

CARRYING OUT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS WITH REGARDS TO OTHERS STOP  
TELEGRAPH US GREENWOOD

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51

**Report of E. Mofutsanyana to ECCL,  
25 September 1935**

REPORT TO E.C.C.I.

25.9.1935

Comrades,

On our arrival here<sup>1</sup> in August & September last year we found the Party in a sad state.

There were already two hostile sections within the Party. On the one hand Kotane, the leader of the Party and his supporters, on the other hand Bach, who has already been removed from the PB and his supporters. In Johannesburg District there were only four Native functionaries – two on each side. The branch which had about 50 members consisted entirely of whites, many of whom were office workers with petty bourgeois tendencies and very few who were actually active in the work of the Party.<sup>2</sup> The excuse for such a state of affairs was that the Party has been smashed by Wolton & Co. We found no groups or nuclei<sup>3</sup> and the Party had reverted to the old Bunting methods of holding aggregate meetings once a week, at which only fights took place between the two sections but no practical work<sup>4</sup> was being done. All the reports that were sent to the CI at the beginning of 1934 were absolutely false.<sup>5</sup> this was done deliberately in order to mislead the CI. The Cape Town branch

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1. From Moscow.

2. The first paragraph opens with the square bracket in pencil which closes after the word 'Party'. There is a single line in pencil with numbers 1, 2, 3 in pencil, in the right margin opposite the second paragraph.

3. The first part of this sentence starting from 'We found...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

4. There is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite the part of this sentence starting from 'fights...'

5. The first part of this sentence starting from 'All the...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

consisted of a mere handful of members who were very inactive, except Gomas, who is branch secretary and another white member, Weinberg.<sup>6/</sup> In spite of the fact that in Cape Town there are much more opportunities for bringing together the Natives, Coloured and whites, as the colour bar is not so acute there, this was not done. The Durban branch was absolutely smashed: there was not a branch but only a few unattached individuals. Other parts of the country were entirely neglected.<sup>7</sup>

Kotane was busy planning an anti-imperialist organisation, which he intended building up on national-reformist lines, even suggesting that only himself and one or two other<sup>8</sup> members of the Party should participate in it, but that the Party as such should remain in the background. One of his strongest supporters was Ngedlane, who has even more national-reformist tendencies than Kotane. His main argument was that the Natives of this country had no confidence in the CP, therefore such a movement was necessary. This was a logical continuation of Buntingism which reflected itself in the formation of a 'League of African Rights' which was handed over to the reformists. Another proof of pursuing that policy was revealed to us in the forming of an 'anti-pick-up'<sup>9</sup> united front between Roux and Ballinger and other individuals who did not represent any mass organisations. This body was placed under the leadership of Ballinger.<sup>10</sup>

The line of Kotane of trying to form such an anti-imperialist organisation was condemned by the majority of the Party and even his supporters admit now that he has committed 'certain mistakes', but in the main they agree with him.<sup>11</sup>

The A.F.T.U. which was led by Kotane was practically defunct. There were only individual members of the A.F.T.U. but no affiliated trade unions. The reason for this was that both Roux and Kotane underestimate the necessity of trade union work.<sup>12</sup>

The Anti-Fascist League existed only in name. A committee was formed which had no masses at all. On that committee there were also Trotskyites participating. They were continuously fighting against the Party members and instead of the Party fraction being consolidated, Issy Diamond, who was a Party member, sided on many occasions with the Trotskyites.<sup>13</sup>

6. This sentence, starting from 'The Cape Town ...', is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

7. These two sentences, starting from 'The Durban ...', are enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

8. There is a word crossed out after 'other'.

9. 'Pick-up' - see footnote 3 to document 34, vol. II.

10. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

11. There is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite two lines of this sentence starting from 'organisation ...'

12. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil and there is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

13. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.



