SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.
(FULL REPORT.)

Thirty-eighth Session.
Moscow, 20th August 1928.

Continuation of the Discussion, and Concluding Speeches on the Colonial Questions.

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Comrades, I now declare this session open and we will continue the discussion of the theses of Comrade Kuusinen.

Comrade BUNTING (South Africa):
Comrades, I should like to have spoken on colonial or at least on South African matters in general but must confine myself to a controversial matter seriously affecting our South African Party.

There is a proposal in the Negro Sub-Commission that the Party should put forward as its immediate political slogan “an independent native South African Republic, as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full safeguards and equal rights for all minorities”; that the country and land be returned to the black population; and that a native revolutionary movement be developed by the Party.

This formulation is opposed by the majority of our Party, mainly for practical reasons. But we may first consider the more theoretical basis of the formula. This is stated in a draft resolution submitted to the Sub-Commission as follows:

“The national question in South Africa, which is based upon the agrarian question, lies at the foundation of the revolution in South Africa.”

According to our experience, it seems possible to harp too exclusively on the national chord in colonial matters. In an earlier debate, I ventured the opinion, that it might not be so universally true that the chief function of a colonial people was to engage in a national struggle (predominantly agrarian in character) against foreign imperialism and for independence; and that in South Africa, at any rate, the class struggle of the proletariat (chiefly native) appeared more capable of accomplishing the same task.

It is often said that the colonial thesis of the II. Congress is authority to the contrary, but I do not find anything to that effect in the thesis. It says, of course, that we should “support the revolutionary movement among the subject nations and in the colonies” — “the form of support to be determined by a study of existing conditions”. And it also says

“there are to be found in the dependent countries two distinct movements, one is the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement with a programme of political independence under the Congress order, and the other is the mass action of the poor and ignorant peasants and workers for their liberation from all forms of exploitation. The former endeavours to control the latter, but the C. I. and the Parties affected must help to develop class consciousness.
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in the working masses of the colonies. For the overthrow of foreign capitalism, which is the first step towards revolution in the colonies, the co-operation of the bourgeoisie nationalist revolutionary elements is useful. But the first and most necessary task is the formation of Communist Parties which will organise the peasants and workers and lead to revolution and to the establishment of Soviet Republics..."

That is so even when there is a bourgeois democratic nationalist movement in existence, and bourgeois nationalist revolutionary elements to co-operate with. Until recently, nearly all subsequent Communist theory on colonial revolution has been based on the assumption that such a movement and such elements are in existence in every colony; the present draft colonial thesis is one of the first to deal on a different basis with colonies, like most African colonies, where such elements do not exist.

In African colonies there is as a rule no native bourgeoisie, and consequently no question of the "two distinct movements": there is only the question of "organising the peasants and the workers to lead them to the revolution and to the establishment of Soviets".

Put in another way, the class struggle is here practically coincident and simultaneous with the national struggle. The object is the same in each case — the removal of all oppression and the gaining of liberation and power for workers and peasants; the parties are substantially the same, and the weapons and methods of the struggle also. Hence, there is no very great point or virtue, even where there is no exploited European class present (as there is in South Africa) in emphasising the national aspect of the struggle as more fundamental than the class aspect; rather the reverse is the case.

Now a further complication arises in South Africa from the presence of a white exploited working and peasants class as well as a black one — a small minority, but one which also rises against the bourgeoisie and imperialists, sometimes in a very spirited and revolutionary way, more so indeed than any modern native national movement hitherto, although it has no racial oppression to fight against.

The South African native masses, in their turn, are being rapidly proletarianised and organised as a working class. The native agrarian masses as such have not yet shown serious signs of revolt: indeed, as the theses say:

"In these countries the question of the agrarian revolution does not by far constitute the axis of the colonial revolution."

At any rate a live agrarian movement has still to be organised in South Africa.

The draft colonial theses in reference to South Africa and other colonies says: (paragraph 12)

"The most important task here consists in the joining of the forces of the revolutionary movement of the white workers with the class movement of the colonial workers, and in the formation of a revolutionary united front with that part of the native national movement which really conducts a revolutionary liberation struggle against imperialism."

