

LM5RM72 THE NATIVE QUESTION (MAJORITY)

The basis of the economic structure of South Africa is the Native section population. This is not only because it is numerically the predominant the mines and also, though to a lesser degree, in industry generally. Almost all the productive labour on the farms is performed by the agricultural Native labourer. There are about one and half million Natives forming the land proletariat in South Africa. The productive part played by European and other mines, as well as on the alluvial diggings, the Native plays by far the greatest part in productive labour. In September, 1932, the ratio of Native labourers employed on the Rand mines compared with Europeans, artisans and labourers was 9.3 to 1, on coal mines 16.8 to 1, and on the alluvial diamond diggings 4.5 to 1. In this primary industry of mining about half a million Native workers are employed.

In other industrial enterprises, as well as in commerce and transport, the Native worker is playing an increasingly important part. With the growing rationalisation of industry, the practice of substituting unskilled for skilled labour is continually extending, and this process must lead to an ever greater prominence of the Native worker, both numerically and as a producer.

The main character of the South African economic system, as it is today, is the exceptionally low level of the wages of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. There are very few countries in the world where Capitalism is able to extract such tremendous profits out of the meanest type of exploitation. In England the average rate of the skilled to the unskilled wage is 15 to 11; in Germany the rate is even more favourable to the unskilled worker. Over the whole range of South African industry the rate of the skilled to the unskilled wage is 6 to 1. On the Witwatersrand, taking all types of employment, the rate is 7 to 1. But taking the mining industry only, the rate averages 10 to 1, in spite of the hard and dangerous nature of the toil involved. In the Railways and Harbours Service, the week's wages of a Native labourer is 15/1, just equal to the day's pay of a checker or a guard, but less than the day's pay of an artisan. In the building industry the average wage of a Native labourer is 3/6 per day, one pound per week, while the skilled wage runs from 2/- to 3/- per hour for a 44-hour week.

Because of this intense exploitation of the black workers, the exploitation of the white workers is comparatively much less vigorous. In this way Capitalism strives, as always, to divide the workers, and, with higher wages, bribes the Europeans workers to side with the employers in the event of the black workers venturing to give expression to their discontent.

This was the policy in the past. There are already indications of a change at hand.

The great crises which deepens and widens the gulf between the productive capacity of the world industry and the consuming capacity of world markets is tending to lower the rate of profits. Capitalism, which is interested only in profits, will naturally try to recover these profits by lowering the wage bill. This will be accomplished by severe cuts in the wages of the skilled worker, since the unskilled wage cannot be cut down any lower than it is. Indirectly, the wage bill will be further lowered by more complete rationalization of industry. The introduction of machines which do not require skilled attention, will inevitably lead to the displacement of skilled workers in favour of unskilled and semi-skilled, and to a general lowering of the skilled wage. The capitalist will compel the white worker to accept the lower wages at present paid to the Native,

In the face of this, the present remedy is for the whole working class in South Africa, and every section of it, to strive for a raising of the unskilled wage, and so narrow the gap between skilled and unskilled, and to organize the Natives, recognising them as fellow - workers, with a right to the same pay as the white man gets for the same work. Only thus will the workers be able to resist the future onslaught of Capitalism on their standard of living.

The first task of a revolutionary workers' party must therefore be to bring class consciousness to every member of the working class. The party must show him that his real interests are in direct opposition to those of the capitalist and imperialists. It must show him the bitter results of a policy framed and followed by a collaboration of classes. And at the same time it must show him clearly the way out of his misery.

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What is the way out for the European worker? Is it to accept the crumbs from the super-profits of the capitalists, crumbs which are sweated out of his Native fellow-worker, the crumbs which he will inevitably lose tomorrow? Or is it to fight for the emancipation of the whole working class to fight for the Revolution, to fight for the abolition of all oppression and exploitation, to fight for a Soviet South Africa?

But this is only a part of the Native Question. As South Africa is still predominantly an agrarian country, the bulk of the population is to be found on the land engaged in agriculture. Therefore the far greater part of the Native question is the Agrarian Problem.

With the exception of a million urbanised Natives (in the Urban Locations) the Natives are all peasant in character, notwithstanding the fact that from time to time they work in industry, mines, and commerce, that is, when they are forced into the towns. But the special characteristic of this peasantry is that it is a landless peasantry. The constant Native farm labourer (500,000), the variable seasonal farm labourer (600,000 to 700,000), the so-called "squatters" (500,000), these three groups, living on land owned by whites, constitute about one-third of the Native population, and live in virtual serfdom. The other part of the Native population is living in "their own territories", administered partly on a tribal, and partly on an individual ownership basis.

To gain an understanding of the distribution of land in South Africa and the acuteness of the Agrarian Problem it is necessary to study the following figures:-

Density of White population in rural districts is 1.44 per sq. mile

Density of Native population in Reserve and Territories is 57.99 per sq. mile

96,674,600 morgan of land are in the hands of the White Population

9,959,000 " " " " " " " " " Native "

Thus, accepting the conservative figures of the Official Year Book, No. 14 (pub. 1934) which gives 1,889,500 Whites to 5,681,100 Bantu, we see that there is 51 morgan of land for every white person and only 1.75 morgan of land for every Native.

The distribution of the land and size of the farms in the hands of the European population is as follows:-

3,687 farms under	5 morgan occupy				8,700
morgen					
8,210	"	from	5 to	20	" " 83,900
"					
8,976	"	"	21	" 100	" " 513,000
"					
30,334	"	"	101	" 500	" " 9,098,000
"					
19,535	"	"	591	" 1,000	" " 14,443,000
"					
13,252	"	"	1,001	" 2,000	" " 19,049,000
"					
4,474	"	"	2,001	" 3,000	" " 11,223,000
"					
3,571	"	"	3,001	" 5,000	" " 13,861,000
"					
2,078	"	"	5,001	" 10,000	" " 14,443,000
"					
832	"	"	over	10,000	" " 13,952,000 "

Now, if we subtract the 20,873 poor farmers who own only 605,600 morgan, and the 30,334 middle farmers who own 9,098,000 morgan, i.e., almost as much as the whole Native population, we find that 32,737 farmers of South Africa. These figures speak for themselves. They make clear that the only solution of the Native Problem is the Agrarian Revolution.

Before elaborating our programme for the solution of the Native Question, which means to estimate the development of the revolution in South Africa, its forms, its forces and reserves, its obstacles, and so on, we should first examine the solution offered by the other working class parties of South Africa.

It is not necessary to spend much time on the programme of the party of reformism and class collaboration, the South African Labour Party. If the parties of the Second International are covered with glory of betrayals, with the laurels of treasons, the S.A.L.P. surpasses them by the reactionary role in the labour movement. If the parties of the Second International try to cover themselves with revolutionary slogans and Marxist phraseology, the S.A.L.P. makes no attempt to hide its pure slave-owners' and slave-drivers' programme, a programme of complete segregation of black and white, a programme of reprisals and discriminations. If the rule of Britain in India was never so brutal, the prisons never so full, the misery never so great, as when the British Labour Party was in power, so the Native Policy of the Government of South Africa was never so ruthless and oppressive as when the S.A.L.P. participated in the "Pact" Government. It was this Government that passed the infamous Colour Bar Act and the Amended Masters and Servants Act. These white chauvinists, hard-headed bureaucrats, and corrupt politicians deny to the Natives their rights to land, to work, to education. They speak of a "White South Africa", "South Africa for Europeans", "i.e. Black Menace", etc. They even "ignore the Natives" to the extent of omitting them from "the population of South Africa". These "socialists" are the greatest enemies of the Native workers and therefore we must recognise them as the greatest enemies of the Revolution. By _____ their venomous white chauvinism in the ranks of the white workers, they split the working class on racial lines, prevent the workers from attaining class consciousness, prevent unity, and thus preserve the rule of Capitalism and Imperialism.

Quite different is the programme and aim of the Communist Party of South Africa. They strive for a revolutionary change, for the liberation of the whole working class, and for the full emancipation of the Natives. this is undoubtedly their aim. But good intentions are not enough. Good intentions lead only to failure if the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary party do not correspond to the actual situation, if they are not in harmony with reality. The entire programme of the C.P.S.A. is based on an incorrect estimation of the revolution and of the correlation of forces in South Africa. Their whole strategy is wrong.

If the white chauvinist policy of the S.A.L.P. flows from the assumption that South Africa is a "White man's country", and the main and central slogan of the C.P.S.A., the slogan of "Native Republics", flows from the equally false assumption that South Africa is exclusively a "black man's country". This antithesis, which entirely ignores the white population, is equally harmful, because it is bound to antagonise one section of the working class against another. Instead of uniting the workers it again splits them on racial grounds. To ignore the fact that unlike India and China, the white population of South Africa does not consist of a temporary officialdom, but is an integral part of the population, means to be blind to reality.

In the red tape style of a bureaucracy, the Comintern from afar and above has forced upon the C.P.S.A. a strategy to cut to the patterns for India and China, without having learned anything from the blunders and mistakes of the Chinese Revolution. Just as in China the Comintern suppressed the class struggle and agrarian revolution and supported the national-liberation (anti-imperialist) movement, so in South Africa they are basing their strategies on the national-revolutionary struggle instead of on the class struggle. the calling for "Native Republics" involves subordinating the class struggle to the national struggle. as "Umsebenzi" says, "The Bantu Republic" will be a "democratic people's government". The revolution will be "an anti-imperialist revolution, a democratic revolution, a people's revolution, an agrarian revolution, giving to the African people real national freedom." In short, it means that the revolution will be a national, bourgeois democratic revolution. But they forget who is going to accomplish the revolution, who will lead it, under the hegemony of which class it will be brought about. They forget that we are living in the age of Imperialism in an epoch of decaying Capitalism, when the bourgeoisie is no longer a revolutionary force, and when a revolution, to be successful, must be led by the working class. but by stressing national liberation and ignoring the white workers, the C.P.S.A. excludes the possibility of a united revolutionary working class, and only such can lead the revolution. Never in history has the peasantry by itself succeeded in a revolution. the peasantry can make insurrections, but they cannot accomplish a revolution. The Native Republics (as a step towards the Workers' and Peasants' Republic) means a bourgeois republic (not a Workers' and Peasants' Republic), even though it implies the overthrow of the rule of British Imperialism. here again is apparent the red tape style.

If it is possible for India and China, at least in the theory of the Comintern, to throw off the yoke of Imperialism by a united front of all classes, including the national bourgeoisie, and still retain the old social order, then why not in South Africa? They forget that all the forces of Capitalism, British and Dutch, Farmer and industrialist, nationalist and imperialist, republican and

monarchist, Malan and Stallard, ALL will join hands in the counter-revolutionary struggle against any anti-imperialist struggle on the part of the native workers and peasants. It should be obvious that here in South Africa a fight against Imperialism is conceivable only as a fight against Capitalism. Our revolution will not be a national but a social revolution.

To sum up, the programme of the C.P.S.A. is full of mistakes, blunders, and contradictions, and the most harmful of them is the slogan of "Native Republics".

Since Lenin died, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism has given way, in the comintern, to opportunism and scholasticism. the old theory of "the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants", which was thrown into the dustbin by Lenin in April, 1917, was pulled out again. The Marxist theory of the permanence of the Revolution was exchanged for the theory of "socialism in one country". In conformity with this category, all countries were divided into four categories, according to their ripeness and ability to build socialism independently. A schematic theory of the preliminary stages of the revolution was invented from which not one state could escape, of which not one stage could be skipped. National bourgeois revolution, bourgeois democratic revolution, democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, workers' and peasants' government, Soviet Revolution, then Socialist or Proletariat Revolution with the dictatorship of the Proletariat, - all this scholastic scheme of categories, periods, and stages, which has led only to defeats, must be condemned. Even if the first tasks which the revolution has to solve are problems which ought to have been solved by a bourgeois revolution, problems such as national unification, liberation from Imperialism, the agrarian difficulty, tec., nevertheless, there can be no question of the bourgeoisie participating in or supporting a revolution. In every revolution, if it is to succeed, the working class alone must be the leader. The October Revolution, although it had to solve all the above-mentioned problems, was not a bourgeois democratic revolution but a proletariat revolution. We need not, therefore, apply to our Revolution this scholastic and schematic theory of categories and stages - " as a step towards it".

WHAT IS OUR PROGRAMME?

There is no other way of solving the Native Question than through a revolutionary change of our social-economic structure. Only hopelessly _____-headed Fabians, and Liberals of all brands belonging to the bourgeois camp, can speak of a solution of the Native Question by reforms, through education, or democracy. With decay of Capitalism, democracy and reforms are speedily passing away. In the face of the approaching fascisation, we have to fight for those few democratic rights which are still left and which are in danger of being taken away. The emancipation of the working class and the liberation of these oppressed races are closely bound together and can be achieved only by throwing off the yoke and chains of Capitalism and Imperialism.

As in South Africa today, so in Czarist Russia the majority of the population (57%), the oppressed nationalities and races groaned under the yoke of Czarism and Capitalism, and only the October Revolution, the Social Revolution, brought their full liberation and emancipation together with that of all the toiling masses of Russia. Until the other parts of the world follow the Russian example, oppression and exploitation, misery, starvation, and unemployment will be the lot of the majority in Africa and America, in China and India. It is time to realise that the so-called national liberation movements of the African National Congress here, of the Swaraj of India, of the Wafd in Egypt, and of the Kuomintang in China, are futile, that they can only lead to nothing except the betrayal of the workers, and that only the workers can lead the struggle against Capitalism and Imperialism. This message must be brought to the Native masses. Their way to liberation and freedom lies in the social revolution, in a South African "October".

The Native Problem is mainly the Agrarian Problem. In a country predominantly agricultural, where 95% of the population is rural, the axis of the revolution revolves around the agrarian problem. The more so, since the Native population of South Africa, 87% of which still lives on the land, is deprived of the land, and is entirely debarred from acquiring land, even if it had the means to purchase. Crowded into the Reserves which cannot give him the barest subsistence for hut tax, quitrent, squatter's tax, he is forced to find work on the mines or on the farms. There, under the infamous pass system, the Masters and Servants Act, and the Native Servant Contract Act, he is reduced to conditions of serfdom. The majority of Native farm workers are serfs, if not actual slaves. In a country where 3 300 000 people own less than 10 million morgen of land while 43 000 people hold 87 million morgen, it is impossible to speak of agrarian "reforms". Only the revolution can solve this agrarian question, which is the axis, the alpha and the omega of the revolution. The pauperisation of the Natives, the pauperisation of the small white farmers, the Native Problem and the Poor White Problem, not only hamper but bar the way for the development of the country. There is no future for South Africa; there is no place for industrial development and growth, until the internal need is studied and supplied, the level of internal consumption raised, the whole internal market systematically developed. Stagnation and decay, poor whiteism and the degradation of the standard of living to the uncivilised level, that is the lot of the toiling masses if the present system of the oppression and subjection of the largest part of the population continues to prevail. It must be made clear to the workers and intelligentsia of South Africa that the Native Problem, the Agrarian Problem is their problem, that the liberation of the Native is their liberation.

