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SIXTH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

(FULL REPORT.)

Twenty-fifth Session.

Moscow, 9th August, 1928 (afternoon).

Discussion on the Report of Comrade Bukharin on the Draft Programme of the Comintern.

Comrade SIKANDUR (India):

Comrades: It is needless to emphasise that the ultimate aim of the Communist International is the establishment of Communism throughout the world. We find all the pre-requisites for the establishment of Communism in the development of capitalism on an international basis, the formation of the cartels, etc. Capitalism has, through its inherent contradictions, reached that stage when it will be possible to hasten the establishment of Communism throughout the world. The crises revealing the disorganisation of capitalist economy are the symptoms of a chronic disease. The objective conditions in European countries and especially in Germany, Czechoslovakia, England and France are ripe for the establishment of Communism.

Comrades, the pre-requisite for the establishment of Communism is the capture of political power by the proletariat. In these countries of Europe, the proletarian movement has reached that stage when it can easily capture the political power. It depends upon the resoluteness of the leadership and the determination of the proletarian movement itself to do that.

But the conditions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are quite different. Take for instance, India. The situation in India in 1928 resembles that of Russia under Tsarism in 1914. Russia in 1914 had a good proletariat, she had industries. The same is the case in India. But now the British imperialists, seeing that it was the development of the proletarian movement in Russia which brought about the downfall of Tsarism,

has grown wiser by that experience and is trying to destroy the industries of India and drive the proletariat of India to the villages. The situation differs a bit from Russia of 1914 in that India is a colony and has not got a strong Party that Russia had at that time. This accounts for so many disastrous defeats to the Indian proletarian movement.

Comrades, there is a large proletarian movement in India at present. But at the same time we should not ignore that there is a national movement as well. We are not talking here of the Gandhian pacifist movement, which though dormant, now may awaken again to our detriment at the time of anti-war activity of the proletarian revolutionary movement and at the outbreak of the next war. This revolutionary nationalist emancipation movement reflected in the formation of the Republican Party can be utilised insofar as it stands for the destruction of British imperialism. Our work is quite different from that in Europe.

Along with our preparations for the establishment of Communism throughout the world, we have to reckon and make preparations for the destruction and defeat of the British and world imperialist forces which are standing against the U. S. S. R.

Comrades, in the fight against imperialism we have to strike the first blow at British imperialism, which is the leader of world imperialism to-day.

In the imperialist countries of Europe there are highly developed industries. This facilitates our task. The struggle will

be sanguinary but only short and will in no time end in the success of our arms. But the circumstances in the colonial countries are quite different. When we capture power in India, Persia and Afghanistan we have to reckon that the industries are not developed to that extent that Communism can be safely established, and the transitional period will be longer there. We have to capture political power at all costs, and for this purpose we must win the forces working against British imperialism. When we find that the radical elements in India or Persia or Afghanistan are making for the overthrow of imperialism we have to utilise them by all means.

Inside the colonial countries and especially in the countries bordering the Soviet Union, we must establish strong disciplined Communist Parties, so that when the long expected crisis comes, it may not find ourselves in confusion. We should not repeat our mistakes of China. We should never dream that these nationalist forces are our full-fledged supporters, to fight against imperialism. But at a time when we are fighting against world imperialism it would be wrong tactics not to utilise such forces. The political movement in 1919 was purely a revolutionary movement for the overthrow of British imperialism. But British imperialism was much wiser. It found its agent in Gandhi. He was the ascribed leader at that time. Owing to his treachery and because there was no strong revolutionary lead at that time, the movement failed.

In 1928 for the first time a revolutionary labour movement began to take shape and to develop as we see it to-day. The movement in 1928 is quite different from the movements of 1919 and 1920. The latter was not a revolutionary phase; it was more like a Tolstoyan movement, nearer to the 1905 movement. The failure of 1905 was the preparation for 1917. The same can be said about India. The failure of the 1920 movement opened the way for a deadly struggle against British imperialism.

Comrades, what I want to emphasise is that, in the colonies and semi-colonies, in addition to the development of strong disciplined Communist Parties, we have to use every movement which makes a stand against imperialism. But that does not mean that we should regard the national bourgeoisie as our allies.

For that reason, it is very important for us to start anti-British and anti-imperialist propaganda in these adjoining countries of Persia and Afghanistan. Persia in 1924 and 1925 had developed a Republican movement, but by Reza Khan's seizure of power it was transformed into a reactionary one.

