

**Minutes of Meeting, Central Committee of the CPSA,
31 December 1937–3 January 1938 (Extract)**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CC OF THE CPSA
HELD ON 31.XII.37 TO 3.I.38

Section of January 3rd

Present: Wolfson, Basner, Mofutsanyana, Weinberg, Gomas, Nikin, Kotane, and Radebe.

[...]

Organisational position of P.

Basner: the organisational position of the P. has to be discussed. There has not been proper collective leadership or collective work.

The principle of collective leadership has been affirmed by the C.C. It is hoped that it will function.

Mofutsanyana In JHb. we are trying to find out what P. members do.

In Durban we found a terrible¹ position. We were called down to settle² trouble between white and Native comrades. Native comrades called whites chauvinists and Trotskyists. We found that comrades did good work in t.u.'s, but no Party work. No meetings, no propaganda.

We have to re-organise the P. We must try to do more with the few forces we have.

Basner: A serious weakness here seems to be the absence of a D.P.O. for the last couple of years we have not had a D.P.O.³ capable of dealing with the technical work of the P., keeping in touch with branches etc.

Kotane: We have laid the main emphasis on t.u.'s. Whatever we do we do with that aim in view. In C.T. everybody is busy, but all in t.u.'s. The D.P.O. is doing t.u. work. Politically, the Party does not exist. If we want to re-organise the Party we must revive our political work.⁴

Weinberg: In Cape Town the P. work is concentrated on the trade unions. In Johannesburg hardly anything is done in either field. This is all due to the fact that P. organs do not function properly and that therefore the work is not coordinated or consolidated.

Gomas.: Cape Town thinks that Com. Kalk is useless on the secretariat.

1. 'a terrible' was written together, then separated by hand.

2. 'to settle' was written together, then separated by hand.

3. There is a typed-over word after 'D.P.O.'.

4. There is a large-size number '21' in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

Basner. Com. Kalk can be criticised not only from point of view of being a member of the secretariat, but from point of view of being an ordinary⁵ Party member.

We have a personal dishonesty in his case which is almost incredible. He does no work in the P., has no connection with the work of the P, but comes to meetings of the P.B., secretariat, D.P.C. and P. meetings and kicks up hell of a row so that there is confusion and his work cannot be criticised. The rank and file loose respect. They know that he does no work.⁶

Gomas: Secretary must see that the decisions of the P.B. are given out to districts. We don't know what is happening in S.A. At least members of the C.C. should be in a position to enlighten members on organisational and political position of the P.

Wolfson Minutes of the P.B. are not circularised.⁷

Mof.⁸ Decisions should be circularised.

Weinberg: there should be a report on the organisational position of the P.

Nikin (as a member of the D.P.C.) We get in new members but find it difficult to trace them. In JHB the P. is based on groups – Sophiatown, Doornfontein and Central. Only Central has been functioning up to recently. This is due to lack of consciousness on part of group leaders.

The whole work is on the shoulders of a few people. In any campaign the work is done by just a few.

We get no lead from secretariat. Leading organs do not function properly. This reflects itself in the work.

We must rectify this sad state of affairs. We have not got bolshevik discipline. I am not⁹ disciplined myself Have neglected group leadership.

The leading apparatus must be overhauled. There are some irresponsible members on it.

P. work must be divided. Some coms. should be responsible for agit.prop. and other for t.u. work.

The D.P.C. must draw up a list of membership and submit it to C.C.

Basner. In England all leading members are functionaries. In every country at least the secretariat consists of functionaries. This is not the case in this country. Comrades on the Secretariat and P.B. have their own work. Preference should be given in the leadership to functionaries.

Mafutsanyana. It is absolutely incorrect to underestimate the work of some comrades at the centre who work day and night.¹⁰

5. 'an ordinary' was written together, then separated by hand.

6. There is a typed-over line after this paragraph.

7. Obviously, 'circulated'. There is a typed-over line after this paragraph.

8. Mofutsanyana.

9. There is a typed-over word after 'not'.

10. There is a large-size number '22' in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

Wolfson It is entirely incorrect to say that we do no work – we have a Spain cttee.¹¹ China cttee, we run a bookshop.

Mof.¹² The trouble is that we always speak about individuals.

We should try to make changes for the good of the Party. We have spoken about Kalk. Nothing will be done about it.¹³ In my opinion, Kalk should not be on the P.B., although I have absolutely nothing against him personally.

I want to address a few words to the C.T. comrades. Unless they make a change there is no hope for the P. Everybody who has a grievance or is¹⁴ opposed to the Party finds a stronghold in C.T. Factions or fractions are started by 1 or 2 comrades discussing somebody. Gomas has said that they receive information from people outside the P. We must always be open when we meet. If something has to be thrashed out, let us thrash it out.

Weinberg. I want to apologise for having said that nothing was done by JHB. I was prompted by my pride in the one thing which we have achieved in C.T. and which has not yet been chieved¹⁵ here – we have worked out a form of collective work.

With regards to Kalk, in my opinion he is not serious and lazy and therefore somewhat irresponsible. But he holds a position in the trade union movement and is S.A. born. For this reason we should try to tie him to the P. by letting him do only his trade union work and having the Party check up on his activities.

C.T. has become the home of political refugees – Kotane, Roux. The former is gradually coming back to work. We home we shall stay¹⁶ and achieve a more disciplined attitude. We have to discuss this question of Kotane's running away from Johannesburg.

(Kotane objects to use the word 'running away')

Kotane had some grievances. He did not know what the others were doing. There was no contact between him and the European comrades as well as between other Native comrades and the Europeans. The position is still the same. Mofutsanyana knows nothing of what is happening on the trade union field. In C.T. Gomas knows everything that happens. Every P. member has to report on his work. Here we do not know what Kalk or Wolfson are doing in their t.u. This is very serious.

Wolfson: I suggest that special aggregates be called, at which a member of the C.C. will report on the work done. A member of the C.C. to be sent to Durban

Special directives shall be sent to all branches, leading organs and committees.

11. Committee.

12. Mofutsanyana.

13. 'about it' was written together and than separated by hand.

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

15. achieved.

16. The meaning of this part of the sentence is not clear. There is a typed-over word after 'stay'.

We must embark on mass work. We should, e.g. hold mass meetings to point out the line of the P. with regards to the General Elections.

We shall call a conference of P. members, sympathisers, prominent trade union sts etc.

Mafutsanyana: We hope that after the C.C. meeting comrades will help us in every way with suggestions etc.

The discussions have been very good. My doubts are still practical doubts.

I hope that this will be a turning point in the history of our P. The most important thing is a comradely spirit everywhere. If that really existed we should see results of our work.¹⁷

Basner: Com. Edwin¹⁸ has said what I had wanted to say in my concluding remarks. I have outlined the two tendencies, which quite naturally exist in S.A. We must guard against them through friendly discussions from the C.C. downwards.

A lot of good can come from this discussion.

There is a lot of respect and sympathy for the Party everywhere.

People look to us for a lead and we owe these people a duty.

RGASPI, 495/14/55/160-2. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/14/55/140-62.

Original in English.

Typed.

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(in Russian),

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17. There is a large-size number '23' in pencil in the right margin opposite this paragraph.

18. Mofutsanyana.