But this task is no longer so easy. It is no longer a mere case of the national and the class movements coinciding as it was automatically. Here the white exploited are of the very race against which the native exploited as nationalists, are fighting. It is almost inevitable therefore that the nationalist movement of the natives will clash with their class movement. Similarly the white exploiting, finding their race being attacked as such by a native nationalist movement, are predisposed by their superior economic and political position to side with the masters nationally and forget their class struggle. Special tactics have to be adopted to prevent this and to harmonise the national and the class movements in this special case, devoted principally to neutralising and correcting white labour chauvinism.

Not only have we no native bourgeoisie or bourgeois national movement, but we have in South Africa no really nationalist movement at all of the kind contemplated in the draft resolution of the Negro Sub-Commission; certainly no movement for a native republic as such has been observable. The African National Congress, which the resolution wants us to boost up, is a moribund body, it has had its day. In any case its demands were not nationalist demands proper, but such as the following: removal of all special race oppression and discrimination, land and more land, equality with whites, equal votes, equal education, equal justice, equal treatment, rights and opportunities everywhere. It has lost its redress for grievances by sending deputations to the King of England, which of course have resulted in nothing. We believe the class stimulus is a greater stimulus even to the native masses, it has actually stimulated greater sacrifices and devotion already, and it has the advantage of gaining, instead of perhaps forfeiting, the alliance of the white workers. We believe the militant leader of the native national movement; it makes all the national demands that the national body makes, and of course much more, and it can "control" nationalism with a view to developing its maximum fighting strength. It can and will respond to the entire struggle of all the oppressed of South Africa, natives in particular.

Some reference to the actual work of our Party seems necessary to explain the foregoing.

Our work among the native masses, our chief activity, conducted so far mainly as a working class movement (although an agrarian movement is growing), is only a matter of contacts, either in person, or through publications, contact especially with the distant and not easily accessible native reserves is limited only by ability to cope with it. We have 1,750 members of whom 1,600 are natives, as against 200 a year ago, and we are adding to that and also rapidly organising militant native trade unions which have learnt to control their powers. We have a great deal of attention and whenever we see any line in it we apply United Front tactics. Thus, after years of preparatory effort, we have recently begun to reap substantial success which will continue provided we can find the man power to garner the harvest. Native workers and some peasants are pouring into the Fight in preference to joining the purely native bodies, which have let them down and fallen into the hands of the bourgeoisie. They see that the C. P. sincerely and unreservedly expouses their national cause as an oppressed race.

Such are the circumstances in which a native republic slogan would be launched, and we consider it would not in theory perhaps, but certainly in practice, arouse white workers' opposition as being unfair to the minority, and this would not only intensify the contradiction between national and class movement, but put the native national movement at a great disadvantage. It would not avail, when such suspicions are aroused, to put them off with smooth, "empty liberal phrases", to the effect that "national minorities will be safeguarded", especially when no definition is given of these safeguards. Expressions like "South Africa is a black country", "the return of the country and land back to the black population", "South Africa belongs to the native population", etc., though correct as general statements, do invite criticism by the white working and peasant minority who will have to fight side by side with the black workers and peasants if the bourgeoisie is to be overthrown. They certainly seem to indicate a black race dictatorship, which is either an exaggeration or they are calculated to be generally understood as one. If the white working class feels, from the apparent exclusiveness of the phrase "native republic", that the intention is to ride roughshod over it, it will say, rightly or wrongly; "Under a native government built on a nationalistic or racial foundation and thus biased against white men, safeguards for the rights of the black peasantry would go to the winds at the first clash." And as regards disposal of the land, the draft resolution does not even speak of safeguards. As the slogan will certainly be interpreted by the exploited whites, it means that the exploited whites are to become in their turn a subject race, that the native republic in practice will be the same as the settler republic. Out of all white men there will be not one that not exception will belong to the natives. The slogan will have to be drafted on less nationalist lines if it is to avoid giving that impression.

Of course, no one denies that the immense majority must and will exercise its power as such, from which it follows that
a minority of the exploited is also entitled to its proportionate voice and share in power and land. The "native republic" is deified, indeed, as a mere expression of majority rule, but it obviously goes beyond that, and the little difference makes all the difference, it handicaps propaganda, when it comes to combating white chauvinism.

