

## Comrade WOLFE (U. S. A.):

Comrades, I want to say a word about the thesis in general. I have seen in it certain formulations which need alteration or correction, amendments, and so on. I want to say that those who reject them fundamentally have a fundamentally wrong approach to the colonial question. I consider the theses unquestionably a most valuable contribution to the work of the Communist International.

The primary merit of this thesis is its effort, and in general its success, in picturing the complicated variety in the process of colonial development and colonial revolutionary movements in the various portions of the world. The theses represent a passing over from the general formula with which the Communist International has largely had to content itself since the basic work of Lenin at the Second Congress, to its application in detail to the concrete and the greatly complicated phenomenon of the colonial picture. In addition the theses utilise the rich experiences of some eight years of struggles in the various colonial and semi-colonial fields.

Other merits of the theses are the attempts to define the colonial regime as to its economic and political characteristics, classification of the colonies according to the degree of development of class relationship. The distinction is made clear between the driving forces of the various revolutions and their political content.

Comrades, in confusion of the distinction between the class driving forces of a revolution and the political content of a revolution, in confusion between bourgeois democratic and Socialist revolution, in confusion on the question of phases in a colonial revolution, — in confusion on these three fundamental lines lies the basis for the Trotskvist conception of the colonial question. The theses greatly clarify these important points.

I turn now to the question of "decolonisation".

1. There exists a general tendency of capitalism to draw the entire world into the train of capitalist production, to destroy the earlier forms of economy and to introduce capitalist conditions throughout the world.

2. This tendency is undoubtedly strengthened by the export of capital.

3. To bring the whole world into the orbit of the capitalist system, however, does not necessarily mean that all sections of it need be industrialised. Capitalist market relations, plus imperialist rule, plus capitalist agricultural relations would also satisfy this tendency. The basic in industrialisation in a country is the development of those industries which produce means of production.

4. In addition to this basic general tendency towards the development of capitalism throughout the world, imperialism

expresses a direct counter-tendency, namely, to intensify the parasitic exploitation and the restrictions upon the development of the backward portions of the world.

5. There have been two periods in the development of modern economy when this restrictive tendency was dominant. These periods were the period of early monopoly out of which modern capitalism grew, the period of "mercantilist" policy in regard to the colonies; and then the period of monopoly on the basis of finance capital, the export of capital and trustification.

6. While the industrialisation and the production of capitalist conditions in the backward nations is growing in an absolute sense of quantity, the parasitic restrictive aspect of imperialism is the dominant one.

7. The so-called decolonisation tendency of capitalism is to such an extent counter-acted by the parasitic restrictive tendency of imperialism that we even witness a tendency towards **recolonisation** or better, towards **colonisation** in the sense of reducing previously independent regions of the world to the status of semi-colonies. We have had in the post-war period, the growth of a whole series of such new semi-colonies where there was no question of colonial status before.

8. Of the two tendencies, that is, of the tendency to further the industrial development of the backward portions of the world and the counter-tendency to hinder, restrict, and prevent this industrial development, the latter is undoubtedly dominant. The fundamental in this period of finance capital and capital export, is not as Comrades Rothstein, Bennet and some of the other speakers said, the industrialisation tendency but the parasitic exploitation tendency of the countries which export capital. To miss this, comrades, is to miss the **fundamentally parasitic role of imperialism**. To hold the theory that the dominant tendency of imperialism is to develop modern production in the backward portions of the world, would lead objectively towards an underestimation of the oppressive reactionary role of imperialism, of the necessity of and the sharp explosive force of the struggle against it. Carried to its logical conclusion, it leads objectively to an opportunist and even an unconscious apologetic line in the question of the role and character of imperialism.

9. The contradiction between these two tendencies is one expression of the antagonism between metropolis and colony.

10. This antagonism, together with the class struggle within the various countries, together with the antagonisms between the imperialist powers and the Soviet Union, will lead to the destruction of imperialism long before this ideally conceived industrialisation of the world is completed or has progressed basically far. Only Socialism will complete the task but on a new basis of division of labour and planned economy on a world scale.

I want to turn now to **Latin America**. Certainly here also both tendencies are observable. But, again there can be no question as to which is dominant.

It is perfectly true that the United States, in certain countries of Latin America has found it necessary to overthrow certain reactionary forces. The reason is a **historical** one, namely, that Great Britain was in those countries first, picked in advance the best natural allies for imperialism in those countries, namely, the land owners and reactionary Catholic church. When the United States came upon the field to challenge Britain's privileged position the U. S. was faced with the accomplished fact of the union between landowners and Catholic reactionaries with British imperialism, and in order to break ground for the forward march of the dollar it was necessary to further certain revolutionary forces in those countries.

