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# THE INTERNATIONAL NEGRO WORKERS' REVIEW

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE  
OF NEGRO WORKERS, 8 ROTHESOOB STR., HAMBURG, GERMANY

Vol. 1

January 1931

No. 1

## CONTENTS

### Our Aims

Towards upsurge in South Africa — Labour struggles, Strike in West Indies, German Harbour Workers' struggle and Negro Seamen, Gold Coast Farmers organize; "Unity" Conference in South Africa — Lenin Memorial — The War Against the Soviet Union — India — China.

Greetings to Negro Workers. A. Losovsky.

### South Africa

Revolutionary Forces in Africa. Thomas Ring.

Imperialism in the West Indies. G. Padmore.

Appeal to the Negro Soldiers of France.

The Strike of the Workers of Gambia. E. F. Small.

Our study corner — History of the International Labour Movement — Organization and Functions of Strike Committees.

Workers' Correspondence.



The rest home of the former Czar of Russia (Lividia) turned into a Rest Home for Workers.

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## OUR AIMS

1. This journal is the official organ of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers. But it is our aim not to make this a sort of "theoretical" journal to discuss resolutions, "opinions" etc., (this by the way can be noted as the outstanding fault of this issue). It is our aim to discuss and analyze the day to day problems of the Negro toilers and connect these up with the international struggles and problems of the workers. It is therefore necessary that we receive the fullest cooperation of Negro workers. This means that articles, letters, points of view and pictures of your daily life must be sent in to us. It is only in this way that we can build a much needed popular journal, taking up the broad international problems of Negro workers. It is necessary that we receive news promptly — the moment anything happens it must be sent in to us — because the oppressors and exploiters do everything in their power to suppress every bit of news that tends to raise the class consciousness and the class initiative of Negro workers.

2. As the official organ of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers, it is our aim to carry out the principles and policies laid down at the First International Conference held at Hamburg, Germany last July, and further elaborated at a subsequent meeting of the newly elected Executive. These can be enumerated as follows:

a) to help build up strong contacts with the trade union and working class organizations of Negro workers, to strengthen these contacts and to support the establishment of revolutionary trade union organizations of industrial and agricultural workers;

b) to help stimulate the class consciousness of Negro workers by helping in International education on trade union and labour questions;

c) to raise the international outlook of the Negro workers by on the one hand bringing to them information of the struggles and problems of the international revolutionary labour movement — of the colonial movement, of the movement in the capitalist countries and of the successful building of socialism in the Soviet Union; and on the other hand by enlightening them against the reactionary principles of Negro bourgeois nationalism such as Garveyism, and trade union reformism like that of Kadalie of South Africa and Randolph of the USA, as well as that of the Amsterdam International and the International Labour Office;

d) to expose the preparations for a new imperialist war especially designed against the Soviet Union.

3. **An appeal for a \$ 75.00 monthly fund.** This is a journal of the Negro workers. You must support it. It is clear that we cannot carry on without financial support, and this support must come from workers. Of course we appreciate and invite the assistance of workers of other races; but we want to impress the need for Negro workers themselves supporting this journal. One penny from a Negro worker in Africa or the West Indies is worth more than several shillings or a dollar from other workers. We ask you, Negro workers in Africa, the West Indies and the USA to support your journal, first by buying it; second, by contributing to a monthly fund of \$ 75.00. We would like to maintain a list of the supporters to this fund. We make this appeal for the further appearance of this journal. Let us hear from you.

\* \* \*

**Towards Upsurge in South Africa** — A critical stage is reached for capitalism and British imperialism in South Africa. Events of recent months show that greater struggles reaching higher forms are in store for the near future; great tasks confront the revolutionary class conscious workers.

**Fact No. 1** — The African National Congress which follows a policy of kicking militants and especially communists out of its ranks, has split up. A militant Independent section has been formed. But even a "militant" section will not meet the situation of the natives in South Africa. The workers must push forward to higher forms of struggle, must build up revolutionary trade unions.

**Fact No. 2** — Dingaan's Day Demonstration on December 16 brought forth big demonstrations and mass meetings throughout wide sections of South Africa. Over 3,000 passes and tax receipts were burnt — 150 at Johannesburg, 400 at Pretoria, 300 at Potchestroom and 3,000 at Durban; and effigies of Pirow were burnt. The police attacked the workers viciously, killing 2 native workers and wounding 20; the natives fought back with great militancy, one native police was stabbed and many hurt. At Durban the Demonstrators carried a Red Flag.

**Fact No. 3** — The South African bourgeois Parties and the British imperialists are uniting their forces for fascist attacks upon the natives.

**Fact No. 4** — Wage cuts and unemployment is causing discontent amongst the white workers. The average yearly wage of Europeans in manufacturing has had the following drop: 1925, £ 239, 1926, £ 238, 1928, £ 221, in 1929-30 still lower.

**Fact No. 5** — The 9th Conference of the Communist Party of South Africa was scheduled to meet on December 26 to take up very important political and organizational questions among which were: the struggle for a Native South African Republic and to help strengthen and build Red Trade Unions. At this Conference the South African Party will take a big step forward towards becoming an INDEPENDENT REVOLUTIONARY CLASS PARTY.

In these factors along with others we see the heightening of the class struggle in South Africa, in which the revolutionary trade unions must take a leading part.

\* \* \*

**Labour Movement** — A so-called unity Conference called by the white reformist trade unions of South Africa took place in October at Capetown. A new body, "The South African Trades and Labour Council", composed of organizations of the White Trade Union Congress and the Cape Federation was formed. The Federation of Non-European Unions was not invited. The question of the native workers was not even raised. Therefore it was not a Unity Conference. There can be no Unity Conference in South Africa that does not take up the question of building a mass united trade union movement of all workers regardless to race or colour to carry on class struggle. This problem then is an problem that the

Federation of Non-Europa Trade Unions must take upon itself. This new organization in reality is a class cooperation body and not a class struggle body. It may be expected to become a fascist organization against the the native workers.

**Haiti** — The Spanish capitalist paper "La Prensa", carried a very brief Associated Press Dispatch from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, stating that the strikes in the coffee, lumber and banana industries which had been on for a week, had resulted in a wage raise of fifty per cent for the workers.

The Associated Press had previously all news of these strikes and even this dispatch was not used in any of the big English language dailies receiving the Associated Press.

### **Negro Seamen and the German Harbour Workers**

The German harbour workers of Hamburg are entering a period of struggle against intended wage cuts. This intended attack of the German bosses and shipowners on the Hamburg harbour workers is but a signal of the general attacks the bosses have prepared against the seamen and harbour workers everywhere. Already attacks are being prepared against the British Dockers and the Japanese seamen.

Reformist and Social fascist trade union bureaucrats are helping the bosses against the harbour workers. These bureaucrats always betray the workers in everyway — help the bosses reduce the wages of the workers, help the bosses in their splitting tactics — just as they have always betrayed the Negro and "coloured" seamen.

The International of Seamen and Harbour Workers is the fighting organization that is helping the Hamburg harbour workers in their fight against the reduction of their standards — in the general fight against the bosses and the ship-owners. **The International of Seamen and Harbour Workers unites all seamen and harbour workers regardless to race, creed or colour for a combined struggle against the bosses — for equal pay and equal conditions, for the complete equality of the workers of all races.**

Negro seamen and Harbour workers, must join in the united front with the Hamburg Harbour workers, and for the bigger struggles that are ahead, by joining up in militant sections of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers.

**UNITE IN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY!  
STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR!**

**West Africa** — Gold Coast farmers have spontaneously risen up against Gold Coast cocoa Pools, combines and trusts; an Association involving 150,000 cocoa — growing peasants has been organized. The native workers of Africa must profit from the experiences of the Chinese and Indian workers and peasants, must build mass class struggle organizations.

\* \* \*

**The War Against the Soviet Union** — The supreme Court of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union at Moscow in December passed judgement on individuals who had planned with outside imperialists a war, to annihilate the workers' and peasants' Government of the USSR. Among the imperialists agents was a whole crowd of Geneva diplomats, generals, industrialists and counter-revolutionaries of France and England, who preach loudly about "peace" and talk disarmament humbug, including Poincaré and Briand of France. The plot has been discovered, but the hatred of the USSR and the plan of war is still alive. These war plans of the imperialist against the USSR is of great concern to Negro toilers; dont forget the last bloody war, dont forget how they led Negro

soldiers to slaughter on the altar of imperialism. We call your attention to our appeal to Negro soldiers of France in this issue of our journal. We should struggle against imperialist war. Defend USSR!

