

not heard anything from you until this date. I wanted to call your attention to the fact that several months have elapsed since you received these theses and not a word has been said to us by you, either for or against the theses.

I would ask you urgently to do whatever possible in order to make clear to us your point of view. At any rate I hope that no final decisions against our proposal would be taken without preliminary discussion with us.

Yours,
A. Bennett
~~~~~

RGASPI, 495/64/77/2.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 621 – 16.FEB. 1928.

56

**Letter from V. Demar to J. La Guma,  
22 February 1928**

February 22nd 1928.

My dear Laguma,

I was very glad to receive a letter from you. I completely sympathise with you in your complaints regarding our white friends who do not understand the importance and absolute necessity of working among the natives. But I think, Laguma, that you exaggerate a little the difficulties you have to face. You speak of a break. This is too much. Of course, there will be some amongst our friends who will maintain their attitude, but I do not believe that the majority will oppose the line given by the Centre.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to work to guarantee the complete isolation of such persons as continue to resist. But I hope no break will occur among our African friends.

There is one important matter which should be stressed, and should give a new stimulus to all our friends to increase their activities. In spite of the big statesmanlike experience just experienced by your native Reformist in Geneva and Amsterdam,<sup>2</sup> he has now been compelled – as I see from the Press – to make strong protests against the administration for preventing his union to establish local branches. This situation gives a good opportunity of explaining

1. The Comintern.

2. Obviously, Kadalie. See document 51.

to the natives the real meaning of Reformism, of Geneva, of Amsterdam, and so on. There is much work for you to do.

I hope you will continue to write to me about everything you consider important and that you and the old man<sup>3</sup> will make the most of your big trip and of everything you saw here.

Please let me know about the old man. How is he behaving? I hope everything will be all right and that you will give up a little of your pessimism as your work proceeds.

Yours,  
(Victor)  
~~~~~

RGASPI, 495/64/77/1.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

Stamped: 671 – 22.FEB.1928

Inscription: South Africa

(in German)

57

**Minutes of Meeting, Executive Committee, CPSA,
15 March 1928**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CENTRAL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH MARCH
IN ASHERS BUILDING AT 8 P.M.

PRESENT.

S.P. Bunting (Chair), T.W. Thibedi, V. Danchin, B. Weinbrenn, A.H. Michalson, M. Wolton, D.G. Wolton, W. Kalk, G. Makabeni, Phooko, R. Bunting, E.S. Sachs.

Comrade La Guma was also present.

LA GUMA'S REPORT.

Comrade LaGuma stated that as a guest of the Soviet Union he had accompanied the British, Irish and American delegations on a tour to the Caucasus.

3. Most likely, J. Gumede who was in the USSR at the same time as La Guma, in November–December 1927.

He had reported on the South African situation to the Comintern and submitted a copy of a cable to the 6th S.A.C.P. Conference which had never been received in S.A. He stated that the Anglo-American Secretariat had asked for a very careful investigation into the Thesis. Fineberg had stated that a task had been submitted which was more than S.A. Party could undertake at present. LaGuma reported that he had discussed the question of students and had been instructed that ten vacancies were available for S.A.¹

In response to a question he stated that Bucharin had said that the white workers in S.A. soaked as they were with Imperialist ideology, were not of primary revolutionary importance in this country. To a further question LaGuma stated that all section resolutions were submitted to the Presidium before circulation and he had no reason to suppose that a different course had been adopted in regard to the Thesis. He further stated that he had suggested a rallying, cry ^{was} needed for the workers of S.A.

THESIS.

La Guma. The origin of the slogan did not consider white workers as of primary importance. The slogan reached out to the majority and challenged the domination by white workers.

The I.C.U. had been built on a basis of nationalism.

Kalk. Said that opposition of local capitalist interests as against Imperialist interests was not being utilised by the adoption of slogan. He ^{asked whether} ~~~~~~~~~ Com. La Guma ~~~~~~~~~ thought that Dutch Nationalist Party could still be expected to struggle against Imperialism.

Danchin. Which Imperialism is referred to in Thesis? Is it British or South African Imperialism? Why does the native national movement (if it can be called such) support British Imperialism against Boers who oppose British Imperialism.

E. Sachs. Said National movement could not succeed in S.A. because all subjected people were becoming proletarianised and there was no middle class or petty bourgeois elements among natives. Another 1922² with joint black and white workers participation would constitute tremendous advance.

Weinbrenn. Said that slogan does not take into consideration white population of 1,700,000. It will immediately turn S. Africa into armed Fascist camp.

1. Vacancies reserved at KUTV for black members of the CPSA (see document 58).

2. 1922 Rand strike which was called 'Red revolt'. See documents 17-19.

