

**Minutes of Meeting of African CPSA Members,
13 November 1932¹**

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COMMUNIST DELEGATES
At the Albert Street Hall, on the 13th November, 1932.

PRESENT: I. MORAKE. (Chairman Brakpan Branch), in the Chair.

GARNER MAKABENI. (Clothing Workers).

NUSE. (Western Township).

G. SOLUND WANA. (Secretary Brakpan Branch).

Frans MOPU. (Johannesburg).

LUCAS MALUPI. (Premier Bakery).

ANDRIES SLAMBAT. (Clothing Workers).

PAUL RADEBE. (Secretary Vereeniging).

JOHN NOKO (Evaton).

also

R. & S.P. BUNTING (the latter asked to attend, as he felt himself the origin of the trouble), and

I. STEIN.²

T.W. THIBEDI also asked leave to attend but was requested to retire as it was a meeting of those who had always been against forming any opposition organisation, whereas Thibedi had formed one.

The report of the delegates appointed on the 27th December, 1931 to acquaint the C.I. and party branches with the proceedings of that day, etc., was read by Comrade G. Makabeni in ~~and~~ Xosa and interpreted by the Chairman into Sesuto.

P. RADEBE: As a five years member of the party I see how ineffective it has become, because since 1929 the leaders have been fighting among themselves.

We black people who walk in darkness welcome all who come to our aid, but now our white leaders are keeping us in darkness and those who help us are called bad names.

I ask Comrade Bunting to continue to work for our people without regarding the slanders against him.

G. SOLUNDWANA: We are greatly disappointed that our report to Moscow has not been replied to. We must make further representations and not remain inactive meanwhile. People say our party has gone the same way as the I.C.U., A.N.C., etc.

FRANS MOPU: Agrees.

1. See footnote 1 to document 18, vol. II.

2. The identity of I. Stein could not be established.

We all see the party is doing little. I have worked very hard for it, and for being a member was sent to goal in Durban and deported when I came out, after defying the order twice. Now the party is spoilt. It is very hard to see one's work go for nothing and the party head office preventing us from carrying on the party work.

ANDRIES SLAMBAT: I am one of those who was driven out of the party premises by the leaders, who are good at writing articles and passing resolutions and do nothing else.

We suffered through our recent strike. Some white members invited me to an A.F.T.U. meeting, but the people were not prepared to organise the African Masses on proper lines. We found a lot of white girls there, who were disagreeably surprised to see natives present. We had to ask special permission to go in.

Nevertheless I am prepared to work for the benefit of my nation.

JOHN NOKU: From the day that Bunting was expelled our party work has gone to the dogs. The head office sent out people to try and put a bad spirit of discord among our members.

I. MORAKE: As Africans we must at any risk spread the propaganda of the C.I., and not falter merely because head office does not support us or even excommunicates us. At present we branches are ourselves doing what we say head office is doing – neglecting our work, but head office neglect is no excuse. We are still full party members. Never mind Wolton or Bunting who may die tomorrow. They have shown us the way, now let us do the work ourselves, not stop because of their³ quarrels.⁴

G. SOLUNDWANA: We must have a centre at which branches can meet and give or obtain advice. We can't work with head office. It fights against us.

L. MALUPI: Yes it smashes up any meeting we try to hold there. With such a centre we can carry on the work ~~the work~~ until Moscow listens to us.

S.P. BUNTING: Opposes any idea of a second party centre and moves that:

(1). We accept the report read by Comrade Garner and resolve to send it to the E.C.C.I.

(2). We are deeply disappointed at the absence of any reply from the C.I. to the report, etc., of the meeting of party members (nearly all natives), held in Johannesburg on the 27th December 1931, especially as such non-reply has been construed as a slight on the African People.

(3). We are resolved not only to keep on foot our branches and groups but to do our best to induce them to function in contact with the party head office, notwithstanding its unhealthy condition. We accept Comrade Bunting's request to cut him out of the picture and to carry on as if he did not exist.

3. There is a crossed-out illegible word after 'their'.

4. A single line is drawn in the left margin opposite this paragraph.

Though I feel very keenly being cut off from the party yet No. 3., seems the only way to compose the party troubles and bring back large bodies of members to activity, however unpalatable it may be to them to have dealings with those now in control.