**India** — The flunkies of British imperialism, the social democrat, Ramsey MacDonald and a whole gallery of lesser lickspittles, Indian bourgeois representatives and princes, shamelessly betray the Indian workers and peasants at the London Round Table Conference. They try to stifle the revolution. But it goes on. Street fighting is continuing in Bombay. The workers through their Red Trade Unions are continuing the fight to destroy any "Federal Union" that aims to keep the Indian masses bound in endless exploitation to British imperialism. The Indian workers and peasants must fight through their Red Trade Unions and peasant leagues for the true Federal Republic of workers and peasants — A SOVIET INDIA.

**China** — A Soviet Government has been set up in a large section of southern China, supported by a Red Army of over 300,000 worker and peasant soldiers. The worsening of the agricultural situation causing wide spread starvation, caused the peasants to rise spontaneously against the landlords. The influence of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions increases. In January last year it had 30,000 members, in August it had over 120,000 members. The Red Trade Unions led over 300 strikes.

\* \* \*

7 years ago this January Lenin, the Great Emancipator, died. But Lenin and the emancipatory struggle lives through LENINISM.

Leninism is successfully building Socialism in the Soviet Union. Lenin lives in the Communist International, founded by Lenin, and that is guiding the International proletarian struggle and the emancipatory struggles of the oppressed peoples to emancipate themselves from International capitalism.

Lenin was the Inspirer of the Oppressed Peoples. Lenin established the relation between the workers in the capitalist countries and the exploited masses in the colonial and semi-colonial lands.

Lenin stressed the right of self-determination to the point of complete separation from dominating nations. The right of self-determination is now a leading demand of the Negroes in Africa, the West Indies, and of the Negro masses of the "Black Belt" of the USA.

Out of the fires of Revolution in Russia, Lenin left us a great legacy. We must keep the fires burning.

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## GREETINGS TO NEGRO WORKERS

By A. L o s o v s k y

(The following article was written by Comrade Losovsky of the Russian Trade Unions and General Secretary of the Red International of Trade Unions, in 1928 for the first number of the "Negro Worker", Bulletin of the Negro Bureau of the R.I.L.U. It is of interest still to the entire working class, that is why we are reprinting it. — E d i t o r.)

Down to the present time the Negro worker was a step-child in the proletarian family, a step-child because the political and trade union organizations of the white workers, that arose scores of years ago suspected the coloured workers. This suspicion of the Negro worker is a characteristic feature of the whole

reformist labour movement. In its attitude to the coloured workers International Reformism upholds the racial superiority of the whites. Even when a reformist comes out in defence of the coloured workers he feels his own superiority. The theory of the higher and lower races, determines the policy of International reformism. Indeed, mutual relations between the white and coloured workers on the basis of equality cannot be understood by it, just as the bourgeoisie of the old capitalist countries consider that coloured workers and especially Negroes were made by the Lord God to be inhumanely exploited. Reformism is not only imbued with the spirit of imperialism, but has also all those racial prejudices that help the bourgeoisie to mobilize the toilers against their fellow workers of other races. In order to realise how perverted are many leaders of the labour movement, it is sufficient to remember that the Amsterdam International and the Pan-American Federation of Labour on the question of coloured workers and especially the Negro workers, differ in no way from the European and American bourgeoisie.

Despite this, activities among the Negroes are not reckoning with these objective facts. That is why the Fourth RILU Congress especially stressed the necessity of conducting serious organizational and political activities among the Negro workers.

The Negro question applies not only to the United States. There are also millions of Negro workers in Africa, West Indies, etc. The foremost Negro workers must seriously take up the organization of all the Negro workers, no matter where they may be. The Negro workers must be drawn into the political and trade union movement. Trade unions of the Negro workers must be built up where the unions of the white workers refuse them entry. Papers must be published for the Negro workers, for this potential force must be turned into an active force, into an instrument that will free the exploited masses from the capitalist yoke. The Negro workers must understand that the racial questions will be solved together with the social question. Real equality and fraternity of workers of all colours will be forged in the joint struggle against capitalism. Let the foremost Negro workers continue to organize and revolutionise their fellow workers — the Red International Labour Unions will render them every aid in their difficult but fruitful work.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Native masses are groaning under the blood thirsty yoke of oppression and exploitation of British imperialism and the local white bourgeoisie. Mountains of grievances are piled up against ancient, colonial, and semi-colonial robbery, plunder and oppression. The British imperialists and the white South African bourgeois rulers control the principal industries, mining, manufacturing, railroad enterprises, agricultural production and the export trade. They rob the country by squeezing the life blood out of the native masses. They squeeze billions of pounds out of South Africa each year. They are crushing the already slave conditions of the natives down to the breaking point. They are doing this in order to keep up their super profit making and to push the burden of the fall in price of goods, the shrinkage in the export trade, the whole burden of the economic crisis, down upon the backs of the Native toilers. The white bourgeois State is increasing vicious legislative measures against the Natives like the Riotous Assemblies Act; and they are bringing on worse serf conditions with laws like the Hertzog Native Bills. At the same time the South African bourgeois parties (The South African Party and the Nationalist Party) and the British imperialists

are more openly and closely joining together against the Natives under the policy of complete unity of all bourgeois forces in South Africa and at London against the Natives. This policy was outlined and dictated at the recent imperial Conference at London where British imperialism strengthened her control over the "Dominion". When Natives fight against their slave and serf conditions, they are met by the police and soldiers of the bourgeois State with clubs and guns, — like what happened at the Johannesburg Demonstration against unemployment, like what happened at the Durban boycott Demonstration; like what happened on Dingaan Day Demonstration. The Imperialist with their bourgeois State mean to keep up the poverty and backwardness of the natives, to obstruct their advancement in every way and to continue their policy of mass extermination of natives people. British imperialist supremacy is the basis of the endless suffering of the native masses. They have on their side not only the white reformist trade unions but the black reformist leaders like Kadalie and the intellectual and petty bourgeois leaders of the African National Congress. Only by struggling against British imperialist supremacy and white bourgeois rule can the natives gain their independence and establish self-determination for the native people; the trade union organizations must stand in the fore front of this struggle.\*

It is our aim here to outline the tasks and role of the Native proletariat in the struggle in South Africa. But in order to have a clear view we must give a brief picture of the South African background.

### Coming of the imperialists to South Africa

Who are these robbers who have come to your country? How came British imperialist domination and white bourgeoisie rule in South Africa? What have they done there? And what are the tasks of the native proletariat in the struggle to better their daily conditions, protect themselves from physical and moral extermination; and to assist the struggle to kick out these robbers?

The Europeans came to South Africa at a very early date. They came professing to consolidate the country, for its growth, advancement, and to better the conditions of the native masses. But in reality their aim was 1) to make huge profits through the port of entry and off the marauding traders, 2) the traders (the Dutch East India Company, etc.) aimed to gobble up everything they could that would bring a pound or a dollar through cheating and robbing the natives, 3) to drive the natives off their land and to take the best and richest for their own selfish use, 4) and, instead of the advancement of the natives, to degenerate them morally and physically, squeezing every drop of blood out of them, by slavery, serfdom and to exterminate them. This we shall show.

The Europeans settled at Capetown and robbed the country through trading and marauding. The British and Boers began to break the power and resistance of the natives for the control of their lands by the defeat of the powerful Zulus under Dingaan in 1838; they forced a Treaty, taking the best and richest land around Natal. The whites then used a policy of "divide and rule" and set up civil war between the tribes which all but broke the power and resistance of the natives, and gave the whites easy sailing. In 1879 the Zulus were again defeated.

\* The political party of the working class — the Communist Party — acting independently as a class revolutionary party will organize and unite all the revolutionary forces of South Africa, lead the struggle to overthrow the present bourgeois rule; and carry through the nationalist revolutionary struggle, to set up a Native Republic with full safeguards for the racial minorities — Europeans, Asiatics and others, and organize the country on a socialist basis.



