlemen in clerical garb, staunch Nationalists, appeared before the Industrial Legislation Commission in Potchefstroom, and pleaded that a wage of 7s. 6d. per week was ample for garment workers in Potchefstroom, and when I protested they denounced me as a "bolshevik", "communist" and "foreign agitator". All the garment workers of Potchefstroom must have been "Bolsheviks", "communists" and "foreign agitators", because they were indignant at the attitude of those two gentlemen.
- (e) In 1936 the real campaign of disruption of the trade union movement was launched by the "Council of Trustees" under the leadership of Dr. Albert Hertzog, a prominent Nationalist, the not so illustrious son of an illustrious father. In this dastardly campaign the £10,000 donated by a wealthy Nationalist lady from Stellenbosch, Mrs. Jannie Marais, played an important part.
- (f) By 1937 most of the leaders of the Nationalist Party had swallowed all the ignoble principles of "Mein Kampf" and the German-trained Dr. N. J. Diederichs and others had started a campaign against democracy, liberalism and the trade union movement, employing the techniques of Hitler and Goebbels. In the same year I was waylaid by a gang of Nationalist hooligans, violently assaulted and had two teeth knocked out.
- (g) In 1938 stooges of the Nationalist Party started a campaign against the Garment Workers' Union by stating that "Afrikaner women from the Free State came to the Witwatersrand to dance with kaffirs."
- (h) In the same year the Voortrekker Centenary was celebrated, and on that great occasion I received a letter from a certain Mr. D. B. H. Grobbelaar whom the Nationalist Party wished to see in my position as Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union. The letter read as follows:-

"I enclose herewith a specimen copy of a pamphlet published by me, in which I point out the mockery of our national traditions your participation in the Centenary Celebrations will mean.

"The same applies to Johanna Cornelius and your other Communistic accomplices. The Afrikaner nation is busy uniting - to mobilise its forces against you and your sort. The thousands of Afrikaner daughters whom you have in your clutches will settle with you and with them the whole Boer nation who are finding themselves in this Voortrekker year. Our people do not want anything to do with Communism and the Jews - the high priests thereof - least of all. The day when the Afrikaners begin to settle with you Jews, you will find out that Germany is a Jewish paradise compared with what South Africa will be! The garment workers will very soon be able to handle their Jewish bosses and do not need your so-called 'help'. We Afrikaners acknowledge no 'classes' as you and your satellites are trying to introduce - therefore, we do not want the garment workers as a 'class' to participate in the celebrations, but all together with us as Boers - the factory girl together with the professor's wife. You and Johanna Cornelius who all day organise and address Kaffirs - will you dare to bring them also along to the celebrations? They are your fellow workers and 'comrades.'

We challenge you to come to the celebrations and this is our last warning.

(Sgd). D.B.H. GROBBELAAR."

This gentleman, fully supported by the Nationalist Party, also employed the usual nazi technique of slander and vilification to get me out of my position as Secretary of the Union. He failed miserably and disappeared from the scene.

- (i) In 1939, "OOSTERLIG", a newspaper published by the Nationalist Party in Port Elizabeth, paid me £250 damages and costs for defamation without the matter going to court.
- (j) In the same year Charlie Harris, the Secretary of the South African Mine Workers' Union, was assassinated by a young fanatic whose mind had become poisoned by Nationalist propaganda.
- (k) In the same year, too, a concentrated attack was made upon the Port Elizabeth branch of the Garment Workers' Union, and the officials of the Union used to be met with shouts of "Heil Hitler" by small groups of Nationalists.
- (l) In 1940 I was assaulted by a gang of Nationalist hooligans at a peaceful meeting of garment workers, and I was laid up for over a week. The leader of the gang was fined £1. 0. 0. in the Magistrate's Court by Mr. H. J. S. Johannes.
- (m) In 1942 I was awarded £600 and costs against the Voortrekker Pers controlled by the Nationalist Party, for printing a scurrilous, defamatory pamphlet. The author, Rev. H. P. Wolmarans, Nationalist and Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, tendered £300 and costs (which I accepted).

- (n) In 1944 The Nationalist Party started a Union-wide campaign of slander against me and other leaders of the Union, arising from the employment of nine Coloured workers in a Germiston clothing factory. For weeks they disorganised the Clothing Industry in Germiston.
- (o) In 1945 the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court awarded me £300 and costs against the Rev. Dr. A. B. du Preez for a scurrilous and defamatory "congregational letter" he published.
- (p) In 1947 the Nationalist Party again started with renewed energy a campaign of slander and vilification against me and my Union.
- (q) In May 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power and then the fascist dogs were unleashed. An inveterate criminal was built up by the Nationalist Party as a great "leader" and "martyr" to take over my position as Secretary of the Union. The attempt of the Nationalist Party again failed miserably.
- (r) In September of the same year an organised mob of hooligans, armed with bicycle chains, knuckle dusters and bottles, invaded a peaceful meeting of some 3,000 members of the Union, mostly women, in the City Hall, Johannesburg, assaulted men and women and caused damage to property to the value of over £100. The criminal who led the mob boasted that he had the full support of the Minister of Justice and of the Minister of Labour. When leading the mob he shouted, "Come Boers, to-day blood must flow. Anna Scheepers (President of the Union) and Solly Sachs will be taken away in ambulances."
- (s) The President of the Union sent a telegram to the Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, demanding that the hooligans be brought to justice. Instead of bringing the criminals to trial, Mr. B. J. Schoeman, Minister of Labour, appointed a "Garment Workers' Union Commission of Enquiry" presided over by a gentleman from a little dorp in the Free State, a Mr. Graham Wolfaard, who knew as much about trade union matters as a cat knows about astronomy. For nearly eighteen months the work of the Union was disorganised and every Nationalist stooge was permitted, indeed invited, to come before the Commission to vilify the Union and its leaders. The work of the Commission cost the Union over £5,000 and the taxpayers of the country very much more. When the Commission issued its report, it was treated with the utmost contempt by every intelligent person.
- (t) The same year Mr. B. J. Schoeman, Nationalist Minister of Labour, refused to publish the Agreement of the Union with the Transvaal Clothing Manufacturers' Association. For over twenty years collective agreements for the Industry were published, but Mr. Schoeman, the self-appointed friend of the Afrikaner workers, thought he would destroy the Union and the hard-won conditions of the workers by refusing the publication of the Agreement.
- (u) In 1949, Dr. T. E. Dönges, Minister for the Interior,