It is true that the Native suffers also from racial oppression and therefore the national question also forms a part of the Native Problem. But while we by no means deny and neglect the national question, we must not put it in the forefront of our strategies and tactics as the C.P.S.A. does. The national struggle must not obscure the class struggle. We must keep our strategical line clear of the swamp of petty-bourgeois Nationalism. National liberation in Russia did not precede the October Revolution. National liberation was a result of the proletarian revolution. A man needs first of all bread, and then liberty. The Native needs first of all land, and then national emancipation. The national question is not the fundamental problem of our revolution; the agrarian question is and will remain the basic task. Our main slogan must be "Land to the Natives" and "Every man has the right to as much land as he can work". The unconditional active support of the peasantry will thus be assured to the proletarian revolution. By popularising among the workers the needs of the peasantry and vice versa, the Bolsheviks succeeded in their revolution. So also can our revolution succeed. By uniting and defending in combined effort the common aims and interests of the workers and peasants, black and white, the revolutionary movement can bring about the overthrow of Capitalism and the establishment of a Soviet South Africa.

THE RESOURCES OF THE REVOLUTION

At the present time the revolutionary forces are very small indeed. The working class is divided into black and white. The level of political education and class consciousness is very low. The Trade Unions, which embrace only the more skilled workers in the towns (and actually, for the most part, only the white workers) are naturally weak. Their leadership and apparatus are in the hands of a reactionary, white-chauvinist bureaucracy. Their policy is that of the white labour aristocracy, which accepts the crumbs from the Capitalist and Imperialist exploitation and thus indirectly share in the brutal oppression and exploitation of the unskilled and unorganised workers. The Native agricultural workers and the Native peasantry, enslaved, downtrodden, backward, are only potentially a great revolutionary reservoir, which so far has not permeated, has to great extent not even been touched, by revolutionary propaganda, revolutionary ideas, revolutionary outlook. The more educated Natives are easy victims to the religious influence of the missionaries or the petty bourgeois National Congress. A very hard and difficult task confronts the revolutionary party. Hard, steady systematic spade work is necessary. A gigantic task of educating white and black, of spreading propaganda near and far, of organising the unorganised in town and country, of giving a revolutionary lead to the Trade unions, of guiding and winning the confidence of the workers and peasants. Whoever is not afraid of the tremendous task must come to the new revolutionary party - for this is the only way out.

Revolutions are not "made". For a revolution, certain objective and subjective conditions are necessary. The discontent of the oppressed is not enough. Tsarism ruled against the wishes of the whole population, and so does Britain in India. But when the four necessary conditions are present, that is,

WHEN the disintegration of the ruling class sets in;

WHEN the oppressed will no longer tolerate the old system but demand a change;

WHEN the ruling class can no longer rule in the old way;

WHEN there is a strong, independent, revolutionary party present to use the revolutionary situation so as to give a lead to the leading class in the revolution, that is, to the workers, and to direct the revolutionary will of the people into the proper channels,

THEN we have a revolution.

The greatest misfortune that can befall the working class of South Africa is if the fourth necessary condition, the Revolutionary Party, is not ready when the revolutionary situation arrives. Our task is to prevent this disaster. The Capitalists are striving toward the fusion of their reactionary forces. We must strive for the unity and mobilisation of the revolutionary forces, combining all workers, black and white, into one single Trade Union organisation. We must fight relentlessly any prejudiced, chauvinistic feelings against the oppressed that may exist among them workers. We must fight unceasingly for the removal of all oppressive legislation against the Natives and all other workers. But while we fight for these partial demands, we must always hold fast our sure conviction that all this fight lies in the preparation and mobilisation of all possible forces for the future Revolution.

THE NATIVE QUESTION (MINORITY)

INTRODUCTION

In formulating a Marxist programme for the working class of South Africa, we must bear in mind that a revolutionary programme is not a ready-made article which can be imported or exported. No! The revolutionary programme must be created out of the specific conditions peculiar to the class struggle in this country, out of the life and strife of the working class and its relations with other classes and sections of the population. A thorough acquaintance with the demographical, political and socio-economic history of the country is therefore essential. In this way, and in this way only, will we be able to arrive at a true and correct estimation of the present direction of the class struggle and its perspective.

The above requires further emphasis, because, superficially it would seem that for the Marxist, the Internationalist, all that matters is that which is general, universal, and not that which is specifically national or local, that the specifically national is something which disturbs the harmony of the international. At its best it is an evil which cannot be avoided, and has therefore to be concealed and smudged over. Such an attitude is, of course altogether incorrect.

Internationalism to the Marxist is not an abstract, lifeless, arithmetical conception, but a real life force. Not conceived in a spirit of humanitarian sentimental solidarity, but built on the real concrete facts of a world economy of which every nation is but a part of and through which all nations are interconnected.

(Marxist internationalism is based on the fact that capitalism itself has already conquered the entire surface of the globe, and has built upon it one single economic organism, and of which every single country is but a limb.)

The historical necessity for the social revolution is precisely because of the contradiction existing between the real, concrete, single international economic organism, and its political division into small entities, with the consequent disturbances of what may be said to be the normal blood circulation.

That must is more or less clear to every Marxist. What, however, is not so clear is precisely that the specific, peculiar national problems are the main manifestations of the sickness of the existing social economic body. As this sickness develops, gets more serious, reaches its crisis, so does the new social order, reclining in the womb of the old society, gain in force and strength, i.e., the sooner do the objective conditions for the social revolution ripen.

The national programme of the international party must therefore find its point of departure precisely in those so-called national problems. With the help of the Marxist method we must arrive at the roots and elementary driving forces for the coming revolution.

Let us then from this point of view, make our observations of the various classes, their problems, their mutual relations, and of the various parties of South Africa.

THE NATIVE QUESTION

The so-called Native problem is not one and the same for the various classes in South Africa.

What is this problem for the big white farmer? The native to him is the only source of labour power, who for generations past has worked for him and his forebears before him, for an almost negligible remuneration. To him the rapidly developing town industry, and especially the mining industry, represent a very serious rival in the field for this cheap and docile labour power. He regards the town with suspicion as demoralising and spoiling the native for his crazy village exploitation.

Here it is necessary to bear in mind that the whole South African agriculture is built on the slavery and exploitation of the Native. Forming more than 80% of the population, the majority of whom still live very primitive tribal lives, the natives have only recently come into contact with Western civilisation, and then in the form of the most horrible slavery. This then forms the kernel of the native problem for the big white farmer.

For the Capitalists in the town in general and for Imperialism in particular, besides the question of competing with the former for labour power, is the problem of maintaining the cheapness of the native, and of preventing him from being spoilt by the bad influences of the town.

On no account must he develop those industrial forms of organisation brought about by town exploitation bringing with it the stimulus in the native of a rebellious, proletarian character.

Here Capitalism finds itself involved in a very peculiar contradiction: it would like to eat the cake and have it. That is why we have Native territories, locations, etc., as closed reserves for their increasing demand for Native labour.

The problem for them is however insoluble. In spite of all their precautionary measures, the urbanisation of the Natives is going on before our very eyes, with all the consequences bound up with the process. The creation of more than a million detribalised urbanised, i.e., proletarianised Natives, out of the population of six millions is a process of tremendous revolutionary significance, which creates fear, terror, and confusion in the minds of the white rulers. That is the Native problem for Capitalists and Imperialists.

Entirely different, however, is the Native problem for the white petty bourgeois of the town and country; for the artisan, the small shopkeeper, the skilled worker, etc., especially for those who, directly or indirectly, are compelled to sell their labour power in order to make a living. These see in the Native, hordes of extremely cheap labour, swooping down and penetrating into all the different spheres of labour, pushing mercilessly out of the way all those whose standards of life is higher than his own, thus lowering the price of labour in general. This is possible not because of the social strength of the Native, but on the contrary because of his exceptionally low standard of living.

When opposed by an opponent stronger than oneself, one is stimulated to fight, one seeks allies and other means in order to become stronger than the opponent and to overcome him. But to overcome an opponent whose strength lies in his social weakness is extremely difficult; it is well-nigh impossible.

This is the aspect of the problem for the white petty bourgeois, skilled worker, etc. From this section therefore comes those Utopian and Fantastic plans for Native segregation, the proposed solution of the white skilled worker and of the petty bourgeois, through the Labour Party which also finds an echo in other bourgeois parties.

In an entirely different light, however, stands the Native problem for the Natives themselves. And it is from this point of view, from the point of the Natives themselves, that we must consider the problem. The Native is the most important to us, not only because the natives comprise more than four-fifths of the whole population, not as in the thesis of the majority group, even because they form almost the entire producing element in agriculture and mining, and are steadily increasing their value in all town industry. That applies to every exploited section of the population in every country.

What is characteristic and peculiar about the Native problem is that it crosses, reflects and expresses all the problems, conflicts, antagonism and contradictions of the socio-economic structure of South Africa, nourishing and casting its shadow over every social problem.

Herein is the peculiarity of the development of Capitalism in South Africa: that on one side, on the side of the ruling class we find the most modern and perfect system of oppression and exploitation, the highest form of concentrated monopoly-capitalism, and on the other side we find the Native, the overwhelming majority of the exploited, whose stage of development is the lowest imaginable.

Living for the most part on the land, the Native is not only pre-capitalistic, but even pre-feudal in his backwardness. Living, as they do, still in the stage of very primitive tribes under chiefs, it is ridiculous to pose the Native problem as the Agrarian Problem. We return to this later.

Capitalism understood full well how to utilise this tremendous contradiction, this exceptional disproportion. This was, in fact the main attraction for it. Able to apply the most perfected methods of exploitation, Capitalism could rely on the resistance form the other side being the smallest possible. There are, however, two sides to every coin. This disproportion, developing dialectically, has inevitably to give birth to all those, for the capitalists insoluble conflicts, antagonisms and contradictions (of which the poor-white problem is the outstanding one) in the social body of South Africa, which will ultimately explode and destroy that same body, and build on the ruins the new free socialist society.

The main contradictions of our epoch - the world division of the forces of production into the narrow frames of national, governmental boundaries - this contradiction is exceptionally concentrated in the framework of our national borders.

All this is of exceptional theoretical value for the Marxist movement in general and for the theory of permanent revolution in particular.

THE NATIVE "PROBLEM" AS SUCH

What is the economic background for all the anti-Native legislation and taxation which encircles the Native and oppresses him?

1. To maintain his low standard of living. By no means must he lose his charm as cheap labour, for his exploiters. Therefore he is enclosed in the hopelessly insufficient native territories and locations.
2. Reducing the Natives to such conditions that they are forced to go in search of work, to sell their labor power.

These two points are of great importance and must always be kept in kind. Only by a complete understanding of the combination of these two points can we explain and understand why the Natives cannot be classified as peasants in the modern sense.

The peasantry of Europe and Asia were developed under feudal relations, into which social body penetrated the new bourgeois productive relations. By undermining the old feudal system and dissolving it, the bourgeois brought to the surface of modern society the so-called Agrarian Movement with its variety of problems in the different countries of Europe and Asia.

That a peasantry in this sense does not exist in South Africa can hardly be questioned, and there is no possibility for its creation under the conditions of Imperialism.

The native territories do not form a developing internal market in South Africa. Their main function in the economy of the country in general and of the mining industry in particular is to serve as a reliable reservoir of extremely cheap labor. All the political force is used in order to ensure the smooth functioning of this system.

Not a hundred years have passed since the final subjugation of the Native (Dingana) by the boers, who, conquering by means of their firearms over the primitive assegais, enslaved the conquered natives. This period, however, did not last long. With the discovery of the alluvial mines, the boers themselves fell under the bloody domination of British Imperialism. These Imperialists too, were interested in the natives, who were to them an abundant source of cheap labour, to be utilized to perform the miracle of turning the natural riches of the country into movable capital.

We thus find the natives, without having passed through all the known historical phases, being flung out of their primitive tribal life against the most perfected form of imperialism, i.e., the last stage of capitalism.

From this most simple of economic formations, he is transformed into the modern proletariat, occupied in the most highly concentrated of industries. Here we have before our eyes the very curious social phenomena of a people stepping over different historical stages of development.

From this we see that the interests of all the natives, not only those proletarianised in the town, - but also the potential proletarians in the native reserves, that their interests clash directly with those of British Imperialism, that is, with those of the mine magnates and their agents, who stand on top of the social ladder in South Africa. It is these gentlemen who see to it that the whole of the class structure of the exploiting class in South Africa is maintained no matter which of the bourgeois parties is in power.

Next to these on the ladder come the national bourgeoisie of town and country, who, turning their faces away from the Imperialists, nevertheless lean their backsides on them, in order the more severely to exploit and mercilessly suck the lifeblood of the natives.

From this short analysis it is quite clear that the native problem is not the Agrarian problem at all, but the problem of Imperialism and Capitalism. Only when we approach the problem from this point of view can we conclude that the Labour Party talk of segregation, the Communist Party talk of a Native Republic, is Utopian as an idea, reactionary as a movement, and counter-revolutionary in effect.

CRITICISM OF THESIS OF MAJORITY GROUP (WORKERS PARTY)

Although the native thesis contains much valuable data, it is fundamentally false and full of contradictions. The thesis describes in detail the position of the native masses, and concludes that the Agrarian Revolution is the alpha and omega of the revolution in South Africa.

What the thesis does not reveal is which class or classes are responsible for the prevailing conditions - in short, who is the enemy of the natives and the exploited people on general. Is it British Imperialism or the local national bourgeoisie, or is it the rich white landowners (in one phase, the thesis refers to the South African Labour Party as the enemy of the natives)? (In discussion they maintained that not Imperialism, but the National Bourgeoisie is the main enemy.)

