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DRAFT THESIS.

THE NATIVE QUESTION.

The basis of the economic structure of South Africa is the Native population. This is not only because it is numerically the predominant section, but because the Native is the direct producer in agriculture and the mines, and also, though to a less degree, in industry generally. Almost all the productive labour on the farms is performed by the agricultural Native labourer. There are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million Natives forming the land proletariat in South Africa. The productive part played by European labour in agriculture is comparatively insignificant. In the gold, coal, 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 characteristic of the South African economic system, as it is to-day, 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 wage 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, or £1 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 European 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 crisis which deepens and widens the gulf between the productive capacity of 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 directly 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 rationalisation 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 low wages at present paid to the Native, or else will replace the white worker by a Native.

In 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 organise 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 capitalists 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.

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 to-morrow? 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.
" Native " in Reserves & Territories	57.99 per sq. mile.

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

9,959,000 morgen of land are in the hands of the Native population.

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 morgen of land for every white person and only 1.75 morgen 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 morgen occupy	8,700 morgen
8,210 farms from 5 to 20	morgen occupy	83,900 "
8,976	21 to 100 " "	513,000
30,334	101 to 500 " "	9,098,000
19,535	501 to 1000 " "	14,443,000
13,252	1001 to 2000 " "	19,049,000
4,474	2001 to 3000 " "	11,223,000
3,571	3001 to 5000 " "	13,861,000
2,078	5001 to 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 morgen, and the 30,334 middle-farmers who own 9,098,000 morgen, i.e. almost as much as the whole Native population, we find that 32,787 farmers own 33,492,000 morgen, which is 32%, and 10,955 farmers own 53,479,000 morgen, which is more than 50% of all the occupied land 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 solutions 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 the glory of betrayals, with the laurels of treason, the S.A.L.P. surpasses them by its 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", "the 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 sowing 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 the forces in South Africa. Their whole strategy of the revolution 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", 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 anti-thesis, 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 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 strategy 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 to consider 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 there is no Native bourgeoisie in South Africa, and that there is no Native bourgeois democratic national movement of any importance in existence. 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 theory all countries were divided into four categories, according to their ripeness and ability to build socialism independently. A schematic theory of preliminary stages of the revolution was invented, from which not one state can escape, of which not one stage can be skipped. National bourgeois revolution, bourgeoisie democratic revolution, democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants, workers' and peasants' government, Soviet Revolution, then Socialist or Proletarian 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, etc., nevertheless, there can be now no question of a 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 proletarian revolution. We need not, therefore, apply to our Revolution this scholastic and schematic theory of categories and preliminary 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 muddle-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 the 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 to-day, 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 in India, of the Wafd in Egypt, and of the Kuomintang in China, are futile, that they can lead to nothing except the

betrayal of the workers, and that only the workers can lead the real 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 round 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 himself and his family, and yet burdened with heavy taxes, poll tax, hut tax, quitrent, squatter's tax, he is forced to find paid work in the mines or on the farms. There, under the infamous pass system, the Masters and Servants Act, and the Native Service 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 talk of agrarian "reforms". Only the Revolution can solve this agrarian question, which is the axis, the alpha and 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 strategy and tactics as the C.P.S.A. does. The national struggle must not obscure the class struggle. We must not pander to the cravings of petty-bourgeois Native Nationalists. We must not compete with the African National Congress in Nationalist slogans in order to win the Native masses. 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 slogans 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.

Collection Number: AD843

XUMA, A.B., Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers Research Archive**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

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