

the need for an agrarian programme and the slogan for an independent Native South African Republic.

After Comrade Petrovsky's explanation Comrade Roux of South Africa asked for permission to state his point of view as he said that since the delegation had arrived in Moscow differences of opinion had arisen among the delegation. Permission was granted and Comrade Roux submitted two documents setting forth his point of view.³ Comrade Roux also stated that he believes that the South African C.P. has not paid sufficient attention to the detailed programme and that there has not been a thorough-going discussion of the role of the Communist Party. The Party has sort of decided to live from day to day on the immediate issues that arise and to adhere to the idea that no programme is needed. This shows the extreme youth and look⁴ of understanding of the party.

Decided:

b.)⁵ Motion that a commission of three be appointed to draw up a resolution which will state clearly a repudiation of the arguments put forward by the majority of the CEC of the S.A. C.P. Commission to consist of Comrades Haywood, Bittelman and Williams.

Amendment that Comrades Bunting and Roux be added to the commission.

Amendment that Bittelman be responsible for this commission

MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED.

[...]

Secretary
Williams
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RGASPI, 495/155/56/111-12. For the full text of the document see: 495/155/56/111-16.

Original in English.

Typed.

3. Roux's documents have not been found in the Archive. His proposals were not accepted by the Commission. For Roux's participation in the Commission and his changing views on the Comintern resolution on South Africa see: S. Johns, *Raising the Red Flag. The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-32*. Cape Town: Mayibuye Books, 1995, 224-5.

4. lack.

5. There is no point 'a' in the original.

**Letter from J. La Guma to D. Petrovsky,  
22 August 1928**

Conf.  
Johannesburg  
August 22nd 1928.

Comrade Petrovsky

Dear Comrade,

I notice that our delegates to the Sixth Congress have exposed their political leanings of which I have been for a considerable time suspicious. We have had quite a bad time in the Party since the arrival of the Thesis, but we – the minority in the Central Executive are fighting on. The crowd led by Bunting are unable to divorce their feelings from the parasitical white worker who are using the black worker now as a cat paw. We have had a number of strikes of workers in this federation recently. On two occasions the blacks came out in sympathy and support of the whites and were shamelessly betrayed on both occasions. The white Communist in the Party pass these instances over without a thought. Theirs is only a sort of pro-native feeling not a Communist one at all. And I am going to make every effort at the next Congress of the C.P.S.A. to change the leadership.

There is a project afoot to send two white members of the Central Executive to the Lenin Institute<sup>1</sup> for a three years course. I tell you frankly I have no confidence in them to return from Moscow and do any party work. Both of them Danchin and Kalk by name are useless to the Party at present. Have good bank balances and in my opinion are merely attracted by the novelty of Moscow and would like to have a three years holiday there at the movement's expense. The one Kalk is a Secretary of the White Furniture Workers Union here at a salary of £35 per month and the other – Danchin a book-keeper at a bigger wage still – naturally obtained at the expense of the cheap black worker. What can these people do for a proletarian revolutionary movement and that a black slave movement. Besides they have never yet given any proof of their sincerity to the Party here – it seems that it is merely a hobby to them. I trust you will be<sup>2</sup> on the look out and not be imposed upon. I am inclined to think that even if the Thesis is adopted by the delegates to the Sixth Congress –

1. International Lenin School.

2. There is a crossed-out word after 'be'.



when it is brought back here it will be 'killed by kindness'. I have no confidence in them to sincerely fight for it.

You may depend on  
Yours for the Revolution  
La Guma.

P.S. To busy to write further until next time.

RGASPI, 495/64/77/20-1.

Original in English.

Handwritten.

Stamped: 1) 002279 – 20.SEP.1928,

2) 2166 – 25.SEP.1928.

Inscriptions: 1) 28/IX/28

2) Received on 14/IX

3) 'Conf.'

(in German)

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#### **Amendment to 'Native Republic' Slogan Proposed by CPSA Delegation, Sixth Comintern Congress, 25 August 1928<sup>1</sup>**

#### THE COLONIAL THESIS ON SOUTH AFRICA.

25.8.28

The CP of South Africa proposes an amendment of the 'Native Republic' slogan as at present drafted, for the following reasons.

1. There is a real danger that if a national or racial movement for a native republic were launched in a form liable to conflict with the other tasks of the Party, or other wise inappropriate, as we think the present form is, it might have as its outcome an eventual race war between black and white, irrespective of class divisions among the whites. This is admitted by advocates of the slogan.

2. Such a race war negates and clashes with the class solidarity of black and white workers which it is the Party's task to promote, and on the basis of which the Party has succeeded in winning the confidence of large native masses without in the slightest degree compromising with chauvinism.

1. Judging by the handwriting, this document was edited and corrected by S.P. Bunting.

3. The ruling class, while not at the moment courting such a race war, will welcome it when it comes, they are ready for it – so long as they can count on white and black labour disunity, on which their strength largely depends.

4. Such a race war would probably result in a defeat of the unarmed blacks, followed by their redoubled oppression and also that of the exploited whites, and with no compensatory gain. The CP for its part would succumb under the strain.

5. All this can be avoided by modifying the 'pure and simple' racial or national appeal of the slogan ('racial' is more correct than 'national' as no native nation exists today, there are only various rival tribes) in such a way as to reconcile it with the class appeal of labour solidarity.

6. The amendment proposed by the SA delegation achieves this result. It reads: 'AN INDEPENDENT WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC WITH EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL TOILERS IRRESPECTIVE OF COLOUR, AS A BASIS FOR A NATIVE GOVERNMENT'.

7. This embodies all the substantial content of the slogan as at present drafted, everything that it will work out at in practice, the absolute liberation of the natives and their rule as the race constituting the immense majority; while it avoids a wording admittedly liable to cause racial misunderstanding and excesses, and thereby keeps open the door for labour solidarity.

8. The native revolutionary movement gains decisively by such solidarity. In particular, the present government, which depends on working class votes and came into power as a protest against the shooting down of white workers in the 1922 strike, dare not directly and violently attack the labour movement. It does indeed attack the native labour movement with a law against 'creating hostility between white and black', whereby a native national or racial movement is attempted to be made illegal; but the labour movement as such is still protected (the reverse of the position in some other countries) and the native movement whether national or class profits by that protection as a most valuable shield.

9. The amendment involves no 'capitulation to white chauvinism', it is rather a means of check-mating and overcoming it among the exploited white workers. After all, the way to combat the chauvinism of white workers and peasants is not just to shake a fist at them, to threaten them with forcible conquest by the blacks, that method may be reserved for the bourgeoisie; rather it is to engage them with black workers and peasants in the common fight against the bourgeoisie, confronting them with the spectacle of black organisation, whether industrial, agrarian or national, on a large scale as an accomplished fact. This we have proved by long experience in this very campaign against chauvinism, as the only alternative to the possibility of a mere barbaric nation-wide pogrom which may, indeed, end in 'capitulation'.