

the answer to Bunting; in the event that Bunting's complaint is shown to be incorrect, then the ECCI representative is to inform us of his opinion and of the opinion of the CC on this matter.

(b) Bunting is to be told that an investigation of the facts which were mentioned in his letter is being conducted by us, and that after the investigation is completed he will receive an answer.

(c) The Eastern S. is instructed to write a letter to the Party<sup>3</sup> concerning the tasks of the Party and the calling of a Party conference.

RGASPI, 495/4/203/2.

Original in German.

Typed.

Inscription: Mü/3 Expl. (typed)

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**Letter from E. Dennis to ECCI,  
16 July 1932 (Extracts)**

July 16th

Dear Comrades,

[...]

2. Party membership. A few remarks are necessary in order to clear up the contradictory figures as contained in Jackson's report of September 1931<sup>1</sup> (5,000 members), the CC report of February 1932 (153 members), and my estimate for April 1932 (58), as well as to determine when, where and why the catastrophic drop, if any. I have checked and double-checked this question thoroughly and the following statements may be accepted as authoritative.

Neither in Sept. 1931, nor at any time in the history of the Party, has the membership equalled 5000 in any given period. The estimate of 5000 applies to one thing only, that is, since the formation of the Party, approximately 5000 cards have been issued. But 95% of this number (5000) were never placed or functioned in a nucleus, never paid dues, and, what is more important, never

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**Doc. 12**

3. There are several crossed-out illegible words after 'Party'.

**Doc. 13**

1. Nzula's report (see document 5, vol. II) is dated (stamped) 5 August 1931. However, it was a draft which means that the final version could be presented to the ECCI in September; or else Dennis could have made a mistake.

carried on any Communist activity regularly. They (the 5000) were recruited at mass meetings, paid their initiation fees, attended mass meetings when organised by the CC directly, participated in a spontaneous way in a number of struggles against the pass laws (Potcheefstrom, in 1928–1929 Vereeniging) and in Dingaan Day demonstration (Durban, Potcheefstrom in 1930).

Concretely, the growth and decline of the Party membership may be approximately as follows:

During 1928 the membership grew from several hundred to about 3000, of which more than one thousand were recruited at one mass meeting in Potcheefstrom, 700 at several mass meetings at Vereeniging, and 300 in Natal (near Standerton), Capetown and Johannesburg, combined, had about 200 members, Durban about 200. In this period during which the local comrades organised mass actions against the pass laws, etc. (Potcheefstrom) the number of Party nuclei (which were on a semi-functionary basis) never exceeded 10. For instance, in Potcheefstrom, 1500 recruits (not active members) there was only one nucleus, with a maximum attendance of 25. It is important to note that the majority of the Party membership at this time were farm labourers.

During the latter part of 1929 the membership (those who held cards and still attended mass meetings) dropped at about 1500. The decline was especially heavy in Potcheefstrom and Vereeniging, where the Party leadership in the CC did not respond to, lead or develop the local struggles, etc.

During 1930 the membership in all districts sharply declined except in Durban, where during the Dingaan Day campaign activities, cards were issued to over 400 (mainly Zulu dockers). These likewise were never organised in nuclei or given or drawn into activity.

During 1931 the membership further declined, reaching in April 1931 the 100 mark. This drastic decline may be summarised accordingly: In January and February 1931, practically the entire native membership of 600 in Durban were deported for their Dingaan Day activities (Dec.16, 1930)<sup>2</sup> – the Party lost contact with them; in September 1931, 12 Europeans were expelled from the Party (Bunting & Co.), after which about 50 native comrades (Vereeniging, Brakpan, Prospect Township) became completely passive and dropped out of all activity (attending mass meetings). While about 75 new native workers and a few Europeans were recruited in Johannesburg during 1931, these were never held (only 6), and the entire Party membership had fallen by January 1932 to approximately 60.

1932 – From January 1932 the membership remained stationary (60); from April 15th to July 1st there was a slight increase to over 200, including a number of miners, dockers and farm labourers (see org. material which I sent on July 1st). [...]