In the Party fraction of FSU the supporters of Bach and Kotane were fighting each other and no practical work was being done.<sup>14</sup>

The work in reformist trade unions was absolutely neglected: a Party fraction existed only in the Garment Workers' Union and that was led by Bach.<sup>15</sup>

On our arrival we learned from both sides that the disagreements between Kotane and Bach and their respective supporters were mainly due to the interpretation of the basic slogan of the CPSA – 'The Independent Native Republic'.<sup>16</sup>

While the Wolton-Bach leadership committed mistakes of a left sectarian nature in the years 1931–32 and even on our arrival Bach still had certain left tendencies, his<sup>17</sup> interpretation of the slogan was, in the main, correct, as was proved subsequently by the documents received from the CI. Kotane's interpretation of the slogan was a national-reformist one. He maintained that it is a stage towards a workers' and peasants' government and that we have to fight for it as such. Roux, as usual, adopted a vacillating attitude that the slogan 'Independent Native Republic' is a 'workers' and peasants' government and it is not.<sup>18</sup> When pinned to the wall on this question,<sup>19</sup> Kotane shifted his position and also stated that it is and is not. While the dialectical approach to such a question is necessary, it is equally necessary to explain to the wide masses, and especially to the rank and file Party members what they are fighting for and what form the 'Independent Native Republic' will take. By failing to do this, they not only confused the rank and file of the Party, but got confused themselves.

In view of the fact that all the arrivals agreed with Bach, Kotane and his followers began to view them with suspicion.

As soon as the last arrival came, a broad discussion of all Party members took place, which lasted several weeks. After the majority of the members expressed themselves in agreement with Bach's interpretation, it was decided to refer the matter to an enlarged PB for a final decision. The enlarged PB discussed the question thoroughly and drew up a resolution, which was accepted. Kotane and Ngedlane were against the resolution. Roux again was wavering,<sup>20</sup> saying that he agreed and did not agree, but all three agreed to follow the Party line, until such time as the CI would give its decision on this question. This resolution was then submitted to the general membership, the

14. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

15. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

16. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

17. An illegible word inserted in pencil after 'his'.

18. The part of these two paragraphs starting from 'interpretation... is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

19. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

20. The beginning of this paragraph starting from 'As soon...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

majority of which approved of it, with the exception of a few of Kotane's followers who disagreed with it but nevertheless pledged themselves to work in accordance with the Party line until the CI decided on this question.<sup>21</sup>

This pledge was never kept by Kotane and his followers. They immediately formed an opposition and carried on fractional activities against the line and leadership of the Party. Instead of discussing practical work at the aggregate meetings, after the PB decision was taken, they still tried to convert these meetings into discussions of the slogan and the existence of a Native bourgeoisie in this country (which they deny). This hampered the general work of the Party and the DPC decided that the aggregate meetings should be confined to practical work only and to call special meetings if the necessity for theoretical discussion arose. In spite of these decisions, they still persisted in bringing up these questions.<sup>22</sup>

In order to discredit the line and leadership of the Party they rallied around themselves in the mass organisations ex-Party members and elements hostile to the Party and fought against Party fractions and its adherents in the respective mass organisations.<sup>23</sup>

Especially was this noted in the Jewish Workers' Club<sup>24</sup> where we have some expelled members of the Party. In the years 1931-32 the Club was actively supporting the CP morally and financially, but on our return we found the Club also divided in two camps. It is clear that the differences within the Party have been carried into the Club and this was accentuated and continued more sharply by the Party opposition. They organised a clique which tried to discredit the Party on various occasions. They stated openly that they disagreed with the Party interpretation of the slogan. Even after documents arrived explaining the slogan, they still maintained their irreconcilable attitude and even went as far as to say that the article on the slogan which appeared in the 'Negro Worker'<sup>25</sup> was a fake and it was sent by somebody from South Africa.