Meanwhile "Her Majesty's Government" at London instituted a series of ruthless campaigns in the Capetown region, breaking completely the power and resistance of the Amaxosa, or "Kafirs". She broke up their tribes, confiscated their lands and left them in a frightful condition of economic dependency and slavery. The Basutos in like manner had their lands taken. In the Transvaal, the best upper lands of the natives were taken; they drove them into the "locations" and reserves of the lowlands which were most unhealthy regions and which were already overcrowded; or they drove them into the European owned farms. In 1884 the British Government at London gave independence to the Transvaal and the Orange Free State under the whites, with absolute disregard for the natives, their rights and their conditions. In 1885 every inch of even the last "locations" were gone from the natives. Then set in more bloody British imperialist and white bourgeois rule and reign.

### General Condition of Natives in South Africa

There are in the Union of South Africa 5,277,023 Natives (Negroes); 1,738,937 Europeans; 761,623 Coloureds, Asiatics, and others (over 500,000 of these are coloured); a total of 7,777,583 inhabitants. The Natives therefore are 67.7% of the entire population.

The Union consists of Capetown, the Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal, having a total of 417,917 square miles; of this the Europeans own 260,000,000 acres and the natives own 40,000,000 acres.

Four and a half million natives live on the "land", two and a half million of these live in the reserves and "locations", the remaining two million live on European owned farms. Even a bourgeois writer says that the masses of natives on the reserves are living at the starvation point, and those on European owned farms are below even this. Each year the needs of the natives increase, while taxes for cattle dipping and other charges drive the able-bodied men to the cities as wage-earners. In the Herschel district some 40,000 natives consumed on an average of £ 3 per year and one half of this had to be earned in the cities by the able-bodied men and brought back to the reserves. By spending their time in the cities the able-bodied men are lost to the reserves, resulting in lower production in the reserves, then comes the drought with no measures against it, then as the Europeans artificially force up land values the natives are pushed off the reserves into the already overcrowded "locations". The struggle for food is fierce. The death rate is high.

The infantile death rate in 1924 in one of the Transvaal regions was found to be over 500 and is on the increase now. Health department reports show that typhus is prevalent throughout native regions; scurvy coming from poor nourishment is also prevalent; in 1929 in Zululand malaria „was most devastating“. A careful investigation in the Grahamtown district for the period from 1904 to 1916 showed a very high infantile death rate, births exceeding deaths in only two of the twelve years. About the same time in East London it was 400 out of a thousand. In Johannesburg in 1922—1924 the infant death rate was "enormously high", 565 out of a thousand. At Pietermaritzburg in 1929 eleven infants out of 83 born, lived. In one Reeftown recently every infant born, died.

In the European owned farms "native labour is bred" in the low fever stricken regions, and held to be drawn on when big crops come. The natives are otherwise contracted to work for 180 day periods, 14 days on and 14 days off. This spacing of their time is done not only to keep them from going to the towns, but to spread their time over a longer period, and they are not paid for the time in between. Women and children are bound to the farms for 365 days a year. In

Transvaal, on some of the farms, often no wages at all are paid, where wages are paid they are as low as 2 or 3 shillings per month, with cast off clothing, refuse and other pieces of animals killed for the master's needs, thrown in. In reality and actual practice the natives are nothing more than serfs, semi-serfs and slaves.

In the Transvaal in 1929 only £ 96,000 was spent for native education while £ 3,000,000 was spent for European education; there are usually only two or three schools for 20,000 native children. In the Union in 1928 there were 324,706 native students in school up to the fourth grade, everything above fourth grade is considered "higher Education", but in reality there is no higher education for the natives. For the training of natives in these schools the state grants only £ 340,000 yearly. During 1928 there were 342,033 European children in school; the state grants an average of £ 7,000,000 yearly for their training. It is clear under these conditions that everything is being done in health neglect, in lack of education, in industry and in agriculture to keep the natives from advancing. One South African puts it quite bluntly: "It becomes a question of preservation of white civilization. If we want to hold our own we must exterminate the natives."

### **Imperialist Robbery — Development of Native Proletariat**

With the discovery of minerals natives were forced into the mines, and with this began the growth and the development of a native proletariat. But the great mineral wealth, and profits from industrial and agricultural products go to the British imperialists and the white bourgeoisie. From the time that gold was first discovered an endless flow of this precious metal has poured into the coffers and banking houses of the white rulers and foreign imperialists, principally Great Britain. From 1868 to 1929 £ 1,005 million of gold was produced; from 1884 to 1929 229,051,118 fine ounces was refined (40% of the gold produced by the entire world during this period). The value of all other minerals produced since 1884, including diamonds, coal, copper, tin, etc., was over £ 405 million. Diamonds was first in value at £ 294 million; coal was second in value at £ 84,062,894; the total mineral production since earliest times has been valued at £ 1472 million. The value of the manufactured products for South Africa, since 1911 has been over £ 2½ billion.

Foreign trade is one of the most important items and sources of income for the bourgeoisie. From 1906 to 1929 the export trade was £ 1,900 million.

In the mining industry since 1922 an average of 241,445 natives have worked each year. They received an average of £ 8½ million in wages or £ 29 for each worker. During the same time 35,386 Europeans received £ 8,000,000 yearly or an average of £ 200 per worker; the bosses took over £ 20,000,000. In 1918 the total income of the mining industry was £ 47,737,738 of this £ 18½ million went as wages for all the workers, the natives receiving £ 7½ million of this; the net proceeds to the bosses were £ 22,000,000. Or take 1928. The mines earned £ 66,406,372, of this 20 million went for wages; less than £ 9 million went to 321,087 natives; over £ 10 million went to 38,000 Europeans; the bosses put away £ 46½ million.

These are enormous figures, and while it may be difficult for the average native worker to grasp the full significance of them, still it is important for him, carefully to study them in order to know who the robbers are and to raise his class consciousness, understanding that his "purpose" in life is not to be a slave for the exploiters, (as he is taught by their agents, preachers, etc.) but that it is his duty and task to struggle to overthrow the robbers and oppressors and help to organize the distribution of the wealth to toilers and workers who produce it.

These figures show that not only the huge profits made by the capitalists and the imperialists, but the super wages paid the European workers is done at the

expense of the Native workers. The wages of the upper sections of white workers is sometimes 600% and usually 400% higher than the wages of the native workers. Even the Federated Chamber of Industry is forced to admit that the wages paid the European workers is due to, and dependent upon, the employment of large numbers of native workers. The white worker in South Africa however is fast losing his favored position. The bosses are not only bringing natives in as unskilled labourers but they are using them as semi- and skilled workers, in many cases displacing the whites. The position of the white workers is becoming worse. Their attitude to the native worker only help the bosses. The conditions of both black and white are being lowered. The wage of a semi-skilled native worker in Durban is not more than £ 3 per month, usually only £ 2½. The cost of maintaining a native family, even according to state figures, is 6/10 per month. In wide sections of the mining fields there has not been an increase of wages for the natives for over 30 years.

Compound life of the native workers is most terrible. It is worse than herding cattle into pens, conditions of this kind are worse than slavery, the "Nigger" should be ruled with a Sjambok (a whip) they say, and in the mines the whips are used freely every day. These conditions should not be endured by any human being.

The natives through taxation are forced from the reserves by the thousands to the towns to earn a living. Being unfamiliar with city conditions and industrial life they are forced into competition with the workers already there, which lowers the wages of all the workers. There is no trade union organization to bring the workers together to fight the bosses. The living level of the native workers can be judged by the fact that all they own or expect to own is a blanket, and perhaps a few cooking things. They have a little rice or some dried fish to eat. By lying figures the imperialists try to show that unemployment does not affect the natives. But it is only through the tribal habits, of sharing and dividing food that the unemployed natives receive any relief and native unemployment is disguised. Also, despite the insistence of the mine-owners that few workers are hurt by the negligence of the owners in providing safety devices, still figures show that a very small item is spent by the mine-owners for the safety of the mines, some mines have been allowed to run so many years without repairs that "costs of repairing them now is prohibitive". The main difficulty and weakness of the native proletariat is the lack of Trade Union Organization, especially in mining and the most important and basic industries.