It cannot be said that all are equally the enemy of the natives, because we are now working out the strategic plan for the revolution. Is it then possible to work out the strategy and not to ascertain who the main enemy is, against whom our main forces must be concentrated, against whom we must deliver the decisive blow? Perhaps it consists of a combination of antagonistic classes? If this is the case, then it is of the utmost importance to the plan of campaign.

If the Native problem is the Agrarian Problem and the agrarian problem is the axis of the revolution, then the only correct slogan is "as much land as they can work for the landless and poor peasantry". But this minuses the role of the white workers, and underestimates the part to be played by the town in general in the coming revolution.

Assuming that the thesis is correct in its view of the Native question as an agrarian peasant movement, the question arises, who can solve this problem, who can lead such a peasant movement and lead it to victory? The peasant himself? No! That is the answer of the thesis itself. The peasantry can rise in revolt, but it cannot independently carry on a revolution, much less bring it to a victorious conclusion. This is quite correct. Here we have no quarrel with the thesis. The whole history of social movement proves its correctness. With whose help then, can the peasant movement be turned into a victorious social revolution? From the thesis one cannot draw very definite conclusions, but it is possible to infer that this role will be played by the urban proletariat. But why should the town workers enter a battle for life and death for the peasantry? Out of sentiment? Because of proletarian altruism? Or is it out of filial affection or racial and national identity? If the answer to these questions is "yes", is it a Marxist approach to the problem? Perhaps the proletariat will lead the revolution in order to extend the internal market, and in this way to develop industry? No! These are ridiculous assumptions.

What will the proletariat as a class gain by it? Exploitation by a more developed and stronger National Bourgeoisie. It is time that those who claim to be Marxists realize that an independent class does not consciously make a revolution in the interests of another class. Its own class interests drive it and compel it to rise, and with weapons in hand to fight for its own class interests. Must we conclude then that the working class will not participate in the revolution? No! Certainly not. Not only will the proletariat participate but it will be the main force, the hegemony. Why the? In the first place and mainly to solve its own class problems: the liberation of the working class from the Imperialist-capitalist yokes; the abolition of war, unemployment, wage-cutting, the prevailing insecurity, and the permanent lowering of the standard of living.

Is the South African proletariat interested in the agrarian revolution, the native problem. etc? Yes! Decidedly yes! But it is mainly interested in them as good and useful allies. The intense exploitation of the native masses, their inhuman and unbearable conditions, are a tremendous reservoir on which the coming revolution can draw. Why is the peasant as good partner in the coming social revolution? Is because his class aim is the classless Communist society? No! As peasants they are interested mainly in the possession of land and in extending their private property. Why then? In their struggle for land, against those who stole it from them and transformed them into slaves, i.e., monopoly. finance-capital (in short, imperialism), the natives are forced to look for support to those sections of the population which are also oppressed by imperialism., and at the same time are also interested in the struggle for their own emancipation. It is quite natural, therefore, that the proletariat and peasantry are, in the present epoch of imperialism, ideal partners, and that they will give each other mutual support against their common enemy. If in the earlier stage of Capitalism, the peasantry in western Europe found their support mainly in the urban bourgeoisie who assisted him to solve the agrarian problem, then in the present epoch of imperialism, when the main problem is to solve the contradiction between Capital and Labour, it is quite evident that in the gigantic struggle, the proletariat is the historical class which will lead the battle against imperialism.

It is the mission of the proletariat, therefore, to be the leader of exploited people. Only when it will play that role, can the victory of Socialism over Imperialism be guaranteed. the classical example of this from the positive side, is the Russian October, and from the negative side, the defeated Chinese Revolution.(Omission here due to typing error).....

than it has to play in South Africa? No! Numerically the Russian proletariat was a negligible minority - nine million proletarians to over a hundred million peasants; nevertheless the October Revolution was a proletarian Socialist Revolution and not agrarian as the S.R.s always asserted.

In South Africa there are about a million natives in the towns. The South African revolution will therefor have to be a proletarian Socialist revolution, led by the urban black and white workers, who will find in the toiling peasants, including the poor white farmer, their main support, because the proletariat and only the proletariat will, after their victory be able to solve the agrarian problem. If we doubt the possibility of the proletariat playing a leading role in the social revolution, then it is ridiculous to even speak of a revolution in South Africa. Then it will have to be brought here from outside, as a present from the victorious world proletariat at the end of the world revolution. In that case, why build a revolutionary party here, to make useless sacrifices?

IS THE NATIVE MOVEMENT THE AGRARIAN MOVEMENT?

The mere fact that Natives suffer from a shortage of land or that they have no land at all does not make the Native problem the agrarian problem, any more than it makes the problem of the poor town population the agrarian problem. Throughout all the ages, and in all countries, there were problems directly connected with the land, yet that does not enable us to judge and understand the modern Agrarian Movement. As all other problems, the Agrarian Problem must be considered in its class content, in the productive relations of the given society, in the interrelations between classes.

What is the modern Agrarian Problem? It first presented itself together with, and as a result of the great Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century and the first half of the nineteenth Century. Born as a result of the developing industry and commerce of the young town bourgeoisie, it was in itself a bourgeois movement, having as its aim the broadening and extension of the peasant industry on the wider basis of private property.

Being itself very much interested in the development of the internal market, the bourgeoisie of Western and Central Europe at first gave their whole-hearted support to this movement of the peasant against the feudal relations which hampered and restricted the normal development and expansion of the Bourgeois state. This movement was progressive in so far as it helped the development of the forces of production of bourgeois Europe. Later, when the bourgeoisie became the strongest class in society, the feudal barons subordinated and fused their interests with those of the town capitalists.

With the appearance of the youngest class in society, the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, however, became increasingly more conservative and reactionary. Already they were interested in maintaining the equilibrium in society, concerned about the balance of forces and the peace and order of society. The fear was that the appearance of a new force in society might very easily disturb the normal process of exploitation, the heaping up of huge profits. Thus we find that although in essence a bourgeois movement, the peasant movement was being regarded with suspicion from the middle of the last century. True, the completion of the agrarian revolution would extend the internal market, nevertheless the movement might become a source of social unrest, a force which might be utilised by the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. Because of this fear the bourgeois revolution could not be completed in Central Europe, especially in Germany. This too, explains the peculiar role which the agrarian movement played in Russia for the entire revolutionary movement.

This two-sidedness is the essential feature of the modern agrarian movement, and must always be borne in mind. On the one hand we have the agrarian movement directed against the feudal system and its remnants. Where the bourgeois interests correspond with those of the agrarian movement, and this depends on the historical stage of development of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie supports such a movement. On the other hand, as the proletariat develops and the bourgeoisie and the proletariat become the main classes in society, the bourgeoisie tend to become more reactionary and become incapable of solving in a radical way the agrarian problem for the peasantry. This historic task now becomes the task of the proletariat, despite the fact that the aim is in essence bourgeois. The Agrarian movement is therefore no obstacle to the Socialist movement of the proletariat as was affirmed by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, contending that if the peasantry is still bound by feudal chains, then industry as a whole is not yet sufficiently developed for a broad socialistic movement, and that the question of taking power by the proletariat cannot be placed on the agenda. That was the Menshevik approach in the Russian labour movement, and this Menshevik approach of Stalinism was the catastrophic factor in the terrible defeat of the Chinese Revolution in 1925-27. In short, the agrarian movement is always directed against feudalism and its relics according to the stage of development in the various countries. It looks for support to the bourgeoisie, but in the present epoch of imperialism, when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to render any assistance, it must turn to the proletariat, depending on the social strength and weight in the given country. The greater, the more significant the influence of the proletariat, the more will it be able to influence the agrarian movement and win over its support. This is the peculiar contradiction in the agrarian problem - in itself, it is a bourgeois movement aiming at the completion and perfection of the bourgeois order, and yet the bourgeois is unable to support it. This places on the proletariat and its revolutionary party the necessity to be very elastic, and to manoeuvre differently at the various stages.

If we will admit the existence in South Africa of such an agrarian movement, the revolutionary party would have to put forward slogans which will be in harmony with the bourgeois democratic character of such an agrarian movement. In such a case, the slogan of "Native Republic" would not be so bad, because through that slogan, the proletariat will be able to attract and win over to its side the whole agrarian movement, i.e., the native population, independent of whether the agrarian problem will be solved before power will be in the hands of the proletariat or after, because in our present epoch, the epoch of Imperialist Monopoly-Capitalism the proletariat is the only force in society capable of solving all the complicated problems. Thus, the idea that the native problem is the agrarian problem is the axis, the alpha and omega of the revolution in South Africa would be the best theoretical justification for the Moscow Stalinist slogan of a "Native Republic". But in actual fact we have here no such agrarian movement, and certainly not as a Native movement.

The sharp point of the Native problem is directed, not against the remnants of feudalism, but against the Capitalist-imperialist productive relationships in South Africa which has transformed the native during the last fifty years into the most exploited, actual or potential proletariat on the world, keeping him in reserves (territories) just as the millions of unemployed in the whole Capitalist world, form the reserve army. It is quite true, that objectively the natives, especially those who still live in the territories, due to their primitiveness are still far from having a proletarian psychology and ideology - that is surely a fact which we must take into consideration. But, objectively, and this is what is of the first importance, such is his position, his class function in the Imperialist-Capitalist Society of South Africa. In this regard, we are justified in recalling Marx's views about the French Proletariat during the great French Revolution: the Native is a class for his exploiters, but not yet a class to himself. But, this is a preliminary stage in the development of every class in society, and if objectively the natives form a class, its class consolidation must immediately follow, and they will be constructed as a class to themselves, with their own class ideology as an inevitable consequence. This increases manifold the function of the revolutionary proletarian party as the educator of this particular working class in South Africa, a class which consists of such a rich variety of material and colour, a class whose internal contrasts are as great as for instance the gap between the skilled English tradesman with his hundred years of Trade Union tradition and experience and the natives who still live in the kraal. The greatest, hardest, and most important task of the revolutionary movement in South Africa is the bringing together of these heterogeneous elements and to mould them into one integral, indivisible class not only in relation to the other classes, but also in relation to themselves. From this follows the tremendously important role of the white section of the working class (although it is numerically the smaller section): the development of trade unionism, co-operation and proletarian education for the whole working class in South Africa.

Now it is quite clear that the revolutionary party must put forward such slogans as will serve the purpose of uniting the two sections, the black and white, of the South African proletariat. Its slogans must demonstrate the mutual interests and the unconditional necessity of their unity, for the solving of their historical class task: to destroy the existing exploiting class society and the establishment of Socialism.

only if we approach the native problem from this angle, will the reactionary harmful and dangerous nature of the slogans of a "Native Republic" become clear, a slogan which instead of uniting, splits and alienates the two sections, and in this way serves the cause of the white rulers in their desire to keep the native in his place, to keep him in his backwardness, and not to allow him to reach the road to the historical necessary unification and moulding of the very peculiar working class in South Africa.

We must have our revolutionary perspectives, based on the general situation, on the structure and relations of the classes: the contradictions of imperialism in South Africa, the Native Problem, the poor white problem, the exceptional insecurity of the white workers, the ruination of the farmers and the lower middle classes by the tremendous concentration of finance and monopoly capital, the crushing of the coloured workers between the black and white proletariat. All these are tremendous potential revolutionary forces, which will give the presence of a revolutionary party with a correct leadership, put the South African proletariat in the vanguard of a world revolutionary movement. The party is the result of a process of struggle in the various stages before the full ripeness of the revolution. It is therefore necessary for the revolutionary party to have a precise knowledge of the various classes, their mutual relationships, and their political parties - to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole political structure of the country. According to Lenin, one of the main pre-requisites for a revolutionary situation is the disintegration of the ruling classes, until they reach a stage that they will be unable to continue ruling in the old way. If that is an irrefutable condition, is possible to imagine that such a situation will arise suddenly, by accident? No! We will reach such a position thanks to the contradictory development of Capitalism itself. There is, we must admit, an intensified antagonism between the various sections of the ruling classes. Is it possible that South Africa is an exception in this case? No! In South Africa, a semi-colonial country of British Imperialism, that contradiction is very sharply expressed in the contradictory interests of Imperialism, which maintains its grip on the whole country, crushing and squeezing all its classes, farmers, industrialists, petty bourgeois, not even to mention the workers and peasants. Is the antagonism between Imperialism and National Bourgeoisie expressed in the political life of the country? Of course! We can say that the whole political history of the country for the last forty years is the history of that contradiction.

Due to the exceptional backwardness of the working class in general and of the natives in particular, their struggle did not up to now find a very strong echo in the political life, including several small exceptions (Johannesburg 1922 strike and a few isolated, spontaneous outbreaks of natives). But, on the other hand, the national bourgeoisie expressed their interests first through the S.A.P. Later, however, the imperialists succeeded in buying over the leadership of that party, but it could not abolish the class contradictions between imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. This forms the expression in the Nationalist Party under the leadership of Hertzog. Now we stand again before such a situation where imperialism succeeded in buying over the leadership of that National Party, and a great part of the apparatus and the national bourgeoisie create over again their party under the leadership of Malan.

Need we be indifferent to this struggle? Certainly not! Because that contradiction hastens the process of the disintegration of the ruling class. What must be the attitude of the workers and their political party to this struggle? In order to answer this question it is necessary to first answer another question. Who is the main enemy of all the oppressed and exploited in South Africa? Is it Imperialism or the National Bourgeoisie, etc.? If we want to be Marxist-Leninists, we must answer clearly and precisely that British Imperialism is the main enemy. From this it follows that in the struggle between Imperialism and the National Bourgeoisie (the farmer-landlords, industrialists) is a smaller exploiter, a smaller blood sucker, than the foreign financial (Chamber of Mines etc.)? No. On the contrary, the exploited masses feel their hatred and rage to the direct blood suckers who are the local bourgeoisie rather than to the foreign banker who exploits and sucks them through agents in thousands of invisible and semi-visible forms. We know quite well that the Non-europeans in this country most supported up to now the parties of British Imperialism against the National parties. It is no secret for us that British Imperialism understood and knew how to play and utilise the racial hatreds and posed itself before the Natives and coloured people as their protectors. But our task is emphatically to tear off the mask of these "good friends", the imperialists, and to expose them before the masses in their true nakedness. As long as Imperialism rules South Africa, the whole system leans on it, the whole structure of oppression and exploitation. As long as the imperialist will be boss, there is no hope for improvement and therefore we have to support the national bourgeoisie in so far as they still struggle and are forced to fight against imperialism. It is true that their fight against imperialism is only the fight of two robbers over the division of the spoils. But as long as the robbed are not yet capable of fighting for themselves against both robbers together, they must logically support the smaller robber against the stronger one, to intensify with it the fight amongst the robbers themselves, and to extend and develop that fight because with it up to a certain stage will struggle be raised to a higher stage, and shaking the foundations of the existing social structure of the country, bring it to the essential and unavoidable point on the road of revolutionary development, until the process of the disintegration and rottenness of the ruling classes will get fully ripe so that they shall no longer be able to rule in the old manner. Does it follow from this that we need to unite with the national bourgeoisie, that we need to go into their party, to fuse with them? No! A thousand times no! We must build up our revolutionary party, to maintain with all emphasis its independence and integrity. But we must, as Marx expressed himself in relation to the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the feudal lords in the 19th century, march separately and strike together, strike them who at the moment are the main enemy, as Lenin patiently and unceasingly hammered in the heads of the communist parties in relation to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. This was included in the programme of the Comintern at the 2nd Congress, to support the colonial bourgeoisie against imperialism! "conclude with them temporary agreements for definite and concrete tasks".