G. SOLUNDWANA: From the point of view of the African Masses I object to No. 3.⁵ How can we submit to all these abuses set forth in today's report?

I. MORAKE: Comrade Bunting effaces himself with a view to effacing the party difficulties, because the loss of a centre is all on account of him, so that if he retires it will be possible for the head office again to be a real centre.

NUSE: I appreciate that Comrade Bunting wants to do this in order to restore the possibility of party life to many branches now 'frozen'. But if we are able to work again with head office we should also be able to drive away the bad elements which caused the ill-feeling.

G. MAKABENI: Why should we resume contact with the head office if the report I have read is true? Or if we go back why send the report? We should fix a time limit for a reply to our report and also cease our hesitation resulting from the bad conditions it exposes.⁶

S.P. BUNTING: I have, of course, retired long ago, but I think you have hung back partly for my sake and it this that must stop.

STEIN: We know that the present leaders (not appointed by the rank and file, and some not a year in the party) are not fit to lead. How can we advise members to go back to them? Why not organise and work outside the party, which is bankrupt, and which stood idle while slave laws were passed this year?

Pirow's deportations are electioneering bluff, and so is his talk about the communistic 'menace' on the mines, which, unfortunately, is not as strong even as it was two years ago. The present leaders have not accomplished anything. Why give them more material to carry on and to justify themselves with? We can work outside. We shall find it impossible to work in the party. They will always be working against us. And if we surrender to our enemy we have to do what he tells us. Bunting's advice will not result in any good but only in justifying the leaders' mistakes. Let us organise separately and see who is right. I cannot see how to work hand in hand with the present leaders.

SOLUNDWANA: Agrees. If we follow ~~Mr.~~ Bunting's advice we admit we are to blame whereas we are not.

S.P. BUNTING: We have always consistently opposed all separate organisations. The C.I. and its sections rightly claim a monopolistic position – there can be only one machine, and isolated groups only confuse the masses. By going into the party and at the same time sending reports to the C.I. you emphasise the extreme difficulty of the position. You do not go in just to be doormats but with colours flying to assert yourselves and make the party

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strong, self-governing and spontaneous as well as truly disciplined. The party needs strengthening all the more because of Pirow's spectacular deportations, and because of the unprecedented dissatisfaction of the masses everywhere. But I must stand out because I realise more than ever that the party trouble arises solely out of the determination to get rid of me, such that although I have already been out nearly two years, the party paper still bristles with lies and malice about me, and a condition of⁷ party position is to be a good anti-Buntingite.

I think resolution 3. may help to liquidate the resulting unhealthy position – indeed all the rest of you might be welcomed back at once. – I am the only stumbling block.

G. MAKABENI: Supports Resolutions (1) and (2), but opposes the return to the party pending reply from Moscow. We Africans are flouted by the white members of the party. We must organise ourselves as a race.

Under the present leadership we are not allowed to open our mouths. We dare not say a word in disagreement with the white leaders' 'theses' although these are not really composed by the C.I. but by Wolton and Bach. We are not allowed to fight for our rights in the party. We are told to be law-abiding and to observe discipline, no argument is allowed by the dictators. I am against going back to the party until it is put in order. Rather let us thrash those who have spoilt it. The natives at head office are not champions of the black man, they are there only for their pay and have to say and do what they are bid.

The party with all its stunts and Jewish gangs to catch the eye of Moscow has no position with the African Masses today, when they need it more than ever. The only remedy is to hold aloof, not support head office. For two years they have refused to call a Party Congress, which might straighten things out.

Let Comrade Bunting retire for the present, however, so that the African comrades may show that it is not for Bunting that they have kept out, but because the head office is rotten. If we went back we should show that⁸ we are only acting as he tells us and not on the merits of the case. We shall be insulted once more.

I. MORAKE: It seems that we can't agree about going back to the party. But communist work must be prosecuted all the same.

Resolutions (1) and (2) are passed. No. 3. in view of the division of opinion stands over pending reply from the C.I.

RGASPI, 495/64/122/2-7.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy. Corrections by hand.

Stamped: 19.DEC.32 – 2599 (in German)

7. There is a crossed-out illegible word after 'of'.

8. There is a crossed-out illegible word after 'that'.