

JOHANNESBURG.

Sept 22, 1959.

Subject: PAC and ANC.

Source: Bob Sobukwe, on Sept 18.

1) I asked Bob about PAC's membership figures. I told him that I doubted them, but that I trusted him, and if he gave me an assurance that, as far as he knew, the figures were genuine, I would accept his word without reservation. He immediately assured me that the 25,000 figure was genuine. He said that he would be frank and tell me that when their membership drive first began, they went all out for numbers, without bothering about assuring that each and every person was fully aware of his obligations as a PAC member. They had intended "weeding out" later. They therefore had a certain amount of dead wood among their membership. The emphasis now was on getting a good quality of member. He said also that they were experiencing organisational difficulties in collecting their monthly subs. He admitted that there was quite a difference between collecting the initial 2/6 membership sub, and then raking in the regular monthly subs.

COMMENT: I am prepared to accept Bob's word on the membership figure without reservation - except of course as qualified by his further remarks about the dead wood. I am ~~xxx~~ afraid that I do not know what proportion of the total this dead wood constitutes.

2) A PAC national executive meeting was held over the Sept 5 to 7 weekend. Among the subjects discussed was the anti-pass campaign due for early next year. Bob said that the matter would be discussed again at a national conference to be held on Dec 16, either in Jbg or East London. The details of the campaign would be finalised at the conference, but the starting-date would be kept secret. He intimated that the campaign would be launched early next year. (PS It will be recalled that this campaign is being waged through various dissident-SACTU trade Unions, principally in the baking, garment worker and laundry fields. Although there is quite a lot of support for PAC in the unions, the fact that PAC is behind the campaign is being kept quiet. The ~~xxxxxx~~ plan is that on a certain date, the workers in the unions - totalling about 14,000 - will leave their passes at home and report to the police station on their way to work. The campaign will be under the slogan of "no bail, no fine, no defence." Prior to the campaign, letters will be written to employers asking for assistance against workers carrying passes - obviously there will be no response.)

3) Bob said that he had heard that some White leftists in Congress had been having discussions with G.M. Pitje with a view to replacing the present national leadership of the ANC. (From the way Bob spoke, I think he had got this information from Pitje). The subject arose when I happened to mention that I thought that Pitje was one of the few really good ANC men. Bob smiled and said that Pitje was not so happy about the ANC. He said that the idea behind the discussions, ~~xxxxxx~~ as he thought Vic ~~xxxxxx~~ desired, was to "get the Communists out of the ANC, but to leave the Communist programme." He did not know how far the discussions had got. (Bob also said that he thought that Pitje was "confused" in his thinking).

COMMENT: I have been trying to see Vic to sound him out about this. It is obviously, if correct, a most promising development, because Pitje is ~~xxxxxx~~ I think I very good person, who has deliberately kept himself largely in the background up to now. He is in charge of the ANC's education policy - whatever this impressive description might mean.

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