When all this trouble started in the Club (for which they were responsible), Roux, who calls himself the leader of this opposition, suggested that all Party members should be withdrawn both from the Club and from the Geserd, and that we teach them to fight out their own battles. They spread rumours that

21. The final sentence of the paragraph, starting from 'This resolution . . .', is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

22. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

23. This whole paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

24. The part of this sentence starting from 'Especially . . .' to 'Club' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

25. H. Jordan. 'What Is the Independent Native Republic?' *The Negro Worker*, no. 1, vol. 5 (January 1935). The author maintained that 'the independent native republic means the revolutionary struggle of the working class and the farmers under the leadership of the Communist Party against imperialism, for the national liberation of the country, for the cleansing of native society from the old order, for the formation of a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the farmers' (p. 13). By 'farmers' he obviously meant peasants. Basically, the article ran counter to Kotane's two-stage revolution thesis.



Kotane has been called away in order to lay down the correct line, that he is coming back as general secretary of the Party and that then the present leadership would be removed.

Since such fractional activities were not only retarding the progress of the Party, but also kept back the growth of mass organisations, the PB was compelled to take drastic steps against these members of the opposition who were definitely responsible not only of breach of Party discipline, but also for carrying on slanderous propaganda. Roux, the leader of this opposition, was suspended both from the secretariat and the PB for encouraging these people in their fractional work and for allowing his name to be used. The four following people: H. Saks, A. Spilkin, B. Levenberg and A. Kagan were expelled<sup>26</sup> from the CPSA, because they were mainly responsible for these slanderous attacks and fractional activities. Issy Diamond, though disagreeing with them on the question of the slogan, wholeheartedly supports them in converting the Party into a sort of democratic organisation, which is definite return to Bunting's policy. This was clearly revealed by their arguments after their reading the reports of the Seventh Congress of the CI, in particular of Comrade Dimitrov's report.<sup>27</sup> They failed to understand that the 7th Congress of the CI outlined what our tactics should be in our approach towards other organisations, especially on the question of united front action, without losing the identity of the Party or opening wide the doors of the Party for everybody. They understand Comrade Dimitrov's report to mean that the policy of most of the Communist Parties was all the time wrong, that a new line has been adopted by the Seventh Congress of the CI, which is the line which they have been advocating all along. As far as the CPSA is concerned, Roux in many instances definitely accused the CI of helping to pursue a left sectarian policy. For<sup>28</sup> example he argued that if he had his own way, he would re-instate Bunting, because in Bunting's time we had a mass Party which was<sup>29</sup> militantly struggling against imperialism. It is unnecessary for us to point out the futility of such arguments. To the CI documents he refers as being written by students from the Lenin School, who know nothing about South Africa. Gomas,<sup>30</sup> too still keeps on<sup>31</sup> saying that he fails to see why Bunting was expelled. This is not surprising seeing that these comrades do not see the difference between the line of the CI and that of Bunting. All along they have been opposed to

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26. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite the names starting from 'H. Saks...'

27. G. Dimitrov's report – the key-note report at the 7th Congress of the Comintern – provided the basis for the new Comintern's policy adopted at the Congress (see footnote 4 to document 43, vol. II).

28. There is a word crossed out after 'For'.

29. There is a word crossed out after 'was'.

30. A double line is drawn in pencil under Gomas.

31. There is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite the sentence starting from 'To the CI...'



Bunting's expulsion and up to this day they have not become reconciled to it.<sup>32</sup>

In order to win over members, to get into the lead to carry out a policy of Buntingism in the Party, they criticise the leadership for inactivity. While some of the criticisms would be justified in a monolithic Party where every member is<sup>33</sup> actively participating in the work and struggle of the Party, it is unjustified in this case. When the present leadership took over,<sup>34</sup> Kotane & Co. said that they would not hinder in the work but would act as onlookers.<sup>35</sup> This is in itself an unbolshevik attitude, but in reality, they did worse than that: they hindered and retarded the progress of the Party by internal squabbles and fractional activities. In our Party, as in all other CP's, constructive criticism is welcomed, but people who sabotage the work of the Party, ignore the Party leadership and do not submit to Party discipline cannot possibly bring forward constructive criticism.

