

he is an opposition comrade. No, we must speak with him; he is a good comrade connected with the masses; we must help him; he is a leader. [...]

Lastly, the workers – the British, the Afrikanders and the Natives. They have a very old traditions of a struggle as workers. They have a very old traditions of struggle as workers, and probably as colonial workers, their traditions are the oldest in the world. When we look at the past, we see some big strikes. [...]

I think that our Party does not yet understand the significance of such strikes, Richter told us that this was also a strike against the Natives. How is it possible to speak in such a way? You must read the articles of Andrews, who was secretary of our Party in the International, and you must see it was not a strike against the Natives. [...]

You know, reality and life gives us the solution for the slogan of the Independent Native Republic. These workers of the Rand give the solution to us. Their strike began for daily demands, and it finished with a demand against British imperialism, for freedom, for an independent South Africa. Life will give the solution, but our party does not understand.

Our Party, through Comrade Richter, says it is a strike against the Natives. I do not know what happened to Andrews but I think that it might have been possible, in 1931, not to have put him out of Party. I cannot forget that Andrews is now the general secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, and I do not forget that, during the imperialist war, Andrews and two other comrades in South Africa (Fisher and Spendiff), were fighters against British imperialism, against the war. I think that if it had been possible at that time to speak with Andrews, we would have been able to keep him for our Party, explaining to him what our line is – uniting the white workers with the Native people, and a struggle also for the Natives.

RGASPI, 495/14/20-a/169, 172, 179–83, 184–6, 189–91. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/14/20-a/169–94.

Original in English.

Typed.

Steno.

Inscription: Read and corrected only on the question of proposals, page 13 till 18, March 23rd 1936. A. Marty.

## 67

### **Programme of Action Proposed to CPSA, 19 March 1936**

1. In South Africa, the danger of fascism has been sharply increasing during the recent period. The Basis for fascism and the ground for the propaganda of the Nazi organisations exist:

(a) In the peculiar situation of this colonial country, where the Nazis endeavour to utilise, demagogically, the very bad situation of the poor whites and the Natives (the 'Aryan' Afrianders against the Natives, the oppression of Natives by the Boers and British imperialists);

(b) In the utilisation, together with the Trotskyites, of the divisions, both national and colour, within the population and within the working class movement.

2. The situation of the Party, which was previously cut off from the movement of the masses, compared with a year ago, has greatly improved. The Party is now beginning to enter the mass movement through the trade unions and through the movement of the Natives around the All-African Convention. Strikes have been led and won, unions organised, campaign for economic demands carried out, and a number of leading positions gained inside the trade unions. This was only possible through the cessation of the open factional struggle, following on the acceptance by the C.P.S.A. of the resolution of the E.C.C.I. Lastly, the Party leadership now consists mainly of active leading trade unionists and active leaders of the Native movement.

However,

1. The Programme of Action, which should have been the basis of Communist activity, has not yet been sufficiently carried out, and the central slogans:

'BREAD and WORK for All Workers, White and Native Coloured and Indians,'

'LAND for the Native Peoples, the Poor Whites, the toiling Farmers,'

'FREEDOM, RIGHTS and LIBERTIES, for ALL;

DOWN WITH FASCISM'

have not been sufficiently popularised in concrete form for building a strong people's front movement in South Africa.

2. The situation of the Party still remains weak.

3. Up till now, some of the factional leaders, who can be very dangerous, are still working in the Party, without having publicly stated that they intend to work along the general line of the Party (Roux, Rimond<sup>1</sup> and others).

## II.

Taking into consideration the fact that the situation in the Union of South Africa is a very difficult one, and that our Party up till now has been a very small Party, we state that the whole line adopted one year ago has proven entirely correct. Therefore, we repeat the same main directives and repeat that it is necessary:

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1. Raymond.



1) To overcome all remnants of factionalism in the Party, exposing the activities of the Trotskyists, who play into the hands of the enemy (the Trotsky capitalists, the authorities, the Nazi agents).

2) To drive out all factional leaders who do not break irrevocably with Trotskyism and their past factional activity, and show this by their deeds.

3) To put at the basis of all Communist activity:

(a) The Programme of Action containing the chief concrete demands of the Native peoples, of the workers of every colour and nationality, of the poor whites, of all the toilers;

(b) The building, on the basis of this Programme of Action, of a real people's front. For that, it is necessary to strengthen and popularise the existing 'People's Front', by drawing into it, on the one hand, all radical intellectuals and democrats, and, on the other hand, by connecting it in all ways to the Native movement, and mainly to the All-African Convention;

(c) In helping to building the people's front movement, to use the Programme of Action as the platform for the coming general election, and for building a bloc in the elections on this basis.

