

Lum/076/0020/13
RPL
Zambezi

REPORT ON THE COPPERBELT TRIP.

JUNE 21st - 22nd 1980.

The delegation left Lusaka on the 21st June at 14.45 hours, and reached their destination Kitwe in the early evening. Members of the branch that we met on our arrival said they were expecting us the following day, so we had to find our own accommodation except for comrade Esther Lerole who was accommodated at the local chairmans house.

We all agreed that the first session of our meeting will commence at 09.00 hours, as we had to get home before fall, then we parted for the night. When we arrived at 08.45 hours we were surprised to find only a few people around, we were told that the chairman had gone ^{to work} and promised to be back at 08.00H. He did not come until 09.45H and we urged him to let the session start.

He provided us with one room in the house where we had a session with him in camera. Our chairman told him the purpose of the visit, and submitted to him the terms of reference as follows:-

1. To investigate what is going on in the branch.
2. Chairman suspension while investigating and an acting chairman to be elected until matters are cleared.
3. A committee followed by a general members meetings be called where the move will be explained and a report from the chairman, secretary and treasurer will be expected to submit their reports., and complains from members if any.

After the pronouncement of the suspension by the R.P.C, chairman comrade Ledjuma showed no surprise, but was repulsive and interjected time and again while the R.P.C chairman was explaining the points. He went back to explain the money transaction with Mrs. Siame and his banking account in Botswana, unfortunately he was backed up at this point by one of the delegation cde Esther Lerole who said the R.P.C was not told that cde Ledjuma had a banking account in Botswana, if it were so cde Ledjuma would have not been suspended. But the R.P.C chairman explained that the matter of the banking account is not what brought about the suspension, but it is the illegal money transaction with the cde is involved in which he personally admitted, the illegal transaction, one thing that is not allowed in the movement. When asked if he knew that it was an offense for a member of the organisation to engage in illegal transactions he said he was not aware of this. Cde Ledjuma then said that " he can see that both cde Nkula and cde Mfene were biased on his case by not reporting everything ", he said this shows that they are out to fight him. But he was told that the delegation had not come to discuss his banking account but to suspend him on the illegal transaction. He blamed the R.P.C for the folly and went on to say that the R.P.C failed to give good guidance to the people. He is not the only one

who has a banking account outside Zambia, he said, ~~and the~~ and the Organisation shall have to expel many members who are not full time in the Movement. But again he was explained to, and reminded that illegal money transactions and legal banking outside the country are two different things.

He was further told that he has not as yet been expelled from the Movement, people are not just expelled without good reasons and justification. It is for the movement to go into his case thoroughly. If the cde (Ledjuma) feels that the comrades (Nkula & Mfene) are prejudiced towards his case, he has the right to appeal to the R.P.C. IN Lusaka and express his feelings and disapproval. This terminated the first session deliberations.

As we adjourned to resume the second session of our deliberations, we discovered that the majority of the committee members were not present. So we decided to have the general members meeting. Present were nine members and six youths who were returned from SOMAFCO. Comrade Peter Mfene gave a talk on current events particularly activities by our militants back home. This was followed by contributions from a few comrades.

At 12.00H the meeting with joint committee started. The following comrades were present:-

Sekano and Phiri from Ndola

Mokwena and Thoka from Mufulira

Ledjuma and Payi from Kitwe.

Notable absentees were the branch secretary and treasurer whose presence were imperative. The local chairman could not account for their absence. After opening the chairman handed over to the R.P.C chairman.

The R.P.C chairman related the agenda as stated in the terms of reference and reiterated the suspension of the branch chairman. So the local chairman was asked to give the branch report. His report dated as far back as 1978 when the branch was inaugurated in the Copperbelt. He said they have been collecting money from anybody indiscriminately but later decided that only members should contribute in order that the branch has its own savings.

In three subsequent general meetings this matter was discussed and agreed upon that every member who is employed should pay K5.00, and unemployed K3.00. Monthly levy should be K2 and K1 respectively, unfortunately this did not come to expectations.

He said the treasurer of the branch had asked to be relieved of his position for health and business reasons, but the general membership disagreed with him. Instead he will have an assistant who will brief him on what takes place.