The main task of the colonial countries is to form strong Communist Parties and to make relentless efforts to capture political power. For this purpose we have to work out different tactics from those of the industrially developed countries.

Comrades RICARDO PARADES

(delegate of the Communist and Socialist Parties of Ecuador)

Comrades, this is the first time that delegates of several proletarian parties of Latin America which were formed in the last years (Social Revolutionary Party of Colombia, Socialist and Communist Party of Ecuador, Communist Party of Paraguay) are participating in a Congress of the Communist International. The ever-increasing participation of Latin America in the Communist movement of the world indicates that the Communist International has taken deep-root throughout the world. Now the imperialism of North America is paramount in world economics and politics and constitutes the stronghold of the bourgeoisie, the labour movement of Latin America, by its geographical situation assumes considerable importance.

It seems to me that the draft programme brought forward by the Executive Committee of the C. I. is on the whole satisfactory. Nevertheless I think that certain points could be amplified and corrected in a less schematic manner.

This draft programme is certainly an enormous improvement on previous programmes. Its form is very dynamic and certain problems which were only outlined in previous programmes are very fully dealt with here. Moreover, it brings forward new questions. The international basis is better than that of former programmes which had the defect that all world problems were treated in a somewhat European fashion. But in spite of this I think one should give more prominence to the problems of the colonial and semi-colonial countries which occupy the greater part of the globe.

It seems to me that the introduction of the programme is rather brusque. The problem of imperialism is dealt with before capitalism of the era of free competition has been defined. This form would be acceptable if the programme were addressed only to elements who are already mature ideologically. I also think that a few more lines should be devoted to the problem of world war, and all its consequences for the labour movement and the economics and politics of the world. I think it necessary to amplify a little the historical retrospect of the First and Second Internationals, and also to present the Russian revolution as a new phase for the proletariat of the whole world because the Russian revolution is given too little emphasis in the draft programme.

The first chapter should contain a more complete exposition of the Marxist doctrine on capitalist development.

The aspect of the development of capitalism in colonial and so-called semi-colonial countries is not sufficiently clear in the programme. These countries supply the world economy to a great extent with food-stuffs and raw material for industry. Moreover, industry which is developing in these colonial and semi-colonial countries produces a considerable amount of articles of consumption, not only for these countries but also for export, although the latter is still very small. At the same time the rural districts of these countries are becoming industrialised, especially in the so-called semi-colonial countries such as Argentina. A characteristic feature of these countries is the form of the distribution of land, latifundia which is the predominant form of agriculture employ at times thousands of rural proletarians (Brazil, Mexico, Argentine). In Brazil there are latifundia which are as big as Switzerland. Industrialisation is proceeding, although slowly, in these latifundia which absorb a numerous proletariat. This is a very important fact for the organisation of the workers and for the elaboration of a correct programme of struggle in our countries.

The form which imperialist domination takes in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the manner in which national capitalism develops and its relations with imperialism must be very clearly defined. What is the substance of this policy of the imperialist countries? The United States and Great Britain especially, are tending to create an extraction industry in the colonies; consequently the mining industry is very developed there. As to the manufacturing industry, the imperialists are developing it only on a very small scale, only to an extent which cannot do harm to the industry of the mother country and which will allow a profitable exploitation of the cheaper native labour power.

On the other hand, national capitalism is endeavouring to create a manufacturing industry but the entire economic policy of imperialism is against this. In regard to agriculture, imperialism is endeavouring to profit by the climate in order to create gigantic concerns which grow a restricted quantity of agricultural products required for the mother country, no attention being paid to the requirements of the natives. Consequently, these countries which are compelled to purchase in the mother countries articles of primary necessity which they do not produce themselves, are entirely under the domination of these mother countries. The conditions in these countries justify to a certain extent the statement of the programme in regard to colonial and semi-colonial countries, that "by this relation to industrial countries which are so, to speak, the urban agglomeration of the world, they represent the rural districts of the world".

