

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

14

**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

- 
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.

against wage cuts, the convening of a conference of the 'chiefs and the people' in the Transkei, the peasant conference arranged by Lekhotla La Bafo, the protest meetings and resolutions against the Asiatic Land Tenure Bill of the Indian National Congress in Durban and Johannesburg, etc. – indicate the increased activities and demagogic manoeuvres of the national reformists and powerful chiefs which aim to stem the revolutionary tide and to strengthen the regime of the slave rulers. Of particular importance and of great danger to the revolutionary struggle is the attempts of the 'left' national reformists in the leadership of the I.A.N.C. and <sup>the renegade Trotskyists</sup> in the 'Communist League' to extend their counter revolutionary influence over the masses under the cloak of 'radical phrases (Port Elizabeth, Krugersdorp) while they attack the Communist Party and carry out an imperialistic policy of betrayal of the revolutionary people.

The social fascists in the S.A.L.P., Trades & Labour Council and Cape Federation, by demagogically manoeuvring on the issue of unemployment (Capetown, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, etc.), by 'advocating' government relief for the white unemployed, by setting up trade union committees to 'investigate' the new wage cuts in preparation throughout the secondary industries etc. – similarly are feverishly attempting to stifle the growing militancy of the lower sections of the European proletariat and jobless and to disrupt and prevent the growing bonds of solidarity between the Native, coloured and European workers, while they actively carry through the 'White civilised labour policy'<sup>3</sup> of Hertzog, Smuts and Creswell and energetically work to put through the 'economy' cuts at the expense of the workers. In this connection the activity of the 'left wing' of social fascism, Andrews, Sachs, Merkel, etc., which shield their anti-working class policy behind 'militant' phrases and proposals, represent the greatest danger to the development of the economic struggles of the workers and unemployed, especially the establishing a fighting alliance of the Native, Coloured and European toilers.

Experience has shown such as in Craddock and Tarkastad (May Day), Capetown (unemployed), Johannesburg (May 12th) that with the correct application of the Party line, the rank and file whether in the I.A.N.C., A.N.C. or reformist unions, can be won over for revolutionary struggle under the independent leadership of the Party. However, the struggle against national reformism, social fascism and the powerful chiefs, for the masses, has been entirely too weak and has not been consistently followed up.

To ensure the victorious advance of the revolutionary movement which present conditions make fully possible, it is imperative that the Party considerably strengthen the struggle from below against national reformism, the supreme chiefs and social fascism, directing its main fire against the 'left' wing within these groups and organisations. It is essential that the Party carry

---

3. The reference is to the Wage Act of 1925 that introduced 'civilised' rates of pay for 'civilised' labour, i.e. for white workers, without mentioning race.



its criticism to the masses, especially comparing the 'militant' phrases of the 'left' national reformists and social fascists with their counter-revolutionary deeds, exposing by concrete examples their treacherous activities and imperialist nature of their policy and manoeuvres.

[...]

6) In the recent period, under the guidance of the Comintern, as a result of the struggle carried on by the Party for the line of the C.I. against right and left opportunism, the Party has made certain steps forward – strengthening of the political line and unity of the Party. [...] However, this represents only the preliminary stage in the process of beginning to make the turn demanded by the E.C.C.I.

For on the whole, the Communist movement in S.A. represents a very unsatisfactory picture. The Party is dangerously lagging behind the revolutionary struggle of the masses. It remains essentially a Party of agitation. It has failed to set in motion a broad strike movement or to achieve definite organisational results when it has participated in strikes. (Durban docks, crystallizers). It has not been able to head the peasant struggles, to develop concrete mass actions against the Native Service Contract Act, against imperialist repression, against war, etc., or to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between the Native and Coloured toilers and the lower paid strata of the European workers and unemployed. Organisationally, the Party remains a narrow, sectarian organisation of semi-functioning cells which are mostly on a residential basis. It has not yet liquidated the remnants of social democratic organisation, has not yet overcome its organisational backwardness, looseness or self-isolation. The Party has been unable to crystallize organisationally its growing political influences and from 1930 up till April of this year the Party membership remained practically stationary. In the mass organisations an extremely unsatisfactory situation also exists. The unions formerly affiliated to A.F.T.U. (Native clothing, garment, tobacco) have completely collapsed and only in the past few months has a small start been made to build A.F.T.U. in the basic industries. The Y.C.L. is virtually non-existent. Red Aid and L.A.I. are only paper organisations, while the F.S.U. which has assumed the character of a mass organisation in Johannesburg, is only a loose agitational body with a poor social composition.