It is certainly strange that we of the C. P. S. A., who are accusation working strenuously and actively for the native masses, and who are always attacking white chauvinism, should find ourselves obliged here to take up unwonted cudgels for the white minority. But the reason is, first the need for labour solidarity, and secondly, a true valuation of the forces at our disposal. Our infant native movement lives and moves in a perpetual state bordering on illegality; on the slightest pretext it can be suppressed either by prosecution or legislation or by massacre or pogrom. We are therefore always looking for allies, or rather for shields and protections behind which to carry on; and even the bare neutrality, much more the occasional support, of the white trade unions, etc., is of incalculable value to us. It undoubtedly helps us to avoid being driven constantly to struggle against all exceptional laws against would make our work almost impossible, and besides, in a political agitation for liberation of the mass of the people, publicity is a very valuable weapon. We have always instinctively felt this need of white labour support, but it is only when threatened by this slogan with the loss of it, that we realise how valuable it is to us, and how impossible it is to agree with the defenders of the slogan who say "To hell with white labour support, damn the white workers". We who have had all these years to work in both camps, black and white, who have learned the art of going it on uncompromising Marxist lines by long and hard experience of the enormous difficulties arising out of this very race discrimination on South African labour — on a matter like this we must be heard. We say that the white workers are unquestionably going to be alienated by the present slogan and that instead of support from white labour we are thus quite likely to get its hostility and Fascist alliance with the bourgeoisie. This in turn will also encourage the government to prosecute and the courts to convict everyone who preaches the slogan. Indeed a further sequel may be violent race hostilities, a bloody struggle for mutual extermination or subjection between whites and blacks as races, and what is worse, between the white exploited and the black exploited, a struggle in which the class struggle is completely obscured and forgotten, and in which the unarmed side courts defeat.

Our present policies are endorsed by good authority. The amended C. I. theses of the C. P. S. A. and E. C. C. I. theses of Comrade Bukharin for instance says:

"53. The Congress observes a growth of Communist influence in South Africa. The Congress imposes the obligation upon all Communists to take up as their central tasks the organisation of the toiling Negro masses, the strengthening of Negro trade unions and the fight against white chauvinism. The fight against foreign imperialism in all forms, the advocacy of complete and absolute equality, the struggle for the emancipation of the toiling Negroes, determined support for the fight against driving the peasants from the land, to organise them for the struggle for the agrarian revolution, while at the same time strengthening the Communist groups and Parties — such must be the fundamental tasks of the Communists in these countries."

There is nothing here about a "native Republic".

In the draft C. I. Programme there is also nothing about a native republic. But a direction to imbue the colonial masses with the idea of the independence and hegemony of the working class is surely somewhat akin to the slogans of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Republics.

After long consideration and having heard all that is said for the draft resolution, and in view of the special complications conditioning Communist progress in South Africa, we are at present, while standing for proletarian equality and for the fullest majority rights, against the creation of any special nationalist slogan for South Africa, except of course the liberation of the native people from all race oppression and discrimination, and separation from the British Empire.

Comrade RAZA (India):

Comrades, the colonial world today cannot be classed as isolated from the rest of the world. These countries are drawn into closer touch with the rest of the civilised world thanks to the international character of capitalism.

Owing to their world-wide inter-relations and economic inter-dependence, all that could have been termed strictly as national some years back is today international. When discussing the international capitalist world, we have to make this Universal Law of Independence our main starting point and lack of the spirit of this law is, unfortunately, a shortcoming of the theses.

The colonies cannot be an exception to this universal economic law. It is true that the economic development of the colonies is extremely slow and incomplete, but they are held up by foreign domination. But still they are drawn into the present world economic system as an integral part of the international capitalist world, through its imperialist policy. The imperialists, while practically putting an end to the feudal system in the colonies, have been purposely supporting the few feudal remnants and the landed aristocracy. They have created a class of the native bourgeoisie and feudal remnants. It is impossible to hold sway over these colonies but the native bourgeoisie have to be put under permanent control so that they should not grow into a rival power to the foreign intruder; hence the support of the feudal remnants and vice versa, such is the characteristic feature of imperialist colonial policy of "divide and rule". Nevertheless, the foreign power is surrendering, and in fact, it has done, a minor portion of the profits to the native exploiter for the joint exploitation of the colony.

