

Letter from M. Kotane to G. Hardy,¹
1 September 1936

Johannesburg.²
 1st.9.1936.

Dear Comrade,

After our little talk, yesterday, I do not know where we are. I am sorry to have to say that I feel that I have been purposely muddled somewhere. Is it here or over there?³ Over there we were told the following:-

(a) No conference; that we must go and do some work first and then to call a conference later to sum up the results of our work.

(b) That 90% of the Party membership must belong to the trade unions. And that⁴ the leadership of the Party must be composed of those Party members who work in the trade unions and those who are doing work among the Natives. That individuals who are not doing this kind of work, however loyal they may be to the Party, could not be in the leadership.⁵ That we must get Afrikaners, English and Natives in the Party – that these three must be the basis of the Party in this country.

(c) That we must set-up a properly functioning C.C.⁶ To my knowledge the idea of a Political Bureau was very much scorned at by them⁷ – they ridiculed the whole idea of a party like ours (a group of 150 people) having a political bureau. We agreed with them on that.

(d) According to them the leaders⁸ of both sections are politically BANKRUPT. They suggested⁹ the following comrades for the leadership:-¹⁰

Wolfson, Mofutsanyana, Gomas and few others whom the Party may elect.¹¹

They strongly recommended to us the idea of a popular elected¹² and a representative leadership. But as their 'REP',¹³ your ruling shall be final in this

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1. The fact that the 'comrade' is G. Hardy is clear from the letter: further on he is referred to as 'their REP'.
 2. There is a typed-over word after 'Johannesburg'.
 3. By 'here' Kotane means South Africa; by 'over there', Moscow. There is a typed-over word before 'over'.
 4. There is a typed-over word after 'that'.
 5. There is a typed-over word before 'leadership'.
 6. There is a typed-over word before 'C.C.'.
 7. Here and elsewhere in the text 'them' and 'they' refer to the South African Commission, chaired by A. Marty. There are two typed-over letters after 'them'.
 8. There is a typed-over word before 'the leaders'.
 9. There is a typed-over word before 'suggested'.
 10. There is a single line in the right margin opposite this paragraph in the original.
 11. The name of Gomas is underlined in a bold line. There is a typed-over word before 'whom'.
 12. There is a typed-over word before 'a popular'.
 13. The word 'REP' is encircled in pencil in the original.

matter. But their decision and procedure as stated in paragraph (a) of this¹⁴ letter remains the MASTERPIECE and the BEST DECISION IN OUR SITUATION.

Yours Comradely,
M.M. Kotane
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RGASPI, 495/14/346/61.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

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(in Russian)

2) Incom. no. 286 | C

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**Minutes, Sixth Conference, CPSA,
5-6 September 1936 (Extracts)**

COMMUNIST PARTY OF S.A. SIXTH CONFERENCE HELD IN THE
TRADES HALL JOHANNESBURG. ON SEPT. 5TH & 6TH IN THE
TRADES HALL.

OPENING OF CONFERENCE 2.30 p.m. Comrade Basner.

Fraternal Greetings from CP France & CP Gt. Britain.

Our Greetings to Spanish CP.

CONFERENCE RISE AND SIGNS 'INTERNATIONALE'

Basner reads the CI RESOLUTION.

HE ANNOUNCES THE COMMISSIONS.

COMRADE KOTANE TAKES OVER AND CONTINUES.

[...]

Comrade Basner then called for a Presidium to be appointed and Comrade Thomas proposed the following names:

Comrades: Stalin, Thaelman, Thorez, Diaz, Prestes, Pollit, W.H. Andrews, Kotane, Ray Alexander, Nikin, October, Naidoo.

Comrade Alexander then proposed that Comrades Lapile and Mafutsanyana be added, which was agreed upon.

Comrade Basner moved that a Credential Commission be appointed and the following names were proposed by Comrade Murphy:

14. There is a typed-over word before 'this'.