arbitrarily decided to cancel a valid passport issued to me to travel to Europe. He obtained an order against me in the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court, but on appeal to the Appellate Division I was successful - the court, by a majority of 3 to 2, allowing my appeal with costs.

I have only mentioned some of the diabolical acts of the Nationalist Party against me and my Union.

17.

I am not the one who has committed any crime against the law or against the South African people. The real criminals are those who want to turn South Africa into a Broederbond Christian National Republic on the Nazi model.

Here is a list of charges I level against them. Let every true South African be the judge.

I charge the leaders of the Nationalist Party with being guilty of the following crimes:

That they have poisoned and perverted the entire national life of South Africa by their persistent incitement to race hatred and intolerance, thereby causing endless misery and suffering to millions of people.

That in their attempt to establish a Christian National Republic which will be neither Christian nor National, they have shamefully violated all constitutional conventions and liberties so dear to the hearts of freedom-loving people, and that they are insidiously employing the Sovereignty of Parliament to destroy individual liberty and introduce instead a reign of dictatorship and tyranny.

That by their evil policy of race hatred and oppression they are stultifying the economic development of the country and will inevitably bring ruin and poverty to all sections of the population.

That they have brought shame and disgrace upon South Africa throughout the world, and have caused civilised people to look upon South Africa as they looked upon Nazi Germany.

That they are disturbing the peace in South Africa, on the African Continent and beyond.

That in their callous disregard for the welfare of the workers of South Africa, they have conspired for years to destroy the free trade union movement which alone affords the workers real protection.

18.

Your Minister, Mr. Liquidator, thinks that by invoking the tyrannical provisions of the Suppression of Communism Act which should really be called The Suppression of Liberty Act, he will remove me from the position of Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union, and that the control of

the Union will fall into the hands of the Nationalists. The Nationalists seem to be so sure of their immediate success that they have, without consulting the 15,000 garment workers, appointed a certain Mr. Hartmann van Niekerk, a Nationalist, as my successor at a meeting of Nationalists in Germiston on the 7th September, 1950. I shall fight them with the same energy and determination as I have fought them in the past, and even if they succeed in removing me from my position there are still 15,000 garment workers who will have some say about who should be their Secretary. Those who are desperately trying to turn South Africa into a Fascist Police State have learnt much from Hitler, but nothing from history. They remember only the glories and successes of January 1933, but ignore the ignominy and utter defeat of May 1945. The Fuehrer was able to bludgeon and mislead the majority of Germans into following him. In South Africa even the avowed Nationalist does not want to see the homely Veldskoën replaced by the Nazi Jackboot. Tens of thousands of Afrikaner workers are beginning to realise that a truly Democratic South Africa will be a blessing, while a Fascist South Africa will only bring ruin and tragedy for all. For every leader Mr. Swart will remove, imprison or banish, ten others will take his place.

Yes, the cowards will flinch and the traitors will try to buy temporary respite by betraying their trust, but in the ranks of the Garment Workers' Union are very few cowards and traitors, and these thousands of workers together with other sections of workers and all decent people will fight tyranny and dictatorship as their forefathers did before them.

19.

Finally I wish to place on record the following:-

- (1) While your letter is dated the 11th September 1950, I only received it on 20th September 1950.
- (2) I submit that in law you are not entitled to include my name in the list referred to in your letter. If you intend to include my name in the list referred to in your letter, please advise me immediately so that I can institute legal proceedings to declare the inclusion of my name in the list as being unlawful and beyond your powers.
- (3) Regarding your intimation to me in your letter to submit in writing such representations as I may desire to make to reach you "at the above address on or before the third day of October, 1950", I claim that a reasonable opportunity under Section 4 (10) of the Act entitles me to be acquainted with the nature and particulars of the evidence which you refer to in your letter; further, that under the proviso I am entitled to appear before you personally and with such witnesses as I have available, in order to place the full facts before you. Will you inform me whether you intend limiting me to making representations by means of a written communication to you?

-- You --

You have assured my solicitor that no further action will be taken against me until the case of S. Kahn has been finally disposed of. While I appreciate your assurance, I desire to inform you that I do not intend waiting for the outcome in that case and unless I am advised by you immediately that you do not intend to include me in your list, I shall take such action as I may find necessary to protect my rights. Please treat the matter as one of urgency as your contemplated action against me has already caused me incalculable harm.

I remain, Sir,

Yours,

For a Democratic South Africa,

E. S. SACHS.  
GENERAL SECRETARY,  
GARMENT WORKERS' UNION.

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***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* **Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand**

*Location:* **Johannesburg**

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