

Wolfson: May be Gomez has something else on his mind, but his policy is on the line of the Party. In Johannesburg there is no opposition to the Party. Marks is the former secretary of the Party.

Basner: Marks is an enemy of the working class. He made open provocations. Natives have to complain on his attitude towards them.

Decided: Hardy, Wolfson, Basner to return to London and get new contact with the commission and to ask for the resolution of the ECCI. A new resolution should be written on the basis of the resolution of the ECCI of March 1937<sup>9</sup> and take into account the changes in the situation. Since that time Com. Wolfson and Basner were to return to Paris and submit the new resolution to Com. Party.<sup>10</sup>

On November 3rd Comrades Wolfson and Basner came back. They were accompanied by Comrades Hardy and Kerrigan. No report on this meeting yet.

RGASPI, 495/14/354/78-80.

Original in English.

Typed.

Inscription: EK/3 cop.

(typed)

16.11.37.

## 87

### **Letter from P. Kerrigan to ECCI, 17 November 1937**

#### REPORT ON PARIS DISCUSSIONS.

On Tuesday morning I arrived and saw Comrade M.<sup>1</sup> Only B.<sup>2</sup> of the other comrades was available. (It transpired that the fog had held W.<sup>3</sup> up in the channel and he and H.<sup>4</sup> arrived late Tuesday).<sup>5</sup>

On Tuesday I explained to Comrade M. that our P.B.<sup>6</sup> had understood their Commission from the Centre<sup>7</sup> to be to work out together with our friends from S.A. the line which would help them in the next period to develop the Party,

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#### **Doc. 86**

9. See footnote 2 to document 84, vol. II.

10. Most probably, a mistake: the Paris resolution would be submitted to 'Com. Marty', not to 'Com. Party'.

#### **Doc. 87**

1. A. Marty.

2. H. Basner.

3. I. Wolfson.

4. G. Hardy.

5. This paragraph is crossed out in pen in the original.

6. PB of the CPGB.

7. The ECCI.

Build the Popular Front and carry through the Election Campaign successfully. The resolution which the Commission, including Comrade W. had formulated<sup>8</sup> was the result of this effort and had been approved by the P.B. I also stated that we appreciated that it had certain important weaknesses, i.e. its failure to deal with the demands of the natives for land, and the part dealing with Trotskyism and opportunism together. Nevertheless, it was the carrying forward of the correct line in this situation before the elections.

Comrade M. emphasised the difference between our resolution<sup>9</sup> and the resolution of the Centre which he pointed out was drafted as recently as March 1937<sup>10</sup> after very exhaustive study and which he felt dealt with all the questions correctly. He was also concerned about the absence of this resolution (March 1937) and stated that it might be better if the comrades went away merely with a series of points as directives.

However we agreed to meet next day and on Wednesday. Comrades W. and H. had by this time turned up, bringing with them the March Resolution.<sup>11</sup>

We discussed procedure. I explained that our Resolution although it very considerably altered the emphasis on the native question and the Afrikaander question, was not basically an opposition resolution to the March 1937 one but developed it on the basis of Comrade W.'s report and in light of the coming General Elections.

Comrade M. said that there were obviously many changes and further even though he agreed with our resolution and disagreed with the Centre one (which he emphasised he did not) it was not possible for him to change it any more than I had the power to change the P.B. resolution. He would send over a report to the Centre of the two viewpoints and we could also communicate our views and then we would await a directive.

Meantime, as Comrade B. was here as well as W. from S.A., Comrade M. proposed that B. should draft a statement giving his views on the resolutions and on the report of Comrade W. regarding S.A., Comrade M. also said that Comrade B. should discuss in London our resolutions with the P.B.

This was agreed to and we adjourned to permit Comrade B. to prepare his statement. He had already expressed endorsement of the March resolution and opposition to the line of the P.B. resolution especially on the native question.

We re-assembled on Thursday morning at 10 a.m.

I do not propose to outline the whole of Comrade B.'s statement<sup>12</sup> but to indicate certain main points. B. said that Comrade W.'s report on S.A. was basically correct and there was nothing to change. He only wanted to touch on two points regarding the report: (A) – to emphasise the importance of the

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8. Commission of the PB of the CPGB.

