

aroused but although protests took place we did not do enough. If all the Africans were organised like the dock workers no boats would have been loaded with supplies for Italian troops. The position today is very precarious. Mussolini is training a large Native army. Spain is attacked by Fascists and war on a big scale can break out any day. African workers must help the workers in Europe to fight for their liberty. Peace is only possible by action of the workers.

With regard to the question of women we must change our attitude and realise that women's place is not only in the kitchen. Women must be brought to meetings. We must win the masses who are under the influence of the churches by getting them to fight for better conditions. The 7th World Congress stressed the necessity of organisation. Today conference show we have made a turn, although we have been rather late in starting up. We must build our Party in S.A. which will attract all the poor people and become a mighty mass party. We must build up unity in the movement. In regard to the question of schools and Kaffir Beer<sup>2</sup> I want to say a few words. Natives must have the opportunity to get Kaffir Beer, the food of their fathers. Europeans are allowed to drink liquor. We must demand schools, free of charge for Native children. European comrades must help in this work. In conclusion, we must build a mass party. Our composition is bad. We have no Afrikaners and not enough Natives. We must bring all nationalities into the Party and we must speak to people in their mother tongue.

RGASPI, 495/14/343/54-5. For the full text of the Minutes see: RGASPI, 495/14/343/1-154.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

## 71

### Letter from J.B. Marks to ECCI, [1936]<sup>1</sup>

#### REPORT FROM COM. FLEET, SOUTH AFRICA. PARIS

I am at the out set lodging a very vigorous protest against the attitude of the comrades in the C.I. who are responsible for the South African Section. This I

#### Doc. 70

2. See footnote 4 to document 56, vol. II.

#### Doc. 71

1. The archives contain a typed copy of the same text with an inscription 'Raimond-Marks' at the top of the first page, and stamps: '3.NOV.1936 no. 4928' and '8 Incom. no. 303, 9.XI.1936'. However, the letter was clearly written long before the dates that the Comintern incoming stamps indicate.

am doing after having taken into consideration the present European political situation as well as the recent disturbances with in the Soviet Union. On the basis of this I fully realise why it had become impossible for me to reach my destination.<sup>2</sup>

But despite all this the comrades could have acted with more responsibility and promptness, by instructing me to return after two or three months, but instead of that I have been left to waste seven months in Paris before word was sent that I should return. Such a treatment would make any one feel indignant and humiliated. More so if one has been playing the leading role in the movement.

Your attitude is aggravated by the fact that I was summoned to come to Moscow at a moment when the mass work, on the anti-imperialist front had assumed a very important phase, and when the Communist Party for the first time succeeded in becoming the leader of the anti-imperialist struggle. As a result of your call I was compelled to decline nomination, despite the fact that we had all the backing of the national reformists and other left reformists. Still here you have kept me waiting, at the most opportune moment. At the moment when I could have rendered valuable service to our movement, and above all this I have failed to attend the very significant commission you convened in order to consider the reorientation of the Communist Party of South Africa.

In view of the fact that I am nine months away from home, and that a general resolution for the impending convention has already been drawn up I shall not venture to report on the current situation in the Party. But would like to very briefly review the Controversy in the Party in connection with the theoretical discussion of the strategic slogan of the Party (The Independent Native Republic)

(II) The Trade Union question in relation to Negroes and Europeans.

III. The continuation of the struggle of Bunting and his remnants against all elements who very actively participated in the struggle against his leadership.

IV. The development of fascism in the colony and how to get white and Black workers to combat same in united front.

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2. The reasons that Marks gives for not coming to Moscow after spending seven months in Paris are not good enough even as an excuse. The real reason was that French communists informed him about purges in the Comintern. One can not exclude that he had found out that he was personally in trouble too, and decided against proceeding to Moscow. The trouble was very serious indeed. On 15 June 1936 the Collegium of the International Control Commission of the ECCI discussed his case and resolved: 'According to the information at the disposal of the Apparatus of the ECCI suspected of ties with the enemy. Raymond is at the moment in Paris... Given that M. Raymond's presence is necessary for investigation of the charges that are of serious importance for the whole CP of South Africa, the matter is to be postponed' (RGASPI, 505/1/43/33, 35. Original in Russian). The International Control Commission of the ECCI, virtually an internal Comintern court, was the body where the most serious cases of disciplinary action against party members of all communist parties were considered. Verdicts could be anything from the expulsion from the Comintern to passing on cases to the OGPU which ended up in arrests and executions.



