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**Letter from ECCI to CPSA,  
10 September 1930 (Extracts)**

Confidential

IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY WORK

To the CP of South Africa.

The main tasks facing the CP of South Africa were set out by the VI Congress of the CI and were worked out in special detail in the letter from the ECCI of May 5th, 1930. These tasks are still in force at the present moment. The organisational task is especially urgent at the present moment. It is closely connected with the fact that the leaders of the Party, according to all information, only accept the policy of the CI as a formality, and in practice do nothing to overcome the great opportunist deviations which were pointed out in the May Letter, or for the organisational strengthening of the Party.

There is no doubt that the CI Letter of May 5th, 1930 continues to lie in some office drawer at the CC, and has never been seriously considered, even in the CC for the purpose of carrying it into practice. It is time to put a stop to such a state of affairs, when the CC does not inform the mass of members of important documents from the CI, and when as a result of this the line decided on by the CI is delayed. The chief question which faces the Party at the present time is that the Party, in its daily work among the workers, agricultural workers and the broad masses of peasants, has no contacts with them. Its contacts with the masses is limited to the calling of chance meetings. As a result the masses know very little about the Party. Although a few members of the Party take an active part in the struggle of the working class, the agricultural workers and the oppressed mass of the village population, this is done without the necessary guidance from the Party organs and they have to act in a haphazard manner at their own risk. In the present condition of the Party, it cannot independently come forward in the developing mass struggle (Durban, Worcester) which definitely prove that the mass is rapidly becoming revolutionised. Another proof of the extreme weakness of the Party is the absence of Red trade unions in places where there are compact groups of Party members and no reformist trade union organisations.

The Party organisations in the localities have no definite formation. The local committees do not work regularly and do not receive proper guidance from the CC, and in reality they only exist on paper. Every leader of an organisation gives Party directives independently, and does not think it necessary to send them for discussion even to the active groups of Party members. The Party members have no definite Party work to perform and are

not attracted into Party life. Many members do not even know the duties of Party members.

Recruiting of Party members is done in a haphazard manner, usually by taking down names at meetings.

The Party must radically reorganise all its work from top to bottom. It is necessary to develop the boldest self-criticism of the shortcomings of Party work, and principally of the labourist and social-democratic remnants, opportunism and sectarianism in practice.

A sharp struggle must be carried on against all relics of white chauvinism, contemptuous and patronising attitudes to proletarian and semi-proletarian Negroes, against ignoring of the slogan 'an Independent native republic', against refusals to select and train Negro cadres for the leadership of all Party work when there is an absolute majority of Negroes in the Party. The Party must be converted into a mass Party, a centralised organisation based on nuclei in factories, mines, farms and plantations. In addition the work of all Party organisations must be imbued with the most attentive attitude to the daily needs of the working masses, must have for its basis the most patient and insistent political and organisational preparation of mass revolutionary activity around the immediate economic demands of the masses, developing these partial economic struggles in the future into mass political acts directed against imperialist rule and the national bourgeoisie.

Supplementary to the May resolution, the CI puts forward the following concrete tasks:

1) The CC must immediately commence the regular publication of a Party organ, in charge of which will be a responsible editor, a member of the CC, who will be directly answerable to the CC for the work of the editing board, and for the political line of the paper. The Party organ must not only be for propaganda and agitation, but for organising purposes. It is absolutely necessary that the central organ should be a good driving belt to transmit the line of the CC, to explain the programme of action of the Party and to assist the local Party organisations to carry out the directives of the CC. The CC must set itself a most important task of forming around the paper support groups in the factories and villages, and also a system of worker correspondents. In every factory, mine, plantation or farm, correspondents should be recruited, and also readers and distributors of the paper. From time to time it is necessary to call meetings, readers' conferences of distributors and worker correspondents, with the aim of discussing questions connected with the improvement at the contents of the paper and the improvement of each distribution.