### **Tasks of the Native Proletariat of South Africa**

In 1930 there were 354,330 native workers in the mining industry; constituting 90% of the workers in this industry. There are over 125,000 native workers in the production or manufacturing industries, constituting around 65% of the workers, in transportation there are around 40,000, constituting about 35% of the railroad workers. In the lesser trades and crafts, like clothing, bakeries, food, etc., there are a few. In all the industries of South Africa the native workers constitute the vast majority around 75%, the other 25% are largely the favoured whites. In agriculture there are around a half million native workers, with a sprinkling of whites.

The first and foremost task of the class conscious workers of South Africa is the organization of the workers in these basic industries — mining, manufacturing, transportation, and the agricultured workers. The fundamental weakness of the South African workers is the lack of organization in these industries. These

industries must be organized on the industrial basis of organization, that is, one industrial union for each industry and for all the workers of that industry. These Unions must be class-struggle Unions, energetic organization, must be carried on throughout each industry on the shop basis of organization, factory committees, shop delegates, pit committees (in the mines), action committees and strike committees. The setting up of these committees must be done against all reformists, against all talk about class collaboration, against any cooperation with the bosses, against reformists like Kadalie and Ballinger, against all reformist meddlers. These committees should become real live militant organs of the workers, fighting against the bosses for the improvement of the conditions of the workers.

Another task of the factory committees must be the organization of self-defence groups in order to guard the workers against the attacks of the bosses and their police. Self-defence corps often will have to guard meeting places, defend picketers, etc. Defence corps must have the closest cooperation of all the workers.

On this basis and fighting for the interests of all the workers regardless to race the **Federation of Non-European Trade Unions** must become a mass organization, functioning throughout the country, a real revolutionary trade union centre unifying all the workers of South Africa — Europeans, Coloureds, Indians, etc., for revolutionary struggle. It must fight for the following demands and conditions:

1. For the right of the workers to organize, for the complete freedom of trade unions, or the right of assembly.
2. For equal pay for equal work (Natives with Europeans) for men, women and youth.
3. For an increase in wages. (In mining there has not been an increase in 30 years.)
4. For a working day of not more than 8 hours for grown ups, 6 hours for youth. Introduction of 6 hour working day in dangerous work, like for example, mining.
5. For compulsory weekly rest days and annual holidays with full pay.
6. For insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident; for old age pension, etc., all to be paid for by the state.
7. For the complete abolition of all forced labour, contract labour, and systems of bondage.
8. For special demands and rights for the Portuguese Natives already imported to South Africa.
9. Away with the compound system.
10. Away with pass restrictions and curfew laws.
11. For abolition of all racial barriers, colour bars and caste systems.

In addition, there are a thousand and one other demands in South Africa for the improvement of the life of the workers such as providing of toilets, workers' inspection supervision, especially in the mines where the danger to the life of the workers is great.

### Other Tasks

The most important task of the trade union movement of South Africa is the development and training of native trade union leaders, who must be drawn up right out of the shops, factories and pits. The most militant; active, class-conscious workers must come forward to lead their fellow workers. Another task

is the building of a trade union Press, issuance of leaflets and pamphlets in native languages and finally close contact must be established with the revolutionary International labour movement.

### **Agricultural Workers**

The class-conscious workers in the cities and industries must help their brother agriculture workers on the plantations and farms, organize to fight, against serf and slave conditions, the forcing of the Natives off the farms with taxation, against compulsory labour, against spreading their work time. Contact must also be made with the peasant toilers.

At this moment everything points to a heightening of the class struggle in South Africa. On the basis of the many grievances and the deplorable conditions of the workers, and the growing offensive of the bosses against the native workers, imminent class battles are ahead. A strike situation flaring up the whole of South Africa is in store for the near future. Careful attention must be given therefore to strike tactics, the preparation and leadership of strikes. (See "Study Corner" this issue.)

The South African proletariat must not forget and must keep it ever before them, that the full and complete betterment of their conditions, that full and complete protection of the interests of all the workers, that the achievement of self-determination for the natives and the setting up of a Native Republic for the organization of the country on a Socialist Basis, cannot be had before British Imperialist supremacy and white bourgeois rule is destroyed. You must build powerful revolutionary trade unions. You must accept the guidance and leadership of the Communist Party, the only party of the working class and oppressed millions of South Africa.

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## **THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES OF AFRICA\***

By Thomas Ring.

It is important to lay down a definite line of tactics in order to define the role of the black races in Africa. The First International Conference of Negro Workers in July 1930, with sufficient clearness pointed out the difference between the Negro problems of the United States of America and those of Africa, at the same time advocating the necessity of applying different methods for the bringing out of respective slogans. It would be a serious mistake to regard the Negro problem in Africa from the point of view of the Negro question in the United States or in the West Indies. But the different situation in Africa itself, on account of the different economic levels and local conditions, was not made sufficiently clear by the conference.

Africa is an object of exploitation for the inexhaustible supply of raw materials und markets. The various colonial administrations are applying various

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\* This article by comrade Ring was much longer, dealing with the whole continent of Africa, but because of a lack of space and also the fact that for the moment we are concerned primarily with what is called "black Africa", we have been compelled to omit the part of the article which deals with North Africa. We shall perhaps be able to print the rest in some future issue. It is translated from the German. — Editor.

forms of exploitation. An investigation into the economic, racial and civil structure is necessary to arrive at a correct political valuation of the "dark continent".

South Africa shows the greatest degree of economic and political development. One and a half million Europeans own 260 million acres of land, 5½ million natives own 40 million acres of land. The Boer War and the war of the Union against German South West Africa marked two stages of the unifying process of the white ruling classes. The differences however between them are being put aside in the economic development which bases itself mainly on mining; the present parliamentary form of government of South Africa is a tool of capitalist interests. The industrialisation of the country resulted in a partial proletarianisation of the white population and brought an influx of cheaper black labour to the cities and industrial centres; this resulted in the competition between black and white labour; but the white reformist trade unions and the white "Labour Parties" support the government in its exploitation of the natives. The South African white reformist Unions organize the Europeans — Dutchmen, Englishmen and Germans into a uniform body that opposes the native population; a sharp line is drawn between "gentlemen" and coloured people. Unity between the black and the white workers is extremely difficult. They receive the lowest wages and are burdened with special taxes. Since the "Colour Bar Act of 1927" Negroes are forbidden to do any skilled labour so that the former drivers and engineers have to give their jobs to the whites. These conditions led to the formation of the South African Trade Union Federation of Non-European class struggle unions affiliated to the RILU. Slavery reigns on the farms. (Up till now the education of the Negroes lay entirely in the hands of the missionaries.)

#### **Imperialist Penetration further north.**

Capitalist development inevitably draws further masses of Negroes into the class struggle. The class struggle begins to extend further to the north, to Rhodesia and spreads among the Negroes that are imported from Portuguese East Africa. The last generation lived in patriarchal communities or in ancient communist tribal communes, the present generation is industrial workers. The projected Cape-Cairo railway undergoes many changes dependent on the course, the economic opening up of the country is taking. The project, if completed, would spread the class struggle to the east of Central Africa, and would connect these districts with the cotton districts of the Sudan and with Egypt. The continuation of the line from the zinc and lead mines of Brokenhill (northeast Rhodesia) to Tanganyika has been abolished and a line has been built to the bog copper mines at Katanga in the Belgian Congo. The nearer the development approaches to the tremendous human reserves of the Equator, the more are the natives proletarianised (which means pauperisation but, at the same time, leads them from tribal seclusion to class consolidation, and educates them technically).

Western Africa is, on the whole, a uniform structure, based on the almost exclusive Negro population as the method of colonisation. Colonisation started on the coast, and the methods applied by the different European nations were almost the same; expropriation of the Negroes from the land and relentless extermination wherever they resisted, the laying out of farms and establishment of trading posts accompanied by exploitation of black labour, semi-education and unpalatable religious lecturing by missionaries. These methods gave birth to what is called the "trouser Negro", a class of native scribes, foremen, store-keepers, overseers, policemen, servants, mission-officials, a class whose thoughts run smoothly in the ruts of the ruling system of the whites; they brag about their

"achievements", before the bushman who constitutes the bulk of carriers and plantation labourers. They pay the bushman for the kicks received from the white master — but they nevertheless adore "civilisation". **Every mass movement of the natives would have to reckon with this class first.** The bush-Negroes, closely confined to their tribes area are not yet capable of a wide organization, are quite helpless before the onslaught of civilisation and confine themselves to reactionary institutions, religious superstitions and fetishism. Their headmen for the most part take a successful hand in trading. A continuation of this state of things is a great necessity for imperialism, because it is impossible for the European to stay of long duration, because of the climate of Western Africa and the countries around the Gulf of Guinea to which British Nigeria belongs.

