

**Letter from J. Marks to ECCI,
1934¹**

SITUATION AS WE FOUND IT

Never in the history of the C.P.S.A. was there a more favourable time than the present for the Party to rally the native masses and the poor strata of the white workers for a united struggle against Anglo-Boer imperialism. But despite this very favourable situation, the Party failed to swell its ranks, this failure is in the main due to the sharp fight that has been taking place among the leading members of the Party.

By the time of our arrival at home the fight had assumed a very serious phase. This fight which was under the leadership of Comrades Bach and Kotane,² split the membership especially that of the centre which is Johannesburg into two hostile camps. This fight very seriously retarded the growth of the Party, and led to the decline of membership, in so much that the centre is today constituted by 32 members of whom over two thirds are petty bourgeois whites, a similar situation exists in Cape Town, Durban and other districts.

The issues around which all these contradictions sprang up are contained in the statements of Comrade Kotane and Bach, which you must have by now received.

During the last two years, the Party committed series of mistakes of a right character, for these Comrades Kotane, Roux and Gomas are mainly responsible, these mistakes have been made possible by their wrong estimation of the danger of the National reformism, which is a result of their total denial of the existence of a National Bourgeoisie. To these Comrades all Natives are oppressed and therefore are equal – thus they speak of the Bantu, they are not prepared to make any class differentiation. This conception is a result of Kotane's Peasant Petty Bourgeois origin, which now further reflects itself in Petty peasant Bourgeois nationalist tendencies inside the Party.

Due to these incorrect conceptions and on the strength of the recommendations from over there, we removed the old leadership which is now definitely hostile and employs all forms of sabotage.

The Kotane leadership has been responsible for pigeon-holding all directives and instructions from over there. The situation inside the Party

1. Obviously, this letter was written soon after Marks's return from Moscow in August–September 1934.

2. Marks must have meant the fight between Bach and Kotane, not 'under the leadership of Bach and Kotane'.

will be reflected by the reports of Comrade Bach. A detailed report be submitted at a later date.

John Marks

RGASPI, 495/64/133/14.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

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**Letter from M. Kotane to ECCI,
20 February 1935**

Johannesburg

20th. February 1935

Dear Comrades,

The situation here is very complex. We are in a state of utter confusion. The Party is disintegrating and the work is practically at stand-still.

I therefore request you, in my personal capacity, to do something – to take a decisive step to save the Party from this demoralization and the approaching disaster.

With revolutionary greetings,

Yrs. Fraternally

Moses. M. Kotane

P.S. The main task of the Party at present seems to be the fight against the Native 'bourgeoisie', instead of British and Boer Imperialism. The national oppression of the Natives is terribly overlooked or underestimated. The leadership runs away from the struggle¹ because it is headed by reformists!

RGASPI, 495/64/145/20.

Original in English.

Handwritten.

Stamped: 1) 14.APR.1935 – 2045

2) Bylage

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1. A word before 'struggle' is crossed out in the original.