

Extracts from Mr. Tabata's reply to Mr. Mqotsi's Allegations.

Mr. Chairman, first of all I want to say I am glad this speech by Mr. Mqotsi has been recorded, because for one thing I hope he himself will have the opportunity to listen to his own speech one day, to hear all the things he said, and can examine his own speech.

As I said, there is a political dispute, even at home. Mr. M. takes this as a jumping off ground to go on talking about people's characters...In face of the central theme for to-day, namely, the dictatorship of the president of an organization the rest of the speech was not on a level expected of this gathering. I hope nobody is going to follow up all those epithets that we are political lepers, etc....
.....The central theme - the dictatorship of a president - should be thrashed ~~my~~ out to-day and settled once and for all. Livie (Mqotsi) says I asked for powers to expel members, for the 4th time he repeats, and I deny it....I could not ask you to grant me powers you have no authority to grant....

Livie says: 'In the vendetta against me there is collusion between Lusaka and Bechuanaland.' This is strange coming from a man who is in the habit of writing secret letters such as these that have been brought here to-day. The disagreement between us was from the beginning on the formation of the Working Committee in Lusaka. After the first meeting took decisions, I said: "Gentlemen, this is not a meeting of the head Unity Committee (HUC) and cannot be." He insisted it was, and counted the people present. Then I said: 'We are in effect disfranchising the rest of the members of the HUC who happen not to be in Lusaka. We have no authority to do that....Later, Livie came round to this view.

Now for the first time I hear him saying: "I grant the constitutional position." This was precisely the question. When he said: 'We have a right here to take decisions,..' I answered 'Then it follows that Ghana has the right, and Bechuanaland, and Basutoland...Then where do we land? This is anarchy.....' I said to him (on a former occasion): 'Look, we cannot constitute the HUC separately outside or the HUC inside. There are no two powers. We, together, constitute the HUC; that is, the people in the various centres together with those at home. And a machinery must be found to create an HUC that is functioning."

Then he asked 'What is the status of the Working Committee?'

I said: 'The same as it has always been.'

He said: 'Has this committee the right to control the president?'

I answered: 'It is not the constitution that makes the Working Committee.

We in Cape Town constituted a working committee. We had no power, yet no president ever worked without it. It made itself indispensable to the functioning of the organization.....'

It is not I who am asking for power. I need no other powers than those that belong to this chair. It is Mr. Mqotsi who insists that unless the members in Lusaka arm themselves with powers to control the president, he is not prepared to work on this basis...But where do we derive the authority to arm ourselves with this power? In fact this is the beginning of the old methods of the bureaucratic trade unions who created machinery for self-perpetuation....

Now to deal with this matter politically. I think our people have short memories. I took this stand because I did remember the costly mistakes we made in the past on precisely this point....It cost us the loss of the Anti-CAD (A Coloured national body affiliated to the Unity Movement). It was Ben Kies who pushed the whole matter of 'Collective leadership'. It sounded good. We agreed in principle. Then Ben Kies started putting it into practice - against the president of the Anti-C.A.D. - Goolam (Dr. Gool). We took away all his rights as president. In the end we discovered that Ben Kies was the one fellow who always schemed to gather a personal following about him, and these voted for him at meetings, whatever he said.

If Livie remembers, I once said² to him (discussing this very problem) :
"Livie, I am not going to be put in a position where on administrative matters I have to canvass a majority of our fellows. All my life I have never canvassed, and I'm not going to start now....."

Now some of you will surely remember what happened in the Unity Movement, when Ben Kies and others organised a split. (He reads a passage from the pamphlet: "The Wreckers of Unity At Work".)

I repeat all this because, when it was written, we still had fresh in our minds what these same people had done, first to the Anti-CAD, to destroy it, and were now trying to do the same to the Unity Movement....to tie up the president, so that he had to depend on them.....This is the danger that faces us here, if we follow what Livie has said. Whoever controls a personal following is the one who will rule the group here.I don't think this was in Livie's mind when he spoke. I think he hasn't thought through the matter to the end, to see the full implication of his remarks. In short, it is not the president who is asking for powers he hasn't got, but Livie asking to be armed with powers to control the president. This is the way we should discuss the question....Not for the first time I ask Livie to define precisely what, in his opinion, are, firstly, my duties, and 2nd. my rights and powers in this organization, and in what way I transgress them."

Extract from a short speech next day, by IBT.

"Last night I came to the conclusion that the trouble - or where Livie made his first mistake, is, he gets his reports from all over. What struck me was - Livie is able to say: 'On such and such a day, So-and-So said such and such a thing about me....A man who can gather such information must have a machinery for getting it...a sort of espionage system.....What has happened here is that outsiders have come between us and are carrying tales.. Livie to-day regards himself as an object of a campaign of vilification by his fellow members of this executive. How did it all start?.....It is interesting that Livie's tale-bearers pick upon the two Indian members of the HUC to smear with racialism.....If these boys carry tales to Livie, each one adding a twist, this tale-bearing implies a certain relationship. They want something in return for their tale-bearing. It's a two-way traffic.....Livie has been discussing matters of the HUC with these boys and this has fed their little egos....When Livie last night used those shameful epithets about members of the executive - epithets that make one blush for him - about gangsters, moral lepers, etc. - it occurred to me that if he really feels this way about them, he will feel no obligation to be loyal to such people.....

To-day we have spoken out, expressed our views and grievances...We can come together, provided we realise we are members of the Executive here...Those young people who carried gossip are the source of the trouble. They are not part of our executive. ...If Livie had not allowed this, ~~and~~^{he} would not have got himself into a position where he feels himself the object (he says) of a campaign."

Mr. Tabata then made an appeal to Mqotsi to return to the office.

"Livie, we have something to give to those who haven't had political experience. This experience must be transmitted to successive generations and this is the duty of the Movement." That is how I spoke to Livie when I went to his house on my return from Europe.....Nobody is persecuting anybody. This office must be run by us together. We need everybody here."