Nigeria forms, since the Great War a certain exception to the usual methods of colonisation; it is being experimented upon by Imperialism. Nigeria is "native territory" that is, no European is allowed to buy land there or to own plantations. (The colony has a climate much worse than anywhere else; it is called a "no white man's country" by the Englishman.) But the military power is still in the hands of Great Britain and the administrative methods favour the development of the "trousered Negro" into a petty capitalist who is gaining ever more privileges under the protection of the European power apparatus; it is the same in the whole of Western Africa. **They constitute a kind of body guard of the white rulers.** The "trousered Negro" independently manages the production and preparation of goods for export; thus he is being opposed to the native reserves in the interior who are but a disconnected mass of tribes living in the most primitive conditions. The coast "trousered class" adapts itself to the state institutions imposed by the colonisers; they support him. The bush-Negro still goes on living in a primitive state of society and does not know any other form of organization but the tribe.

The first signs of a "Negro nationalism", after the pattern of Liberia, are to be noticed among the privileged classes; but the lack of any industrial development does not permit this movement to gain any force. But a "catastrophe" from without, at a moment of the weakening of the imperialist system on a world wide scale would accentuate the sharp contradictions among the Negroes; it might stir up the bush Negroes.

Though the economic stage of Western Africa, the most backward in the world, is uniform, it is impossible to apply summarily political slogans in these districts. The backwardness of the aboriginal population, the contrast between the natives and the colonial administration tend to split the interest and hinder the penetration of uniform and all embracing views. It is true that a part of the young Negro population in the French coast district begins to develop itself ideologically away from rule of the invaders (thanks to the more brutal oppression of all classes) they are united in "the League for the Defence of the Negro Races" and strive to grasp the leadership of the emancipation struggle from within. They will be able to make headway only if they succeed in bridging the economic contradictions and the ancient conditions of the masses in the interior, thus organizing them.

### LIBERIA

The white race can produce another "shining example for its providing for the oppressed races" — it is the Negro Republic Liberia founded with the help of American capital. A number of liberated Negro slaves returned from America to Western Africa about a hundred years ago, shouting humanitarian phrases and lustily advertising the "new won liberty". The tribes living in the "free state" that was proclaimed later on were given land along the coast and the rest of the

natives were driven into the bush. A parliament, an army and an administrative apparatus were created in childish aping of the American pattern, and a new type of the "free Negro citizen" was born. American imperialism, now building an open door into Africa is backing the creation of Liberia and strengthening it by loans, by the rubber and cocoa monopoly, and by the control of the customs and police. This adds to the numerous shortcomings of the "trousered Negro" the arbitrary use of political power attained without struggle; the natives are being brutally exploited their ignorance of formalities and their illiteracy are utilised to collect taxes three or four times etc. **No revolutionary impetus may be expected from the Liberian rulers, as their interests are directed against the tribes of the interior; their liberal parties, at the best, are standing on the platform of the Garvey movement an organization of petty bourgeois and intellectual Negroes in America who dream of creating a black empire of capitalism in Africa. The republic is a tool of imperialism.**

The revolutionary forces that will acquire some political significance in the development of Africa on the road to emancipation are as different as the economic changes that gave birth to them.

1. The industrial development of South Africa permits the direct transgression of primitive forms of society to a Negro proletariat. Thus the proletariat gradually arises threatening the existence of the capitalist white South Africa. The government has already given some signs of fear: reprisals of the movement and the attempt to increase the gap between the black and the white workers.

2. The European unable to stand the climate of Western Africa, trains a class of Negroes to the task of control and administration in the service of imperialism; sometimes they are granted certain privileges for the exploitation of others. The privileges of these body guards are resisted by the unbroken powers of the bush Negroes. **The intellectuals among the Negroes are organizing the defence of imperialism.**

The Negro race is the chief agent of the revolutionary powers in Africa, and will acquire a clearly defined revolutionary significance among the black proletariat of the West Indies and North America. They will realise their tremendous reserves, as stated by Lamine Senghor (Chairman of the Negro Self Defence Committee) at the Brussels Congress against colonial oppression and imperialism (February 1927): "The Negroes have slept too long. But beware! Who has slept too long will not go to sleep again when he wakes."

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## IMPERIALISM IN THE WEST INDIES

By George Padmore

There are about 10 million Negroes in the West Indies, a small group of islands located in the Caribbean Sea, between north and south America. All except Cuba, Haiti and San Domingo are dominated by British, French, Dutch and American imperialism; while Cuba, Haiti and San Domingo, the so-called independent Republics are, in truth and reality, economic colonies of the United States, which maintains puppet governments in each of them as well as marines in Haiti.

### 1. Labour and Social Conditions

The Negro masses in the West Indies are just as viciously exploited as the natives of Africa or the black toilers in the United States of America. Their



exploiters are not only the foreign imperialists, but the native bourgeoisie and the landlords, who are equally as ruthless in their suppression of the broad toiling masses, as the foreign blood suckers.

After the abolition of slavery in the early eighties of the last century, the Negroes refused to continue to work on the plantations. The British Government, in order to save the sugar industry made grants of land to them on the basis of which a peasantry was developed. At the same time it was necessary to secure labour for the big plantations, so East Indian immigrants were brought in from India in 1845 and set to work on the sugar cane plantations. These workers were so badly treated that the Government of India was forced to protest to the Colonial Office at London.

Since the war the policy has been to stop peasant land holding and to place all the lands in the hands of the big native planters, landlords and foreign corporations. This has created a landless semi-proletariat, who work part time on the land and part in the mills. Everywhere the natives are in revolt against the landlords and their governments.

In Cuba, Porto Rico, Haiti and San Domingo, American imperialists have completely enslaved millions of black workers on the sugar cane, coffee and tobacco plantations. In order to get cheaper labour thousands of natives are imported from Haiti and Jamaica to work on the plantations in Cuba, Porto Rico and San Domingo.

In the British colonies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbadoes, British imperialism is equally as brutal and ruthless as American imperialism. Throughout the West Indies the whole population lives on the verge of starvation. In the rural districts we find thousands of pauperized, down-trodden natives huddled together in company-owned barracks on the sugar plantations or scattered around the countryside in mud shacks. The social conditions amongst these victims of imperialism is hardly much removed from primitive life. Forced to labour long hours for the smallest pittance, the West Indian worker is scarcely able to provide himself with food to eat. Women and children are forced to go into the fields and labour in order to help along the family. The man worker receives about 40 cents per day while the women and children receive between 15 and 30 cents.

In the larger British colonies, especially in Trinidad, where there is a big oil and asphalt industry, an industrial proletariat has been brought into being in recent years. Thousands of Negroes are employed to dig the pitch (asphalt) and to load ships at La Brea, at an average of 50 cents per day and live under terrible conditions.

Although the vast majority of workers in the oil fields are Negroes, in recent years, however, Hindu workers have been attracted to the industry. The natives are the unskilled labour force, while the Europeans occupy the best paid positions.

The marine workers form another important section of the West Indian working class, sailors, longshoremen, boatmen, etc. The transportation system, such as railroads, street cars, busses and taxis are all operated by black workers.

## 2. Agricultural Situation.

The complete failure of the sugar industry has reduced the West Indian toilers to a condition beyond description. Starvation and disease are raising havoc and depopulating entire sections of the population, especially in the rural districts.

The Church is making some flimsy appeals for the labourers, but it is merely doing this to safeguard its own position, for much of its financial backing came out of the sweat and blood of the agricultural labourers, who have been taught

by the Church to work hard, and be obedient to their exploiters, have faith in the Christian God and food will always be guaranteed them. But now things have come to the worst and this is arousing the Negro slaves. That is why their religious dope peddlers are doing their best to divert this growing revolutionary spirit among the masses into safe channels, by holding out promises of Government relief to them.

These Church people are forced to admit that there is squalor and degradation among the great majority of the labouring classes, their food is insufficient in quantity and quality, Considering the nature of the work they have to do, a great proportion of these people of all ages and both sexes are suffering from malnutrition; in the country districts, for the most part there are no sanitary conveniences, this applies universally to all villages. Diseases prevail which are preventable and curable and are sapping the energy and life of the population.