The Anti-Fascist League, in which members of the opposition were <sup>not</sup> active, has hitherto made good progress,<sup>36</sup> such as rallying the masses for combating the Greyshirts, carrying on extensive propaganda in towns and countryside and smashing the Greyshirt movement in such important centres as Johannesburg and Durban. This was made possible by the hard work put in by loyal supporters of the Party. This naturally annoyed the opposition who wanted to see every undertaking of the Party smashed, and they started slandering the leadership of the Party in the Anti-Fascist League. Grey, while a member of the Party and a supporter of the opposition, came to the PB and asked to be put in the lead of the Anti-Fascist League,<sup>37</sup> stating that he was most suitable for it. When this was rejected, he went round to sympathisers and to members of the League and told them that the League was being run by the CP, that money collected for the<sup>38</sup> League was being used for communist propaganda and that, if the money was given to him, he would establish an anti-nazi League without Communists. A full report on the League will be given separately.

In the FSU we have no trouble at all. The reason for this is that since August last year no member of the opposition is on the executive and this resulted in this organisation being more active this year than last year.<sup>39</sup>

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32. This paragraph starting from 'Since such ...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

33. There is a word crossed out after 'is'.

34. There is a word crossed out after 'over'.

35. The sentence starting from 'When the ...' to 'onlookers' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil and there is a double line in pencil in the left margin opposite this part of the paragraph starting from 'When the ...'

36. This part of the sentence starting from 'The Anti-Fascist ...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

37. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite this second part of this paragraph starting from 'This naturally ...'

38. There is a word crossed out after 'the'.

39. This paragraph is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

In the Geserd too we found squabbles and bickerings being a reflection of the two views within the Party.<sup>40</sup> On the arrival of Mr. Salmon,<sup>41</sup> who is a careerist and an egotist from Moscow, he came to the Party and told us that he had lengthy discussions with a CI representative who gave him instructions as to what line to pursue in the Geserd. From our point of view, that line was totally incorrect, but the opposition supported him.<sup>42</sup> He even suggested that the fraction be dissolved and that everything be left in his (Salmon's) hands. We agreed to some of his proposals and asked him to carry on in that spirit. However he assumed dictatorial methods and antagonised the majority of the executive of the Geserd, we decided to remove him. The opposition was against it, but subsequent events proved that we were correct. The squabbles continued all the time and at a recent meeting of the Geserd Executive, one of the expelled, Levenberg, stated openly that two members of the executive went to consult the Party on Geserd matters.

On the 11th May this year a textile strike broke out, a report of which was already sent. This strike was under the leadership of the Party. Loyal Party members actively participated in the struggle, but not a single member of the so-called opposition even helped us<sup>43</sup> in the struggle.<sup>44</sup> It is amazing how heroically this newly formed<sup>45</sup> union consisting of backward girls who knew nothing about the class struggle, struggled.<sup>46</sup> The state apparatus was mobilised against them, but still they persistently and militantly kept up the struggle for their rights for a period of eight weeks. This was due to the correct leadership of the CP. After the strike was settled, the opposition came out with their usual criticisms.<sup>47</sup> This strike was not without shortcomings, but the opposition which joined the enemies of the Party in these slanderous attacks, neither took part in the struggle nor came with any suggestions during the strike. All their criticisms, which were aimed at discrediting the Leadership, came forward after the strike was settled. The Textile Workers' Union was not recognised by the employers prior to the strike (which was the main reason for the workers coming out). Since the settlement of the strike the Union has been recognised. Immediately after the settlement the Union was re-organised on a national basis. Many of the

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40. This sentence is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

41. The identity of Mr. Salmon could not be established.

42. There is a single line in pencil in the left margin opposite the part of this paragraph starting from 'Mr. Salmon...' to 'remove him'.