This intolerable situation in the mass work and organizational status of the Party, which can and must be rapidly and basically changed, has been brought about largely by a series of opportunist mistakes and deviations, both of a right and left character, particularly as a result of right opportunism in practice. The principal manifestations of right opportunism have consisted in: reliance on spontaneity (May Day Campaign, Anti-War week, unemployed work etc.) and an unwillingness to carry on planned daily work in the basic industries; a lack of faith in the Party and in the fighting strength and capacity of the proletariat and working masses; an inability and disinclination to combine the struggle for the urgent needs of the masses with the fundamental slogans of the revolution, an underestimation in practice and neglect of building the Party and especially



the nuclei (up till June not a single member of the P.B. attached to a nucleus), in not applying even the most elementary principles of Leninist organisation (dues, payments) in failing to carry on all campaigns and activities of the Party through the nuclei; slow and inadequate response to major political events and issues (Native Service Act)<sup>4</sup>; complete indifference to forming fractions in the Trade Unions which has led to a distortion and sabotage of the practical line of the Party, (leather, laundry, garment, furniture, stevedore); bureaucratic sectarianism in the Party apparatus and approach to the masses; general passivity and lack of Party responsibility; a conciliatory attitude to white chauvinism (Kalk) and to petty bourgeois peasant nationalism, and a very inadequate struggle against white chauvinism within the ranks of the Party and in the mass organisations (May Day demonstrations in Johannesburg etc.); in both a distortion and an inability to apply the united front tactics from below (united front from above with Unemployed Workers Union in Capetown, with I.C.U. in Pretoria, with trade union bureaucracy in Johannesburg); a very weak and an abstract struggle against national reformism and social fascism; legalistic tendencies in the Trade Unions (leather etc.) in an inability to combine the struggle against Buntingism and the right danger generally with the organisation of practical mass activity etc.

Left opportunist mistakes have consisted in tendencies to set forth the problem of national and general strikes in opposition to organising partial strikes, with the practical result of abandoning strike preparation; calling on the workers for strike action, without organizational preparation (July 13th Manifesto); in a sectarian attitude towards the most exploited sections of the white workers (Johannesburg); in sectarianism in A.F.T.U. i.e. passive resistance to working among workers who 'won't listen to us'; (Laundry, white unemployed etc.). The shortcomings and weaknesses of the Party have also been facilitated and accompanied by a number of serious deviations on the ideological front, both of a right and left opportunist nature i.e. incorrect analysis of the gold standard program of the Nationalist Party and of the sterling platform of the S.A.P. (position that 'we should agitate to remain on the gold standard'); wrong analysis and interpretation of some of the basic slogans of the revolution (position that in South Africa, an Independent Native Republic or that an African Federation of Independent Native Republics is a stage towards a workers and peasants government; that the slogan for the voluntary uniting of the African nations in a Federation of Independent Native Republics means that the Zulu, Basutu, etc. nations must establish and are obliged to exercise their right to self-determination to separate and form independent national states; also that the slogan of Federation means to abandon the propaganda and struggle for an Independent Native Republic in

---

4. Native Service Contract Act of 1932 allowed farmers to use the labour of their workers' families as well as that of the workers themselves, to evict them summarily and to whip them.

South Africa with the right of all nations to self-determination, with full safeguards for all national minorities; the placing of an Independent Native Republic in opposition to the right of the Basuto, Zulu etc. nations to self-determination, even to separation, etc.). No advance can be made towards the fulfilment of the gigantic tasks before the Party without waging a decisive and an uncompromising struggle against all manifestations of right and left opportunism, particularly against 'right opportunism which remains the main danger in the C.P.S.A. and the chief obstacle in the way of the further development of the revolution'. (E.C.C.I. Letter Oct. 1931).

[...]

The Plenum again emphasises that the solution of all tasks before the Party demands the most ruthless struggle at all times, on all fronts against every manifestation of right and left opportunism with the right danger as the main danger. The turn to mass work, the process of Bolshevisation of the Party which is now going on, will lead to a sharper and more concealed struggle of all opportunist elements against the line of the Party.

[...]

RGASPI, 495/64/120/60-4, 65. For the full text of the document see: RGASPI, 495/64/120/58-70.

Original in English.

Typed.

Stamped: 19.SEP.1932 - 6634

9381 - 21.SEP.1932

Inscription: Engl. 3

# 15

## Letter from E. Dennis to ECCI, 22 July 1932<sup>1</sup>

July 22nd 1932

Main Office

Gentlemen:

We have received your instructions regarding the extended stay of your sales manager, which, as we understand, means that he must continue his

---

1. This coded letter may have been sent by telegraph or with somebody travelling to Moscow. Dennis's other messages found in the archives were sent directly to the Comintern and were much more open.