

NOKWE ATTACKS AFRICANISTS, DEFENDS C.O.D., LIBERALS AND BLACK SASH MOVEMENT

THE policy of co-operation with other races was defended against Africanist criticism by Mr. Duma Nokwe, Secretary-general of the A. N. C., in an interview this week. He was asked whether the A. N. C. would instruct its members either to stay away from the Africanist conference at the week-end, or to behave in an inoffensive way. He replied that this would be beyond the powers of the A. N. C.

Mr. Nokwe had the following discussion with a reporter over the Africanists meeting:

'What is your view of the Africanists?' — 'We of Congress have made ourselves clear on this matter in several statements which have appeared in the press. They are a dissentient group who are opposed to the Congress policy. We are happier that they have gone out.'

No observers

'The Africanists are holding a meeting this week-end, will the Congress not send observers?' — 'It is unlikely. In fact I could emphasise that it is not our intention to do so.'

'Some of your members may wish to attend?' — 'Members of Congress are well aware of their responsibilities as members of this national organisation. It is quite possible there may be a few who wish to attend the Africanists' meeting. They would be acting as individuals.'

'Will their attendance not be interpreted as an act of snobbing or interference?' — 'One cannot comment on that. In fact, it all depends on what the attitude of the Africanists will be towards them at the conference.'

'Would you not issue a word of advice to such people to stay away from the meeting or tell them to behave in an inoffensive way?' — 'That is not the function of Congress. In fact if Congress issued such an order it would be acting beyond its powers of administration.'

Mr. Nokwe added that the Africanists, in seceding from the A. N. C., decided to form their own organisation.

gress because their presence within the organisation, particularly as they held views in disagreement with the organisation policy, was not in the interests of the Africans.

Their chief attack was that the A. N. C. was being directed by the Congress of Democrats.

This was not true. The Congress of Democrats, a European political body, was started by the African National Congress.

The purpose was to educate Europeans on Congress policy. It was necessary to do this, for Europeans did not otherwise have the opportunity to understand properly the aspirations of the African people.

Mr. Nokwe also quoted the Liberal Party which he said was now fully sympathetic with Congress policy because of the continued and now succeeding education campaigns of Congress policy among the Europeans.

Clashing views

When it started, Mr. Nokwe said, the Liberal Party was a mere Parliamentary party. Its members held clashing views with the A. N. C. on the franchise question. They held that certain Africans, complying with certain educational qualifications, could be given the franchise. They had now climbed down and supported universal franchise for all.

The same applied to the Black Sash. They were also increasing their activity to embody a great deal that the Congress was fighting for.

These were good signs, Mr. Nokwe said, of a growing consciousness from the European side that Africans also deserved a certain measure of elementary human rights.

Congress leaders were ob-

liged to take a broad view of the South African situation, because of its multi-racial character.

They had decided to co-operate with all races in the struggle for emancipation of the African oppressed.

They rejected the Africanist submission of 'Africa for the Africans' as unrealistic.

Mixed community

'We are a mixed community and we must accept that fact. Our actions must therefore be guided by the situation that exists in our country. We cannot pretend that our neighbours do not exist.'

Wald

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