43. There is a word crossed out after 'us'.

44. The beginning of this paragraph starting from 'On the 11th...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.

45. There is a word crossed out after 'formed'.

46. There is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite starting from 'On the 11th May...' to 'struggled'.

47. This sentence starting from 'After the strike...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil.



girls who were very backward before the strike, have since become class<sup>48</sup> conscious. Many workers of other industries also learned a lot during the strike and a group of white miners approached Comrade Wolfson and suggested to propose him as their secretary. This in itself proves that basically the line adopted by the CP during the strike was a correct one. Roux, who was at that time in Durban, was instructed to pull out the Durban textile workers in a sympathetic strike, but he miserably failed to do so. In the beginning he was optimistic, but afterwards stated that nothing could be done as Bolton, the secretary of the Durban branch of the Union had a hold on the workers and he was opposed to the strike. This was found absolutely incorrect, because as soon as Comrade Wolfson went down to Durban, Bolton was removed by an overwhelming majority and a new secretary was elected.<sup>49</sup>

We sincerely wanted to work with Kotane & Co., and this can be proved by the fact that Kotane was put in charge of such an important organisation as Ikaka. Kotane surrounded himself with anti-Party elements who are members of Ikaka. He even wrote to the headquarters of the International Labour Defence, asking them that in future all correspondence be addressed to a person who has been expelled from the Party for Trotskyism by Kotane himself, but he is now a supporter of the opposition.<sup>50</sup> The reports sent to headquarters concerning the South African section were grossly exaggerated and this was done deliberately to mislead the headquarters. Only recently a report of the Ikaka was given to us by the present secretary of this organisation. According to this report they have a membership of about 300, but even this membership is not consolidated. This is due to the fact that Ikaka became a stronghold of the opposition.<sup>51</sup>

It is impossible in a report to enumerate all the harm the opposition has done to the Party. The mistakes the leadership has committed was to allow such an opposition to exist within the Party and not taking steps against them.

The statement sent in by the so-called opposition begins with the following words: 'WE refute the charge that the present disagreements in the Party are based on personalities'. Such a statement is a pure invention of the opposition, as no one ever stated that the above mentioned were expelled on account of personal disagreements. The fact is that they were expelled for fractional

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48. There is a word crossed out after 'class'.

49. There is a double line in pencil in the right margin opposite the second part of this paragraph starting from 'The state apparatus ...'

50. The beginning of this paragraph starting from 'We sincerely ...' is enclosed in square brackets in pencil and there is a single line in pencil in the left margin starting from 'be proved ...' to 'by Kotane himself'.

51. There is a single line in pencil in the right margin opposite the second part of this paragraph starting from 'this can be proved ...' to '... not consolidated'.



activities and slanderous propaganda against the Party line and its leadership, and this they cannot refute.

E.T. Mofutsanyana

RGASPI, 495/64/149/93-7.

Original in English.

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52

**Letter from E. Roux to ECCI,  
12 November 1935**

Johannesburg  
12 November 1935

To the ECCI

Dear Comrades,

The PB has just shown me a cable from you saying that you are awaiting my presence in connection with the inner Party dispute. I was also aware of your earlier cable with a similar request. Unfortunately I am not in a position to leave at present, nor could I have left at any time since last June when Comrade Ngedlane and I were summoned to appear at the Durban court on a charge of 'lese majeste'.<sup>1</sup> The case is still proceeding. It has at present reached the stage of an application for leave to appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court at Bloemfontein. Our Party legal adviser says that it is very unlikely that the case will be concluded for some months, possibly not until February, 1936, or even later. In the event of the appeal failing, which is probable, I shall then have to serve a sentence of four months' imprisonment. There is no alternative fine.

This being so it is clear that the dispute will have to be settled without my personal attendance at headquarters. Since, presumably, you are already in touch with Comrade Warren, I suggest that you take up the matter with him. He is fully aware of the earlier events leading up to the present crisis. You will by this time have received the statement of 20 September signed by me and others. This will provide you and Comrade Warren with further information and in addition I am sending a further statement<sup>x</sup> (enclosed) of the events since the expulsions were carried out. I ask you to place this document too at the

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1. Lèse majesté - a legal term indicating disrespect to an authority. The concrete reason for this case against Roux could not be established. Earlier Roux was twice sentenced for incitement to violence.