4) To concentrate the work of Communists mainly:

(a) In the trade union movement, to bring about a united trade union organisation of the whole South African unions, and draw the majority of the workers, white and Native, into the unions in the shortest possible time;

(b) On the defence of the rights, interests and demands of the Native population;

(c) Amongst the Afrikaners, especially the poor and middle farmers, by increasing activity in defence of their interests against the landlords and imperialist big-bourgeoisie, to win them away from fascist influences.

5) To ensure that the central and local leaderships of the Party be composed exclusively of tested activists of the trade union movement connected with the masses, and of true and loyal activists of the Native peoples.

6) That all loyal members of the Party be mobilised around the Programme of Action and for actual work in the trade unions and amongst the Afrikaners and the Natives.

7) That the editorial boards of the 'South African Worker' and of 'Umsebenzi' be composed of tested comrades who can really carry out this line so that these papers become more and more centres for uniting and organising the working class and trade union movement, the movement of the Natives, and the poor whites. These papers must become broad papers in which the leadership is always in our hands, and we should call upon all progressive elements to write for the paper, who are willing to fight against fascism and war (in South Africa). Also, at the appropriate moment, to begin carrying on a campaign for a daily paper for the united trade union movement.

8) (a) Appropriate measures must be taken for the education and training of cadres; establishing schools (evening and workers' schools, etc.

(c) To take steps for the formation of a monthly Party organ of the magazine type.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Situation of the People.

In a country which has the most gold in the world, where prosperity exists in gold-mining, building and secondary industry; where the profits of the gold-mining magnates have been considerably increased, the situation of the broad toiling masses has not improved. Wages are below the breadline. The agrarian crisis proceeds, and crushes down the farmer by low prices, debts, taxes. The army of poor whites is growing. The Land and Trust Bill does not meet the demands of ~~the~~ Natives for land, and the Native Franchise Bill reduced very much their political rights.

Movements of miners, railway workers, tramway workers, etc., in which, in several cases, white and Native workers are beginning to fight together for higher wages and better living conditions, the organisation of the People's Front, the wide republican movement of the Afrikaners, the foundation of the All-African Convention, show that discontent with the existing conditions, and a will to struggle for a better and happy life is growing everywhere. The heroic struggle of the Spanish people to defend its Republican Government meets with the warmest sympathy.

The most reactionary elements of finance magnates are answering with cruel methods of suppression and reaction. Important members of the government, Pirow, Fourier,<sup>3</sup> Grobler,<sup>4</sup> acting as representatives of the Chamber of Mines and big landowners, are in favour of fascist legislation and are showing sympathy with German fascism. Greyshirts and Blackshirts playing on race hatred and nationalism, are developing a big activity, and the leaders of the Republican movement,<sup>5</sup> appealing to the democratic traditions of the Afrikaners, are more and more developing fascist arguments. Nazis, working through the Greyshirts and the Reichsbuns,<sup>6</sup> are utilising the discontent of the masses and the great republican sentiments of the Afrikaners in order to prepare the conditions for a return of colonies and to extend the strategic position of fascist Germany and Italy in Africa. The war danger is accelerated and sharpened by the fascists elements, and the Hertzog government sees no other way to meet this situation than by speeding up the armament programme, closely connecting it with the armament

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2. Point 'b)' is absent in the original.

3. Fourie, Adrian Paulus Johannes (1883–1941), from 1933 – Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in Hertzog's government.

4. Grobler, Piet Gert Wessels (1873–1942), in 1933–8 Minister of Native Affairs in Hertzog's government.

5. The reference is to the Afrikaner nationalist movement with its republican anti-imperial sentiment.

6. The reference is not clear. This could be one of many small pro-Nazi groups that emerged at that time among German colonists in South West Africa.



programme of the British National Government. But at the same time, Pirow, Minister of Defence and Railways and Harbours, is making statements in favour of the return of fascist Germany to Africa.

### Programne of Demands of the Peoples of S.A.

Only the common struggle of all progressive forces in S.A., the strengthening of the 'People's Front', formed October 1936,<sup>7</sup> and their developing into a real people's front, uniting European, coloured and Indian toilers and Native peoples, based upon a broad activity of the masses, can bring about essential improvement in the living conditions, stop fascist development, prevent war for the toiling masses and oppressed peoples in South Africa.