To bring free countries under its domination, imperialism penetrates into them by means of trade and finance capital. Imperialism creates for itself gradually a strong economic position and in most cases it secures parallel with it political positions. Thus, it is colonising Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama and other Latin American Republics. Other countries resist more effectively this economic and political pressure either because they are bigger and more difficult to enslave or because they take advantage of their geographical situation or of the rivalry of the other imperialists. In this position are several Latin American countries, such as Argentina and Brazil, which in spite of the economic penetration of imperialism have not yet become semi-colonies. Mexico is heroically resisting the imperialist penetration. Ecuador is still fairly free of the penetration of foreign capital. It has as yet no State loan from the United States, and its investments are very small. Moreover, national capital is bigger than foreign. But owing

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to its political weakness the colonisation of this country will be easier than that of Mexico when the imperialists will turn their attention seriously to the exploitation of the wealth of this country. The problems of the proletarian struggle must be considered from a different viewpoint in colonial and semi-colonial countries and in the so-called "dependences". This distinction must be made because hitherto the general conception of our countries has been that they are the "rural districts of the world", which alters the problems of the struggle in these countries by under-estimating the proletarian forces and over-estimating the peasant question. That is why the slogans of the agrarian, bourgeois-democratic revolution are considered in the programme as the tasks to be accomplished in these countries.

It is clear that one cannot establish a strict classification between so-called semi-colonial countries because here is a considerable number of intermediary forms. Therefore a new category must be accepted. This new group would consist of the "dependences" which have been penetrated economically by imperialism but which retain a certain political independence either because the economic penetration is not very strong or because they are strong politically.

Imperialism with all its characteristic features of economic penetration, its monopolism, its economic policy, is changing the normal development of capitalism in our countries. For this reason this development assumes a different character from that in Europe during the period of free competition.

Owing to the fact that all these causes are producing a powerful revolutionary movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the Communist International must pay more attention to them.

In the paragraph which deals with agriculture, point d) when speaking of the form of distribution of the expropriated big landed property it is suggested to distribute this land among the poor and partly also among the middle peasantry. I propose the following amendment:

"Not to give to the peasants the land which belonged formerly to big landowners, but to establish collective agricultural concerns."

Countries with a highly developed capitalism will find it very difficult to solve the land problem at the time of proletarian revolution. In some of these countries, for instance, France, the number of peasants is very great and the parcellation of land is enormous. Moreover, the highly developed individualism of these peasants does not favour the socialisation of land. Diverse solutions become imperative in the various countries in regard to the distribution of land. Owing to the big peasant population in certain highly developed capitalist countries, an alliance with the peasantry will have to be made. The dictatorship of the proletariat, pure and simple, will be very difficult at first owing to the economic importance of the peasants in that period.

In this respect the industrially backward countries are in a better position as far as the socialisation of land is concerned; their chief obstacle to socialism will be inadequate industrialisation. In many Latin American countries latifundia are the predominant form of land ownership; the wage system and the system of payment in kind predominate there. Where land is held by a few people it will be easy to expropriate and socialise it. On the other hand those countries of Latin America which have a big Indian population are in a better position for the construction of socialism in the rural districts than the countries where this Indian element is lacking (Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia). There are many communes in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia which are now important factors in the struggle against the domination of the feudal lords and which will be, at the moment of the establishment of the proletarian regime, nuclei for socialist co-operation in the countryside. The American Indians are imbued with a remarkably collectivist spirit. They establish agricultural, irrigation and building co-operatives as well as other forms of collective work. These elements must be utilised in the proletarian State for the construction of socialism.

Such communes were the centres of activity in several insurrections of agricultural labourers and peasants in Latin America. In 1920, there was a big movement in Ecuador to claim the restitution of the land which had been stolen by the feudal lords. In the course of that year 4 big insurrections of Indians took place in Ecuador. One of these insurrections

started in a commune. These insurrections have revealed to us the revolutionary strength of the Indians and their collectivist spirit. In Argentina and Uruguay the situation in the rural districts is different because in these latifundia countries most of the agricultural labourers and peasants are half-castes, creoles and European immigrants among whom the individualistic spirit predominates.

The revolutionary problem is linked up with that of the oppressed races such as the Indians in Latin America. In some countries Indians constitute the biggest section of the rural population, they suffer much more than white and half-caste workers from the exploitation of the landed proprietors. Indians who are considered an inferior race are treated more brutally. All these factors have created among the Indian workers and peasants a spirit of solidarity and a class spirit of the exploited. Therefore Indians are very revolutionary elements. I think that this problem of oppressed races must be dealt with in the programme.

Petty bourgeois revolutions are another problem which should be, in my opinion, seriously considered. In Latin America they have an aspect of their own and are of considerable interest to the proletarian cause. In his criticism of the draft programme Comrade Thalheimer gives a wrong estimate of the revolutions in some Latin American countries. The most typical of these revolutions is that in Mexico, which lasted from 1910 to 1917 and which has left a revolutionary situation in the country. This revolution which is of a petty bourgeois character has certain socialist traits owing to the intervention of the organised working class and the demands of a proletarian character which were brought forward during the revolution. The anti-imperialist character of the Mexican revolution, the hegemony of the petty bourgeoisie, the heroic struggle of the peasants for land under the leadership of their famous chief, General Zapata, give a petty bourgeois character to the Mexican revolution. One should study very seriously the Mexican revolution which is very important to the proletarian movement of the world and especially of Latin America.