2) An immediate start must be made on the reorganisation of the apparatus of the CC itself. It is necessary to set up from among the membership of the CC, a bureau consisting of three members, two candidates and a permanent secretary. The bureau must guide the work of the Party in the intervals between plenary sessions of the CC, must prepare for plenums of the CC, must decide all current questions of the leadership of Party work. The secretary will



be the executive organ of the bureau. In addition, a trade union department, agitprop department and women's department must be organised in the CC under the direct guidance of the bureau, and at their head must be comrades appointed by the CC. These comrades will organise groups of active members who will systematically assist them in their work.

Financial and accounting work of the CC will be carried on by the treasurer of the bureau, who will systematically report to the bureau and the plenums of the CC.

3) The leadership of the CC of the Party over local organisations will be carried out by local elected Party committees (town committee, section committee and district committee), which will unite the Party nuclei of definite factories, and which are elected at conferences of representatives of these nuclei and are required to report to them. To carry on all this practical daily work, a bureau of the committee will be appointed, and will organise its regular work in the same manner as the CC (Org. Department, Agitprop, Women's, trade union departments). In the committees, all questions will be decided collectively at sessions of the bureau and plenums of the committee.

The basis of all the work of the local committees is the proper arrangement of the work in factories, mines, plantations and farms, the welding together of a permanent body of nuclei, the organisation of the Communist training of Party members, recruiting and the carrying out of the whole of the Party policy in practice. The nuclei consist of all Party members who work in the given undertaking. The nuclei elect a bureau and a secretary for constant guidance and control of the fulfilment of regular Party work by every Party member. The nucleus must call a meeting of its members not less than twice a month to discuss decisions of the Party and of the Comintern and practical measures for carrying them into practice, and also urgent and vital questions from the life of the factory, and also work among the masses. It is especially important that the nuclei should rapidly and energetically react to all burning questions from the life of the factories.

4) Party nuclei must also take the initiative in forming factory groups of mass proletarian organisations, in the first place, factory groups of revolutionary trade unions and revolutionary trade union oppositions, but also groups of the ICWPA,<sup>1</sup> sport organisations, workers' self-defence.

In places where the Party members are not linked together in a single factory, according to the decisions of the III International organisational meeting, they may be joined in nuclei on the territorial principle (street nuclei, village nuclei). For the systematic preparation of cadres, the CC must form in the near future a school to which those comrades who have shown themselves in the best light in local work should be attracted, and especially Negro activists. At the same time the Party nuclei, at first only the larger ones, should

1. International Class War Prisoners' Aid – the British section of the International Red Aid.

organise with the assistance of the Party committees, circles to work out the Party programme, to explain its chief tasks and to furnish the basis of a Marxist-Leninist education. The Party nuclei must, not in words but in deeds, prepare to formulate and carry out a practical Party line, and all its members must take part in the active discussion and decision of all questions, and especially must analyse in detail all questions connected with the life of the factory with which they are connected, the conditions of labour and life of the workers and burning questions touching their interests. The Party nucleus must carefully estimate the moods of the working class, must formulate their dissatisfaction in the form of demands, explain the meaning of the latter and mobilise the masses in the struggle for carrying them out.

When reorganising the Party, it is necessary first of all to penetrate important factories which have been included in previous struggles or in factories where struggles are expected. In this category we have: mining undertakings, plantations, industrial and transport undertakings.

The Party must understand that the training of cadres should not be limited to work among Party members. The Party must consolidate organisationally the broad sections of sympathetic non-Party workers.

The training of this non-Party active and the attraction of it in the Party will be carried out by calling regular meetings, conferences, delegate meetings, at which will be discussed their most burning questions, the shortcomings of mass work, the Party press, etc. Such stubborn and systematic work among the non-Party actives is also a preparation for recruiting to the Party.

Recruiting of new members is the regular duty of every Party nucleus.

5) The most important mass organisations through which the Party will transmit its influence to the working masses are the Red trade unions. On this question there is a special detailed resolution from the V Congress of the RILU. The most urgent task of the trade union department of the Party consists of forming Party fractions in all trade union organisations, and the fractions will be under the direct guidance and control of the trade union department and will give regular reports to it. The Party must also without fail organise systematic work in the reformist trade unions, must form opposition groups there and must link up these groups with the Red trade unions, especially in view of the fact that the white workers are not organised in Red trade unions. The trade unions affiliated to the SANTU (South African Native Trade Unions) must set themselves the task of organising a revolutionary opposition in the trade unions belonging to the SATUC. It is absolutely impermissible to have such a state of affairs when the Party, having a fairly large group of members among agricultural workers, has not commenced to organise a red trade union among them. The organisation of agricultural workers' unions must be the first task of the Party.

