

Another serious phenomenon inside the Party is the underestimation of the role of the Proletariat plays in leading the national emancipatory movement. The comrades are out for a pure and simple nationalist movement. Such tendencies are creating a very ugly situation inside the Party, and among the members of the Party. In this direction Comrade K.<sup>10</sup> is very much responsible. He certainly has very deep seated nationalistic tendencies. This you should make all effort to eradicate these tendencies, when he comes for medical treatment.<sup>11</sup>

RGASPI, 495/64/145/54-5.

Original in English.

Typed.

Stamped: 1) ... SEP.1935 – 5275 (date before 'SEP.' is illegible)

2) ... NOV.1935 – 6469 (date before 'NOV.' is illegible)

### 43

#### Letter from E. Roux to J. Gomas, 12 September 1935<sup>1</sup>

#### COPY OF LETTER FROM EDDIE ROUX TO JOHN GOMAS

131 a Kitchener Avenue  
Bez Valley  
Johannesburg  
12/9/35

Dear Johnnie,

I have been drawing up a lengthy reply to your letter enclosing the correspondence between the Cape Town DPC and the PB. I have not yet finished it. But recent events in the Party compel me to write without delay.

At a meeting of the PB this afternoon the following comrades were expelled from the Party: Levenberg,<sup>2</sup> Hilda Saks, Spilkin, Diamond and Kagan. I was suspended from the PB and Secretariat, to be expelled within three months if I do not express my agreement with the existing 'leadership' and 'Line' of the Party.

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#### Doc. 42

10. 'K.' – Kotane.

11. The last paragraph starting with 'P.S.' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

#### Doc. 43

1. This letter was sent to the Comintern by the addressee, John Gomas.

2. Levenberg.

This only happened about an hour ago, and I still feel rather dazed and not quite sure what to do about it. I rather think that all who feel as we do about the present 'line' ought to unite and send a letter to the CI asking them to intervene in this country. I gathered the Cape Town DPC has already forwarded its statement to the CI but I think a further statement embodying a description of the state of affairs in Johannesburg as well as in Cape Town should be sent under our joint signatures.

There were present at the PB when this decision was made: Joffe,<sup>3</sup> Nikin, Ramutla, Mafutsanyana and I. I found myself in a minority of one. The actual grounds of expulsion are that there is an open opposition in the Party and this opposition must be expelled. I put forward as an alternative suggestion that a resolution should be drawn up on the basis of the decisions of the 7th Congress of the CI<sup>4</sup> and that this should be used as a basis for liquidating the factional struggle in the Party. I did not get a support for this.

On the question of calling a Party conference (as suggested by Cape Town and Johannesburg) it was stated that 'a conference will be called after the opposition has been expelled'.

Marks was absent (in Durban), Mofutsanyana stated that he was glad that Marks 'with his conciliatory tendencies' was not there. This was perhaps one of the reasons why Joffe and Co. decided on action at this stage. The other reason is the tremendous opposition to the Party members in the Anti-Fascist League on the part of Farmer, Larkins<sup>5</sup> and the two Cornelius sisters (the former and the two latter have been delegates to the USSR who were all non-Party workers - JG),<sup>6</sup> an opposition that has developed as a result of the usual high-handed methods of Joffe and Richter.<sup>7</sup>

I admit that many bad elements are taking advantage of the situation to further their own ends and that these have declared their 'adherence' to the 'opposition'. But the real truth trouble has been the resolution of August, 1934, incorrectly evaluating the importance of our fight against Bachism and Woltonism (sectarianism) and subsequently the slackness, laziness and inefficiency of those who replaced Kotane.

I was told this afternoon that because I 'knew English' I should continue to edit 'Umsebenzi' and do all my other work in the Party, but I am to be removed from the PB etc. I am not sure whether I am to accept this position, and I certainly feel that I must stand by the other comrades who have been in the fight against Bach.

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3. Most probably, Louis Joffe.

4. In a sharp contrast to Comintern's previous policy the 7th Congress called on communist parties all over the world to form a united people's front not only with other socialist but also with bourgeois parties against the danger of fascism and war.

5. J. Larkins, activist of Anti-Fascist League.

6. Explanation added by John Gomas.

7. Maurice Richter.

Let me know your opinions by return of post. It may still be possible to get headstrong bounders to change their minds.

Yours fraternally,  
E.R. Roux.

RGASPI, 495/64/145/52.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

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**Telegram from M. Kotane, J. Gomas and E. Roux to ECCL,  
14 September 1935**

**DOCUMENTS ABOUT THE FACTIONAL STRUGGLE IN THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.**

Strictly confidential

I. Appeal to the E.C.C.I.

1) First Cable:

Johannesburg,

Sept. 14, 1935.

COMINTERN MOSCOW

PLEASE INTERVENE SOUTH AFRICA SECTARIAN LEADERSHIP CONDUCTING MASS EXPULSIONS SPLITTING PARTY TOP BOTTOM IN FACE ABYSSINIAN WAR DANGER WE PREPARED HELP UNITY PARTY BASIS SEVENTH CONGRESS DECISIONS STOP KOTANE HOMAS<sup>1</sup> ROUX (clear)

RGASPI, 495/14/347/3. For the complete selection see: RGASPI, 495/14/347/1-28.

Original in English.

Typed.

Inscription: '8'

EK/Copying.

3056/4.

5.3.36.

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1. Obviously, Gomas.