Makabeni. Slogan may be alright later on but was not suitable now. It does not take into consideration the wishes of the people.

Thibedi. Slogan is Garveyism and Racialistic.

Bunting. A black republic is inevitable and we all agree on that but the means to achieving it brings out our disagreements. The launching of the slogan now will mean the hostility and antagonism of the entire white working class.

Phooko. Says slogan resembles Garveyism and will be a means a placing power in the hands of the chiefs who will use it for their own ends.

M. Wolton. Slogan has been grossly misinterpreted as a piece of racialism by many comrades and discussion has not been on merits of slogan but arguments against racialism. The interpretation that the white workers will be segregated, that the present position will be reversed, that the whites will be driven into the sea are distortions of the slogan. Even a Native Bourgeois Govt would mean improvements for the native worker and the limited freedom secured would be an advance on present conditions.

D.G. Wolton. Eventually blacks must predominate in this country, and a Black republic be realised. The collaboration of the white workers was of secondary importance. Unity will only be realised after the proletarian revolution in S.A. is achieved. Slogan Workers of the World Unite is abstract in this country and in face of daily oppression at hands of white worker cannot easily be understood. Hence, need for slogan reaching out to native masses especially.

Discussion has shown that Thesis is not understood and acceptance at this stage would endanger the Party. Slogan must be popularised and when properly understood and when shorn of distortions, it ^{would} secure the support of the majority of the Party.

As the hour was very late it was agreed that any further statements be heard at the next meeting.

PRESS.

Com. Bunting drew attention to a statement in the current issue of the paper which he contended was contempt of court. It was moved that the item referred to be obliterated and after some discussion was put to the vote.

Carried by 7 votes to 3.

NEXT MEETING.

It was agreed that a special meeting be held on Sunday night, ~~that~~ but as several members could not attend on Sunday, further discussion on the Thesis be left over until next Thursday.³

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 11.50 p.m.

Confirmed this⁴ day of March. 1928.

Chairman.

RGASPI, 495/64/75/15-16.

Original in English.

Typed. Copy.

58

**Minutes of Special Meeting, Central Executive Committee, CPSA,
17 March 1928.**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD
AT ASHERS BUILDINGS ON SUNDAY MARCH 17TH 1928 AT 8 P.M.

Present. S.P. Bunting (Chair). E.S. Sachs, V. Danchin, R. Bunting, M. Wolton,
D.G. Wolton.

Comrade La Guma was also present.

Students. Com. La Guma reported that there were vacancies for 10 students in the Oriental University,¹ – a course of 3 years tuition. This number of students had been allocated to S.A. by the University and sanctioned by the C.I. Considerable discussion followed and it was finally agreed that five students should be sent now and more at a later date when they could be spared from local work.

The following nominations were then accepted

Gomas, Tong, Thibedi, Mphahlele, Silwana, Shumba, Gumede Jr.

It was agreed that the following names be put on a list for further consideration at a later stage.

Mbeki, Ronald, Ndobe, Kelly, J. Molefe, Tjelele, Mofutsanyana,
Twayi, Chilwane, G. Makabeni, Majoro, Sepeng.

Doc. 57

3. The words in this phrase were changed by hand in the original.

4. There is an empty space for a date after 'this' in the original.

Doc. 58

1. Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV).

A proportionate vote was then taken of the nominations with the following results.

1. Gomas	42 votes
2. Thibedi	32 – " –
3. Shumba	22 – " –
4. Tong	16 – " –
5. Gumede Jr.	16 – " –
6. Mphahlele	8 – " –
7. Silwana	7 – " –

It was also agreed that Com. La Guma should interview Miss Dorothy Gow in Capetown in regard to the student question.² In the event of any of the first five not being able to leave the vacancy to be filled up by the next on the list.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 11 p.m.

Confirmed this³ day of March 1928

Chairman

RGASPI, 495/64/75/17.

Original in English.

Typed.

59

**Minutes of Meeting, Central Executive Committee, CPSA,
12 April 1928 (Extracts)**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT ASHERS BUILDINGS ON THURSDAY APRIL 12 AT 8 P.M.

Present. S.P. Bunting (Chair), M. Wolton, W. Kalk, R. Bunting, V. Danchin,
T.W. Thibedi, G. Makabeni, D.G. Wolton, A.H. Michalson. Apologies were
received from B. Weinbrenn.

[...]

Thesis. A letter was read from J. Shields in England that he had, as a result of careful deliberation and extensive discussion, become a supporter of the Thesis.

[...]

2. The meaning of this resolution is not clear.

3. Space for a date is left empty in the original.