The petty bourgeois revolution in Ecuador, 1925, was already of a different nature although in some respects it is similar to the Mexican revolution. The revolution of 1925 was directed mainly against the financial plutocracy which had dominated the country 30 years, against the corrupt State officials, the army chiefs and the big landlords. The partly civil, partly military government which was established had a certain Soviet structure. It was based on military councils and delegates of labour organisations (the latter only with a consultative vote). The supreme organ was the Civil Council. The various manifestoes of these military councils as well as the programme of the military league which had made the revolution spoke always of proletarian demands, struggle against the exploiters and contained also a few proletarian demands. Several private capital monopolies were transferred to the State. Certain radical measures were taken (law for the expropriation of land). The petty bourgeoisie was persecuted and several of their press organs were suppressed, the clergy was persecuted, certain workers' demands were acceded to and in the beginning of the revolution strikes were supported by the army. It is due to the army that the population of Chimborazo seized the land. During this period many agricultural labourers' and peasant rebellions took place against the landlords and the authorities. The revolution had also an anti-imperialist character.

I think that the slogan "bourgeois-democratic agrarian revolution" is not correct. It will be perhaps more effective in countries into which imperialism has completely penetrated and where the land question constitutes one of the fundamental levers of the revolution.

One of the causes which could determine a social revolution in our country would be an imperialist war or a war against the U.S.S.R. In this case the problems will have a different aspect in Argentina and in Mexico. In Mexico one could struggle for an anti-imperialist revolution against landlords. As to the co-operation of the nationalist bourgeoisie in this war against imperialism, this is an utterly problematic question. Instead of the petty bourgeoisie, the leader in the revolution will be the proletariat in close alliance with the peasantry which demands land, the big bourgeoisie of Mexico will go openly against the proletariat and the peasantry. Even if the bourgeoisie were to be for a time on the side of the

proletariat, it would betray it even more rapidly than the Chinese bourgeoisie because the demands of the industrial and agricultural proletariat and also those of the peasantry will make the class problem very acute. The national bourgeoisie is well aware that under present conditions a struggle against imperialism with the proletariat organised on a revolutionary programme and the peasants who demand land as allies, would be fatal to it. The problems of national independence do not appear now to the bourgeoisie in the same light as before, when in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the national forces were only aiming at national independence. At present the proletariat exists as an organised revolutionary class, and this changes the whole situation. In the present epoch when the social problems are very acute, when Communism is spreading through the world and the Communist International is becoming the leader of the revolutionary proletariat, the bourgeoisie cannot take up the same attitude as at the time of the struggle for the independence of the people of Latin America. The colonisation of the peoples of Latin America which is the aim of the imperialists, although it awakens nationalist feelings among the bourgeoisie, cannot be prevented in an effective manner except by the combined forces of the proletariat and the peasantry. The programme says that the proletariat must keep intact its class independence, its combativeness against the exploiters, even if it enters into a temporary alliance with the bourgeoisie. These sentences are absolutely correct. They must appeal to all revolutionists. The slogan "bourgeois-democratic agrarian revolution" has already created enough confusion in some parties of the Communist International which at one time manifested opportunist reformist tendencies. We have already pointed out that hardly in any country of Latin America the landlords differ in any way from the bourgeoisie. Even the bourgeoisie and its various strata are sometimes fused into one single stratum of plutocrats. This monopolist plutocracy is at the same time a loyal ally of American imperialism. Industrial companies have been formed by national and foreign capitalists, as for instance the Anglo-Ecuadorian Oil Co. The same happens in other Latin American countries. One can understand that the community of interests between the bourgeoisie and the imperialists must be very strong. I would like to know how we can expropriate imperialist capital and feudal land without also expropriating national capital, considering that it is bound up with the landlords and imperialists. On the other hand, to expropriate only the land of these exploiters leaving them the industries, banks and commerce, namely, the most important economic factor, would be tantamount to the failure of the democratic bourgeois revolution led by the proletariat. The truth is that the national bourgeoisie will prefer to have smaller profits and to keep its property by placing itself at the service of the imperialists.