The capitalist system demands state power, without which it cannot coerce the working masses, cannot guard its trade and trade routes, cannot capture fresh markets, etc. etc., and hence the evolution of imperialist forces as the vanguard of capital. Imperialism is the tool of oppression in the hands of the capitalists. Imperialism demands ever more fresh colonies, exploitation and subjugation, in order to introduce the capitalist order of society among the colonial peoples. Simultaneously with this, the colonial policy of the imperialists has given rise to enormous social contradictions in the colonies; the rise of the working class, the pauperisation of the peasantry. These are the two main factors which today stand in the way of the advance of the imperialists. But this is not only true of India and the other colonies, but is true today all over the world. The unification of all these forces in the colonies along the lines adopted for the rest of the capitalist world is the task before the Communist International. Imperialism is the creator and chief-in-command of the capitalists; Communism is the creator and the advance-guard of the toiling masses. All the members of the political parties fall into either of the two main categories.

Communism, as the diametrically opposite force to imperialism, has to adopt just the opposite tactics as the latter in the colonies. Communism has to utilise all mass forces which imperialism has created. Communism has to challenge the very order which imperialism stands for in the colonies. Communism cannot aim at bourgeois revolutions.

The Communist International, as the standard bearer of Communism, has to rely on the industrial proletariat for carrying out its revolutionary programme in the colonies, and to organise the struggle of the world proletariat. Imperialism owes its very life to the capture and exploitation of the colonies. The C. I. must capture the colonial revolutionary forces, the proletariat and the peasantry, the very germs created by the imperialist colonial policy and which will eventually destroy it.

The history of the Indian Nationalist movement is a history of the treacherous betrayal of the toiling masses by the national bourgeoisie leaders. Not only that, those treacherous leaders took to armed uprising on any occasion. Because they are class conscious. There may exist antagonism between the foreign and the native bourgeoisie, but this is a phenomenon all over the world. But it does not mean that the C. I. bases all its revolutionary programme on this antagonism alone. No, it must base its programme on the dynamic forces of revolution, that is, the proletarian movement in all the countries. It is quite a
different thing for the Communist International, for tactical reasons, to utilise those antagonisms for revolutionary purposes. But even this is problematic, owing to the fact that the capital-

is more cunning and politically conscious than ever. Economic antagonism exists between a section of the native bourgeoisie and the foreign bourgeoisie; the former stands for an exclusive right of exploitation, but this is not the driving

force of the revolution. The driving forces of the revolutionary movement are, as in every other capitalist country, the millions of home and foreign proletariat and the millions of the peasantry, created by the capitalist exploitation in different col-

onies; and it is these rising forces that badly need the atten-
tion of the Communist International. Needless to say, we cannot
depend, or rather, we must not attach any considerable im-
portance to the so-called nationalist movements in the colonies,
as the history of this movement is the history of the small cap-
tulation before the imperialist forces on the one hand, and of the other, the treacherous betrayal of the masses by the so-called nationalist leaders just at the moment when an honest sincere lead was needed.

With reference to paragraph 8, in which the theses mention the decolonisation theory, Comrade Kuusinen is quite right in his condemnation of this false theory. No imperialist power whatsoever will ever agree to decolonise until and unless its very existence is threatened. Especially in India it is a life and death problem for British imperialism.

A few remarks about the industrialisation of India. The creation of the native bourgeoisie is a historical necessity for the British bourgeoisie, but at the same time, by such an action, the British bourgeoisie has created a great competitor and a rival. It has been said that the third imperialist colonial policy asserts itself. India must be industrialised, but: 1. under the chief control of British capital; 2. Indian capital has to assume a junior partnership; and 3. the Indian industries have to play a secondary role so as never to be independent of the home industries, but, besides this, to be permanent consumers of the home manufactures. 4. to help in the competition against Japan and the U. S. A. etc. and 5. to help in the production of war material.

This is, in short, the gist of the real imperialist policy of the British bourgeoisie with regard to the industrialisation of India. There is a group of comrades who really think that the industrialisation of India is developing quite independently, and that that is the real policy of the British bourgeoisie. Such an idea is absolutely erroneous and misleading. As long as the British rule in India, there can be no free development of the natural resources of India, much less of industry. Then again, a section of the theorists think that there has been no in-
dustrialisation whatsoever in India, but this is just as wrong as the first one. If there has been no industrialisation, how will you account for the huge army of the industrial pro-
letariat and the strikes in practically all the industrial centres of India. Whatever motive may be attributed to industrialisation, it has been developing; though it is quite correct to say that it has been retarded, and that it will never receive any indepen-
dent headlong stimulus at the hands of the imperialists. Com-
rade Page Arnott should not have been so optimistic and en-
thusiastic about the industrialisation of India. Speaking the oth-
er day on the colonial theses, he went so far as to defend British imperialism in India, instead of ruthlessly condemning it.

