

**Letter from J. Gomas to H. Haywood,
18 March 1935**

(Excerpts from Cape letter, 18.III.1935)

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The position of the Party has gone tremendously back in many respects. You will be able to see that from the resolution too. Things are rotten up at the Centre and the whole of the Party is suffering from this. Some of those fellows who have returned from home² recently had Kotane removed from the leadership and forced themselves into the lead. Something of the kind has happened in the past before that. These fellows keep on doing things from the top. We, who are at the bottom, are simply forced things down our throats. We will have a plenum meeting in April where we will have to clear up a lot of things. You see from the resolution there is a misunderstanding on the Slogan and Marks, etc., is unable to give a clear explanation or he did not give it yet. This plenum will be a heated one.

As far as Trade Union activities are concerned, we are worse off than ever. We have nothing of our own, or Red Trade Unions. I think you have seen that whatever we have had consisted very much of paper members and was based on exaggerated reports. There was a good deal of dishonesty in those reporters too. The leadership is keeping me and all districts in entire ignorance of the position of the Party and other revolutionary activities about the country. So I am not in a position to tell anything outside my sphere. A number of those fellows you found us with³ has FALLEN AWAY, particularly in Cape Town – Coloureds. They were not of the reliable and sticking type. The trouble is, we have not got any better in their place.

In Cape Town we have not organised following in the Trade Unions, particularly amongst the non-Europeans. Nothing at the Docks. In the Tram and Bus Workers Union our Militant Opposition, however, is organised on

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1. Apparently J. Gomas sent a letter to Haywood who included a copy of it, or a copy of an extract from it, with a letter of his own sent to the ECCI. For full text of Haywood's letter with a copy of Gomas's text see: RGASPI, 495/155/102/4-6.
 2. Obviously, from Moscow.
 3. From this sentence it could be inferred that Haywood had visited South Africa and had met Gomas. So far no evidence has been found to support this. In his autobiography he writes that he left the Soviet Union in late 1930 and returned there for several months in 1932 but otherwise was active in the United States on CPUSA business until he left for Spain in 1937. Files of the OMS within the Comintern archives that could shed light on Haywood's activities in the 1930s are still closed so this question cannot be clarified until now. Haywood eventually did visit Cape Town briefly in late 1943 or early 1944 when he was a merchant seaman on an American troop ship.

much stronger lines. The comrade who had to resign from the committee, is now chairman of the Union. Otherwise, we have nothing much to talk of. I hope to write again. Greetings, etc.

(Signed) J... G...⁴

RGASPI, 495/155/102/6.

Original in English.

Typed.

42

**Letter from J.B. Marks to ECCL,
15 July 1935**

Dear Comrades,

Job -g 15th VII. We presume that the written and verbal reports which you have time and again received from us have given you an insight to the internal situation of the Communist Party of South Africa.

The C.P.S"A. consists of two hostile camps. To bring the two together is not a simple matter. In the main the White Comrades are responsible for this very unhealthy situation.¹

Your recent analyses convinced us that you are very well, acquainted with the local political situation. The developments on the political front have by far out paced us. The party has not as yet succeeded to orientate itself, and turn its face towards the masses. The reasons for this failur are the fundamental and not casual differances,² in the leading ranks of the C.P. The fractions inside the Party are not only hampering the work, but retards same to a very great extent. Valuable time is being wasted in all kinds of unnecessary personal and political begging.

The ideological influence of the Party has spread wide and far, but this the Party has failed follow up organisationally and to consolidate same.

The facilities for carrying on Party work have been greater than any other time in the history of the C.P S"A. But this we did not exploit sufficiently.

With the rapid changes in the local political situation many changes have been brought about. We are witnessing a sharp turn as far as the white workers are concern. Even the Afrikaaner worker who has been very hostile for many

Doc. 41

4. Despite the word 'signed' there is no original signature in the text.

Doc. 42

1. There is a double line and a cross in the right margin opposite this phrase. The paragraph starting with 'The C.P.S.A.' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.
2. There is a typed-over word before 'differances'.