It is pointed out in the programme that in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the most important industries, banks and also commerce are in the hands of foreign capitalists. If this were true, national capital would be so small, at the expropriation of the imperialists that it would be a mistake to leave to our class enemies these last strongholds. If the agrarian revolution is victorious, if it will be able to expropriate the owners of the latifundia, the capital of the imperialists — and this is the most difficult task — if the proletariat and the peasants succeed in constituting themselves as the workers' and peasants' government, it will be also possible to expropriate the capital of the national bourgeoisie without compensation.

For Argentina the problem will be slightly different. The slogan of a revolution for the national independence of Argentina would meet with much success because imperialist oppression there does not assume as serious forms as in Mexico, Cuba and Panama. For Argentina there will be two solutions in case of war: general strike and boycott by the working class or proletarian revolution supported by the peasantry to expropriate national and imperialist capitalists. I do not think that the slogan "Agrarian revolution" is correct for the majority of colonial countries and "dependencies".

Alliance between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie appears in a slightly different light. Artisans who are fairly numerous in some countries, are elements on whom one can rely. But small employers, small trades people who want to become big capitalists are aspiring to hegemony in the revolutionary struggle. Hence they are very dangerous elements. The utilisation of the petty bourgeoisie for the revolutionary cause depends on a correct policy and good organisation on

the part of the proletariat. As to the participation of the proletariat in the struggles instigated by the petty bourgeoisie and directed against the imperialists or the big national bourgeoisie, I think that we must intervene there very energetically, but must at the same time keep our class independence, endeavouring to secure hegemony in the revolutionary struggle and not forgetting for a minute the possible treacheries of the petty bourgeoisie.

Comrade RING (Poland):

Comrades, the minority of the Polish Delegation is of the opinion that the Draft Programme can be accepted as a basis and that the Programme can also be finally decided upon at this Congress.

Our standpoint is that the VI. Congress of the Comintern must give to the Communist vanguard of the proletariat not a manifesto or declaration, but just a programme of the Communist International.

The Polish Communist Party stands in great need of a programme of the Communist International, and for three reasons:

1. We are a party which is developing rapidly. The most diverse elements come to us, join us and we must assimilate them. In this respect the programme of the Communist International will be a great help to us.

2. We are a country which is probably destined to have a revolution sooner than other countries. We require a clear solid programme in the forthcoming revolutionary events. We must know that our revolutionary ideology corresponds to that of the Comintern.

3. Unfortunately we are a Party with many currents. The existence of an official Comintern programme will undoubtedly help us to overcome more rapidly these divergencies of opinion and the fractional struggle which results from them.

I must emphasise that the Draft Programme has important advantages. One of them is its completeness, for it touches on all the main problems which confront the proletariat in its struggle.

Another advantage is that the most important characteristic features of the present epoch, i. e., the epoch of imperialism, are shown up in it with the utmost clearness.

We say that these formulations should not be toned down. Although imperialism is a stage of capitalism it has specific features. Therefore, a programme which is not elaborated anyhow and at any time but precisely in the imperialist epoch, must necessarily depict clearly and in a plastic manner the characteristic features of this epoch.

A series of hints contained in the programme render more easy our struggle against Right opportunist errors.

The introduction which begins with the words: "The epoch of imperialism is the epoch of declining capitalism", brings the question most forcibly to the fore. It is an argument against the false opportunist standpoint that imperialism is the highest development of capitalism. The same may be said also of many other points of the draft Programme; for instance, of the point which says that the free competition of industrial capitalism, which has taken the place of the feudal monopoly and the monopoly of trade capital, has itself, become transformed into a monopoly of finance capital. This is a very distinct, clear and at the same time a correct definition of our epoch.

The accentuation and clearer definition of a few formulations which we are proposing, do not interfere with the general character of the draft Programme. Re the chapter on capitalism. I would like to draw attention to one of our amendments which corresponds to a proposal of the German Delegation. The programme says that imperialism is developing the forces of production. We propose a slightly different formulation, namely that the forces of production undergo a further development in the imperialist epoch. At first glance the difference seems very slight, but we think that our formulation is theoretically more exact and politically more expedient. It is more exact theoretically because it corresponds with the fundamental conceptions of Marx and Engels.

I hope that Comrade Bukharin will accept our amendment, as a formulation such as ours is met with also in his book "Theory of Historical Materialism".

Also in regard to Fascism we agree in the main with the standpoint of the draft Programme. It is one of the good points of the draft Programme that Fascism is connected on

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