A very important step in this direction would be the creation of a broad election ticket for coming elections, both locally and nationally, uniting all who are ready to struggle against fascism and war, for bread, land, peace and freedom. We call for the rallying of all workers without distinction of race, of all white and coloured toilers in the population, and all Native peoples for a common struggle to carry out the following demands:

#### I. Bread and Work for All, Workers, White and Native, Coloured and Indians.

- 1) Work for all workers, white and Native!
- 2) Equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race, sex without lowering the level of wages of the whites.
- 3) Increased wages and establishment of national minimum wages.
- 4) Remove the barriers against the Natives entering the skilled trades, without lowering the wage level of the skilled European workers.
- 5) Maximum 40 h working week for all workers.
- 6) Unemployment relief for all white, coloured and all Native unemployed, industrial and agricultural.
- 7) Social insurance for all the workers (white and Native), whether industrial or agricultural, against sickness, accident, old age, etc.

#### II. Land for the Native Peoples, the Poor Whites, the Toiling Farmers.

- 1) Only the confiscation without compensation of the land of the big land magnates, the mining companies, the Crown lands and the transfer of this land together with government land free of charge for the use of the Native peoples and the toiling poor white farmers, will bring about a stable and fundamental improvement in the situation of agricultural population. However, while fighting for such a solution of the land question, the toilers seek to carry out the following immediate demands.

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7. This may be a mistake: the document is dated 19 March 1936.

2) Repeal of anti-Native land laws, so as to allow of meeting the requirements of the Natives for farmers.

3) The immediate provision of a special land fund from government and Crown land and the estates of big landlords, to give the Natives sufficient land for their support.

4) During the crisis and unemployment, the provision of grain free of charge at government expense for the starving farmers, both whites, Natives, bywoners,<sup>8</sup> squatters and workers in European farms in drought-stricken districts.

5) The return of all subsidies received by the big farmers from the government.

6) State assistance for all the toiling farmers, including the Natives, at the expense of the profits of the financial magnates and landlords.

7) The expenditure of the present irrigation revenues to make adequate provisions against droughts and to make available larger areas of land for cultivation by the landless, poor whites, Native and European farmers.

The fulfilment of all these demands will not mean a violation of the interests of the toiling farmers, Boers and others, because not more than 20–25 million morgen<sup>9</sup> of land, out of a total of 143-million morgen, belong to the toiling Boer farmers, while about 100–120 million morgen of land are possessed by a handful of big landlords, the state, religious missions, etc. This land is sufficient to satisfy all the needs of the Natives, the landless and poor white farmers, while not only leaving the toiling farmers in possession of their present land areas, but even increasing them.

### III. The Over-Rich must Pay!

1. 100% Taxation of all super-profits of the gold and financial magnates and the big landowners.

2. The repeal of the unbearable taxes on the Native peoples and the toilers (passport taxes, head tax, hut tax, etc.).

3. Cancellation of all export subsidies and the subsidies to the Italian lines, and a radical change in the tariff policy of the Government which raises the price of widely consumed goods and, at the same time, giving no assistance to the small and middle toiling farmers.

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8. 'Bywoners' – white tenant farmers (from Afrikaans 'bijwoner' – 'one who lives with another'); people of lower status.

9. Morgen – a measure of land in Holland that was introduced in South Africa by Dutch colonists in the seventeenth century and survived well into the twentieth century. 2.25 morgens make one acre.



IV. Freedom

A. Democratic Rights and Liberties for All.

1) Equal and civil and political rights and liberties for the entire adult population of South Africa, irrespective of race, nationality, sex, colour and social position.

2) Repeal of the anti-Native laws disfranchising the Native peoples.

3) The repeal of the pass laws and of its curtailing the freedom of travel and domicile against the Natives.

4) The ~~extent~~ extension of existing rights of association (trade union, cooperative, political) to the Natives; freedom of press, assembly, demonstration, strikes.

5) Against discrimination, the pick-up!<sup>10</sup> Equal rights for Natives before the law, etc.

B. Down with the Fascists and the Warmongers!

Support the Republican Government in Spain!

1) The dissolution of the fascist organisations (Greyshirts and Blackshirts), who inflame national and racial hatred in the interests of capital (Chamber of Mines) and of the German Nazis, the bloody Herero Murderers,<sup>11</sup> the landlords.

2) The disbanding of the Pioneer Battalion and the special service battalion,<sup>12</sup> and other military organisations.