However, just as soon as Britain's puppet governments were overthrown, then the United States tried to stem the tide of the revolutionary development which it had helped to set loose. In those countries in Latin America, where the United States can take its pick, it links up with the semi-feudal, catholic landowning reaction and all the most backward class forces in the country. Thus, we find that the United States sets up a Fascist dictatorship, autocracies of the most brutal sort, in such countries as Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile.

So far as Liberia is concerned this "progressive" American imperialism is attempting to go back to a system of chain-gang, chattel slavery.

The situation in Latin America presents us with a whole series of new forms of semi-colonies of various grades and kinds, most of them maintaining their formal independence while the power of the United States grows greater and greater.

American imperialism has developed many forms of intervention. We can distinguish the following:

1. **Military intervention**, primarily in Mexico and the Caribbean countries. In those countries we have witnessed no less than 30 military interventions in a period of a quarter of a century.

2. **Customs control**. The Orient is not the only portion of the world where the customs of so-called sovereign countries are controlled by imperialism.

3. **Direct fiscal control** of bank appointees who are nominated by the President of the United States and formally approved by the puppet governments.

4. **Military advisers**.

5. **The financing** of "revolutions" and financing of reactionary dictatorships.

The general progress of American domination is from North to South, from near to far, from the Canal to the Straits of Magellan. Of course, it is not a regular march; certain countries were temporarily overlooked in order to make the jump into Chile for the copper and other mineral wealth there.

This march involves not only a struggle with the peoples of Latin America but also a struggle with British imperialism. The United States has invested in Latin America at the present time something like 5,200,000,000 dollars. If we add Canada we find that the United States has invested in the New World something over 8000 millions, out of a total of 13,000 millions which is invested in the world as a whole, exclusive of the war debts.

To date the United States has invested in Latin America almost an identically equal amount to Great Britain. You can calculate both of them in round figures at about 5000 million dollars, but before the war Great Britain already had 5000 million dollars invested in Latin America, and has today only 5,200,000,000 dollars, whereas the United States before the war had only 2,200,000,000 dollars and has equalised with Great Britain now.

I want to underscore the importance of Latin America in the scheme of economy of the United States, and also its importance in the coming war period. Venezuela today with its oil resources scarcely touched is the third biggest producer of oil in the whole world; the first being the home territory of the United States. The Soviet Union is the second. Mexico is the fourth. Colombia and Peru have scarcely been opened up and are rich in reserves of oil. North Argentina and a section of Bolivia also show oil deposits. Metals are found in rich abundance and in the forms easy to extract. Raw materials of importance in making munitions are potassium and nitrates. There is rubber and, of course, agricultural products.

The Latin American revolutions belong to the bourgeois democratic revolutions. They represent a close fusion of revolutionary movements, primarily agrarian, with the struggles against American imperialism. However, the basic driving force in these revolutions is not the bourgeoisie, but the workers and peasants. This explains the vague socialistic aspirations which are in the hands of foreign capital, as are the banks, means of explains the Socialist phraseology, the radical gestures of the petty bourgeois governments that take advantage of these revolutionary forces for their own purposes.

During the electoral campaign of Calles and Angel Flores, for the Presidency of Mexico, Flores who represented the land-owning catholic reaction with the support of British capital, posted all over the country a placard with his picture and the words, "I am a Socialist and a Revolutionary". You can imagine what revolutionary phrases the "Socialist" Calles used if that was the character of the propaganda of the reaction.

We have in Latin America, for example, such dangerous careerists as Haya de la Torre of Peru who came to Moscow, who attended the Fifth Congress of the Comintern as a fraternal

delegate, who came to the Third Congress of the Profintern as a regular delegate, and who has attempted to cover with the mantle of Communism an essentially non-Communist movement.

A few remarks as to class forces in Latin America:

a) We must not, in the first place, forget the great weakness of the **national bourgeoisie** in most of the Latin American countries. All important industries in most of these countries are in the hands of foreign capital, as are the banks, means of communication, etc. Thus, in Mexico, in the field of petroleum, the investment of native Mexican capital comes ninth on the list and even Cuban capital has more money invested in Mexican petroleum than have native Mexicans. This weakness of the native bourgeoisie helps to account for the greater role played by the petty bourgeoisie in Latin American revolutionary movements.

b) We must note the peculiar character of certain sections of the Latin American **petty bourgeoisie**. Intellectuals who are partially declassed, play an important role out of all proportion to their numbers in the movements of Latin America.