But the main point is, never to lose the independence of our party to maintain the purity of our own banner; not to discard our revolutionary principles, "March separately and strike together". That is the revolutionary attitude to the parties of the national bourgeoisie.

 THE WAR QUESTION (MAJORITY)

Whereas there is a unanimity concerning the general Theses on war (see "War and the Fourth International"), there seems to be a difference of opinion when we come to deal with our policy and slogans for South Africa. This flows from the divergent views held by comrades on the possibility of keeping South Africa out of a new world war.

To clear our minds on this point we must make a thorough examination of imperialism; we must consider the correlation of forces in South Africa; we must analyse the political parties and their relations to imperialism and war.

It would be a mistake to include in one formula all the Dominions and their relations to Britain. Such a generalisation would not be worthy of a Marxist. It is impossible to draw any useful comparison between Ireland and South Africa, between Canada and New Zealand. There is not only the fact that none of the other Dominions has a subjected and oppressed Native population comprising three-fourths of the total population, as is the case in South Africa. In the Irish Free State there is but a small percentage of British, while in Australia and New Zealand there is a very large preponderance of British. In Canada, as in South Africa, the white population is divided almost equally, in Canada between French and British, in South Africa between Dutch and British. Therefore the natural and cultural bonds between Great Britain on the one hand and New Zealand and Australia on the other, are the strongest, and those between Great Britain and the Irish Free State the weakest. Midway there stand Canada and South Africa, the last more loosely bound than Canada on account of the hostility of the Dutch population towards Great Britain since the lost Boer war.

But not so the economic situation and ties. If in Canada British Imperialism has to compete and share with American Imperialism, if Australia has her own industries and more external trade with other countries, in South Africa the case is different. Here the grip of British Imperialism is the strongest. Except the primary industry of agriculture, almost all the assets of South Africa belong to Britain or Britishers. The gold mines, the greater part of diamonds, the coal, the sugar industry and the secondary industries such as building, shoemaking, clothing, engineering, Brewery Trust, Tobacco Trust, etc., and the transport, airways, shipping, tram and bus services, are in the hands of Britain.

The whole public debt of South Africa is in British hands. The government loans, as well as those of the provinces and Municipalities, the Railways, the Electricity Supply, all loans are directly or indirectly in the hands of Great Britain. The banks which control industrial life, export, import and credit, the Standard Bank and Barclay's Bank, belong to British capital and are controlled by British finance. The same is true of the Insurance system. So we see that the whole economic life of South Africa is controlled by British finance capital. South Africa is indebted to Great Britain to the extent of 318 millions, and it is this position as a sole creditor that makes the rule of British Imperialism in South Africa so impregnable, as long as capitalism rules.

How does the grip and rule of Imperialism manifest itself? Directly through the finance and money market of the City of London and through their representatives, the Banks, indirectly through the Chamber of Mines, Chamber of Industry, Chamber of Commerce. Let those simple souls who believe in democracy, who do not understand the nature of the state, and who think that South Africa is ruled by her Government and Parliament, look for a majority or minority of the South African Party, or the Nationalist Party, or the Malanites, to decide who is at present ruling South Africa, and how the correlation of forces will manifest itself when war breaks out. We Marxists must never lose sight of the indisputable fact that Parliament here as elsewhere is a mere show for the simple souls. In the present epoch of Imperialism the ultimate deciding factor is the dominating finance capital. And more especially will this be the case in time of a crisis such as war.

The best and clearest manifestation of the rule of finance capital was in the matter of the Gold Standard. Although the majority of the country and in Parliament was for remaining on the Gold Standard, the pressure of the City of London and the Chamber of Mines forced South Africa off Gold and subjected the "independent" South African pound to the British pound. Today we are dragged into the inflation policy and currency manipulations of Great Britain automatically and unreservedly, in spite of the existence of the "independent" Reserve Bank, just as in the same way as we should have been without its existence - like Rhodesia or Kenya. It is no longer a secret that Great Britain is in a state of financial war with the U.S.A., and we in South Africa are automatically dragged into this war. There can be no better example of the rule of finance capital in this country than our course of action in relation to the Gold Standard.

Dependant on the gold industry is the balancing of our Budget, our granting of subsidies and bounties to agriculture, our debt settlement, the extension of bonds by the Land Bank, the development of irrigation schemes. And the greater this dependence on the Gold Industry, the more powerful is British finance capital and its representative, the Chamber of Mines. It was British finance capital that forced the country off gold; it was British finance capital that forced the coalition upon those who up to that time had been deadly enemies (remember smuts and Hertzog); and it is British finance capital that is now forcing fusion.

Setting aside the aims of both parties in Fusion, such aims as higher and more stable profits, a settlement of the Native question, that is. a permanent settlement securing the supply of cheap and yet cheaper labour, eliminating even the existing competition, we can see that by Fusion finance capital will strengthen its position. For fusion means a breaking up of the Nationalist Party, a split which must weaken it, and on the other hand a consolidation and strengthening of the South African Party. Even if after Fusion there should be a clash over the War question, the Nationalist Party is Broken. Malanites may gain a few seats here and there, but the strength, even in Parliament, is shifting from the Nationalists to the more willing and pliable tools of Imperialism.

We can safely assume that when England declares war, she will declare it for the whole Empire, consulting of course the Governments of the Dominions in accordance with the Dominion status as defined by the Statute of Westminster. Having the right and obligation of Empire defence, she obviously has the right to control the Empire's foreign policy. This was true in 1914 and is true now, except that the Irish Free State may declare neutrality whereupon her strategic points will be occupied by the British Navy. In the case of South Africa, Empire control is the more sure because this country is of vital importance to Great Britain in time of war. The value of the trade routes to India, Australia and New Zealand, the supply of foodstuffs and raw materials, Rhodesian copper, the control of the Southern Atlantic, and the more than ever necessary gold, besides the "protection of investments", would exclude the possibility of neutrality for South Africa. No sensible man can consider seriously the position, in case of war, of a neutral South Africa, trading with both sides. Who is going to protect the trade in such a situation? Will England allow enemy ships to call at South African ports and allow South Africa to supply the enemy with foodstuffs and gold? Therefore all the talk about the right of neutrality is indeed academic. No statesman can take it earnestly. The significance of the fact that General Smuts would not concede this point of neutrality even for the sake of Fusion, yet nevertheless yielded to Hertzog the right to, disagree with him, thus allowing him to save his face, the significance of his visit to Dominions of Lord Hankey, the Chairman of the Empire Defence Committee, the recognition of the South African wireless system by England's leading man, of the harbours by England's leading man, and of the military and airforces by others of Great Britain's leading men, all this must be kept in mind when we consider the war question in relation to South Africa. As Colonel Brink said the other day*, or as N.E.3 wrote in a recent article+.

* See note 1 in appendix

+ See notes 2 and 3 in appendix

South Africa is increasing her military and airforces, not for neutrality purposes, for if she were left to defend the country by herself, she would need more than anything else such naval defences as minesweepers, submarines, and hydroplanes. But she does not speak or dream of providing such weapons, just because the British Navy is sufficiently well equipped. Needless to say that only backward farmers can ignore the iron law of quid pro quo. Even if the question of the declaration of war should come before Parliament (which is impossible), it would receive the necessary majority. For the majority of both the Fusion and the Labour Party would vote for war, and the voice of the minority, Malanites and some of the Fusionites, would just remain a minority recorded in the Minutes of the House of Assembly. If the minority should press for a referendum on the question, either this would be ignored, or Parliament would be suspended. As Lenin says, no conscience clauses, no objections, no cry of "Boycott the war", no general strikes can stop the war. Only a civil war can stop it.

Now, can we assume that the Malanites will wage a civil war on a grand scale? A rebellion like that of 1914 will have the same effect as it had in 1914, and the lesson of De Wet's fate is not yet forgotten. Can we assume that the Malanites will become a revolutionary force? Surely in such a case the duty of the Revolutionary Party would be to support the National Revolutionary movement in its fight against Imperialism. But just here is the point where we must recall the lessons of the Indian Revolutionary Movement and the Revolution in China. The Indian Congress called off the Civil Disobedience Campaign in India, as soon as it saw a beginning of the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants which threatened to outgrow the limited struggle of the Indian National Bourgeoisie. Gandhi hastened to compromise with British Imperialism. Still more striking was the lesson from China. The Kuomintang in the famous bloc of four classes turned against the workers and peasantry as soon as the bourgeoisie saw the danger to itself of the revolutionary spirit of the masses. Although the semi-colonial position of China made the struggle against Imperialism more imperative, the fact that such a struggle could come only as a beginning of a democratic revolution, made inevitable the agreement between the National bourgeoisie and the Imperialist powers, drove them together in their fear of the Chinese masses, and the counter-revolution began with the coup d'etat of Chiang-Kai-Shek.

The Malanites not identical with the national colonial bourgeoisie of India and China, on account of racial bonds with Imperialism and hatred towards the Native population, are by no means lagging behind the Indian and Chinese bourgeoisie. They are realistic enough, and know well enough the nature and strength of British Imperialism, to understand that a serious struggle against it requires an upheaval of the revolutionary masses which would first of all become a menace to the bourgeoisie itself.

And it is especially this most reactionary part of the bourgeoisie, the Malanites, the zealous advocates of full and complete segregation, who have to fear the upheaval of the revolutionary masses. If we consider, moreover, that the Malanites constitute only a part of the national bourgeoisie ("national" only in the sense of being opposed to British Imperialism), then it becomes clear that it would be fantastic to expect a civil war or national revolutionary movement on the part of the Malanites which would keep South Africa out of the coming Imperialist war. But does the above argument imply that the Malanites will not launch an anti-war propaganda and strive for neutrality? Certainly they will not fail to do this. But their anti-war propaganda, with the individualist, pacifist slogans of passive resistance, sabotage, refusal to enlist, and so on, will be in basic contradiction to the methods of revolutionary Marxist Party. And therefore we must resolutely oppose and condemn any suggestion that we should support the Malanites, or enter with them into a united front, or into a temporary agreement because they are opposing the war and we also oppose the war. Such a suggestion must be condemned for the following reasons:-

1. We are against war, but we know that the only way to prevent war is by means of a revolution, not by pacifist talks, meetings, etc., not by calling for a boycott of the war, not by referendums.
2. We know well enough the reactionary and treacherous nature of the Malanites, enough to exclude the possibility of their joining us in real revolutionary fight against Imperialism. If they did join us, it would only be to betray us, as the Chiang Kai Sheks did in order to compromise with British Imperialism. It is only while they remain in opposition that these petty bourgeoisie resort to the most inscrupulous demagogy in order to heighten their importance in the eyes of the big bourgeoisie and imperialists. And therefore they are our greatest enemies.
3. To go into a united front with the malanites, deceiving ourselves with the idea of outmanoeuvring them, would be the greatest possible mistake. Such an ally, who will most certainly become an enemy tomorrow, is worse than none at all. "It is the worst and most dangerous thing if a manoeuvre arises out of the impatient, opportunist endeavour to outstrip the development of one's own party and to jump over the necessary stages of its maturity. To jump over necessary stages with the aid of a purely superficial, false, diplomatic, combinatorial and deceitful gathering together and union of contentious organisations and elements - such experiments are always dangerous, BUT FOR YOUNG AND WEAK PARTIES THEY ARE POSITVELY FATAL." (Trotsky)
4. The proletariat must always act independently, advance its own revolutionary policy against war, its own slogans, and set up a proletarian united front, against the war and against the trampling down of the few remaining democratic rights.

5. We are not pacifists. The transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war is the general strategic task of every proletarian party, to which the work during the war should be subordinated. If the proletariat finds it beyond its power to prevent war by means of revolution - and this is the only means of preventing war - the workers, together with the whole people will be forced to enter the army and participate in the war. (See Theses 59,79)

6. Some contend that, in case war breaks out, the Malnites will uphold the defence of democratic rights, and that through a united front with them we may save our legal position and express our views openly through the medium of support of their newspapers. We must condemn such a policy as sheer opportunism. As Lenin says (Vol. 18, p 84): "Defense of class collaboration, renunciation of the idea of social revolution and of revolutionary methods of struggle, make a fetish of bourgeois legalism, abolition of the class point of view and the class struggle out of fear of repelling the broad masses of the population (read here petty bourgeoisie), these are undoubtedly the ideological foundations of opportunism." And further, "The utilization by the bourgeoisie of the laws of war-time for gagging the proletariat makes it absolutely necessary to create illegal forms of agitation and organisation. Let the opportunists save the 'legal organisations' at the price of betraying their convictions." (p.82)

Consider the cry that is so often raised: "The slogan of 'Turn the war into a civil war' is not applicable to South Africa, for here we have specific conditions", etc. Is not such a cry as this a renunciation of the revolutionary methods of struggle, a badly concealed opportunism? Is not the idea of a united front with the Malnites (in one form or another) a direct betrayal of our convictions for the sake of saving our "legality" and of getting articles published? Are we remembering that we should have to reckon with the censorship of the editors of "Die Burger" or "Die Volksblad", who are not going to turn into revolutionaries overnight? And the same applies to the "legal" platform. We must not be afraid of repelling the masses by our revolutionary slogans; we must not be afraid of being driven underground and, oh horror! isolated. We must preserve the whole tradition of revolutionary Marxism, of the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky. "Our task consists not in swimming with the current" (Vol 18, p 66). Remember Karl Liebknecht. Remember that "it is necessary to learn and swim against the current" (see our Theses:72).