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2. See footnote 1 to document 80 and footnote 2 to document 90 (both in vol. I).



4. You also raise the question of winning over the sincere, rank and file workers who are still under the influence of Bunting. This directive has in the main been carried out. That is, since May 15th we have won over the majority of the 3 small Party groups (native workers) which went with and previously remained under the influence of Bunting (Vereeniging, Brakpan, Prospect Township). Here it must be noted that these groups had gone with Bunting simply because the struggle waged against Bunting at the Party centre had never penetrated into these groups, because the Party leadership never even took the trouble to send its representatives to the groups because it did not combine the fight against Bunting with organising practical mass activity. At the present, the 'League of Soviet Friends' (which split away from the FSU in Johannesburg) and the 'Communist League' (a so-called Native Communist organisation) which have been organised by Bunting, have been completely isolated from the masses and are, as far as membership and activities are concerned – virtually non-existent. But unquestionably we must intensify and strengthen our struggle against Buntingism and the Bunting elements, for their counter-revolutionary influence cannot be measured by their present status.

5. I would suggest that you immediately prepare a letter in the name of ECCI which will reach here in time for the Congress in November. It is clear from my reports and the plenum resolution, what this letter should contain. Nevertheless, I would suggest that among other things, special emphasis be given to the following points: a.) the immediate revolutionary perspective; b.) to approach the question of strengthening and building the Party on a national scale especially from the viewpoint of building and the work of the nuclei; c.) the problem of independent leadership in the struggle of the workers and peasants; d.) the question of united front tactics from below in the struggle against the national reformists, chiefs and indunas<sup>3</sup> and the social fascists. In this connection it is urgent to point out the need of directing the main fire against the 'left' national reformists (Tonjeni and the official leadership in the IANC, etc.), against the 'left' social-fascist, i.e. Andrews, Sachs, Merkel, etc., as well as for the Party to differentiate between the powerful supreme chiefs and indunas and for instance, many of the smaller chiefs and headmen, some of whom have been removed from their official positions because of anti-government activities; e.) to concretely put forward what the propaganda of the Party for a revolutionary way out of the crisis must contain. In this connection it would be well to explain in more or less detail the demagogic 'economic independence' program of the Nationalist Party, particularly in regards to maintaining the gold standard, as well as the SAP's 'sterling' platform; f.) It would also be beneficial for the Party if a

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3. Induna – the highest military rank among the AmaZulu. Indunas also acted as advisers to chiefs, ama-kosi. The British preserved both institutions as part of 'native' administration.

thorough explanation were given re. Independent Native Republic – what it is and means, etc. [...]

Fraternally submitted  
Dennis

RGASPI, 495/64/120/32-4.

Original in English.

Handwritten, signed by Dennis.

Stamped: 17.SEP.1932 – 6636

9382 – 21.SEP.1932

Johannesburg

Inscriptions: 1) Johannesburg

(in Russian)

Urgent

2) Engl. 3. Conf

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**Resolution of CPSA,  
July 1932 (Extracts)<sup>1</sup>**

**RESOLUTION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION AND TASKS  
OF THE CPSA ADOPTED AT PLENUM OF THE CC  
JULY 17TH-21ST 1932<sup>2</sup>**

[...]

3.) In the recent period, under the pressure of the forward surge of the revolutionary movement, the national reformists, supreme chiefs and social fascists, assisted and utilised by imperialism, have been making strenuous efforts to increase and strengthen their influence so as to hinder and disorganise the growth of the national and class struggle, attempting to divert the national revolutionary movement into reformist channels in the interests of imperialism.

The 'emergency' conference at Kimberly to activate the A.N.C., the organisation of united front meetings against the new pass laws in Capetown by the A.N.C., the conference in the Free State to 'resurrect' the I.C.U., the protest meetings and resolutions of the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives against the Native Service Contract Act, the Transvaal Conference of Native teachers

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1. This resolution was most likely written by Dennis. In his letter to the ECCI of 2 July 1932, he stated that he was preparing a draft resolution for the CPSA plenum to be held later in July.  
2. The title is in Dennis's handwriting.