There are two basic reasons for the existence of discontent among the intelligentsia of Latin America. One is that foreign imperialism in general, and American in particular, tends to maintain in power for indefinite periods autocratic governments, until these degenerate into cliques of super-annuated bureaucrats who leave no room for the young intellectuals being turned out by the universities to find a career in the important sphere of government. This was one of the driving forces which made the student body and the young intellectuals of Mexico virtually unanimous in their opposition to Diaz and his group after they had been in power for thirty years. A similar situation exists in countries like Venezuela, Peru, etc. Secondly, there is the tendency of American capitalist enterprises to employ as technicians, engineers, overseers, etc., Americans so that the only other field that might be open to intellectuals is thereby closed to them by imperialism. They have only one field of activity, namely, opposition politics and anti-imperialist politics and into this they tend to enter. They represent, however, a dangerous force combining with the usual vacillating characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, a peculiar susceptibility to both open and indirect bribery, being readily satisfied by a "share" in the government.

c) The proletariat in the Latin American countries, with the exception of the most developed of them, is extremely weak. This is a reflection of the weakness of the industrial development in general. Also, even where there is a proletariat developing it is still lacking in experience, organisations, technique and discipline, due to the newness of the proletariat as a class. It is closely linked up with the peasantry, often made up of only recently "deruralised" peasants. This infiltrates the proletariat with peasant ideology and makes popular a sort of "narodnikism".

d) As to the **peasantry**, it presents some peculiar features in many of the Latin American countries which makes it necessary to distinguish sharply between it and the European peasantry. The peasant in many Latin American countries is not a landowner of even the smallest parcel of land, he is a former joint owner of communal lands. The process of creating large estates, of dispossessing the peasant Indian communes, the process of enclosures has removed him from the land, impoverished him and made him into an agrarian worker. However, he retains the traditions of having been a possessor of land and the ambition of recovering the lands taken from him, or his immediate forefathers. Often he does not even demand private property in land, but demands that the communal lands be restored to the entire village unit or tribal unit that formerly possessed them.

e) There are whole sections of inland countries in Latin America where Spanish is not the language of the people, where there are still vast **Indian tribes** with strong survivals of tribal organisation. These Indian tribes speak their own language, retain strong vestiges of primitive Communism in their tradition and their economy and in some cases have a powerful tradition of former tribal glory. (Incas, Aztecs, Mayas, etc.) They view Europeans and even mixed white and Indian natives of the coastal and more industrialised regions of the country with suspicion and even aversion and can rarely be led

by those who cannot speak their own tribal language. The Parties of Latin America in those countries must work out a whole series of special measures to meet these problems, measures involving such matters as self-determination for the indigenous races, special propaganda in their own languages, special efforts to win leading elements among them, special educational activities for those Communists who are of Indian origin and who speak the Indian dialect so that they can go back into the inner regions of the country and organise the indigenous elements.

The history of the last generation in these Latin American countries where compact indigenous tribes exist, is characterised by a whole series of Indian uprisings, sometimes against foreign imperialist oppressors, sometimes against the landowners, sometimes against the native state bureaucracy — generally a fusion of these three revolutionary moments. These uprisings constitute the greatest reserve of revolutionary energy that exists in Latin America which reserve is only very imperfectly connected with the proletarian and agrarian peasant movements of the rest of the countries.

f) Emphasis must be laid on the lack of bourgeois democratic and parliamentary traditions in Latin American political life and lack of such traditions and illusions among the masses. The weakness and often times virtual non-existence of the native bourgeoisie is of course the basic explanation of this. The petty bourgeoisie makes up the state apparatus and often times the officership of the armies. A struggle for control of the treasury is quite literally an important force in the conflicts between the different so-called parties in Latin American life.

g) As to the rival imperialisms the conflicts between them often result in liberating revolutionary forces in a country where they are about equally balanced. Each of them supports contrary elements, and if one of them is tied up with the reaction, the other one has to tie up with the progressive elements. The result is a continuous see-saw manifested in Mexico since the discovery of oil there. This has tended to liberate revolutionary forces in the country. We may look for a similar situation now in a country like Venezuela where oil has been discovered in such quantities and where British and American capital are in pretty even balance.

h) The leaders of the American Federation of Labour, Green and Woll and their henchmen, Morones, Iglesias, Cariato Vargas, etc., with their Monroe Doctrine of Labour and their Pan-American Federation of Labour seek to paralyse the fighting will of the Latin American masses, and pave the way for the new conquest of the continent. The American and Latin American parties must set up the closest union of the working class organisations of Latin America with each other, with the Left wing of the American labour movement and with the R.I.L.U.

i) I think the Congress must categorically reject the proposal for the founding of Workers' and Peasants' Parties in the Latin American countries.