Now, what shall be our current policy and slogans?

1. We must launch an extensive anti-war campaign, carry on a tireless propaganda in lectures, meetings, special public meetings and open air meetings, exposing the military preparations and machinations of capitalism and Imperialism, their alliances, the militarisation of the youth, and the approaching catastrophe; unmasking the hypocrisy of our statesmen and politicians and the misleading capitalist press, and explaining to the masses how the war is going to affect them, how the armament race is affecting their standard of living, how they were fooled in the last war and how they are going to be fooled again to supply the necessary cannon fodder.

But we must also tell the workers that their peace sentiment cannot stop war. War is inseparable from capitalism, and therefore the abolition of war is possible only through the abolition of capitalism. And we must tell the workw=ers that they have no country until the working class has captured power and taken the means of production from the exploiters.

2. We must show the masses the futility of pacifism. But in the struggle against pacifism we must always draw a distinction between the anti-war sentiment of the large masses of the toilers, who are ready to fight against war but do not as yet understand that the revolutionary method is the only proper way of combating war, and who therefore become a prey to pacifist swindlers, and even themselves become in their turn swindling propagandists of pacifism. The workers must be enlightened and urged to join the revolutionary united front in the struggle against war.

We must fight the bourgeois militarisation of the youth, against the increase of the "Defence" forces, and against a possible introduction of compulsory military service (conscription) in this country. We must fight also against the bourgeois recruiting campaign for volunteers. It, must, however, be made clear to the masses that the struggle against conscription or volunteers is only of secondary importance compared with the fight against Imperialist war.

AND WHEN WAR BREAKS OUT

4. In the event of a big mass movement, arising at the moment of the outbreak of war, in favour of boycott, or refusal of military service, we must organise the movement and give it revolutionary character in the direction of revolutionary mass action. The anti-war sentiment must be utilised for the purpose of revolutionising the masses. But even then we must combat the boycott ideology and the pacifist slogans by explaining that the result of these would be that the most determined and revolutionary, that is, the most class-conscious section of the workers would remain outside the army. And thus the most vital part in the struggle against war, systemic revolutionary work in the army, at the front and at the rear, would be impossible. "Boycott the War" is a stupid slogan. "The Communist must participate in every reactionary war", said Lenin in 1922. Our main strategy, when war is already in progress, is expressed in the slogan "Turn the war into a civil war", which signifies not a single act, but a steady, systematic revolutionary mass action and propaganda in the army for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. We must advise the workers and the oppressed classes to reject the refusal of military service, to reject the boycott slogans, and to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn the use of arms, to carry on revolutionary work in the army, and at the proper time to turn their weapons against the bourgeoisie.

Appendix

Note 1

"Colonel Brink said that he need not dilate on the strategic importance of the Cape. It had always been an important point, and I suppose that today it is even more important than ever, and consequently, we must be prepared to deal with any eventuality."

"The Cape was the route to the East and was probably more important from an Imperial point of view. The Suez Canal was always a doubtful proposition, as was shown in the last war, when it was nearly captured by the Turks."

Cape Times, 12/10/34

Note 2

"Though politically we are free to pursue our destiny and can theoretically, remain neutral even if other member of the Empire are involved in war, we cannot actually detach ourselves from reality, from the laws of nature and ignore the economic bonds which bind us to the rest of the world.

Markets we must have to sell and buy from. Whatever our political opinions may be, it is obvious that our association with the rest of the greatest Empire the world has ever known is our economic salvation. There are the bulk of our markets - in some instances our only markets- and, thanks to Britain's vital interests, there lie the safe trade routes, which we could never aspire to maintain from our resources."

"The importance of the Cape as the gateway to the East - responsible for the founding of the original colony - has not been eclipsed entirely by the Suez Canal. That ancient asset will stand us in good stead in the future for urgent strategic reasons. The Suez Canal might easily be blocked in time of war and the Cape would become one of the most important strategic points in the world.

"Whatever the problems, military and economic; with which we have locally to deal, our only great danger is the possible decline of British sea-power through economic causes or political and financial chaos, such as that initiated by the socialistic government which precipitated the great crisis of 1931."

"Whether Great Britain will be able to maintain her enormous expenditure of 50,000,000 pounds annually on the navy or not is of vital interest to us.

In explaining his recent measures for the strengthening our national defence, Mr. Pirow, the Minister, made it clear that he appreciated our dependence on Great Britain for our coast defence and sea-borne trade, and that South Africa's policy would be to co-operate with British Navy by providing reserves, to be trained by the Africa Squadron, and by strengthening our harbour defences and ensuring the safety of the naval base.

Coastal air squadrons are to be provided for scouting purposes and for certain limited offensive measures against possible raiding cruisers.

It was last October, when he outlined the reorganisation of the Defence Force, that Mr. Pirow said: "The cabinet has decided that it is our duty to put our coastal defences on a sound footing and has agreed that over a number of years a very considerable sum of money shall be spent to achieve that sound footing. By putting coastal defence on a sound footing, I mean putting them on such a footing that they can deal with anything except a large-scale naval attack."

-E.J.S. "Cape Argus", 9 & 10/10/34

Note 3:

"It is not possible in a case of a world war for South Africa to stand aside. That is why we should do all in our power to promote world peace."

-Mr. J.H. Hofmeyr
Minister of the Interior
Cape Argus, 9/11/34

THE WAR QUESTION (MINORITY)

"The catastrophic commercial, industrial, agrarian and financial crisis, the break in international ties, the decline of the productive forces of humanity, the unbearable sharpening of class and international contradictions mark the twilight of capitalism and fully confirm the Leninist characterization of our epoch as one of wars and revolutions.

"The war of 1914-1918 officially ushered in a new epoch. Its most important political events up to now have been: the conquest of power by the Russian proletariat in 1917 and the smashing of the German proletariat in the year 1933. The terrible calamities of the peoples in all parts of the world, and the even more terrible dangers which tomorrow holds in store, result from the fact that the revolution of 1917 did not find victorious development on the European and world arena.

"Inside the individual countries the historic blind alley of capitalism expresses itself in chronic unemployment, in the lowering of the living standards of the workers, in the ruination of the peasantry and the town petty bourgeoisie, in the decomposition and decay of the parliamentary state, in the monstrous poisoning of the people by "social" and "national" demagoguery in face of an actual liquidation of social reforms, of the pushing aside and replacement of old ruling class parties by a naked military-police apparatus (Bonapartism of capitalist decline), in the growth of fascism, in its conquering power and smashing of each and every proletarian organisation.

On the world arena the same processes are washing away the last remnants of stability in international relations, driving every conflict between the states to the very edge of the knife, laying bare the futility of pacifist attempts, giving rise to the growth of armaments on a new and higher technical basis, and thus leading to a new imperialist war. Fascism is its most consistent artificer and organiser.

"On the other hand, the exposure of the thoroughly reactionary, putrefied and robber nature of modern capitalism, the destruction of democracy, reformism and pacifism, the urgent and burning need of the proletariat to find safe path away from imminent disaster, put the international revolution on the order of the day with renewed force. Only the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the insurgent proletariat can save humanity from a new devastating slaughter of the peoples...." ("War and the Fourth International")

"The disintegration of Europe, and the collapse of the League of Nations, the bid of the U.S.A. for world hegemony, the Japanese offensive in the Far East, all reveal the desperate plight of World Imperialism, and the drive towards a new Imperialist War.

It is impossible to predict precisely where and when the first shot will be fired. Circumstances may compel the Japanese military camarilla to strike the first blow, while there is yet time, though under the Soviet-American agreement, as well as of internal difficulties, Japan may be forced into a temporary retreat. The Saar basin, the Balkan Peninsula, or the Danubian countries may well provide the initiative. The multitude of factors and the inter-turning of conflicting forces exclude the possibility of a concrete prognosis. But the general tendency of development is absolutely clear: the postwar period has simply been transformed into an interval between two wars, and this interval is vanishing before our very eyes. Planned, corporative or state capitalism which goes hand in hand with the Authoritarian, Bonapartist or Fascist state, remains a utopia and a lie in so far as it sets itself the official task of a harmonious national economy on the basis of private property. But it is a menacing reality in so far as it is a question of concentrating all the economic forces of the nation for the preparation of a new war. This work is now proceeding with full steam. A new great war is knocking at the gates. It will be crueler, more destructive than its predecessor. This very fact makes the attitude towards the oncoming war the pivotal question of proletarian policy.

U.S.S.R. AND IMPERIALIST WAR

"Taken on a historic scale, the antagonism between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely deeper than the antagonisms which set individual countries in opposition to each other.

But the class contradiction between the workers' state and the capitalist states varies in the acuteness depending upon the evolution of the workers state and upon the changes in the world situation. The monstrous development of Soviet bureaucratism and the difficult conditions of existence of the toiling masses have drastically decreased the attractive power of the U.S.S.R. with regard to the working class of the world. The heavy defeats of the Comintern and the national-pacifist foreign policy of the Soviet government in their turn could not but diminish the apprehensions of the world bourgeoisie. Finally, the new sharpening of of internal contradictions of the capitalist world forces the governments of Europe and America to approach the U.S.S.R. at this stage not from the point of view of the principal question: capitalism or socialism, but from the point of view of the conjunctural role of the Soviet state in the struggle of the imperialist powers. Non-aggression pacts, the recognition of the U.S.S.R. by three Washington governments, etc., are manifestations of this international situation. Hitler's persistent efforts to legalise the re-arming of Germany by pointing to the "Eastern danger" find no response as yet, especially on the part of France and its satellites, precisely because the revolutionary danger communism, despite the terrible crisis, has lost its acuteness. The diplomatic successes of the Soviet Union are therefore to be attributed, at least in a large measure, to the extreme weakening of the international revolution.

It would be a fatal mistake, however, to consider the armed intervention against the Soviet Union as entirely off the order of the day. If the conjunctural relations have become less sharp, there remain in full force the contradictions of social systems. The continual decline of capitalism will drive the bourgeois governments to radical decisions. Every big war, irrespective of its initial motives, must pose squarely the question of military intervention against the U.S.S.R. in order to transfuse fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism.

The indubitable and deep-going bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state as well as the national-conservative character of its foreign policy do not change the social nature of the Soviet Union as that of the first workers' state. All kinds of democratic, idealistic, ultra-left, anarchistic theories, ignoring the character of Soviet property relations which is socialistic in its tendencies and denying or glossing over the class contradiction between the U.S.S.R. and the bourgeois state must lead inevitably, and especially in case of war, to counter-revolutionary political conclusions.

defence of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the imperative duty of every honest labour organisation ..."

("War and the Fourth International")

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NEXT IMPERIALIST WAR

Through its economic investments, British imperialism remains the real ruler of South Africa. All the talk about "sovereign independence", "free association of nations within the British Commonwealth", etc., is mere camouflage to hide the real role of the British Imperialism in South Africa.

The most important industries, like the Gold, Coal and Diamond mines, the Sugar industry and so on, are almost completely controlled by British capital. Most of the Government, Provincial and Municipal loans are raised in the British money market. British capitalists form the majority of Railway bond holders. All the vital economic keys of the country, including the banking system, are in the hands of British imperialism.

With this stranglehold on South Africa's economic resources, British imperialism is able to, and does play the leading role in directing the different political currents of the country. Any one of the major political parties, when in power, whether it is S.A.P., Nationalists (Hertzogites and Malanites), Fusionists, etc., can only function as the political executive of British Capitalism - the tool of Imperialist bandits and exploiters.

The chief political expression of British imperialism and its local representative, the Chamber of Mines, is the Fusion Party, which takes the place of the old S.A.P.

Fusion is the political preparation for war - to ensure "peace" internally, while British imperialism is engaged in a bloody struggle to maintain its world supremacy. To this end, war preparations are proceeding at a feverish pace. The Special Service Battalions, are the first steps towards the militarisation of the unemployed youth. The Defence Force is being tightened up, the Air and Coastal Defences are being re-organised. Fusion complements on the political field what Pirow is preparing on the military field.

The Malanite section of the Nationalist Party represents the small agrarian interests, the small or middle farmer, the bywoners, poor whites, etc. It also represents the minor industries (Boots, Clothes, Textiles, etc.) which it seeks to protect from "foreign" competition by means of heavy tariff barriers. The Malanites carry on a heavy demagogic campaign against imperialism, which must be exploited to the full by the Communist League. While utilising Malan's anti-imperialist programme for its own revolutionary ends, the Communist League must make it clear to the toiling masses that when in power the Malanites can only act as the lackeys of British imperialism, even as its forerunners, the S.A.P., Nationalists, and Fusionists. That the power of British imperialism can only be broken by a workers' and peasants' government.

The Labour Party will, in the near future, play a role of growing importance in South African politics. Painfully, it is already emerging from the swamp into which it was drawn by its own treachery and opportunism. Representing large strata of the privileged white workers, it will continue to draw to its banner, failing aareal workers' party, a Communist Party, those white workers who will in time become disillusioned with the Fusionists and Malanites. Judging by its past record, and by present indications, the S.A.L.P. can be relied upon to support British imperialism in the coming war.

The minor political currents represented by the Stallardites (Dominion Party), the Centre Party (Roosites), Grey Shirts and the Communist Party, play an altogether unimportant role in South African politics. Of these groups the Grey Shirts represent the the biggest potential menace to the working class, but at present they represent only small sections of shopkeepers, other unimportant sections of the middle class, and misguided workers who lack a revolutionary workers' party to which they can turn for guidance.

A general survey of the situation, reveals the fact, that British Imperialism has succeeded in entrenching itself more firmly than ever as the dominating force in South Africa, but it is equally true, that a growth in the strength of British imperialism, leads to a corresponding growth in the anti-imperialist forces within the country.

Im the Second World War, which in the existing International political and economic situatu=ion is liable to break out any moment, Brirish imperialism will, without any doubt, force the government of the country - whichever party is in ower - into active participation on its side. But it is quite possible that large section of the population will attempt to organise resistance to the government's attempts to inveigle the country into war. If such a thing could happen in the last war, it is even more probable that it will be repeated to a greater extent in the coming war. Without doubt, such an opposition to war will find its political expression through an opposition parliamentary party.