He said when the delegation from Lusaka visited the place last September and suggested that they should have committees in all other towns of the Copperbelt, they thought that it was a good suggestion and that it would work and boost up the membership and contributions. But on the contrary it created more problems than before, because parents were asking as to why their children were left behind when

others had gone to school. As the result of this only ^{few} people contributed and at times he had to use his own money. He further went on to say that at one stage members felt that there was some interference from the R.P.C. They felt favours were done to some people. At this stage cde. Esther interjected and told the committee that "we have come to investigate about the transaction by cde. Ledjuma and not other matters". The chairman then said that though the report was labourious ^{out of context time} monotonous and some points should be given to cde Ledjuma to state his case. Cde Ledjuma then said that meetings were attended regularly until they were disrupted by the R.P.C. in Lusaka by stopping them from holding meetings in large gatherings because of the security situation and also when they received news about students who returned from SOMAFCO, this lowered their morale. They felt it was wrong for the movement to send the students back to their homes, the question was what would have happened if those students were from South Africa.

Two letters were received, one from the Students Secretariat the other from the R.P.C. when the students were sent back. The letter stated that a courier will be sent to explain about the return of the students from school but to their surprise no courier came from Lusaka, nor a report from SOMAFCO. Cde. Lerole said the R.P.C. also never got a reply. Comrade said the impression they got from the letter was that they had no accommodation for them in Lusaka, also the general mood of the members was that the R.P.C. was not frank with them.

many After he had concluded his long statement he was asked by the delegation as to how meetings were held since last September? He said they did not have a single meeting because of the security situation but only met in small groups. The delegation said at no time did the R.P.C. interfere or stop them from holding meetings. Even last September when the delegation was there they emphatically said the Copperbelt was far from any trouble that could occur in Lusaka. It is only when the delegation of two comrades visited him on a personal matter on 10th - 11th May that he said to them that meetings were curtailed because of the Mushala gang and raids but if permission is obtained meetings can go on as usual. Comrade Mfene asked a question on the composition of his local committee. Before the question was answered cde Esther Lerole protested that the delegation was not there to come and ask petty questions. She suggested that the chairman should tell the meeting that the delegation came to investigate ~~transaction~~ of the members by cde Ledjuma, she further said that cde Mfene has accused cde C. Lerole of this as well hence he is not in the delegation. The chairman was at pains to stop this embarrassing dialogue. Comrade Mfene said issues were clear in the terms of reference:

- a. New members were asked to pay joining fees.
- b. If people do not pay the K15 plus their monthly levy their children will not be sent to school as promised.

Comrade Phiri asked if that was the reason for the suspension of their chairman?

The chairman said that was not the case, the reason for suspension was different and personal and that we are not prepared to reveal it unless cde Ledjuma wishes us to. As this part solved the contradiction, it was decided that the complainants be called individually. The first to be called was comrade Belina Siame who is a new member. She said she paid cde Ledjuma K30 for contribution. As we were informed that the other complainants were not present and cde Nuwana had since gone to South Africa. Cde Siame was reminded about the complaints made. Comrades S. Koate and Muwana about taxation. She said she remembers Cde Muwana speaking about K20 but comrade Mfene said it was K15 and K5 was to follow otherwise her child won't go to school. Cde Siame remembered other details vividly and about the child named Gloria who has gone. As the cde was leaving the room people came in and they could not be controlled because they had long been waiting. They wanted to know about the return of the children and when they would be going back. The chairman said the return of the students was well known since they absconded and came to Lusaka naturally their places were taken by other students. As their places are filled there is no space for them at present, they may be places when other students leave in September. It appeared by the number of questions that the R.P.C was carpentered for some people asked if scholarships could not be obtained in Zambia. The chairman said that something in that direction can be attempted since all the students are still members of the Organisation.

Hence, after the chairman ask the house to order for nominations of the Acting chairman. The name of cde Sekano was proposed and voted for unanimously.

As we were about to close cde ^{Mfene} asked the comrades who were not in the committee to leave and cde Mfene requested cde Ruth Koete to remain. Cde Peter Mfene said when the R.P.C delegation was here last September cde Kate was the secretary of the branch how is it that she is no longer a secretary and how is it that there is a new secretary Rose Maseko?

Cde Ledjuma said cde Kate failed to attend meetings regularly hence she was relieved of her position. Cde Ledjuma further produced a letter of termination dated 29.9.79 22 days after the visit of the delegation. When cde Ledjuma was asked as to how many meetings he held from the 7th to the 29th September he could not account. Cde Kate said cde Rose was given the post on the day the delegation left in September. When asked if she was approached on the question of her absence from meetings she said never! She tried to account as to what happened between her and the chairman she became personal and emotional and then she was stopped from continuing. All the members in good faith and agreement said cde Kate should serve in the committee even to assist the secretary. She has the material that was given to her by the Women's Section but the women comrades said they have agreed at the meeting of the 15th that she should be the custodian of the material.

In that high note we closed with the national anthem at 14.00H.