The Independent Native Republic and how it is interpreted. The I.N.R. can only be established, as a result of a successful bourgeois democratic, or anti-imperialist agrarian revolution in South Africa. To bring this revolution, in this epoch of imperialism, when the bourgeois revolutionary role has been out played, to its logical conclusion, means that <sup>the</sup> proletariat must occupy the hegemony.

The logical conclusion of this revolution will mean ~~the~~ primarily the return of the land to the millions of poor landless Negro peasants and to the thousands of poor white peasants.

It will also mean the confiscation and nationalisation of the huge imperialist state property. The mines, railways and harbours and state farms.

That a section or a great number of the Native bourgeoisie will participate in the earlier stages of the revolution cannot be disputed, but we definitely must understand that a certain number of the chiefs, <sup>and</sup> bourgeois elements and other lackeys of imperialism will turn counter-revolutionaries <sup>at the word go</sup> while the workers and peasants shall be struggling to carry the agrarian revolution to its logical conclusion.

Consequently in my opinion the forces of the workers and peasants who will go up to the bitter end, shall have to establish a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

The argument against is that there exists the possibility of the proletariat in the ranks <sup>of the Party was</sup> not succeeding to capture the leadership during this anti-imperialist revolution. We reply that in that case we shall not have succeeded in establishing the Independent Native Republic as it is visualised in the slogan of the Party. But on the contrary it will be some bourgeois Native Republic.

Thus my contention is that in the Independent Native Republic the form of government must be that of a Democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants.

The mines and other big imperialist concerns shall have to be nationalised. Here we notice the necessity of carrying through a Socialist task during the bourgeois democratic revolution.

The refusal of the counter-revolutionary elements to struggle against imperialism, was very clear during the National Convention at Bloemfontein in 1935.<sup>3</sup> Only two chiefs attended (Serobatse and<sup>4</sup> Mamogale).<sup>5</sup> Then the role of Dube is typically that of the Native bourgeoisie which is said to be non-existent.

It does not behoove me to make a very lengthy explanation as Comrades Kotane and Bach have reported on <sup>the</sup> diverse opinion.

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3. The reference is to the All-African Convention that took place in Bloemfontein in December 1935.

4. There is a crossed-out word after 'and'.

5. The identities of Seboratse and Mamogale could not be established.

Due to the fact of this theoretical discussion, all practical work was neglected, which resulted in a heavy loss of membership. This is briefly my conception of the Independent Native Republic.

### Trade Unions.

In this domain the Party for many years pursued an absolutely wrong policy, that of fighting the reformists like Sachs and others demanding that they should admit the Natives into the European trade unions but nothing was done to organise the Natives into separate or parallel unions as it is being done today.

We are only today pursuing the correct policy that of organising the Natives into separate unions, when the white workers are not as yet prepared to admit them into their unions. The correctness of this policy<sup>6</sup> is seen in the fact that the Party has now penetrated various branches of industry and set up Trade Unions and Trade Union groups.

The great success for the Party was the penetration of the mines and actually setting up a Native Mine workers Union on a very concrete basis.

It is necessary that the comrades in the C.I. very carefully consider the peculiarities in the country and not merely to dismiss facts as South African exceptionalism. Especially the relation between the white and Black workers call for a profound study. I have not yet seen the newly drafted resolution for the impending Convention. Still I hope it deals with the work in the Trade Unions, especially among the Negroes.

### Bunting's Influences and Slanders.

Bunting still has a very strong influence over a section of the Party members, especially among some of the white comrades in the leading positions of the Party. Roux, Diamond and some others<sup>7</sup> have never divorced with Bunting politically and personally. Bunting's whole line is being perpetuated by these elements.