If the Malanite-Nationalists are still an opposition party, then it is more than probanle that they will lead such an opposition to South Africa's entry into the war. To say in advance that such a campaign is doomed to failure, is not correct. In time of World War, when the fate od every belligerent imperialistic power hangs in the balance, any new obstacle can birng down the scale. If the struggle for neutrality will draw in large sections of black and white toilers - and this is the task of the revolutionary party - and work to, arm them, it can be of termendous significance for the complete emancipation of the exploited masses from the yoke of imperialist-capitalist domination, even if British imperialism does succeed in forcing South Africa into war.

From this it is clear how essential it is for the revolutionary party to keep in touch with the neutrality sentiments of the masses, to participate actively in that movement and to direct it into a revolutionary channel. Through such action, it will be possible for the Communist League to win the confidence of the masses, and to place itself at the head of the workers and peasants, irrespective of whether the struggle for neutrality is successful or not.

 THE TRADE UNION QUESTION (NO DIVISION ON THIS QUESTION)

The problems and tactics of the Trade Unions are determined by the conditions and intensity of the class struggle. As a starting point we take the irrefutable fact that capitalism is in a process of decay. The economic crisis throughout the world for the past five years, the enormous masses of unemployed, the decline in wages, the onslaught on the standards of living, the various developments of fascism, the imminence of war, all this shows the impossibility of retaining the existing social and economic system, the deadly rule of oppression and exploitation. Against the background of this sharp economic crisis the social struggle in all countries grows more severe. Strikes of unusual magnitude are breaking out, beginning in the United States, as the proletariat strives to maintain its standards of living under the heavy hand of capitalism.

But in these fights the workers are betrayed by their own leaders in the trade unions. The majority of Trade Unions in capitalist countries are in the hands of reformists or bureaucrats, the direct servants of capitalism. Although themselves workers, they are directly or indirectly bribed by the capitalist and their chief activity is to mislead the workers. They put their trust in the goodwill of the bourgeoisie and in class collaboration; they turn away from the class struggle and from the revolutionary fight for a new order. This dependence upon the bourgeoisie is the main reason for their insistence upon the "independence of the trade unions", and for their favourite slogan: "Keep the trade unions clear of politics". They accept complacently the additional slogan furnished by the bourgeoisie: "You carry on with your economic struggle and we will look after politics". The bourgeoisie have always tried to separate the economic fight which is the basis of the trade union movement from the political struggle, and the bureaucracy of the trade unions strongly supports this. But under present conditions every economic struggle inevitably takes on political significance. Therefore the main task of a revolutionary party is to conquer the trade unions. For only by conquering the trade unions can we conquer the masses, that is, win their confidence. And this can only be achieved by systematic, obstinate work along the lines of opposing and unmasking the treachery and slackness of the trade union bureaucracy in the struggle for the daily interests of the workers, and by setting against the policy of class collaboration a steady revolutionary course. The trade union is the workshop of and school of a Communist, and our task is by conquering the trade unions to prepare the workers for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

The position of the trade unions in South Africa reflects the backwardness of the South African worker. All the trade unions are under the control of reformist leaders. Furthermore, the unions are stultified and pacified by a blanket of industrial legislation which aims at settling disputes by mutual agreement instead of by direct action. Most of the unions, and this is the most important point to keep in mind, are the close preserves of the white aristocracy of labour. Natives are debarred or discouraged from entering these unions and are in the majority of cases completely unorganised or helpless against the continual attacks on their meagre standard of living.

The majority of the trade unions in the Cape are affiliated to the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, while those in the northern provinces, as well as a few in the Cape are affiliated to the Trades and Labour Council. The Cape unions follow a more liberal policy in connection with non-Europeans, and in the majority of unions in the Cape it is permissible for Natives to join. Unfortunately this cannot be said of the unions in the Transvaal, Free State, or Natal.

On the other hand, the Cape Federation of Labour Unions is, in general, one of the most reactionary bodies that ever existed in the ranks of the working class. In no way does it advance beyond the American Federation of Labour, for even the reformist, yellow trade Union International (the Amsterdam International) is, for the Cape, as for the American Federation, too revolutionary.

When we examine the Trade Union policy of the two existing Workers' Parties, the South African Labour Party and the Communist Party, we see the same erroneous and harmful attitude as towards the Native Problem in general, that of the S.A.L.P. being chauvinistic and that of the C.P. being separatist and sectarian. The policy of the S.A.L.P., a policy of white Trade Unionism, barring the way for Natives in the existing Trade Unions, is not only most detrimental to the interests of the whole working class of South Africa, which includes both black and white workers, but is even against the interests of the white workers organised in the white trade unions. By barring the way into the trade unions for the great bulk of workers in the various industries of the country, they are serving the ends of the capitalists, who by reason of this division are able to intensify their exploitation, using the white worker as a playball in their hands. The whole history of the working class movement in this country is marked by tragic examples of this fatally short-sighted policy.

the chauvinist policy of the S.A.L.P. in conjunction with the chauvinist trade union bureaucracy was responsible in 1922 for the collapse of the General Strike on the Rand and for the appalling slaughter of the workers there. As a matter of fact, the strike was instigated to prevent native workers from doing skilled work. It was a strike which clearly reflected the reactionary, chauvinistic policy of the S.A.L.P.

In the same way, the white workers, who mainly owed allegiance to the S.A.L.P., failed to support the strike of Native mineworkers in 1919. That the native workers emerged victorious from that strike was due solely to their own militancy and in spite of the scaabbing activities of the white workers.

While we must emphasise the fact that some good work was done in the trade unions by the C.P. for a number of years prior to 1928, and this should be remembered and appreciated, we must also say frankly that with its entry upon a new "ultra-left" road, the road of adventurism, its policy of the "Third Period", the "Native Republics", the "Red Trade Unions", and more especially its trade union policy, has been since 1928 most harmful and disastrous. Its views on Trade Unionism found expression in the slogans "Out of the Trade Unions": "For New Revolutionary Trade Unions" - a policy contrary to the interests of the working class. It is a policy of despair, of pessimism, and a general loss of faith in the masses by the Communist Parties, the Comintern, and the Profintern. They forgot the teachings of Lenin, which was always against any split in the Trade Unions. "The Trade Union movement, in spite of the treachery of its leaders, is the historically inevitable form to unite the entire proletariat into one organization." The Task of the Revolutionary Party in the Trade Unions most certainly does not consist in wresting from the Unions the best and class-conscious workers in order to create small separate organisations. This policy of a breaking off from unions on the part of the revolutionary elements plays into the hands of both the capitalists and the counter-revolutionary Trade Union Bureaucracy. It is commonplace that the employers are making use of any and every means in their power to split the ranks of the working class on such questions as the labour of women, or cheap labour, or skilled worker against unskilled worker and semi-skilled, white against black, employed against unemployed. And then comes along the "revolutionary" C.P. to help them by splitting the Unions! This policy of detaching the best elements from the masses means the isolating these revolutionary on the one side, and abandoning the great bulk of the workers to the full influence of the Trade Union bureaucracy on the other side. It is not difficult to see how harmful to the interests of the working class such a policy is.

What shall be the attitude of the New Party to the Trade Unions?

The new Revolutionary Party will be able to defeat the existing trade union bureaucracy and wrest from the leadership, only when it has learned how to win the confidence of the masses. This cannot be achieved by detaching the most class-conscious elements from the masses, but by participating in the daily struggle of the masses, in their daily needs and hopes. The basis for enlarging our influence lies within the economic struggle.

Questions of wages, working hours, unemployment, short time, social insurance, compensation, sanitary conditions, and all kinds of grievances must be our concern, but at the same time we must utilise all this for educating class consciousness and militancy. Our task is to work insistently in the trade unions, giving the masses guidance in the daily struggle as well practical lessons in the revolutionary spirit and revolutionary Marxism. In the attack, as in the retreat when necessary, we must be at the head, in the forefront. So only can we win the confidence of the masses.

1. The economic struggles should follow the slogans of increase in wages, improvement in labour conditions, and the defence of the fundamental rights and interests of the workers.

1. We must be clear on the point that this cannot be achieved by class collaboration, which is the policy of opportunism and bureaucracy. While not entirely rejecting collective bargaining, we must point out to the workers the relatively slight value of this, and keep in mind the fact that the capitalists always violate the collective contracts whenever it is to their advantage. Therefore the fundamental policy of the Trade Unions must be direct action.

3. The problem of unemployment must engage our close attention. The capitalists are continually trying to split the workers; they pit those who are still employed against their unemployed comrades. But unemployment menaces every worker and therefore the struggle must be directed against its causes. For this is a matter of life and death and we must rally both the employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled in the Unions into one united, solid fighting body.

4. For the same sound reason, the unity of the workers, we must above all fight for the abolition of the "Colour Bar". We must point out to the workers the deadly danger of division, which is in the interests of the capitalists only, and the pressing need of unity of black and white in the trade unions. We must fight for equality of labour and conditions and equal work for equal pay independent of race or sex.

5. We stand for a united trade union movement of all workers irrespective of race, colour, creed or sex. It is the duty of every member of ours in the trade unions to agitate for the removal of the Colour Bar where such exists. But, until such time as this can be achieved, we must organise into separate bodies all those who are actually debarred from joining the existing trade unions. Under no circumstances, however, do we regard such purely Native Trade Unions as opposition trade unions or as a goal in themselves. They are only a step towards the amalgamation of all trade unions, black and white, into one central organisation of trade unions of all workers of South Africa.

§6. But while conducting or participating in the fight for the improvement of conditions of labour, for raising the standard of living of the workers, and so on. we should always bear in mind that it is impossible to solve all these problems within the framework of the capitalist system. While gradually forcing concessions from the ruling classes, compelling them to enact social legislation, we shall ever and again point out to the workers that only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat can solve the social question.

 CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARTY (MAJORITY)

The fundamental principles of a party are embodied in its programme and theses; the basis of the organisational construction of a Party is laid down in its constitution. In the programme are expressed all the essential fundamental differences which distinguish the party concerned from all others. The aims and objects of Reformist parties and those of Revolutionary ones are in our epoch diametrically opposed. In the last instance it is the question of preservation or destruction of the present system of class division, of oppression and exploitation. Consequently, the programme and platform of a revolutionary Marxist party and that of a reformist one must be totally different. What is of particular importance to us at the moment is whether this difference both in theory and in practical work must or must not appear in the organisational form, in the structure of the Party. This point is especially important, because there are many, even in the ranks of the Left Opposition, who think that the Party organisational form and the party programme are not closely interconnected.

During the pre-revolutionary period, the period of comparatively peaceful development, the Social-Democratic parties affiliated to the 2nd International dominated the Labour Movement, and the parliamentary forms of struggle were the chief forms. Kautsky, defending the 2nd International for its failure and betrayal of the workers in 1914, declares that the parties comprising the 2nd International were instruments of peace and not of war, and therefore they were not in a position to embark on any serious activity while the war lasted. This is partly true, for these parties were indeed not adapted to the revolutionary struggle of the working class; they were not fighting organisations capable of leading the working class to revolution, to seizure of power. They were merely an electoral apparatus well suited to parliamentary struggles. And therefore the most important political role belonged not to the Party but to the parliamentary fraction. The party at that time was only an appendix, a servant of the parliamentary fraction. Social-democracy, which rejected the revolutionary fight for the overthrow of capitalism, and has put its faith in Democracy and Reforms, in the "evolutionary process", in parliamentarism and the vote, naturally built its [parties on a broad basis for parliamentary struggle, for securing the majority. Here the number, the quantity was all important.

After the revolution he wrote: "The Communist Party as the vanguard of the Revolutionary Class, enrolling as members all the best elements of that class, consisting of fully class conscious and devoted Communists, who have been enlightened and steeled by their experience in the stubborn revolutionary struggle, inseparably connected with the whole life of the working class, and through this class lined up with the wider mass of the exploited, and enjoying the full confidence of one and all of these - only the Communist Party, if it fulfills all of the above-mentioned conditions, is competent to lead the proletariat to the last, the ruthless, the decisive campaign against the united forces of Capitalism." (Vol XVIII, pp232) And again: "With Reformists and Mensheviks in our ranks we cannot hope to lead the revolutionary proletariat to victory or to preserve the gains of victory. Moreover, it has been confirmed by recent experiences in Russia and Hungary." (Vol XVII, pp372)

Thus we have on the one hand the Party of reforms, of "gradualness", which puts its faith in democracy and parliamentary action, with a broad, open, legal organisational form, aiming to embrace the whole working class and the semi-proletarian masses in its ranks in order to win some day the the majority in parliament and thus "gradually grow into Socialism". and on the other hand we have the Bolshevik party, the Party of Lenin, who had no faith in bourgeois democracy and bourgeois laws, a cadre party, a close-knit party, a vanguard only, combining legal and illegal aspects and activities in its organisational form. Such a party carries no "dead weight", and through its members, the best class conscious elements, the pick of the working class, it is able to teach, to guide, to lead the labouring and exploited masses, in order to seize power by revolutionary overthrow of Capitalism and through the Dictatorship of the proletariat to achieve Socialism, the classless society.

It is therefore clear (1) that the organisational form of the party is inseparable from and clearly interconnected with its programme and platform and (2) that the organisational form of the Bolshevik Party was not suitable for a period of peaceful development of Capitalism, for reforms and parliamentarism, just as the organisational form of the old Social-Democratic parties is not suitable for our epochs of war and revolutions, for the fight for power, for the decisive battle against Capitalism.

The utter collapse of the broad Social-Democratic Party, with its millions of members and many more millions of voters, and the failure of the second International, 1914-1933, are at the same time the failure and collapse of the mass-parties. The achievement of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, of the little Bolshevik sect following the "sectarian", the "isolationist", the "maniac" Lenin, the triumph of the October Revolution, are at the same time the achievement and triumph of the revolutionary cadre-party, of the revolutionary vanguard.

The October Revolution was able to succeed not only because "revolution" was written on the Bolshevik banner, whereas "reform" was written on the banner of Social-Democracy. but also because the Bolsheviks were a highly organised, centralised, strictly disciplined, small but dteremined revolutionary army, a real vanguard, which could laed and did lead the working class to victory. The value of quality against quantity was made manifest through the Bolshevik Party of 1917-1921 as clearly and convingly as it had been proved on the battlefield of Tannen burg.