9. See footnote 5 to document 83, vol. II.

10. See footnote 2 to document 84, vol. II.

11. March 1937 resolution. This paragraph is crossed out in pen in the original.

12. See document 85, vol. II.



native representation Act. When Hertzog took away rights of the Cape natives and substituted this Act he gave a real possibility for the natives participating in the Elections for a Senator and for big political activity every five years in these elections. (B) – The Advisory Boards meeting once per year could discuss resolutions and proposals.

He then stated that W.'s report does not show certain friction which has started in the Party from the leadership downwards. He amended the word friction to differences and said he would deal with them later.

On the P.B.<sup>13</sup> resolution he said the basic difference between it and the Centre resolution of March<sup>14</sup> was that the P.B. resolution took S.A. out of the category of Colonial country. A basic difference is that it says that a fundamental change in the Government is possible without the native masses. His points were that in the election the first task was the fight for annihilation of Blackshirts and Greyshirts.

Next he pointed out that Pirow and Hertzog were to all intents and purposes the same as Malan. The drive of U.P. is not so savage on the natives as the unsatisfied Malan crowd.<sup>15</sup> We have to fight all these Parties. How to fight them. On basis of existing Labour Party and giving them support at same time trying to win members of Malan's Party to us.

It is of utmost importance that Labour must accept slogan of Bread and Land for Natives. Comrade M. interjected here with the question 'Will they accept?'. Comrade B. replied 'They must accept although I don't believe they will accept by this General Election.' He went on to say that what is more important than winning support for the Labour Party in the election is building up the United Front because there are certain members of Malan's Party who are favourable to the native question, etc.<sup>16</sup>

What is wrong with the P.B.<sup>17</sup> resolution is that it says the Whites can bring down the Government without Land Bread and Work for all. Once you argue you can get the Government overthrown without natives, you are splitting the workers.

The Government wants a strong Labour Party in S. Africa because it helps the Government with its native policy.

In answer to questions Comrade B. said you cannot overthrow Government in a Colonial Country on basis of Labour or Popular Front. The decisive issue is that the Black is organised and how the White will help him. It doesn't matter how narrow is the Popular Front as long as it goes forward on slogan of Bread, Land and Work for All.

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13. PB of the CPGB.

14. 1937.

15. 'Malan's crowd', 'Malan's party' – Purified National Party.

16. There is a single line in pen in the right margin opposite this text starting from 'winning support'.

17. PB of the CPGB.

Comrade B.'s line boiled down to this – that he saw no possibility of a real change in the Government without the native masses supported by the Whites carrying through the overthrow of the Government.

Comrade M. following this said we would not discuss B.'s report but would ask him to stay over a day or two and write his views down. Thereafter Comrade M. would have some talk with him and send B.'s report to London for consideration by P.B. and discussion with him.

We next discussed the March<sup>18</sup> resolution which M. said must be the basis in view of its origin and the disagreement on our resolution. Both W. and B. when asked by M. agreed with the March resolution.

We then discussed what additions were necessary. I proposed an additional point re the development of the People's Front movement for the elections. Also a point re the question of Party organisation and sectarianism. Comrade M. proposed a point re the question of developing cadres. Comrade H. raised question of our slogan, S.A. Wealth for S.A. People Make the Rich Pay. Comrade M. strongly opposed this and said it would help Pirow and company. He referred to the resolution of March and said the point was covered where it said 'make the over-rich pay'.<sup>19</sup>

Finally in the afternoon the first three points were drafted out and, after alterations in point one, were inserted. (~~You will have the material now~~)<sup>20</sup>

Following this Comrade M. talked with me privately. He said he was concerned about the situation in the Party as revealed by these two comrades. B. was in his opinion dangerous and likely to cause trouble and Harry<sup>21</sup> should check up on him. He would get B.'s statements down in writing as we had no stenographer. He would talk with him and we would need to do likewise. W. on the other hand was very weak politically although he was a mass T.U. man and had worked well in his T.U. Consequently he, M., was very concerned about what was likely to happen in the leadership in S.A.<sup>22</sup>

PETER KERRIGAN  
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~~This is a report as requested.~~<sup>23</sup>

RGASPI, 495/14/350/137-9.

Original in English.

Typed.

Stamped: Incom. no. 446 | C

(in Russian)

'27' XI 1937  
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18. 1937.

19. There is a double line in pen in the right margin opposite this sentence in the original.

20. The sentence in brackets is crossed out in pen in the original.

21. Pollitt.

22. There is a single line in pen in the left margin opposite the last paragraph.

23. The sentence is crossed out in pencil in the original.