

action, a very broad programme for the development of the struggle in the united front of all workers and all peoples – white and Natives – against British imperialism; perhaps it is necessary to explain once more the character of the slogan of the Independent Native Republic, and, if necessary, the comrades will explain what the future revolutionary government in South Africa will be. During these three months, I suppose all the comrades have had time to read all the speeches of the VII Congress, and surely they know the theses, resolutions and line of the VII Congress of the C.I. Therefore, I put the following two questions: (1) the question of preparing a programme of action for the Party, but only in the main lines, because it is impossible here to give exactly all the daily demands; and (2) the question which they have been discussing for seven years.

(Comrade Naumann follows.)

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J. Mpama's Statement to South African Commission, 13 March 1936

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MEETING OF COMMISSION ON SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION MARCH 13, 1936

The Comrade in question is Marks not Roux.
Henderson

Henderson: Comrades, I just want to say a few words with regard to the opposition. I know nothing about the opposition, if I participated I would know. I participated in a little thing but as regards Katane opposition I am not quite clear.

Firstly, we were discussing the question of Comrade ~~Roux~~^{Roux's} not coming to Moscow. When I came here I was called to the C.I. and asked some questions on what I thought of ~~Roux's~~^{Roux's} not coming. I told what I know. Comrade ~~Roux~~^{Roux} was called here up till now. It is a full year Comrade ~~Roux~~^{Roux} has refused to come and he is still supposed to be secretary of the Party. I think it is rather a dangerous situation to keep Com. ~~Roux~~^{Roux} in the leading

position in the Party. It is dangerous to the Party, and if the Party is afraid to remove Com. ~~Ruhe~~^{Roux} it means that Party will always keep him there. I think it is quite necessary that the comrades should know the position of Com. ~~Ruhe~~^{Roux} and see that the Party take the necessary steps.

The first is we can see that Com. ~~Raymond~~^{Roux} refuses to come and they were going to allow Com. ~~Raymond~~^{Roux} to remain in the Party. It will be dangerous to the Party as it has been dangerous to the Party.

Just a few words about ~~Kataloni~~^{Katane}'s coming home. When ~~Kataloni~~^{Katane} came home he was left for a certain time in town, in a European building, where everybody knows that a native cannot stay there. Then he came out to the location, he stayed a few months in the location, there he carried on some work with the Y.C.L. members and the miners came to see him. All of a sudden Com. ~~Kataloni~~^{Katane} was taken out and no native comrade was allowed to see Com. ~~Kataloni~~^{Katane}. Comrades come to Moscow to be educated and yet when they get home, they drag him and put him among the whites. He was absolutely, nobody could see him.

I did not work under ~~Kataloni~~^{Kotane}'s leadership. Certain classes were carried on for functionaries. These circles were conducted on a Saturday night. That is the only time when we had political studies except when Com. Walton was in leadership, when after Plenums and conferences there used to be political circles and in these circles Com. ~~Richter~~^{Roux} used to take the study circles. For Com. ~~Richter~~^{Roux} to say that I attended three meetings is not true, to tell the Party what was discussed in the D.P.C. I said that I knew nothing, as a D.P.C. of the Political Bureau discussions. We never had a report in the D.P.C. of what the Political Bureau¹ did. We had Spilken, we had H. Lex,² but what was done in the D.P.C.? We used to come together. My group met, we discussed this and this, we sold so many papers, and what happened afterwards?

One comrade said he has a report, one comrade has a meeting and he has to go, and so the meeting is closed. That is the end. We only used to discuss the work of the group and never did we discuss political questions. We never got reports of the Political Bureau in the D.P.C. It might have happened after I left, but what happened before I left was that it was very hard to get the D.P.C. to meet. Com. Hilton spoke to me, we come but the members do not turn up, one or two come and no members turn up. In our group, I am a leader of a group, and I never gave a report on what was going on in the Political Bureau. This was during the period of December, January, February, March. I could not give a report of the groups when I came here, I was unable to tell the comrades of what was going in the leadership of the Party. I cannot distinguish one leader from the other. There was not a communist meeting but it was a pure native organisation. We used to carry on strikes. Bunting used to send us all the

1. There is a typed-over word after Bureau.

2. The identity of H. Lex could not be established. The name could be misspelled.

materials, but when we took active work in the provinces we were against the whites, even those whites whom we could use – we fought against the whites. There is not a single comrade who could say we must have unity between white and black.

We based our fight for the immediate demands, we did not associate ourselves with anything beyond what was needed in the location, the passes came in as a question that concerned the native. In my opinion, to say one leadership was good and one was bad, is not true. As a whole our South African Party had a wrong line, the work that was carried on ever since 1923 was that line. Lately we began to understand how to work. Our Party is still based on a territorial basis, we have no factory nuclei. We have two or three members in a group and the groups do not increase. One comes today and leaves and another comes tomorrow, they just fluctuate, we cannot keep the members together. We do not get the workers where they work. Any trouble that arises in on location the other location is not interested. One location is not interested what is going on in another location.