The same conditions which exist in the British colonies also prevail in the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, where agriculture is the main occupation of the populations. All of the large sugar cane plantations are owned by French companies which make great profits by robbing the Negro workers.

The conditions which prevail in the Virgin Islands of the United States are most appalling. The Negro workers hardly get more than two days work per week for which they receive an average wage of 35 to 50 cents. Poverty exists everywhere and is taking its toll among the children of the poor.

### 3. Forced Labour.

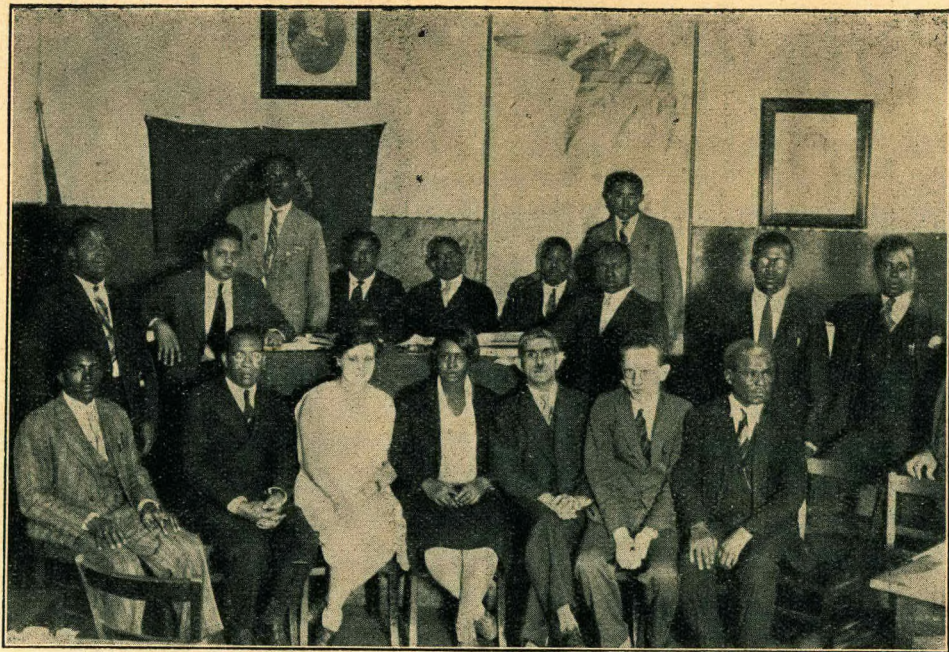
Forced labour also exists in the West Indies. Whenever there is a shortage of labour for public works, the Governments of the various colonies especially in Haiti, conscript or force the natives to do the work. Nearly all of the public roads have been constructed by forced labour gangs under the military supervision of United States Marines. In the British Islands all forms of repressive legislation, such as vagrancy laws, are enacted in order to enable the imperialist rulers to find an excuse to force the Negroes to work. Workers and peasants are arrested on all kinds of frame-up charges, thrown into prison and there assigned to chain gangs and made to build roads and other forms of public works.

According to the latest reports, the situation has become so deplorable in the British colonies that the "Labour" Government, in order to avoid the general uprising of the toiling population, has been forced to appropriate a small sum of money to help the populations in Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guinea.

### 4. What must be done?

The workers and peasants in the West Indies must build up a real revolutionary trade union movement. For example in Trinidad where the labour movement has reached the most advanced stage, the left wing opposition to the reformists misleaders, (Cipriani and Bishop who presently control the Working Men's Association) should immediately begin a wide campaign among the rank and file in the various unions, as well as the unorganized on the basis of concrete everyday demands which should be linked up with the ultimate demands of the class interests, to win the masses away from the reformists and develop the left wing movement.

Rank and file committees should be set up inside and outside the unions. These committees must take the initiative in putting forward the demands of the



**Group of Delegates in attendance at the First International Conference of Negro Workers — Hamburg, Germany, July 7, 8, 1930**

workers over the heads of the "leaders", for only in this way will the opposition be able to expose the treacherous role which the fakers are carrying on, especially since the crisis which is forcing them to come out with more and more "left" phrases in order to cover up their deception.

The opposition must pay special attention to the organization of the agricultural labourers and the unorganized workers in the basic industries (oil and asphalt), as well as transportation.

Committees of action must also be set up among the agricultural workers of all the sugar and cocoa plantations, as has been successfully done on the Felicity Estate, (where, it may be noted, 2000 labourers armed with cutlasses, agricultural forks, hoes and other implements marched on Port-of-Spain, the capital of the Island, July last, and demanded that the plantation owners and the Government withdraw the wage cut — from 1 shilling to 9 pence — and abolish the increased hours of labour).

Despite all the attempts of the labour fakers and the petty bourgeois nationalist leaders, such as the Hon. Serran Teelucksingh, "labour" representative of the Legislative Council of Trinidad to persuade the workers to turn over the leadership of the struggle into their hands and return to the estate, the strike committee bluntly refused to permit the men to go back to work until all of their demands had been granted.

Since this armed demonstration, the Trinidad Press reports that there is considerable unrest on all the large plantations, where the workers, inspired by the militancy of the labourers of the Felicity Estate are also setting up committees of action to put forward their grievances and lead them in the struggle.

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers should render all aid and assistance possible to the struggling West Indian workers, and to support the economic and political demands of the toiling population of the West Indies in their fight against the imperialists and the native capitalist exploiters.

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## APPEAL TO THE BLACK SOLDIERS OF FRANCE

Black soldiers of the imperialist rulers of France, we send you a warning and an appeal. A new war is very near. It is being prepared by the rulers of France who have conscripted you into their armies, the armies with which they have conquered and oppressed the peoples of East, North Africa and Black Africa. They will demand that you fight for the "mother" country as they demanded before.

They will tell you that you must fight for Liberty, for Equality, for Fraternity. But there is no liberty, no equality, no fraternity. In the last great war you were placed in the first line trenches, to lead the charge against the enemies' fortification. They said this was an "honour" bestowed upon you for your bravery and daring. You paid for this honour upon their altar of imperialism with tens of thousands of lives. They promised you great rewards. They have squeezed billions of profits out of the exploitation and oppression of millions of colonial peoples, out of your brothers and sisters of Black Africa. And what has been your reward?

Even today in the armies of France you are paid a lower wage than the white soldiers. You are dragged away from your homelands to serve in the armies of the rulers of France oppressing other colonial peoples as your brothers and sisters of Black Africa are oppressed. Conditions everywhere in the cities of France, in the villages in the barracks are intolerable for you. But this is not all, what of your mother country Black Africa? She groans under the iron heel of the oppressor, and for you the oppressor is also the ruler of France, the one who commands you to fight, the one whose promises to oppressed and exploited workers regardless to race means nothing.

After the last world war the rulers of France and of England redivided African colonies among themselves. Today those colonies are in desperate straits.

Black soldiers of French Equatorial Africa, in 1910 your country had a population of 7,500,000 and in 1924 a population of 2,500,000. Where have those 5,000,000 gone? Dead! They died from famine, from disease, from forced labour, from slavery, the results of their exploitation and oppression by the rulers of France. In 1928 17,000 Negroes were worked to death, in the construction of the French railroad from the Congo to the sea.

Black soldiers of France, your brothers and sisters in 1924 revolted under the terrible exploitation of the French masters who had robbed them of their lands and were taxing them to death. The revolt was drowned in blood. This even while you were serving in the armies of the French imperialists. Again in 1928 they revolted. Driven to the point of desperation by the unbearable oppression of the French overlords which had grown steadily worse, seventy thousand of them were killed as the armed forces of the imperialists of France put down this uprising in blood. Thousands of more who fled to the Belgian Congo died of famine there. These are the fruits of your victory of 1914—1919, Black soldiers of France.

In 1910 the Cameroons had a population of 8 million and in 1928 of only 2 million. Where have those 6 million black toiling masses gone? The way of the dead in French Equatorial Africa, the way of the decimated black masses of the Belgian and French Congo, of Dahomey and Senegal, of the Sudan and East Africa. Under the iron heel of the ruthless masters of French and English imperialism these toiling black masses — your brothers and sisters have been done to death. These are for Black Africa the fruits of the victory you had gained for that so-called mother country and its imperialist rulers.

