

and Commercial Workers' Union. We have committees formed of members of these two unions and they meet occasionally to discuss the problems that are confronting us in these organisations. We have formulated a policy for these members that they must push inside these organisations which they do the best of their ability. In Cape Town we have Sunday evening meetings as well as week day meetings. Large number of literature is sold and we recruit members at these meetings. We are hampered very much by lack of propagandists. Our speakers are comrades who work during the day and they find it hard to do so as much party work as is required from a member of a Communist Party. We also have a school for illiterate Negroes which meets twice a week. The teachers are white people. Our party has about 400 members of which 100 are Negroes and 300 are whites.

[...]

RGASPI, 495/2/71a/123-5, 131.

Original in English.

Typed.

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**Remarks of N. Bukharin to Presidium, ECCI,
16 March 1927¹ (Extracts)**

[...]

I am against the resolution² because it is wrong... even worse is the overall construction of the resolution, especially concerning the directives of the CI. The greatest fault is that there is no line on the most important questions. When Com. Lozovsky says that the resolution is too general, then I can say that, on the one hand, it is too general, and on the other, it does not give a general line. I now will consider individual questions. The national question, or in other words, the race question, the relationship between black and white workers, has not been worked out in the resolution. This is the most important question and for this question no line is given. There is a sentence about the Brussels congress, but where is the party line? There is no mention of it in the

1. This document is a full record of N. Bukharin's three comments on the South African question at 16 March meeting of the Presidium. La Guma presented his statement to the same meeting earlier and stayed on to participate in the rest of the proceedings. Bukharin's comments on South Africa were part of his general remarks on different matters discussed at the meeting.

2. The resolution under discussion was drafted by the British Secretariat and presented to this meeting (see document 39, footnote 1). For the text of this resolution see: RGASPI, 495/2/71/175-80.

resolution. This, however, is the most burning problem. To write a resolution without indicating the line for these questions is not appropriate. Then it is better not to write a resolution at all. Concerning the question of the nature of the state. The party must make demands, such as a demand for a Negro republic independent of the British empire,³ or in addition for autonomy for the national white minorities, etc. Again, there is no word about this question in the resolution. Overall the Communist International must say very clearly that in the struggle between the Negroes and the whites that it is on the side of the Negroes. That is the main problem and if one speaks of race prejudice of the Negroes one is turning the problem upside down. Then we would be in the mainstream of imperialist politics. Not to mention the nature of the state is non-permissible. Where do we take the struggle, along what line? That is not clear from the resolution. On the other hand, we are supposed to work along the line of partnership between the whites and the Negroes, but one has to understand that this problem must be considered in detail. This is a complicated problem and must be at the centre of questions considered in the resolution. In the resolution there are no specifics of the general line, indeed, there is no general line. Then I would like to note that the resolution which is meant for the party does not say a word about the communist party itself. To give a resolution for the communist party without saying a word about the communist party does not make sense. Then it is better not to write a resolution at all than a resolution where the party is not mentioned [...] I believe that the worst enemy could [not] work out a better plan to destroy our party. Therefore, the resolution is politically incorrect. It is opportunistic and we cannot accept such a resolution [...]

Com. Bukharin: I suggest that at this stage of development we only ask one question, namely the question of our policy with regard to the black trade union.⁴ What are we supposed to do with this issue, if we do not succeed in the struggle against the expulsions?⁵ This is a resolution about a concrete issue. Perhaps we should accept an additional resolution about the Brussels congress, but this is a directive which has already been defined in the general resolution about the Brussels congress. One could accept it as a separate resolution. [...]

3. This is the first mention of the slogan of independent native republic that has been located in the Comintern archives to date. It is unlikely that this question was raised at any earlier meeting during La Guma's stay: there is no mention of this in the documents. Unless there was yet another meeting which preceded the 16 March meeting of the Presidium and which has not been traced in the Archive yet, or was not documented at all, Bukharin was the first person to mention independent native republic. This mention could have come without any preliminary discussions, casually, particularly since a similar slogan for the African-American population of the southern states of the USA had been discussed earlier.

4. Obviously, the ICU.

5. Here and further on Bukharin discusses the expulsion of communists from the ICU in December 1926.

Com. Bukharin: We must at least find a general solution to this question. I believe that it is not permissible for local bodies to disavow their delegates who are expelled by the congress. In doing so we would our⁶ power in the struggle for our policy in the trade unions. On the other hand, I am against the immediate organisation of a new trade union. This would be a mistake in the other direction. The situation is rather difficult here. We have rather limited influence and there is a danger that we would be isolated. If we start organising a new trade union immediately we lose the trump card in the struggle for trade union unity. Since in this case the issue is the black trade union we would lose politically.

Therefore it would be better that our followers vote against the exclusion of those who have been expelled. If they are expelled by the congress for those reasons, they should advocate co-operation among those expelled, especially in the struggle for reinstatement in the trade union. I believe that is sufficient in the current situation.

My practical suggestion: we do not accept this general resolution but form a small committee, perhaps of three comrades, whose task it should be to define this important problem properly based on the principles which we feel are correct or, in the event that another proposition is accepted, based on the principles of that proposition. Then we will accept a separate resolution that the VTsSPS,⁷ several foreign trade unions, etc. send telegrams of greeting, and nothing else. [...]

Accepted.⁸

RGASPI, 495/2/71a/128, 137-9, 142, 148.

Original in German.

Typed. Steno.

Inscriptions: 1) South African question

2) Pres. 16.3.27.

(typed)

6. A verb after 'would' is missing in the original. Perhaps, 'weaken'.

7. Abbreviation for Vsesoiuznyi Tsentralnyi Sovet Professionalnykh Soiuziv (All-Union Central Council of Professional Unions), the central body of Soviet trade unions.

8. Bukharin's proposal that a committee of three draft a resolution on South Africa was accepted. The resolution submitted by the British Secretariat was rejected.

**Resolution of Presidium of ECCL,
16 March 1927**

RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICA

16.III.1927

The expulsion of five Communists from the Executive of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa confronts all the revolutionary workers of that country with the question of the forms and methods suitable for the struggle against the expulsion and splits.

The Communists should pursue the following line in connection with the Congress of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, to be held on the 25th April.

1) To bring protest resolutions at all Locals¹ against the expulsion with the demand, appealing to Congress, to have the Executive's decision annulled.

2) In the case of Congress confirming the expulsion of 5 Communists, all opponents of expulsion at the Congress should bring written protests against it, but should in no circumstances either leave Congress or give grounds for disruption.

3) All opponents of expulsion should strive for the non-expulsion by local organisations from their ranks of any workers who may be expelled by the Executive or by Congress.

4) If the leaders of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union exclude from the Congress all who support the expelled Communists, all excluded from Congress should form an Excluded Members' Committee which should take the following actions:

a) Send an appeal to all local organisations of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union demanding their coming forward against the disruptive activities of the majority at Congress;

b) Send in demands to all local organisations for the convention of an Extraordinary Congress and the withdrawal of the resolution;

c) Embark on a campaign in all local organisations for the support of the expelled workers;

d) Express themselves in favour of the preservation of the unity of the Union, making the keystone of the whole campaign the necessity of taking back all those expelled and of the establishment of the unity of the Union for the purposes of the successful struggle against the bourgeoisie.

1. Local branches.