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JOHANNESBURG.

June 13, 1959.

Subject: Pan-Africanist Congress.

Source: Myself, and others where quoted.

On Sunday, May 31, the Africanists set up their first regional organization at a meeting held at the Communal Hall, Orlando, Johannesburg. I was able to go out there for about half an hour. This did not allow me any time to get any detail about the actual proceedings. I did, however, note that there were about 200 people present. Sobukwe gave me his speech to the meeting, and this I enclosed under cover of my letter of June 2.

I spoke to Leballo at the meeting. He told me that there were 206 delegates from the Witwatersrand area, from 33 branches representing 9,086 members. He also said that after the reading by Sobukwe of his speech, discussion ensued. On the whole, this was straightforward, and was not basically different from what Sobukwe said. The only real point of interest, he said, arose in the discussion of Indians. Delegates felt that the question of PAC's attitude to Indians should be more clearly defined than it was at the moment. The general feeling was against regarding the Indians as part of the African group. In addition, he said that there was some discussion of the proposed Africanists' "status" campaign to achieve courteous treatment for Africans in shops. It was agreed that the campaign should be properly discussed and planned on July 31 - PAC's "African Heroes' Day". The campaign will also aim at boycotting firms and factories which underpay their African workers. A regional executive was elected, the chairman being Mr D. Sivisa, formerly chairman of the ANC's Sophiatown branch and of the ANC's Western Areas Regional Executive.

COMMENT: 1) I am inclined to accept the ~~number~~ Witwatersrand membership figure given to me by Leballo as being pretty accurate. It is not an unreasonable figure to expect after several months of hard work, and at the same time, is not extravagant. The number of delegates at the meeting also tallies with the number I saw there, that is, of course, if one is prepared to accept that everybody in the hall was a ~~member~~ delegate. Incidentally, among those I saw were Legrate of "T World", and Matthew Nkoana. The latter in fact made a speech while I was there in which he said that socialism was not foreign to Africa but was part of African traditions. He quoted African communal ownership of land, etc in support of this. To return to the question of membership: a few days after this conference I asked Mathopeng how the recruiting drive was going. He told me that it was going reasonably well. He said that, unlike their expectations, there had not been a great rush for membership, but instead, they were finding it necessary to go from door to door and to speak to each ~~individual~~ man individually. Once this was done, however, the proportion of those joining was high. Thus membership was increasing, not rapidly as expected, but more slowly and very steadily. 2) A few days after the conference, I also tackled Sobukwe on his speech. I told him I thought that the way in which he handled acceptance of the Coloureds as being ~~part~~ part of the African group was somewhat dishonest (in his speech he said that from the start PAC ideology logically included the Coloureds) in view of the fact that he had told ~~me~~ me personally several times that the question of the Coloureds was a problem. If he had been able to blush, he would have done so, because he explained to me that immediately after the forming of PAC in early April, he had received a letter from a Coloured man in Cape Town pledging full support and asking for assistance in setting up a branch down there. In view of this, said Sobukwe, he had no alternative but to pretend that the Africanists had always intended to include the Coloureds. I also attacked him for his remarks about the White Press, pointing out that he and PAC had had a fair publicity and what was the grounds for his statements in his speech. Again, he retreated, and said he now realized he had not been quite accurate, as he was really referring only to "Golden City Post", which claimed had deliberately suppressed news of the Africanists since the inaugural conference.

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