Black soldiers of France, the workers of Soviet Russia gained a great victory in 1917. They too in 1914 were called to war by the rulers of their country who are the friends of the rulers of France. But in 1917 they revolted against the terror, the exploitation and oppression of those rulers. The worker and peasant soldiers of Russia killed their officers. They overthrew the whole system of Tsarism, ruling princes and capitalists and took the government of their country into their own hands. Since 1917 they have governed themselves. They have freed the small nationalities which were oppressed under the rule of the "Friends of imperialist France". The workers and peasants of these freed republics are now building their own industry and culture together with the aid of the freed Russian workers and peasants.

Black soldiers of France, the position of the workers and peasants who now govern their own Russian Socialist Republics was in 1917 little better than the position of the ruthlessly oppressed black masses of Africa today. They stand now freed men and women, the rulers and builders of their own country. The position of the black masses of Africa remains worse than that of slaves. In Soviet Russia the peasants are freed from the centuries of ignorance, of supersti-

tution, of customs and traditions, free from labouring in the fields for 14, 15 hours a day. In Black Africa you remain chained to the hoe and the wooden plow. A change must come.

Black soldiers of France, the workers and peasants governing themselves in Soviet Russia are forming an indissoluble bond of unity and struggle with the oppressed and exploited masses all over the world.

Black soldiers of France, it is against these workers and peasants that the imperialist overlords of France and England, your exploiters are preparing the new war. It is against these toilers who have demonstrated their friendship with the toiling masses of the world that you will be forced by your oppressors to fight. They want to destroy the first Socialist Government of the World, because it is the symbol of freedom, because it is an inspiration to you and the toiling masses of other countries.

Already the Poincares and Briands have plotted to destroy the Soviet Union. But they have been caught. Every move by which they hoped to defeat the plans of the workers' Government has been revealed. But the danger is not passed. The imperialists and especially rulers of France will go ahead with their plans to attack the government of the workers and peasants. The campaign of lies go on against the Soviet Union.

The example of the Red Army of the Soviet Union is yours to follow. War against imperialist War. Long live the class War. Do not be used as tools of your oppressors to drown in blood the glorious victory of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union. You must struggle for the establishment of independent Native Republics in your home Black Africa. The day of Black Africa's emancipation from the horrors of slavery and of forced labour, of poverty and famine, of disease and premature death will come only when you have gained victory over that class that would drive you to war against your brothers. Link arms in struggle with the revolutionary workers of France against the common enemy.

Black soldiers of France, in all the world the Negro masses are exploited and oppressed. The hour of their international struggle is at hand, against the imperialist rulers of the world.

Long live the International solidarity of the workers and toiling masses of the world!

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## SITUATION OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS IN GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA

By E. F. Small, secy. Gambia Labour Unions.

(Speech delivered at the First International Conference of Negro Workers.)

The general labour position in Gambia is a chapter of the old story of imperialism. The final stage of imperialism has almost reached completion; the State machine is being continually turned from "benevolent" and "philanthropic" uses to serve exclusive capitalist interests; the Negro workers and peasants are the hopeless underdogs of the situation — the forsaken victims of capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

It is this fact that called the Gambia Labour Union into being one year ago. With the exception of administrative clerical workers, all workers and peasants are now represented by the Union. Of these an aggregate membership of 1,000 workers, and 2,500 peasants has been registered. Of course, they are all Negroes. As yet there is no European settlement. Europeans are employed in the administrative and mercantile departments as supervisors. They have no permanent interest in the land. Their periodical tours to the Coast are prompted by motives of self-betterment, and racial aggrandisement. Therefore, all the same the race-issue in its broadest possible sense, is no less real in the relations of the white bosses to their black subordinates; this imperialist regime is naturally opposed to equal rights and opportunity, and conducive to race discriminations and disabilities of a colour-bar.

Within few months of its inception the Gambia Labour Union was called upon to face its first industrial struggle; for the first in time the Colony's history, hundreds of operatives went on a general strike both for the right to organize in trade unions as well as for an increase of wages and better conditions of employment. I will emphasize only its salient features of the strike. Leading commercial firms in Gambia attempted to stifle the newly-formed organization at its very inception. They assailed the elementary right of the workers to organize in trade unions, giving the employees three days' notice to quit the Union or be dismissed. Strike notices issued by the Union were treated with sheer contempt.

Before, during and after the strike the merchants had official support in their attempt to suppress the trade union rights of the workers. An official warning issued during the strike against alleged intimidation of workers had the practical effect of preventing picketing, and culminated in an armed Police raid on the 14th of November last, in which civilian passengers were wounded in the streets of Bathurst. So far standard minimum rates of wage have now been fixed jointly by the Union and the Bathurst Chamber of Commerce, but in spite of the agreement reached in settlement of the strike, workers are being victimized by lock-outs, dismissals without notice etc. It is even proposed to import cheap labour from abroad, Jamaica and other places. And it is hoped this Conference will have some effect in preventing the victimisation of Negro workers by their own comrades.

A striking instance of the victimisation of trade union workers may be seen at the Public Works Department in Bathurst. This you will find combined with a system of piece-work and contract, which constantly throws the men out of work, and is a typical example of State exploitation of cheap labour in the guise of public economy. To carry out this anti-trade union system of exploiting cheap labour non-trade union foremen are employed, while there has been a lock-out of hundreds of trade union workers at the P. W. D., since last November. This lock-out had been threatened by the Government during the strike, when serious objections to the system were raised by the Union. Though the general works of the Department have been stopped for so long the estimated expenditure for the year is allowed to run as if there had been no close down, so that in the end the talk of public economy, is a mere lip-service.

Employment for the worker and peasant in Gambia is seasonal. That is to say it is limited to the period of the trade season, which is now regulated to last from December of one year to April of the next. This recent regulation, as will be seen in the case of the peasants, is a striking episode of **imperialism**. There are no manufacturing industries. The classes of workers are those whose services are required to carry on the trade in groundnuts, of which an average of 70,000 tons are exported annually from the Gambia. Comparatively few of these are regularly

employed. The large majority are employed more or less for two to three months of the year. How can this majority subsist for the remaining nine months of the year? It becomes perfectly clear that these workers are faced by the most serious question of a living wage.

The workers and peasants in Gambia are in the most pitiable plight. There are no big farmers in the Colony, nor is there individual ownership of cultivable land; all such land is cultivated by a primitive custom of joint ownership. The peasant is employed during the lean months of wet season. During this part, there is a dearth of foodstuffs, and the conditions of life are the most miserable. The area on which food crops — rice, maize, etc., could be grown is severely restricted, and improved methods of cultivation are beyond the peasants' means. To obtain money for his other requirements, therefore, they have to supplement the rising of a limited supply of foodstuffs by growing groundnuts so greedily hunted by the European capitalist.

The Government realises the extreme poverty of the peasant. But instead of relief advances are made to the peasants in the shape of a yearly supply of imported rice and seed-nuts. After harvest when the peasants try to hold out for better prices round goes the Government collector to demand the payment of the taxes and debts for rice and seed-nuts.

The poor peasants are thus forced to part with their produce at any price. They begin work each with a debt of £ 4 to £ 5. The peasant can reckon on an income of £ 7. Deducting from this the debt he has incurred of £ 4 to £ 5, he is left barely with about £ 3, on which to subsist with his family all the year round. Can you imagine the degradation to which he is reduced by such circumstances? Can you imagine how population could increase, or how the problems of disease and infantile mortality could be solved so long as the peasants' hard toil is exploited to its utmost limit for the benefit of foreign capital?

It is important to note that in this state of affairs local merchants in Gambia have gradually diverted their attention from their primary interest — the profits realisable on the sale of capital goods, and are now concentrating upon making big profits from trade in raw material which they contrive to purchase at the lowest possible prices. In spite of the inevitable set-back this entails in goods trade, huge mergers, combines, trusts pools and participations, local and foreign are being formed to grind down the peasants and corner their produce. These pools are formed to exploit cheap labor and effect economies at the expense of the worker and peasant. Their natural consequences are large overstocks of goods and unemployment. The part the state machine is made to play in the crisis is the most remarkable. By the present regulation of the trade season you have seen how the interests of the peasants are played into the hands of the merchants.