3) Root out the fascist supporters in the government, armed forces and police, and all public offices.

4) Prohibition of entry of all German Nazi agents, provocateurs and spies to South Africa. Prohibition of the Nazi press and propaganda.

5) Drive out all Nazi propagandists holding trade and diplomatic posts in South Africa and South West Africa.

6) Demand government protection for former German citizens who are subject to Nazi terrorism in South West Africa.

7) No discrimination against Jewish poor people or other persons escaping from Nazi terrorism from Europe.

8) Withdraw all support of the foreign policy of the British National Government, which aids fascist powers.

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10. See footnote 3 to document 34, vol. II.

11. The reference is, obviously, to the Herero and the Nama 1904–7 uprising in German South West Africa and the virtual genocide against both peoples, particularly against the Nama, at its aftermath. The reason for mentioning this event may be the fact that Lenin was interested in it and quoted a rebels' song in his 'Notes on Imperialism', the work with which authors of the document were profoundly familiar.

12. See footnote 1 to document 35, vol. II.

9) Defend S.A. by an indivisible peace system based upon collective security and mutual assistance pacts.

10) Raise the blockade against Republican Spain and restore the legitimate right to buy arms to defend the Spanish people.

11) Aid to the democratic people of Spain.

A fight for equal political rights and liberties for the Natives and a struggle to raise their conditions of labour and life to a higher cultural level is the most powerful weapon for the defence of the conditions of life, wages, the rights and liberties of the white toilers.

The only path of salvation is to rally all the peoples of South Africa, Native, white, coloured, the workers and all the toilers, under the banner of struggle for carrying out the demands in this programme. All honest and freedom-loving people, all the foremost elements among the toilers, the advanced elements among the Natives, must take the path and, above all, we Communists of South Africa, must take this path and fight in the foremost positions!

#### Tasks in South Africa.

The necessity for securing the greatest possible unity and the greatest possible success in the mass struggle for carrying out this programme makes it essential for the Communist Party:

##### 1) Re Trade Union Unity:

(a) To concentrate its work in the first place on the work in the trade unions, around the immediate demands of the workers;

(b) To organise the European, coloured and Native workers, to overcome the racial and national prejudices existing among the broad strata of the European workers;

(c) To form a united trade union movement, and therefore, the CP fights for the amalgamation of all trade union organisations into a single center.

(d) To take a decisive stand against every attempt by Afrikaaner nationalists to split the trade unions on a national scale.

While carrying on systematic explanation, agitation and propaganda, especially amongst the white workers regarding the necessity for organising and struggling jointly with the Natives, the Coloured and Indian workers, we must at the same time organise parallel trade unions of Native workers in places where national prejudices interfere with the acceptance of Native workers into the trade unions of white workers, coordinating their work and struggle with the work and struggle of the white workers, and taking the line of gradually uniting these unions.

2) To unite all Native peoples in South Africa, by strengthening, popularising and building the All-African Convention around the immediate demands of the Natives in every location, township and reserve, working in such a way as to strengthen the national organisation of the Natives affiliated to



the All-African Convention, and affiliating the Native trade unions, not only to the South African Trade and Labour Council, but also ~~the~~ to the All-African Convention, in order to strengthen its proletarian content and to have a link between the All-African Convention and the People's Front. The greatest effort, must be made to draw into the All-African Convention all Native progressive organisations, and to develop special propaganda in the All-African Convention against Nazi propaganda, also, to draw attention to the crushing of the Herrero Rebellion, thus giving it a broad, loose basis.

### 3) The Afrikaan Movement:

While supporting the struggle of the Afrikaaners for their independence, and while participating in it, the C.P. basing itself upon the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements amongst the Afrikaaners (the so-called 'poor whites'), must, at the same time:

a) take determined action and expose the attempts of the fascists and all reactionary elements to incite the poor Afrikaaners against the Natives, and must stress with special force the necessity for actions of solidarity between the natives and the Afrikaaners against fascism and national oppression;

b) Must carry on a determined struggle against Malan and other reactionary elements in the Boer Republican movement, exposing the fascist development of Malan, which leads to making the republican movement a recruiting ground for fascism, and especially for the Nazis. At the same time, the C.P. must support all those elements of the republican Boer movement which actually fight, or are prepared to fight, against fascism and imperialism;

c) Must always explain the situation of the toiling masses, small businessmen, intellectuals, etc. in fascist Germany; their actions against the last democratic rights and against religious freedom.

