

East Africa whom we have recently made contact with here. We are taking the necessary steps to develop activities in Lourenco Marques (plans were worked out and mutually agreed upon between myself and the Portuguese comrades in June – but circular instructions have not facilitated the fulfilment of these), including the immediate sending of an organiser; besides and what is most important, we will train the Native miners and utilise them on their return to East Africa. Also arrangements are being made again (they were supposedly completed in June during my trip) to secure two East African workers for 'higher education'. I will inform you as soon as something concrete materialises out of our present 'plans' and correspondence with the East African comrades.

11. I would like to call your attention that this letter is not intended as an exhaustive report, but rather as a series of remarks. I trust you will overlook the loose and disconnected manner in which I have dealt with various question, particularly the unsatisfactory way in which I have combined details with a number of general observations and conclusions.

With communist greetings,
Dennis.

RGASPI, 495/64/79/54-69.
Original in English.
Handwritten.

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**Letter from S.P. Bunting to ECCL,
26 October 1932**

P.O. Box 1915,
JOHANNESBURG, South Africa.
26 October 1932.

The Sec. E.C.C.I.
Moscow.

Dear Comrade,

Yet another wild outburst of lies against me in the C.P.S.A. organ 'Umsebenzi' of 22nd instant impels me, although my last communication to you on the matter has met with no response, to write again briefly lest silence should be interpreted as admission.

The following statement in the issue in question are total falsehoods: (page 3 col. 1) That I have formed the 'Communist League' or subsidised or guided it

or am in any way associated with it. On the contrary I have throughout discouraged and denounced the formation of any opposition organisation. Thibedi, who is anything but 'hand in glove' with me or an ally or 'beloved follower' of mine, (although I did not 'endorse his expulsion') did form such an organisation a few months ago, partly, I believe, out of native elements disgusted with present Party leadership: but I knew nothing of it and have had nothing to do with it. Nor I think has Com. Gana Makabeni. I believe this 'Communist League' has lately expelled Thibedi himself from its ranks.

(ibid.) That I have any 'united front' with the Trotskyites', or am in any way associated with them. I have never had any Trotskyite leanings.

(ib.) That I am in any way associated or connected with the paper 'Maraphanga'¹ or finance it, either with a 'hidden hand' or at all. The first I knew of it was when I saw a copy of its issue 'No. 1'. The Party ^{leaders and editor} not only admit that they had 'no evidence' for the three foregoing misstatements, but were specifically informed of the truth by myself and also I understand by Thibedi before they printed and published them.

(Col 2) That I 'join in slandering the U.S.S.R.' or 'call for the blood of the heroic workers and peasants' etc., or am 'opposed to the Soviet revolution in China, to the establishment of Soviets' etc.

(ib.) That I am 'opposed to the establishment of an Independent Native Republic': (this² lie has been already long since disposed of in earlier communications from me) or 'to the organisation of a revolutionary workers' and peasants' Government based on Soviets', etc.

(ib.) That I 'say a Native Republic is apparently too one sided and exclusive and becomes unintelligible' (this old misquotation and distortion was exposed and repudiated by me in 'Umsebenzi'³ itself nearly two years ago).

(ib.) That I am 'bitterly opposed to supporting the fight for national independence', 'against National Independence and class freedom', that for me 'the bourgeois landlord parliament of the slave rulers is more preferable than the revolutionary rule of the workers and peasants' etc. etc. – such crass abuse indeed scarcely calls for denials.

(ib.) That I 'deny the revolutionary role of the native peasantry'; this is another shameless distortion refuted by me in 'Umsebenzi' long ago.

(ib.) That I 'claim that the land stolen from the native population should remain in the hands of the European landlords and Mining companies' – again a slander too gross almost to deserve denial at all.

(Col. 3) That I 'aim to limit the National revolutionary movement to a reformist cry for equal rights under imperialist rule', 'reject the task of the anti-

1. See document 16, vol. II.

2. There is an illegible word typed over after 'this'.

3. The official organ of the CPSA.

imperialist and peasant agrarian revolution', 'deny the leading role of the native proletariat', etc. etc.

(ib.) That I was in any way concerned with the 'League of Soviet Friends': the fact being that I discountenanced it as soon as I heard of it, and I think persuaded its promoters to drop it, natural reaction though ~~it~~^{it} was to the antics of the present party leaders, as well as of 'Zack' (as Inprecorr calls him),⁴ in the F.O.S.U.

