

Statement by S. P. Bunting

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Private, for circulation among members *of the Communist Party only.*

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DEAR COMRADES OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY,

No doubt you have heard of the recent expulsions, and perhaps you have wondered what is the reason for them. Speaking of my own case only, I believe the great majority of the comrades and the African comrades in particular, will say they know of no reason why I should be put out of the party.

The trouble does not emanate from the membership, however, but from the "new leadership" installed at (or rather before) last conference, which really means Com. Wolton, for the rest of the leading personnel remained much the same as before. Some of you may remember how bitterly, and as I think, falsely Com. Wolton attacked me at our 1928/9 conference, and how that conference did not want to hear anything of such quarrels. Since Com. Wolton's return from Europe last year, however, the attack has been greatly intensified, until it has become almost a "frame up." What have I not been charged with during the past few months? "Chauvinism," "opportunism," "right wing deviation," "being against Trade Unionism," "against the Pass Campaign," etc., etc., to all of which I plead, and I believe your verdict should be, not guilty. Similarly with the charges published in "Umsebenzi" of 4th September last about "sabotage work" or "fractional activities" in connection with T. W. Thibedi, the African Club, etc. - rather thin charges, I think you will agree, even if true, but actually quite false, 'is the members of my group and all others who know the facts (except a mere handful attached to Head Office who have reasons for not knowing them) will testify.

In short, my expellers cannot clearly state any of their reasons except by grossly and knowingly distorting the truth. Or they say I do not follow the "party line". The only party line I know is that published in our party programme, Conference Resolutions, etc., in accord with the Communist International, and this I follow. No other "line", even if authoritative, has been given out, except this lying "anti-Bunting" line, to the propaganda of which much valuable time and man power has been sacrificed, with the result that much real party work has been scamped or most inefficiently conducted, and party membership and general agitational activity have shrivelled almost to a skeleton (and then they blame me for all that too'.)

Well, without engaging in anything like an opposition or a split, I am obliged, in applying to the next Party Conference for reinstatement, to ask you all for your support. That

does not mean that hanker after "leadership"; let the best man lead, whoever he is. For a year already I have worked hard as a rank-and-filer, especially on the founding of a miners' union, and should have been content so to continue. I only want this "ban," passed by a small dictatorship without giving any notice much less a hearing) either to me or to you, to be removed, so that may resume doing my bit in the great war for African emancipation – free this time, I hope, from the persistent in is representation, boycott and persecution, especially behind my back, to which I have been subjected for over a year past.

It will not be so easy for you to do what I ask. The present leadership will possibly do its utmost (and controlling the party machine it can do much) to prevent you from securing free expression of your will, through your own freely-chosen delegates, at the conference. It may say "this appeal of Bunting's is fractional" or "opposition to the leadership cannot be tolerated" or "Bolshevism does not believe in hearing both sides", or it may try to shelve the matter altogether. But if there is something wrong with a party or its bureaucracy, if there is some danger or poison or disease at work, must you just hold your tongues and say "Ja baas"? No, you cannot be deprived of your right to put matters in order at a party conference, and for that purpose to ascertain and discuss all the facts beforehand. If, therefore, you think that in the interest of the party and the African masses I should be reinstated, I beg you not to be indifferent or inactive, not to be bluffed or intimidated, but to assert yourselves by insisting on the conference being held and the matter properly placed on the agenda, and by sending delegates definitely instructed to cancel the expulsion resolution.

Yours ever fraternally,

S. P. BUNTING.

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