### 4) The People's Front!

The existing 'People's Front' is not yet a real people's front. Everything must be done by the Party to build a very broad people's front. For that, it would be very good to organise a new conference on the basis of the two or three very urgent questions arising within the working-call movement, in the general situation of the peoples in South Africa, and in the Native situation.

The National Committee of the people's front should be urged by our Party representatives or others to gather together a broad representative committee, composed of leaders of the trade union movement connected with progressive intellectual elements, leaders of the Native movement, and, if possible, of the Afrikaaan movement, for the purpose of initiating this conference. The points taken up at the conference could be, for example:

a) the increasing danger of war in Europe around the Spanish question, a danger which would surely affect South Africa;

b) The danger of fascism in South Africa connected with the Spanish events;

c) One or two burning questions for the workers and Natives.

On such a basis, it would be possible to prepare a very broad conference, from which should result a broad people's front in South Africa.

The Party must fight very energetically for the acceptance by the conference of the contents of this Programme of Action. In all its work, as soon as the Central Committee will have adopted a general platform of action, the Party, in its daily work, must orientate itself in the main direction and slogans of this programme.

Various form of organisation should be utilized to ~~attract~~ attract the various strata of the population to the building of this people's front. It is not absolutely necessary to give to this broad movement the name of 'people's front'.

In all the work of the Party in building the people's front, it is always necessary to emphasise that, in all cases, we are fight energetically against the creation of any new organizations. The Party must denounce the creation of new organisations as helpful only to the Chamber of Mines, the fascists and imperialists.

The C.P. should continue to support the Labour Party of South Africa and struggle against every attempt to split the Labour Party. But, at the same time, the Party must criticize, in a very friendly form, the shortcomings of the Labour Party which has systematically forgotten the Native peoples, explaining that it is impossible to improve the conditions of the European workers without a united struggle with the Natives and Afrikaners.

For this, the Party must very sharply expose all the work of the Trotskyist-fascists, starting from their splitting and sabotage work in South Africa. The C.P. must prove the character of their activities, and in that way make easier the understanding of the acts of the Trotskyist against the Soviet Union. It is necessary to show concretely that the work of the Trotskyist in South Africa is only to the benefit of the capitalists and against the workers.

#### The Inner Party Line.

In order to carry out all the important and urgent political and organizational tasks here set forth, it is absolutely necessary to continue the radical change in the Party and to continue the efforts to extend the activity and the methods of work. It is necessary to root out the last remnants of actionalism<sup>13</sup> within the Party. This can only be done by taking a decisive stand against all those harbouring Trotskyist ideas forcing them to accept publicly the line of the Party and the C.I. decisions of the 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress, after they have declared their intentions to do so before the appropriate body of the Party. Their failure to do this should be followed by their expulsion from the Party.

It is absolutely necessary to note that it would be extremely harmful to attempt to renew the scholastic discussion around the slogan of the

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13. Factionalism.



Independent Native Republic, and around the question of the existence or non-existence of a Native bourgeoisie. The slogan of an Independent Native Republic, advanced by the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist International is only a slogan of a general perspective character of the national liberation struggle of the masses of people of South Africa. This slogan sums up all the concrete economic and political demands of these masses. As to the question of the future state organisation of the people of South Africa, this will depend upon the concrete inner and international conditions under which the decisive struggle of the masses of people of S.A. for their national liberation will take place, and also, it will primarily depend upon the political power and tactical work of the C.P. Only the enemies of the working class, the enemies of the Natives, the<sup>14</sup> enemies of the toiling whites are interested in this discussion. In the present situation anyone who tries to continue this discussion and factional struggle further will merely expose himself as an enemy of the interests of the masses of the people, as an agent of big capital and the landlords, as an enemy of the movement. The real, genuine, honest fighters for the cause of the workers, for the cause of the oppressed and downtrodden Natives, for the cause of the toiling whites, the genuine and loyal fighters for the idea of Communism will make themselves known in practice in the struggle for the trade union unity of the workers, in the struggle for rallying all the peoples of S.A. into the united front, in the struggle for carrying out the general programme demands of all the workers and peoples of South Africa, white and Native. This is the path and the guarantee for the formation of a real mass genuine Party in South Africa.

RGASPI, 495/14/350/38-46.

Original in English (Comintern translation of a Russian original text. For the Russian original see: RGASPI, 495/20/662/137-48).

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14. There is a typed-over word after 'the'.