When we who are calling ourselves Bolsheviks-Leninists, are proposing to build a revolutionary party, can we discard the greatest work of Lenin, namely his teaching concerning the revolutionary party? Anf can we dicard the experience of the last thirty years? We must take into account the fact that every type of party that was born in the epoch of parliamentarism, anf accomodateditself to it has fallen into decay. We must also take into account the fact that epoch of parliamentarism has passed. the history of the working class for that period, which is mainly the history of mass parties, demonstrated on a world-wide scale that with mass parties such as those in Western europe, victory is out of the question. It is therefore imperative that we return to the fundamental teachings of Lenin and to the experience od Bolshevism in the matter of party structure. it must be pointed out that on this question the too a revision of Lenin' teaching has taken place in the Comintern since Lenin died. The principle of "choosing the best of the working class for the party" was forgotten and a different organisational method was adopted.

The most striking example of the result of the substituted method is the miserable failure of the Communist party of Germany. It died in the same inglorious way as the Socialist Party of Germany. For the Communist Party of Germany also relied too much upon democracy and parliamentairism, and only started to build an illegal party when it was already too late. From all the experience of the past it should have been clear to them that the main reason for the failure of and degeneration, the inertia and the decay of the mass parties lay in the lack of a strict, illegal, conspiratorial, and professionally educated organisation-core, and that without this it is impossible to solve the organisational problem, or find the coorrect programme or enter upon real action.

But not only this. The Communist Party of Germany forgot the other portion of Lenin's teaching: the ditinction between the party vanguard and the mass. the task accprding to Lenin, is not ot draw the masses into the party, but to serve the mass movement in the correct professional mannerand thus bring them under the influence of the party. But the Communist party of Gemany did exactly the opposite, and as a mass party, could not do otherwise. For the influence of the party in concrete action, there was substituted then the influence of the masses, as more and more of thee masses were drawn into the party. this was the reason why the swelling of their membership numbers and voting numbers had not increased in the least their real strength, their fighting stength, For the Communist Party as a vanguard did not exist.

The same is said in point 3 in the 21 points of admission. Is South Africa an exception to these universal rules? Were not workers shot in South Africa in 1922? Did we not witness the deportation of militant and revolutionary workers from Provinces and even from the Union? Has not an injunction been recently sought and obtained by capitalists against strikers, virtually prohibiting it? and has not political party lately been suppressed in South West Africa and declared illegal, because "it is detrimental in its activities to the peace, order and good government of the territory"? These are precisely the activities which are indispensable to a real revolutionary party.

For every clear thinking Marxist it should be obvious that not one revolutionary party on this globe can escape the stage of complete illegality. and as this cannot be helped, the revolutionary party must be prepared for it, not just six or eight weeks beforehand, but in its essence, in its whole structure and character. Only in this way can the party attain stability, security, continuity, revolutionary strength and vitality.

CONCERNING THE PARTY (MINORITY)

One of the fundamentals that separates the reformist from the revolutionary is the the conception of the role of the party. It is because Lenin alone understood the nature of the Marxist Party that the Bolsheviks became the revolutionary force that they were.

The thesis "Concerning the Constitution of the Party" completely fails to understand the difference between a revolutionary Marxist (i.e. Bolshevik) party and a reformist, Social-Democratic Party. In general its criticism of the role of Social Democracy is quite correct. The Social-Democratic Parties had degenerated into reformism, acting as an electoral apparatus, a vehicle for self-aggrandisement. The Thesis then goes on to say that to get to the core of the matter we must examine Lenin's view of the party. this we will proceed to do, and we will find that it will lead us to widely different conclusions than those drawn by the Thesis.

First of all we must ask ourselves, was the Bolshevik Party, which is the best example of what a revolutionary Marxist Party should be, was this Bolshevik Party an iron bound party, working within a narrow groove, never deviating from the line that it had set itself? Trotsky gives us the answer clearly and simply in his "Strategy of the World Revolution", page 74:- "Bolshevism always distinguishes itself by a historical concretisation in elaborating organisational forms, but not by naked schemes. The Bolsheviks changed their organisational structure radically at every transition from one stage to another.

Now, on the contrary, one and the same principle of 'revolutionary organisation' is applied to the powerful party of the proletarian dictatorship as well as to the German Communist party, which presents a serious political factor, to the young Chinese Communist Party, which was immediately drawn into the vortex of revolutionary struggles, as well as, finally to the party of the U.S.A., which really constitutes but a small propaganda circle. It is enough for any kind of doubt to be expressed in the latter about methods thrust upon it by Pepper who is right in command, and there descend upon the 'doubters' all possible measures of reprisal for the formation of faction. And the young party, which is still in the completely embryonic condition as a political organism without any real connection with the masses, without the experiences of a revolutionary leadership and without theoretical schooling, has already been armed from head to foot with all the attributes of 'revolutionary organisation', so that it looks like a six-year old boy wearing his father's equipment."

Let us turn now to Lenin's own words to find out what the proletarian party should be, if it is to play its historic role as the leader, the vanguard of the working class. But first of all, let us examine what the Thesis contends to be Lenin's views on this matter.

The Thesis counterposes a Cadre Party to the mass party, as if it were two diametrically opposite forms. It says that the "utter collapse of the Social-Democratic Party, with its millions of members and many more millions of voters are at the same time the failure and collapse of mass parties (sic). The achievement of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, of the little Bolshevik sect ... party, of the revolutionary vanguard." Further on, the thesis says, "The task, according to Lenin, is not to draw the masses into the party ..." (My emphasis) (No underscore in this quotation - Typist)

The thesis claims that the reason why the German Communist Party collapsed so ignominiously before the Hitler savages was because the Communist Party of Germany forgot Lenin's teachings on the Party. The Communist party of Germany failed to realise that that they should "not draw the masses into the party". No, the Communist Party of Germany "did exactly the opposite, and as a mass party could not do otherwise". So all the criticism which Trotsky and the Left Opposition levelled at the German Party was wrong. The Party did not collapse, Hitler did not come into power, because of the throttling grip of the Stalinist Bureaucracy but because "For the influence of the Party in concrete action, there was substituted the influence of the masses." This party then, in which, according to the Left Opposition, there existed no internal democracy, in which bureaucratic centralism had replaced democratic centralism, in this party there was too much influence of the masses.

Trotsky devoted two whole books ("What Next?", and "The Only Road"), as well as numerous articles on the German question, but it never once occurred to him that the reason for the collapse of the German toilers was, not the Stalinist bureaucratic cancer, but the influence of the masses on the party. The "united front from below", the theory of "social fascism", the doctrine of "socialism in one country", all these had no influence on the line followed by Thaelmann in the C.C. No, they were directed by the influence of the masses. This is the astounding lesson drawn by the drafts of the thesis from the German defeat.

What is the Leninist attitude to the party? There is so much written about it that one can take almost any book of Lenin's and find some reference to his views on this all-important matter. In "Left Wing Communism" under the significant heading "Who are the enemies in the Working Class Movement in the Struggle against whom Bolshevism Grew, Gained Strength, and became Hardened?", Lenin writes: "Bolshevism at its inception in 1903 was imbued with the tradition of merciless struggle with the petty-bourgeois, semi-anarchist and dilettante-anarchist revolutionism. This tradition always obtained in the revolutionary social-democracy, and gained special strength in Russia in 1900-1903, when the foundations were laid for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat." (My emphasis) (again no emphasis - Typist)

So we see that the years 1900-03, that is, the years during which "the foundations were laid for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat". In short Lenin's view of the party is a direct anti-thesis of the view contained in the thesis.

Are we then opposed to the formation of cadres? No! Only through closely knit highly disciplined cadres, can the revolutionary party be protected from agent-provocateurs, police spies, and other enemies of the working class. But with all the emphasis we must state that that a cadre party does not exclude a mass party, that the cadres are a substructure built into the superstructure which is the mass party of the revolutionary proletariat. This was Lenin's attitude to the party. This forms the kernel of the Leninist teachings on the party.

That the Left Opposition supports this view is quite evident from Max Schachtman's "Ten Years", an official publication of the Communist League of America, at that time affiliated to the International Communist League. Comrade Schachtman writes: "In Spain, a popular uprising of the masses offers the Communists their first big opportunity to lead a proletarian battle for emancipation; only there is no Communist Party. In England, France, the United States, Czechoslovakia, the Scandinavian countries, Poland, China, India - in all these countries where Communism was once represented by mass parties or parties on the road to embracing the masses - the section of the International writhes in the agony of impotence." (My emphasis) Not a word here about the Communist Parties being smashed because of the growing influence of the masses, but strong condemnation of the Stalinist Bureaucracy which has reduced what were once "mass parties or parties on the road to embracing masses" to impotence.

Let us continue our examination of this wonderful thesis, which has proved to be more leninistic than Lenin.

On Illegality

The thesis lays tremendous strength on the necessity of building "an illegal party at the same time as, and parallel with the lawful party". These words seem to indicate that what are required are two separate, distinct organisations, one for legal work, and one for illegal work. Anyone who has taken the trouble to study the history of the Bolshevik party will dismiss this as utter nonsense. Lenin compared the party to an army. The behaviour of that army which does not prepare to master all types of weapons, all means and methods of warfare which its enemy may possess, is unwise and even criminal. This, Lenin said, applies even more to politics than to armies. "But those who cannot co-ordinate illegal forms of struggle with legal ones are very poor revolutionaries."

We agree with the thesis then that it may be necessary at some future time, perhaps in the very near future, for the proletarian party to act illegally. That is to say, the time may come when the bourgeoisie may discard its covering of democracy and drive the Communist party underground. We must prepare for such a crisis. But while the thesis emphasises the illegal aspect of the struggle (half the thesis is devoted to it) it completely ignores the tasks of the revolutionary party in that period in which capitalist democracy still prevails. It obstinately shuts its eyes to the fact that in South Africa we can still carry on our work legally, above ground, that we are still permitted to publish papers, to hold our meetings, demonstrations, etc.

Not a word is said in the thesis about participating in bourgeois parliaments, city councils, provincial councils, school boards, etc. Is the illegal aspect, that is, the tasks of a possible future, then more important than the tasks of today? No! Only imbeciles and people suffering from what Lenin styled the "infantile disease of leftism" will make such a statement. "Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal means of struggle are opportunistic, for the bourgeois often (especially in 'peaceful', non-revolutionary times) use such legal means to deceive and fool the workers. On the other hand, they think that illegal means in the struggle are revolutionary. THIS IS NOT TRUE." (LEFT COMMUNISM" - My emphasis) Lenin stressed the importance of working inside the bourgeois parliaments, and other public bodies; in the workers' mass organisations, etc. "..... it is far more difficult, and yet more valuable, to know how to be a revolutionary, even when conditions are yet lacking for direct, general, truly mass action" (that is such as the position we in South Africa find ourselves in today) "to be able to defend the interests of the revolution by propaganda, agitational organisation, in non-revolutionary institutions and even in downright reactionary surroundings, amongst masses that are incapable of immediately understanding the necessity of revolutionary methods."

There are comrades, even, unfortunately leading comrades, who do not understand the Leninist attitude towards parliamentary action. Perhaps this accounts for the complete lack of reference to this all-important issue in the thesis. Some time back when Mr Ballinger challenged the Lenin club to put up candidates for Parliament and defend its views, a comrade replied in sneering tone to this effect: we want nothing to do with your parliament; we are not interested in putting up candidates. That is the way of reformists, but we are communists, revolutionaries, we believe in the class struggle, not in your parliamentary democracy, it is no accident that this comrade is one of the fervent supporters of the thesis "Concerning the Party". But this is not the Marxist approach to the question at all. In fact, this particular comrade seems to be afflicted with a severe attack of "infantile disease".

What is the Marxist Attitude towards the Bourgeois Parliaments? Lenin deals extensively and concisely with this question in "Left Wing Communism": "It has been proved that participation in bourgeois democratic parliaments a few weeks before the victory of the Soviet Republic, and even after the victory not only has not harmed the revolutionary proletariat, but even has actually made it easier to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments should be dispersed, has made it easier to disperse them, and has facilitated the process whereby bourgeois parliaments are actually made 'politically outworn'. To pretend to belong to the Communist International, which must work out its tactics internationally (not on narrow, national lines) and not to reckon with this experience, is to commit a great blunder and while acknowledging internationalism in words, to draw back from it in deeds".

"Tactics should be constructed on a solid and strictly objective consideration of the forces of a given country (and of the countries surrounding it, and of all countries, on a world scale), as well as on an evaluation of the experience of other revolutionary movements. To manifest one's revolutionism solely by dint of swearing at parliamentary opportunism, by rejecting participation in parliaments is very easy. But, just because it is too easy, it is not the solution of a difficult, a most difficult, problem."

Are the specific conditions in South Africa then such that a thesis which claims to lay down the role of the revolutionary party can completely avoid even mentioning the necessity of participating in bourgeois parliaments, or are the sponsors of the thesis merely seeking to follow what Lenin called the easier road, that is to oppose participation in parliament, to denounce it as opportunism? With all the emphasis in our power, we must answer, NO! Quite the contrary in fact.

In South Africa we are faced with the position that the largest section of the toiling masses is completely deprived of the right to participate in parliamentary elections, or in any way to share the privileges of bourgeois democracy.

That small section of the working class which does enjoy these privileges still maintains its faith in parliamentarism. Is it correct, today, when the bourgeoisie themselves are attacking the parliamentary institutions, when a fascist dictatorship looms as a grim shadow over the entire capitalist world, threatening to deprive the workers of those privileges for which they fought for centuries, is it correct under these circumstances, to attack parliamentarism, or to ignore the issue? No, a thousand times, no! Our task, the task of the revolutionary party, is to fight for the maintenance of the existing democratic rights enjoyed by the workers, and to fight for an extension of these rights to that large section of workers and toilers who do not enjoy them. This is in essence the main immediate task of the workers' party. This task can only be fulfilled by a party which participates in every phase of the workers' struggle. In the Trade Unions, Co-operatives, Sports Organisation, etc. This task cannot be achieved by the party visualised in the thesis "concerning the party" but only by a Mass Communist Party, built on the sure foundations of Marxism-Leninism.

APPENDIX

Although theoretically the main mistake of the thesis appears to lie in the underestimation and negation of the day to day work and is therefore similar to what Lenin called "the infantile disorder of left Communism", in practice - and this is what is most important - it is of an entirely opposite character.

