

Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU)

1919		The <u>Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU)</u> is formed in Cape Town after World War I, with a membership of 24.
1919		The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) absorbs a number of other nascent worker organisations and other centers, and becomes the national workers organisation.
1919		The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) calls for a strike of dockworkers at Cape Town. 3 000 workers respond to the call and within a few days some 5 000 African workers in the railway yards, in factories and on public works follow suit in sympathy of the dockworkers. At the time, the dockworkers' salary is 3 shilling and 8 penny per day for unmarried workers and 4 shilling per day for married men. The union's demand for a wage of 8 shilling and 6 penny per day, and increase of 1 shilling per day is offered and it is refused.
1919		<u>Clements Kadalie</u> , founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), submits an application for affiliation on the basis of 20 000 membership to the South African Industrial Federation (S. A. I. F)
1919	April	The remarkable growth of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is stimulated by the arrest of one of its organisers, Selby Msimang in connection with a movement for higher wages at <u>Bloemfontein</u> .
1919	August	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), invites Selby Msimang, the congress leader from Bloemfontein, who had been involved in a wages campaign there, in the course of which he had been arrested and charged with inciting violence.
1919	December	A dockworker's strike takes place in Cape Town, lasting fourteen days and involving 2 000 men. This strike brings Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), for the first time, to real prominence and lays the foundation for his development into a leader known to thousands through the length and breadth of South African, and indeed even further a field.

After the strike, Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), begin to take more radical positions that it has been contemplated by the ICU's original sponsors and

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he is regarded by the police as being connected with the International Socialist League.

The dockworkers' strike is called off, as the strikers do not receive support from the established unions.

1920		Fifty delegates from various Black organisations hold a conference. They decide to form the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (ICU). The aim is to bring together all classes of labour, skilled and unskilled, in every sphere of life whatsoever to obtain and maintain equitable rates of wages and reasonable conditions of labour, to regulate relations between employer and employed and endeavour to settle differences between and to promote cooperation, insurance, sick and out-of-work benefits and old-age pensions.
1920		A conference of Black trade unions is held in Bloemfontein and Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial put forward a new constitution for the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa (ICU) as a nation-wide union.
1920	January	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), becomes the first ICU paid secretary.
1920	July	Selby Msimang calls an urgent meeting and is attended by Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), Joe Pause, J. G. Gumbs and Bennett Ncwana. The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa (ICU) is established as a national non-White trade union in Bloemfontein.
1920	October	Workers affiliated to the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) holds a meeting to demand higher wages. Samuel Masabalala, the organiser of the meeting is arrested following a disturbance that occurs.
1920	23 October	Samuel Masabalala, leader of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is arrested at <u>Port Elizabeth</u> .
1920	24 November	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is arrested and issued with a deportation order, naming him a prohibited immigrant and ordering him to leave the Union of South Africa within three days.
1921		The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) passes a resolution in its conference to: dissociate itself from any political body whatever, but solely to propagate the industrial economic and

social advancement of all the African workers through the industrial action on constitutional lines, and?not foster or encourage antagonism towards other established bodies, political, or otherwise, of African people??

1922	March	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), assumes dominant position in the national ICU.
1923		<p><u>James La Guma</u> takes over the responsibilities of Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), in administration and Kadalie is released to do propaganda work.</p> <p>All thirty delegates at the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) conference are from Cape Town, with the exception of one from Namibia (formerly, South West Africa).</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) conference in Cape Town decides upon a nationwide publicity campaign to get Africans to organise themselves into one Big Union and this results in the first branch of the ICU in Bloemfontein other than that of Luderitz in Namibia (formerly, South West Africa) being opened.</p>
1923	23 April	Start of publication of the workers? Herald, newspaper of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).
1923	21 December	Message by the secretary general of the Industrial and Commercial Workers? Union (ICU), Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) appears in its newspaper, Herald.
1924		<p>Samuel Masabalala is dismissed from the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) for negligence and financial irregularities.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) decides that in future all the money collected by the branches should be centralised.</p> <p>J. G. Gumbs is elected president of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).</p>
1925		<p>The constitution of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is drafted.</p> <p>The constitution of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is revised.</p> <p>At the 5th annual conference of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in Johannesburg, Clements Kadalie, the founder of ICU, meets <u>A. W. G Champion</u> for the first time. However,</p>

Champion disputes Kadalie's statement and acknowledges that they have met earlier that it is being stated.

The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) claims to have a membership of 39 000.

Selby Msimang meets Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in one of his open air, propaganda meetings.

1925

The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) adopts a new constitution, which fixes the union's name as the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa.

The significant change the constitution made is the abolition of the old general executive council and the establishment of the national council, composed of the chief officers of the union. These are the president, the senior and junior vice-presidents, the secretary general, three trustees and provincial secretaries, all to be chosen by the annual conference from among those who had been members of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) for at least three months.

Speaking of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) leaders, the commissioner of police in his report states, "It is noteworthy that these pseudo men lightened natives confine their attention to the towns, probably because they would get very little sympathy or encouragement from the kraal natives".

1925

April

Selby Msimang starts to work as the organising secretary of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in Johannesburg.

1925

29 September

Selby Msimang arrives in Natal to take over from A. S. Maduna as the organising secretary of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) nationwide.

1926

General J.B.M. Hertzog accuses the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) of being a political organisation rather than a trade union with members recruited from every walk of life.

The secretary of Native (Black) Affairs bans Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), under the pass laws from entering Natal.