As regards our press. I do not know comrades, but that paper, the article of December 14, I am not quite sure. I know when I came here in May there was an article that was drawn up and sent. I think it is that article.³ This article was sent in May or June and the article comes out two days before the Convention. In my opinion it was real sabotage to the work of the Convention. Why should it come out just before the Convention? We must not run away from the fact that though they are reformists they have influence over the masses and we cannot get these masses as long as we are going to attack their leaders. We must work in harmony with the leaders then we will get the masses. But the fault of the paper is the fault of the opposition. But how can the opposition get hold of the paper if the leader keeps our paper?

I attended the aggregate meeting before I came here, an article appeared on the front page on the native bourgeoisie. What were the explanations of Com. Ruhe? Why did this article appear in the paper? Nobody came out on the paper, none of our leaders so that there was an article that should not appear and Com. Basner came out and spoke. Long afterwards Comr. Ruhe^{Roux} said – I put the article in because I waited for the Editorial Committee but nobody turned up. I got up and asked him – is it possible that Com. Ruhe^{Roux} makes us understand that nobody comes out to edit the paper. Com. Marks told me that she⁴ left home to go and help the paper.

Com. Kataloni^{Katane} says the opposition is active. I think that I blame our leadership for allowing the opposition to use our paper. It is the duty of the leadership that they see that there are articles for the paper. Com. Ruhe^{Roux} said that there were no articles and that was why he put in that article. What

3. It is not clear what article is discussed here.

4. Obviously, 'he'

did our leading comrades say? They said they cannot waste their time on that and they walk out.

In these aggregate meetings I attended there started some discussion on Com. Diamond. But the truth remains that when these discussions started our leaders did not take an active line to squash them. Com. Marks remained neutral.

Brigadier: What line was it?

Henderson: I do not know, it is in connection with what the comrades are expelled.

Here in the aggregate meeting Com. Marks did not give his opinion about the thing. The next day some of the members asked why is it possible that here are the leading comrades and when such discussions take place they cannot give us a line of how to fight against these struggles. One person, who is a very young comrade, he asked the question how is it possible that some comrades cannot give the line. I understand the position of Com. Ruhe, in the condition he is, he is unable to give the line in the discussion, it debars him from taking an active part in the Party. What is the result? Under the Ruhe leadership outsiders came to me and asked me why do you keep such people in the Party? They did not mention any name, and I did not know whom they meant, but now I found out that Com. Ruhe is still in the Party and non-Party workers know that we have such bad people in the Party, will never come to our Party, not as long as we have such elements in our Party.

Also in regard to the united front on black and white. It is quite true that in many places the position is favourable if we are politically educated. We would have had a broad united front with whites in the provinces if only we knew what line to take. We were working blindly, and instead of making use of the white people we drove them away, we did not allow any white man to come near our meetings. Here is one thing we must take into consideration, there is not getting away from it, the white man may be poor that he will be below the grade of the native, but he is anti-native and the same thing is with the natives. The natives look upon the whites as exploiters. The natives cannot understand what kind of Europeans they are. They cannot understand that there can be such white man who can come out in sympathy with the native workers. For the mere reason that his skin is white he is looked upon as an exploiter of the native people.

How can we do it? Com. Katone⁵ puts a suggestion that we should send people to Malone.⁶ This is the only way. But when we send people the question remains – these people that we send, have they realised their mistakes in the past? The past has shown that when we wanted to get hold of the unions, we called a meeting and we decided to unite. The hall was

5. Kotane.

6. Malan?

crowded, here comes the leaders of the trade unions. The Party wants to form a united front. The Party demands that they should immediately leave the hall. When they left the members began an attack on them and we were left with nothing.

The people who will be sent to work in these parties and trade unions, when they will realise their mistakes then there is a chance of winning the masses. We can get the masses if we have the leader. We can use him if he is an anti-imperialist element. It must be definitely pointed out to the Party that the Party must first see that they win the influence of the poor whites if they go into the movement. There is a basis for building a united front and especially in the provinces the situation is more favourable than in the centre. If we build a united front with our leaders will they be definitely told that they will have to first win the influence of the masses before they expose the leaders. That is my opinion.

Comrades, that is all I want to say. If it is that I am wrong in the records of the discussion that are taking place in the DPC, then Comrade Richter⁷ will bear me out. The few times that the DPC met, and the rest it did not meet for everybody was busy and there was the factional fights. But these things did not exist in the DPC. Our DPC gave reports of group meetings and that was all. Everybody had work to do and they went on with it.

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7. Maurice Richter.