Our primary task in Latin America is to establish Communist Parties, build them strong and make their lines of demarcation clear. They must penetrate the mass movements of the workers and peasants and lead these movements. Particularly in view of the weakness of the parties, the political backwardness of the masses, the lack of parliamentary tradition and the excessively big role played by the petty bourgeois state bureaucracy and the petty bourgeois professional politicians in Latin America, there is the danger that such elements will get control of the workers' and peasants' party. The correct form for Latin America today is the worker-peasant bloc with leadership by a steadily developing Communist Party.

j) In the various struggles against imperialism and against internal reaction in the various countries, the workers and peasants must enter as a separate force. The Communist Party must make clear its own programme at every stage, must criticise at every stage the elements with which at times it must co-operate; must struggle consistently for the hegemony in those movements. At the same time we must pay special attention to the organisational form that the struggle manifests. For example, when elements of a still revolutionary character seek the support of the peasants and workers of Latin America, we must put down as one of the minimum organisational conditions the right of those workers and peasants to separate armed detachments under their own leadership, with their own programme, and maintaining the status of guerilla forces in the general

struggles that take place. This tactic has been applied with some success in Mexico, and as a result, whole sections of the peasantry are armed today, and in spite of the repeated efforts to disarm them, they retain their arms. There is a new wave of resistance against American imperialism; a new development of revolutionary forces in the agrarian revolution, and all the phases of the revolutionary movement in Latin America. I mention only a few instances: the long struggle in Mexico, the revolutionary struggle in Ecuador, uprisings in Brazil, in Colombia, in Peru, in Venezuela, in Bolivia, in Paraguay, in Northern Argentina; the sharpening struggle in Chile, which has only temporarily been defeated by the establishment of a brutal military Fascist dictatorship. And above all, the heroic resistance that has been manifested by such little countries as San Domingo, Haiti and Nicaragua and the other Central American countries to the aggression of the United States. Costa Rica has been quiet for a while, but we find here in an issue of a Costa Rican paper of May 18, 1928 that a motion of interpellation to the Secretary of Foreign relations as to why they are not recognising the Soviet Union, and a demand that the United States blockade be broken in this respect, was carried by the Chamber of Deputies. This means that there are stirrings among the masses, or these petty-bourgeois politicians would never attempt to frame such a demand.

The outstanding example of the new strength of the resistance of Latin America to American imperialism is the struggle in Nicaragua. This is the first time that Nicaragua, or any of the small Central American countries, has been able to put up so brave a resistance for so long a period. For a year and a half, in one form or another, the forces of national liberation in that diminutive country have been holding at bay the marines of the United States and carrying on, with more or less success, incredibly heroic guerilla warfare. The United States has still not succeeded in winning this war in Nicaragua. Never before has such a struggle awakened so much echo in the rest of Latin America and gone so far towards unifying the revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces in Latin America for a common struggle.

In the face of the dominant power of American imperialism in the world today, Latin America assumes more importance than ever; in fact, it moves up to the first rank among the vital questions concerning the entire Communist International. The United States and the Soviet Union represent the two poles of the earth today. The whole Comintern must turn its attention to this natural enemy of American imperialism, this natural ally of the proletariat of the world — the revolutionary movements of the Latin American peoples. At the 5th Congress Latin America was represented by one Party and two League delegates for all of these numerous countries put together. The large representation at the 6th Congress is an evidence that the Comintern has already turned its eyes in that direction, and an evidence also of the rapid development of class relationships in Latin America. But the entire Comintern, and particularly the American section of the Comintern, must multiply by many times its attention and its aid to the Communist Parties and the revolutionary movements of Latin America.

The Latin American countries are still in the so-called Latin Secretariat. Because our apparatus unfortunately is built on a basis of language, in place of common political problems. I think that some reorganisation must come after this Congress in which common political problems become the basis of grouping, and not common language.

Finally, I want to say that as far as the question of "Latin-Americanism", which has been raised in the discussion here, is concerned, we cannot slavishly accept the general proposals for Latin American unity which are made by the petty bourgeois intellectuals of Latin America. The proposal for a union of all the existing governments and countries as at present constituted in Latin America is a fundamentally false and reactionary proposal, because they include whole series of puppet governments of American imperialism, and some governments which are still puppets of British imperialism. We must raise the slogan of the union of the revolutionary forces, the workers and peasants movements, of Latin America with the revolutionary workers of the United States; and we must add to that the slogan of the Union of Soviet Workers and Peasant Republics of Latin America for a common defence against American imperialism, and for a common federation in a Soviet Union.