The anti-Native leadership struggle is reflected in various ways. The crudest forms of the day are slandering and demanding of Negro leaders to perform miracles and a very crude way of a divide and rule policy – in the form of bribery – to which some Negroes very readily fall victims, forced by their miserable economic positions and on such lines opposition are<sup>8</sup> built in the Party by Party members.

In order to have a clear conception of the influences of Bunting consider the struggle against Raymond. Bunting journeys to Cape Town<sup>9</sup> converse with

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6. There is a crossed-out line after 'policy'.  
 7. There is a crossed-out word after 'others'.  
 8. There is a crossed-out word after 'are'.  
 9. There is a crossed-out word after 'Cape Town'.



Gomas – Gomas then initiates the struggle. Bunting against Edwin.<sup>10</sup> He states Edwin is hopeless, does not know his own mind, he is just a puppet, and this is carried on by the followers of S.P.B. Gomas taking the initiative in all cases.

Late  
Jack,<sup>11</sup>

If comrades are still there take up the Jack question, especially with Moses.<sup>12</sup> The rumours at home are that Jack did not see, eye to eye with the C.I. on the Native <sup>question</sup> and so he was liquidated. This had a very bad effect on numerous comrades. It scared students we prepared to send over.

#### Fascism in South Africa.

The struggle against fascism presents a complicated question between the white and Native workers in South Africa, the majority of the white workers are anti-fascism and anti-Native. A line as how best to organise this united struggle would be welcomed.

I shall not take up other aspects of this question, because we have sent three leading Comrades over and they must have reported on all aspects of Party work.

I shall not go further until I have seen the resolution.

Comrade Suzmanovitch,<sup>13</sup>

You have given us plenty of assistance during the previous eighteen months. Your assistance consisted of directives and instructions on South African problems.

But have committed serious blunders by sending material through unreliable channels, with the result that some material fell into the wrong hands – by wrong hands I mean the opposition. Secondly, you have allowed Comrade Bach to send things in his writing and this created a hell of stink.

Then again you send information with all kinds of people, ordinary delegates and what not. Such tactics are no damn good.

I must also draw your attention to the disastrous instructions you sent Edwin<sup>14</sup> and Joffe. These instructions were received during my absence from the centre. (Let Richter<sup>15</sup> explain nature of instructions.) If such a policy will be pursued in the future then we shall not make head way in our work. I very

10. E. Mofutsanyana.

11. The reference is most certainly to A. Nzula (Tom Jackson) and the reaction of South African communists to his death in Moscow.

12. M. Kotane.

13. Zusmanovich. Obviously, Marks did not know that Zusmanovich was expelled as an official of the Comintern at the end of 1935.

14. E. Mofutsanyana.

15. Maurice Richter.

much regret that circumstances did not permit me to come and give a verbal report on this particular instruction.

I am looking forward to a brighter future in all aspects of our work.

Sheik, Suz and Potechin<sup>16</sup> we expect much from you

Cheerio,  
R.<sup>17</sup>  
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RGASPI, 495/4/346/75-82.

Original in English.

Handwritten.

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2) Incom. No 303 C (in Russian)

9.XI.1936

3) 13923 - 10.NOV.1936

Inscriptions: 1) '8'

2) more 2 pl (2) confidential

(in Russian)

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**Minutes of Politbureau, CPSA,  
26 January 1937**

**POLITBUREAU CPSA. MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
HELD ON 26TH JANUARY 1937 AT 6 PM.**

Present: Comrades Mofutsanyana, Wolfson, Kotane, Marks and Basner.

ALL AFRICAN CONVENTION & ELECTIONS.

Comrade Mofut.<sup>1</sup> said that we decided that Comrade Basner should go forward as a candidate of the A.A.C. for the coming election as Senator. At present the AAC is only a sham, but the elections are agitating the minds of the people. Through the AAC the Cp has been in touch with voters associations and this has shown much support for our nominee.<sup>2</sup> But the E.C. of the AAC cannot

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**Doc. 71**

16. E. Sik, A.Z. Zusmanovich and I.I. Potekhin who were Marks's lecturers at KUTV.

17. Raymond.

**Doc. 72**

1. Mofutsanyana.

2. There is a triple line in black pencil in the left margin opposite this sentence.