Well, now, the so-called industrialisation of India has brought forth an army of factory proletariat — the vanguard of the Indian proletariat, if it be — capable of fulfilling its historic mission quite independently. The peasantry, comprising the greater part of the Indian popula-
tion, the most down trodden, the landless and the homeless whose blood is sucked by the government, the landlord and the usurer jointly, is adopting a revolutionary movement.

The present economic analysis of the situation brings forth the familiar and the unfamiliar. The factory proletariat and the peasantry — must co-operate to ful-
till the tremendous task of the liberation of India from imper-
ialist domination. It is quite clear and certain that in the struggle the factory proletariat, being better organised in the urban centres, will take the lead. The situation today, therefore, demands the organisation and centralisation of a strong class-
conscious political party with a Marxist-Leninist programme and slogans; in other words, the Communist Party of India, to lead the revolutionary masses to its final and successful goal.

Some comrades may suggest that the Workers and Peasants Parties existing in the various provinces of the country are nothing less than a proletarian party, as suggested by me. Permit me to clear the situation. In the first place, these workers and Peasant Parties are not Communist programmes. Secondly, their programme is an elastic one so as to include all those who are interested in the welfare of labour. And thirdly, they have no peasantry affiliated to them. They are, so to speak, mere union of workers.

At the same time we must criticise the policy of the Com-
intern in conducting the organisation of the Workers and Pea-
sant Parties while altogether ignoring the organisation of the Communist Party of India. This is just as absurd as to put the cart before the horse. This policy must be revised.

In conclusion I request that all these points should be clearly dealt with in the theses and a definite line of action should be drafted for the future work in India.

Comrade SCHUBIN (Soviet Union):

Comrades, I would like to pick out two questions: the question of grouping colonies and semi-colonies and the ques-
tion of the characteristic of the class forces in these: the de-

colonisation revolutionary. First of all I will say a few words concerning the standpoints represented here by Comrades Bennett and Rothen-

stein. But is it necessary after Comrade Bennett's yesterday's explanation to speak about this question? I think that it is. For if one sees through what stages comrades have gone who want to group colonies and semi-colonies as a whole into a decol-

onisation theory — but have nevertheless used the same arguments in defence of this theory, if one examines the whole path which the comrades have traversed, one must say that it is a path of retreat in connection with which the fundamental errors of this theory have been retained. To what length have these comrades already gone? They have gone the length of Com-
rade Bennet — to emphasise his standpoint — quoting, under the unanimous applause of the whole audience, Comrade Buk-

harin's speech in which the latter declares that the process of the industrial development of India, the process of its in-
dustrialisation, has been interrupted by British imperialism, that what is going on there at present is not the industrialisation but the pauperisation of the country.

If this is how matters stand, i. e., if Comrade Bennett means by control of British imperialism opposition to the industrial development of the colonies or impeding this deve-

lopment, and if he means by industrialisation — not the course of industrialisation but the two-track program — production, but means the interference of capitalist production to the colonies, is it then worth while to argue against this whole theory? But I reiterate, in the arguments of the comrades who have defended this theory, the fundamental mistakes of the decolonisation theory, i. e., of the obliteration of the difference between the colonies and the imperialist countries, have remained intact. Let us con-

sider the path traversed by the overt and covert adherents of decolonisation. The first stage: decolonisation without in-

verted commas. It was already formulated in Roy's book The Future of the British Policy a book which was written, as everyone knows in 1926. Roy said then:

"What are the main demands of the nationalistic bour-
geoisie? They consist of free labour, industrialisation of in-

dustrialisation of India, political autonomy, and protec-
tive tariffs. All these demands were satisfied because British imperialism endeavoured to overcome the post-war crisis through the reorganisation of the foundation of the Empire. Experience has shown that the economic pro-
gramme of the nationalists can be carried out even if the imperi-
alisms do not want it. We have faced political demands, but in other words the big bourgeoisie has come to the conclusion that its economic development is possible within the framework of the imperialist policy", (translated from the German).

This is fundamentally all that is wanted for a decolonisation theory! Certainly, someone in the commission designated Comrad

e Luhani quite wrongly as the father of this theory. Perhaps Comrade Luhani was the first to coin the name for this theory, but in that case he is only the "sponsor" of the theory whereas its father is Comrade Roy.

Let us take the second stage of the development of this theory. The slogan "Industrialisation of India under British