Under modern conditions the organisation of the unemployed becomes of extreme importance. This can and must attract into the struggle the most backward sections of the proletariat, and remove the barrier between white



and black workers (see decision of V Congress of RILU, which shows in detail the forms and methods of work in this sphere).

6) The anti-imperialist struggle for freedom of the toiling native population must not only receive the fullest and widest support from the Party, but must be at the centre of its attention and must be organised by the Party.

The Party must carry on systematic work to expose the treachery of social-reformist organisations and leaders (The African Congress, Kadalli, etc.). The attention of the masses must be concentrated on the struggle against all slave conditions and the political lack of rights of the Negro population, and at the same time this struggle must be linked up with the direct struggle of the working class and the struggle of the peasant masses and agricultural workers against the farmers, landowners, planters, etc.

Mass activity of organisations for the purpose of repulsing imperialist violence must be supported by proletarian methods of struggle, chiefly by mass political strikes and demonstrations, which will be carefully prepared for by all previous work.

By organising in the cities, villages, plantations and mines elected committees of action representing all the workers for the purpose of carrying out such activity, the Party must make use of the directions in the organisational resolution of the V Congress of the RILU so as to carry on tireless work to guarantee proper Party leadership and to struggle against the working masses becoming subservient to petty-bourgeois elements. The organisation of the Anti-Imperialist League in South Africa may serve as that form of mass organisation which will guarantee the proper proletarian leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle of the TOILING Negro masses.

7) The main line of Party work in the country will be on the one hand the organisation of agricultural workers in trade unions and on the other hand support for the development of the mass peasant movement, the movement of landless peasants, small rentiers and sharecrop farmers for the lowering of rents, against taxes, against forms of compulsory and slavish work, for the carrying out of the slogan 'a South African native republic'.

The Party must take steps to see that the trade unions endeavour to find proper forms of contact with groups of workers who are returning to their own villages.

In addition to this it is necessary to extend as widely as possible the contacts of workers' organisations with every kind of radicalism and revolutionary peasant committees of action and with organisations which have been formed in connection with the struggle for the partial demands of peasants.

8) In connection with the sharpened form of the strike struggle and with the growth of repression against revolutionary proletarian organisations, the Party must immediately commence to form mass organisations of proletarian defence based on the factories, mines, plantations and villages. All white workers should be attracted to join workers' defence corps and their international education should be extended in every possible way.

The Party must also not forget that success in its work will inevitably cause the government to move against it. This makes it necessary for the Party, at the same time as it develops its legal organs, to prepare an illegal apparatus composed of the most reliable and faithful comrades.

9) The Party must immediately widely and seriously discuss the letter from the ECCI dated May 5th, 1930 and also the present letter. It must draw all the necessary conclusions from these letters, must carry them into practice with Bolshevist directness and decisiveness. Only in this way can the Party ranks be strengthened and the Party converted into a real Bolshevist vanguard.

RGASPI, 495/4/399/29-33.

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**Report of E.S. Sachs to ECCI,  
8 October 1930**

Johannesburg.  
8th October, 1930.

REPORT.

I arrived home on the 1st October<sup>1</sup> and on the second attended a meeting of the E.B. of the Party, at which I submitted a report on

- (a) World Negro Conference;
- (b) R.I.L.U. Congress.
- (c) Discussion with C.I. letter of the 5th May and latest resolution.

I was informed that the C.I. letter of 5th May was not received here and I must ask you, therefore, to forward a copy of the letter to us immediately as well as a copy of the resolution adopted recently.

Use this address for all private matter:

1. Sachs attended the International Conference of Negro Workers in Hamburg and 5th Congress of the Profintern in Moscow, both in July 1930.