Left Communism in Europe, in the years 1919-1920, was the reaction and result of the betrayal of the 2nd International. It was inspired and filled with a revolutionary impatience, which in a hot-headed manner wanted to break through the iron wall which was not yet sufficiently shaken by the revolutionary waves of uprising masses coming to the social consciousness. The under-estimation of the day-to-day revolutionary work by our comrades is formulated in a situation which is not revolutionary. It is in such a situation that it is necessary to start from the beginning, to awaken the masses to revolutionary class consciousness. To build a revolutionary party in such a situation, the most important part of the work will be of a propaganda character. In such circumstances, the neglect and underestimation of present work is the result of an intelligentsia psychology with its contempt of the masses and the daily needs. Marxism to them is a completed, finished, dogmatic catechism, for which the masses must first be prepared, must reach such a degree of perfection that they will be worthy and deserving of becoming irradiated with the divine light of Marxism. That is why they use the expression "Marxism was too much for the Natives for a start." (Spark, No. 1, Vol I)

Such "leftism" is not the result of revolutionary impatience, but is and can always be used as a "theoretical explanation and justification" for not going in to the vital day to day struggles of the masses. That is why they put quality against quantity, mass party against cadre party; hence their flood of talk about the illegal party, tight and closed party, etc., when such a situation of illegality has not yet arisen and there is no sign that such a situation will arise in the near future.

It is therefore clear, that such talk is only a "revolutionary" excuse for not doing the revolutionary propaganda work necessary at present. It is therefore necessary to emphasise and stress the importance and necessity, at the beginning, to lay the foundations for broad and extensive present-day work, utilising all the possibilities which legality offers us, and to adapt the organisational frame of the party to the concrete reality as it exists.

REMARKS ON THE DRAFT THESES OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

The theses are written without doubt on the basis of a serious study of both the economic and political conditions of South Africa, as well as of the literature of Marxism and Leninism, particularly that of the Bolsheviki-Leninists. A serious scientific approach to all questions is one of the most important conditions for the success of a revolutionary organisation. The example of our South African friends again confirms the fact that in the present epoch only the Bolsheviki-Leninists, i.e., the consistent proletarian-revolutionaries, take a serious attitude to theory, analyse the realities, and are learning themselves before they teach others. The Stalinist bureaucracy has long ago substituted a combination of ignorance and impudence for Marxism.

In the following lines I wish to make certain remarks with regard to the draft theses which will serve as a programme for the Workers' Party of South Africa. Under no circumstances do I bring forward these remarks in opposition to the text of the theses. I am too insufficiently acquainted with the conditions in South Africa to pretend to a full conclusive opinion on a series of practical questions. Only in certain places I am obliged to express my disagreement with certain aspects of the draft theses. But here also, in so far as I can judge from afar, we have no differences in principles with the authors of these theses. It is rather a matter of certain polemical exaggerations arising from the struggle with the pernicious policy of Stalinism. But it is in the interest of the cause not to smooth over even slight inaccuracies in presentation but, on the contrary, to expose them for open deliberations in order to arrive at the most clear and blameless text. Such is the aim of the following lines dictated by the desire to give some assistance to our South-African bolshevik-Leninists in this great and responsible work to which they have set themselves.

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The South African possessions of Great Britain form a Dominion only from the point of view of the white minority. From the point of view of the black majority, South Africa is a slave colony.

No social upheaval (in the first instance, and agrarian revolution) is thinkable with the retention of British Imperialism in the South African Dominion. The overthrow of British Imperialism in South Africa is just as indispensable for the triumph of Socialism in South Africa as it is for Great Britain itself.

If, as it is possible to assume, the revolution will start first in Great Britain, the less support the bourgeoisie will find in the Colonies and Dominions, including so important a possession as South Africa, the quicker will be their defeat at home. The struggle for the expulsion of British Imperialism, its tools and agents, thus enters as an indispensable part of the programme of the South African proletarian party.

The overthrow of the hegemony of British Imperialism in South Africa can come about as a result of a military defeat of Great Britain and the disintegration of the Empire; in this case the South African whites can still for a certain period, hardly a considerable one, retain their domination over blacks. Another possibility, which in practice could be connected with the first, is a revolution in Great Britain and her possessions. Three-quarters of the population in South Africa (almost six million of almost eight million) is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the Native masses; in its turn it will give them what they are so lacking today: confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth. Under these conditions the South African Republic will emerge first of all as a "black" Republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for whites or brotherly relations between the two races (which depends mainly on the conduct of the whites). But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence will put a certain imprint on the state.

Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between the classes, but also between the races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the State which corresponds to their numbers, insofar will the the Social Revolution in South Africa also have a national character. We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary the proletarian party should in words and deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.

Nevertheless the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by its own methods.

The historical weapon of national liberation can only be the Class Struggle. The Comintern, beginning from 1924, transformed the programme of national liberation of colonial people into an empty democratic abstraction which is elevated above the reality of class relations. In the struggle against national oppression different classes liberate themselves (temporarily!) from material interests and become simple "anti-imperialist" forces. In order that these spiritual "forces" bravely fulfil the task assigned to them by the Comintern, they are promised, as reward, a spiritual "national-democratic" state (with the unavoidable reference to Lenin's formula "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry").

The thesis points out that in 1917 Lenin openly and once and for all discarded the slogan of "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" as if it were a necessary condition for the solution of the agrarian question. This is entirely correct. But to avoid misunderstanding it should be added (a) Lenin always spoke of a revolutionary bourgeois democratic dictatorship and not about a spiritual "people's" state; (b) in the struggle for a bourgeois democratic dictatorship he offered not a bloc of all "anti-imperialist forces" but carried out an independent class policy of the proletariat. An "anti-tsarist" bloc was the idea of the Russian Social Revolutionaries and the Left Cadets, i.e., the parties of the petty and middle bourgeoisie. Against these parties the Bolsheviks always waged an irreconcilable struggle.

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When the thesis says that the slogan of a "Black Republic" is equally harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a "South Africa for the whites", then we cannot agree with the form of this statement: whereas in the latter there is the case of supporting complete oppression, in the former there is the case of taking the first steps towards liberation. We must accept with all decisiveness and without any reservations the complete and unconditional right of the blacks to independence. Only on the basis of a mutual struggle against the domination of the white exploiters can be cultivated the strengthened the solidarity of the black and white toilers. It is possible that the blacks will after victory find it unnecessary to form a separate black state in South Africa; certainly we will not force them to establish a separate state; but let them make this admission freely, on the basis of their own experience, and not be forced by the sjambok of white oppressors. The proletarian revolutionaries must never forget the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination, including a full separation, and of the duty of the proletariat of the oppressed nation to defend this right with arms in hand when necessary!

The thesis quite correctly underlines the fact that the solution of the national question in Russia was brought about by the October Revolution. National democratic movements by themselves were powerless to cope with the national oppression of Tsarism. Only because of the fact that the movement of the oppressed nationalities, as well as the agrarian movement of the peasantry gave the proletariat the possibility of seizing power and establishing its dictatorship, the national question as well the agrarian found a bold and decisive solution. But the very conjunction of the national movements with the struggle of the proletariat for power was made politically possible only thanks to the fact that the Bolsheviks during the whole of their history carried on an irreconcilable struggle with the Great Russian oppressors, supporting always and without reservation the right of the oppressed nationalities to self-determination including separation from Russia.

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The policy of Lenin in regard to the oppressed nations did not, however, have anything in common with the policy of the epigones. The Bolshevik Party defended the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, with the methods of proletarian class struggle, entirely rejecting the charlatan "anti-imperialist" blocs with the numerous petty bourgeois "national" parties of Tsarist Russia (P.P.S., the party of Pilsudski in Tsarist Poland, Dashnaki in Armenia, the Ukrainian nationalist, the Jewish Zionists, etc., etc.) The Bolsheviks have always mercilessly unmasked these parties, as well as the Russian Social Revolutionaries, their vacillations and adventurism, but especially their ideological lie of being above the class struggle. Lenin did not stop his intransigent criticism even when circumstances forced upon him this or that episodic, strictly practical agreement with them. There could be no question of any permanent alliance with them under the banner of "anti-Tsarism". Only thanks to its irreconcilable class policy was Bolshevism able to succeed in the time of the Revolution to throw aside the Mensheviks, the Social-Revolutionaries, the national petty-bourgeois parties, and gather around the proletariat the masses of the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities

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"We must not", says the thesis, "compete with the African National Congress in nationalistic slogans in order to win the native masses." The idea is in itself correct, but it requires concrete amplification. Being insufficiently acquainted with the activities of the national Congress, I can only on the basis of analogies outline our policy concerning it, stating beforehand my readiness to supplement my recommendations with all the necessary modifications.

- 1) The Bolshevik-Leninists put themselves in defence of the Congress as it is in all cases when it is being attacked by the white oppressors and their chauvinistic agents in the ranks of the workers' organisations.
- 2) The Bolshevik-Leninists place the progressive over against the reactionary tendencies in the programme of the Congress.
- 3) The Bolshevik-Leninists unmask before the Native masses the inability of the Congress to achieve the realisation of even its own demands, because of its su[per]ficial, conciliatory policy, and develop in contradistinction to the Congress a programme of Class Revolutionary Struggle.
- 4) Separate, episodic agreements with the Congress, if they are forced by circumstances, are permissible only within the framework of strictly defined practical tasks, with the retention of full and complete independence of our organisation and freedom of political criticism.

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The thesis brings out as the main political slogan not a "national democratic state", but a South African "October". The thesis proves, and proves convincingly,

- (a) that the national and agrarian questions in South Africa coincide in their bases;
- (b) that these questions can be solved only in revolutionary way;
- (c) That the revolutionary solution of these questions leads inevitably to the dictatorship of the Proletariat which guides the Native peasant masses;
- (d) that the dictatorship of the proletariat will open an era of a Soviet Regime and Socialist reconstruction.

This conclusion is the cornerstone of the whole structure of the programme. Here we are in complete agreement.

But the masses must be brought to this general "strategic" formula through the medium of a series of tactical slogans. It is possible to work out these slogans, at every given stage, only on the basis of an analysis of the concrete circumstances of the life and struggle of the proletariat and peasantry and the whole internal and external situation. Without going deeply into this matter, I would like to briefly deal with the mutual relations of the national and agrarian slogans.

The thesis several times underlines that the agrarian and not the national demands must be put in the first place. This is a very important question which deserves serious attention. To push aside or to weaken the national slogans with the object of not antagonising the white chauvinists in the ranks of the working class would be, of course, criminal opportunism, which is absolutely alien to the authors and supporters of the thesis: this flows quite clearly from the text of the thesis, which is permeated with the spirit of revolutionary internationalism. The thesis admirably says of those "socialists" who are fighting for the privileges of the whites that "we must recognise them as the greatest enemies of the Revolution". Thus we must seek another explanation, which is briefly indicated in the very text: the backward Native masses directly feel the agrarian oppression much more than they do the national oppression. It is quite possible: the majority of the Natives are peasants; the bulk of the land is in the hands of the white minority. The Russian peasants during their struggle for land had for long put their faith in the Tsar and stubbornly refused to draw political conclusions. From the revolutionary intelligentsia's traditional slogan, "Land and Liberty", the peasant for a long time only accepted the first part. It required decades of agrarian unrest and the influence and action of the town workers to enable the peasantry to connect both slogans.

The poor enslaved Bantu hardly entertains more hope in the British King or MacDonalld. But his extreme political backwardness is also expressed in his lack of national self-consciousness. At the same time he feels very sharply the land and fiscal bondage. Given these conditions, propaganda can and must first of all flow from the slogans of the Agrarian Revolution, in order that, step by step, on the basis of the experiences of the struggle, the peasantry may be brought to the necessary political and national conclusions. If these hypothetical considerations are correct, then we are not concerned here with the programme itself, but rather with the ways and means of carrying this programme to the consciousness of the Native masses.

Considering the small numbers of the revolutionary cadres and the extreme diffusion of the peasantry, it will be possible to influence the peasantry, at least in the immediate future, mainly if not exclusively through the medium of the advanced workers. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to train the advanced workers in the spirit of a clear understanding of the significance of the Agrarian Revolution for the historical fate of South Africa.

The proletariat of the country consists of backward black pariahs and a privileged arrogant caste of whites. In this lies the greatest difficulty of the whole situation. As the thesis correctly states, the economic convulsions of rotting Capitalism must strongly shake the old barriers and facilitate the work of revolutionary coalescence.

In any case, the worst crime on the part of the revolutionaries would be to give the smallest concessions to the privileges and prejudices of the whites. Whoever gives his little finger to the devil of chauvinism is lost. The revolutionary party must put before every white worker the following alternative: either with British Imperialism and with the white bourgeoisie of South Africa, or, with the black workers and peasants against the white feudalists and slave-owners and their agents in the ranks of the working class itself.

The overthrow of the British Dominion over the black population of South Africa will not, of course, mean an economic and cultural break with the previous mother-country, if the latter will liberate itself from the oppression of its imperialist plunderers. A Soviet England will be able to exert a powerful economic and cultural influence on South Africa through the medium of those whites who in deed, in actual struggle, will have bound up their fate with that of the present colonial slaves. This influence will be based, not on domination, but on mutual proletarian co-operation.

But more important in all probability will be the influence which a Soviet South Africa will exercise over the whole black continent. To help the negroes to catch up with the white race, in order to ascend hand-in-hand with them to new cultural heights, this will be one of the grand and noble tasks of a victorious socialism.

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In conclusion, I want to say a few words on the question of a legal and an illegal organisation (Concerning the constitution of the Party).

The thesis correctly underlines the inseparable connection between organisation, programme, and tactics of a party. An organisation must assure the execution of all revolutionary tasks, supplementing the legal apparatus with an illegal one. Nobody, of course, is proposing to create an illegal apparatus for such functions as in the given conditions can be executed by legal organs. But in conditions of an approaching political crisis there must be created special illegal nuclei of the party apparatus, which will develop as the need arises. A certain part, and by the way a very important part, of the work cannot under any circumstances be carried out openly, that is, before the eyes of the class enemies.

Nevertheless, for the given period, the most important form of the illegal or semi-legal work of the revolutionaries is the work in mass organisations, particularly in the trade unions. The leaders of the trade unions are the unofficial police of Capitalism; they conduct a merciless struggle against revolutionaries. We must have the ability to work in mass organisations, not falling under the blows of the reactionary apparatus.

This is a very important, for the given period most important, part of the illegal work. a revolutionary group in a trade union which has learned in practice all the necessary rules of conspiracy, will be able to transform its work to an illegal status, when circumstances require this.

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20th April 1935