(ib.) That I 'use the name Communist League, as well as that of the National reformists in the A.N.C. and I.C.U.' etc. – really I have no idea what all this means.

(Page 5 column 1) That I made 'efforts to create a split in the Communist Party following my removal from C.C. of the C.P.S.A.' or have 'tried to develop a counter revolutionary instrument' etc. The very contrary has been the case.

(ib.) That I am a 'rich lawyer': whatever the reason, there are few lawyers who earn so little money as I do. As for the wattle farm, I have already dealt fully with that matter in an earlier communication.

(ib.) That Com. Gana Makabeni 'openly admits the imperialist character of my programme and actions': he is too honest to do anything of the sort – but perhaps he will write about these matters himself. The like regarding Com. Pick, who has indeed been inclined, I think, to favour an opposition group, which however my letters to him have consistently opposed.

(ib. Col. 3 ad fin) That I with Thibedi 'organise a counter-revolutionary body consisting of a white membership only, negroes are debarred from membership'. What this grotesque nonsense means I cannot conceive. I know nothing of such an organisation.

(ib. Col. 4) That Thibedi and I put faith in legal machinery. I cannot what Thibedi does. For my part I was called in by the laundry Workers Union (led by Thibedi) to advise (gratis of course) on their legal claims and deprecated their rushing into expensive and probably futile law cases instead of organising the class fight on mass lines.⁵ As a result the Union complained that I refused to take up its law cases and has gone (and has already paid large sums) to another lawyer, and someone has even spread a story that I am in collusion with the laundry bosses!

I pass by mere epithets, such as 'renegade', (though an unwilling expellee can hardly as such be called a renegade or a deserter) 'rotten', 'white chauvinist' (outside the Party head office not a native in South Africa I think will call me that) 'right wing opportunist', 'imperialist agent' etc.; these are flung about in a reckless or parrot fashion just to round off a sentence.

But seeing that this blackguardly campaign ^{of lies} (to which I have no means of retorting) has gone on continuously for the last two years while I have since expulsion been virtually inactive and silent, it may be wondered whether it is

4. E.S. Sachs

5. A line in pen is drawn in the left margin opposite the first half of this paragraph.

scape-goat that is being attacked to divert attention from the sins or failures of the Party leaders? Of that, as well as of the strange series of articles in Inprecorr of July 14, 21, 28 and Aug. 4 last, more may be written hereafter, – probably after a meeting shortly to be held of those who attended the conference of 27 December last already reported to you, to hear a report on the absence of any reply to the representations of that Conference of⁶ the E.C.C.I.

For me personally the whole affair has been and is a tragedy, for I have no other interest than Communist work, but I think it results rather tragically for the Party also. Certainly this continuous slander produces confusion among the readers of the paper, both those who know me and therefore disagree with it, and also, I think, those who do not but wonder what on earth all this mudslinging has to do with them or their cause?

Yours fraternally

S.P. Bunting
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RGASPI, 495/64/119/22-5.

Original in English.

Typed.

Stamped: no. 8422 27.XI.32.

## 18

### **Report of Committee of Opponents of PB, CPSA to ECCI, 13 November 1932<sup>1</sup>**

#### INTRODUCTORY OF THE REPORT

#### RE THE CONFERENCE OF THE 27TH DECEMBER 1931

Resulting out of the Communist Party of South Africa having taken a holiday in organising the oppressed, exploited and voiceless masses in South Africa while

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#### **Doc. 17**

6. Judging by the context, 'of' should be 'from' here.

#### **Doc. 18**

1. The sequence of events that led to the appearance of this document is described in the document itself but the story is complicated, some turns of it are unclear, and it is difficult to understand it without reading documents 18 and 19 (vol. II) together. The following is the editors' interpretation of the text of the two documents.

On 14 November 1931, in the wake of Bunting's expulsion from the party, CPSA's Johannesburg branch convened a meeting at which it decided to call a party conference to discuss the policy of the PB. The PB was invited to attend but sent its representatives, mostly white. As a result the policy debate was polarised along racial lines with the opponents of the PB winning the battle. The conference appointed a small committee that was to report the matter to the Comintern.