An open split develops within the ranks of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) over tactics.

The National Council of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) expel members of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).

E. J. Khaile is elected financial secretary of the Industrial and

Commercial Union (ICU).

1926	March	<p>The general secretary of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) reports on a tour he had undertaken to the branches, complain of inefficiency, dishonesty and unconstitutionalism at all levels of the organisation and took Clements Kadalie, the founder of the ICU, who is supposed to be a servant of the national council to task for acting without its authority.</p>
1926	April	<p>The South African Trades Union Congress, which sits simultaneously with the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in a congress in Johannesburg, refuses either to send a representative to the ICU, or to receive a fraternal delegate from the ICU to their own congress.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) resolves at its conference to make a special effort to organise the mine workers, and this indicates that in its eighteen months on the Rand it has made little progress in winning them over.</p> <p>The headquarters of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is shifted from Cape Town to Johannesburg. A smaller national council executive bureau, an executive committee of the national council, replaces the board of arbitration.</p>
1926	December	<p>The communists are expelled from the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).</p>
1927		<p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) claims to have a membership of 100 000 workers.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) members in the Eastern Cape are told that the organisation would restore freedom by Christmas.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is the largest worker organisation in South Africa, with a membership variously estimated at 100 000 to 250 000.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union's (ICU) comes with a price, weakness starts developing, personal or individual issues between Clements Kadalie, the founder of I.C.U and A. W. G. Champion leader of ICU yase Natal are some of the contributing factors.</p>
1927		<p>The Native (Black) Administrative Act is enacted. The Act is aimed at restricting criticism of apartheid and the activities of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).</p> <p>Sam Masabalala, an Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) official is sent to prison for stealing union money.</p>

Rural support of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) greatly enlarge and extent to other provinces other than the Cape.

Chief Diniso Nkosi of Barberton in the Transvaal claims to have brought two thousand members into the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).

The paramount Chief of the Zulus, Solomon Ka Dinizulu, denounces the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).

1927		<p>By the time the new constitution of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is adopted the union is on the brink of collapse.</p> <p>The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) has spread its wings throughout the Southern Africa.</p> <p>Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), who is influenced by White liberals, rejects militant trade union. Kadalie, who is wary of the direction of the ICU, is in contact with Amsterdam International and British trade union congress to seek help in charting the way forward.</p>
1927	23 May	<p>A. W. G. Champion, acting national secretary of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) write a letter to the Prime Minister, General J.B.M. Hertzog.</p>
1927	June - November	<p>Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) visits Europe to try and gain international support, see how other professional trade unions run their affairs so as to help him gain respect from White labour within South Africa.</p>
1927	July	<p><u>William G. Ballinger</u> arrives from Britain as an advisor of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).</p>
1927	August	<p>The revised constitution of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) offers increasing power of A. W. G. Champion, the provincial secretary during Clements Kadalie's, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), absence, while on a visit to Europe.</p>
1927	December	<p>While in Europe, Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) in consultation with a British trade union official, Arthur Creech Jones, devises a new constitution and this is accepted after his return by a special conference of the ICU that meets at Kimberley.</p>

1928

Thousands of disgruntled members of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) leave the Union, as they are losing faith with the leadership and due to the division that exists within its members.

Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) reads a statement on the Economic and Political program.

The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) challenges the pass laws.

The Economic and Political program of Clements Kadalie, founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union's (ICU), shows the ICU's inability of winning workers over. There are large numbers of native workers to whom the ICU is scarcely known. I refer to the workers on the Witwatersrand gold mines, the Natal Coal mines and the Railways. Branch secretaries in these areas should make every endeavour to rope these men in as members of the ICU, as they would be an undoubted source of strength. The good work commenced some years ago among dockworkers has unfortunately been discontinued very largely. Renewed efforts must be made during the ensuing year to bring the strayed ones back to the fold.

1928

There is a significant decline in the membership of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) fuelling much speculation of internal fighting within its ranks.

The Natal branch of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) dissolve and A. W. G Champion form the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) Yase Natal.

1929

The new Constitution, Rules and Bye-laws of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) are drafted.

A Pamphlet by A. W. G. Champion, 'Blood and Tears', appears in the History of Durban Native Riots.

The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), with the support of its new British advisor, William G. Ballinger, sacks Clements Kadalie, the founder of ICU. The ICU is split even further.

The Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) of Natal leaves the national ICU to form the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) yase Natal. This branch becomes powerful to such an extent it becomes very active and influential in the Beer Hall strike, causing even bloodshed in the centre of Durban. The ICU loses property that is purchased in the name of ICU of Africa.

J. G. Gumbs, the president of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) dies.

1929		Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), form the independent Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU).
1929	January	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), resigns from the ICU after disputes with William G. Ballinger.
1929	29 September	The Government uses the Riotous Assembly Act to ban Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), from the Rand and A. W. G. Champion from Natal.
1930		The Industrial and Commercial Union?s (ICU) split into a number of separate regional organisations of declining strength and influence. Clements Kadalie, the founder of the ICU, keeps a section alive in East London until 1950. A. W. G. Champion is banned from Durban. A. W. G. Champion is served with a banning order by the Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow.
1930	June	Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU) is banned from the Rand.
1930	24 September	A. W. G Champion is banned from Natal as he is suspected of wielding much influence with the union.
1951		Clements Kadalie, the founder of the Industrial and Commercial Union?s (ICU) dies.
1989		The 70th anniversary of the Industrial and Commercial Union?s (ICU)?s foundation is marked.

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