While thousands of workers are being constantly thrown out of work there is no effort made to protect the worker or to relieve the unemployed; nor are the benefits of the Workmen's Compensation Acts extended to workers in Gambia.

From the brief report you can see that Gambia is smarting from the effect of the economic and industrial condition that is sweeping the face of the world. The workers and peasants have experienced the needs for active resistance against capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

The workers of Gambia responded with great enthusiasm to the call of the International Conference of Negro Workers and Peasants. It is our hope that this Conference will go a long way to consolidate the forces of economic and industrial resistance against all forms of capitalist oppression not only among Negroes but among workers and peasants of the world.



# OUR STUDY CORNER

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(The aim of this corner is to help Negro workers along the line of self-education on trade union questions; to help them with the theories and practices of the International revolutionary labour movement, and the history of its development; to place Negro workers in direct contact with the Red International of Labour Unions; to bring labour questions and information to the widest number of Negro workers in shops and factories — in order to help develop leading cadres of Negro organizers, agitators and trade union leaders and to stimulate the class consciousness of masses of Negro workers. We shall also from time to time carry Book Reviews and comments. We therefore suggest, (in order to make this corner useful and practical), that study circles, groups or corners be organized amongst Negro workers to discuss the questions raised here as well as questions arising at their work; that correspondence be established with this corner; that all workers desiring direct contact with the school and the Correspondence Courses of the RILU make it known to this corner.)

## The Rise and History of the Trade Union Movement

The Trade Union movement is a mass movement of the proletariat. Its aim is to improve the position of the working class, and (as we shall see later), at various stages of its development, different methods have been used to achieve this purpose. But when the unions reach their highest stage of development the realization is forced on them that the only way out, is the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Socialist Society. The trade unions have their roots in the capitalist system and are born of the conflicting interests of the workers and the capitalists.

The capitalist system of production began to develop at the end of the 18th century, with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in England (1765—1825) and the Great French Revolution (1789). This system is now dominant in every part of the world with the exception of the USSR where it has been displaced by a more efficient form of Socialist production. Instead of a primitive economy where all necessities were satisfied on the spot, as was observed during feudalism, we now have a commodity economy — an economy that produces goods for a market, turning labour power into a commodity also.

The indispensable condition for the existence of the capitalist system of production is to prevent the producer from controlling the means of production, for the buildings, machines and equipment, the means of production belong to the capitalists and not to the workers who are the producers. Since the workers have no means of production they are compelled to sell the only commodity in their possession, namely, their labour power. When the capitalists hire and exploit labour power capitalist accumulation commences. This accumulation, coupled with the competition between the capitalists, gives rise to a concentration of capital, all means of production being concentrated into the hands of a few capitalists.

As a result of the concentration and centralization of production, small enterprises are either ruined or simply become auxiliary enterprises of the big plants,

being entirely dependent upon them. Large-scale capitalist production brings large numbers of people together who were in no way connected with each other before, but, who thanks to capitalism (finding themselves in the same conditions of exploitation and oppression), are stirred to give expression to their indignation and to improve their lot.

The capitalist system of production gives rise to various classes in capitalist society. A class is a group of people standing in the same relation to the means of production, playing the same role in the social production. The bourgeoisie owns and controls the means of production. In capitalist society the bourgeoisie controls the industries and lives on the surplus value produced by the workers. The working class does not own the means of production. They are producers and are exploited by the bourgeoisie. All class relations in capitalist society lead inevitably to a struggle between of the capitalists to increase their exploitation of the workers that is to increase their share of the social wealth.

(To be continued.)

## Organisation and Functions of a Strike Committee

1. A strike Committee is an organ for leading militant collective actions of the workers.
2. The election of a strike committee should take place several days before the lockout takes place or the strike is declared. If the lockout sets in suddenly or the strike breaks out unexpectedly the election of the strike committee should take place immediately at a factory meeting called before the workers go home.
3. The election should take place at factory meetings where all the workers take part, regardless to race, political faith or trade union membership — organized and unorganized. Democratic elections must prevail. The size of the committee depends upon the magnitude of the strike. Names should be put up right after the opening remarks.
4. In a small enterprise there should be one member on the committee for every 25 or 50 workers; in bigger enterprises one member to every 100 or 200 workers; in big enterprises of 20,000 or more workers the strike committee should consist of 200 or 300 members, with representation from all departments of the enterprises.
5. A big strike committee should elect an Executive whose business shall be to call the members of the committee together regularly, render an account of the activities and to keep them in contact with the strikers.
6. Definite functions should be assigned to each and every member of the committee.

### Functions and Tasks

1. The first and foremost task of the strike committee is to lead the fight to successfully achieve the demands of the workers.
2. The committee must increase its fighting capacity by eliminating any influence of reformist trade union officials and fakers, by exposing their fake "revolutionary" phrase making and double crossing tactics — (negotiation behind the backs of the workers, etc.).

3. It must organize demonstrations outside the trade union halls, call joint meetings of organized and unorganized workers, collect money, and help the workers.
4. The strike committee must enter into negotiations and eventually sign agreements, declaring before hand that all agreements made by the reformist bureaucrats behind the backs of the workers cannot be binding on the workers.
5. The strike committee must always be watchful of new political developments, the bosses bringing in additional measures against workers, injunctions, court actions etc.; it must at every opportunity appraise the workers of the ultimate aim of strike struggles — the Destruction of the State apparatus.
6. The strike committee organizes regular registration of all workers involved in the conflict; it must establish control bureaux.
7. It must establish strict discipline amongst its members; during its formation provisions should be made for the recall of members who are not doing their duty in regard to energetic conduct of the struggle.
8. The strike committee must keep close connection between the strikers and the unemployed workers to prevent them being used to break the strike.
9. The strike committee must organize pickets and self-defence corps in the following manner:
  - a) pickets should consist of all workers, and the unorganized should have the cooperation of the experienced workers;
  - b) the pickets must be carefully selected of young workers (usually the most aggressive strikers), older working men and women and the wives of working men;
  - c) the widest possible working class circles should be drawn in;
  - d) in places where the terror is great or likely to be, self-defence corps should be organized as soon as the strike breaks out and the most active workers drawn into them;
  - e) Sport organizations and working class women's Leagues should also be drawn in;
  - f) special attention should be paid to the struggle against police and private detective agencies — factory police, factory spies, fire brigades, etc.
10. The committee must gain the support of sympathetic workers, in other industries, in the same industries in joining countries and workers in far away countries.
11. By constant militant and aggressive action the strike must be pursued towards a successful conclusion. At the conclusion it will be found that the strike committee will have performed many of the duties of a permanent organ of the workers. The workers should not let the opportunity slip of utilizing the committee for building up a strong militant trade union movement.

Note: Strike Committees, Action Committees and Lockout Committees are often interchangeable terms — they are primarily active struggle organs.

# WORKERS CORRESPONDENCE

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Guadeloupe, 1930.

Comrade:

The call to the International Conference of Negro workers did not leave the workers of Guadeloupe indifferent. The papers spoke a lot about it. Due to the cyclone of September 12th 1928, our resources came to an end. At the time when we had started to recover, a strike of agricultural workers took place, the results of which are the following:

Dead . . . . .	3
wounded . . . . .	4
jailed . . . . .	5

This is the capitalist procedure! . . . and above all of the French Government whose slogans are: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity! Let me tell you about the meaning of this trinity. These three words have been separated by three periods. We should read: Liberty, none, equality, none, fraternity, none!

This is the slogans of the capitalists!

In order to defend the comrades in jail we had to spend much money. It is impossible for us to make the trip from Guadeloupe to England. We know that our Negro comrades from the United States are seriously engaged in the success of the London Conference. At this great Conference we should hope to present our misery, and the sufferings of the workers of Guadeloupe under French Imperialism.

Fraternal greetings, Ponte.

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International Negro Workers' Review.

December, 1930.

Comrades:

I think we can be of great aid to each other. Our paper can furnish you with a weekly digest of Southern conditions and you in turn can give us great aid by supplying us with information about the movement and conditions of the Negro masses in colonial countries — something we need very much in internationalizing our local struggles.

Our main task in the South is to break thru the wall of white chauvinism — we will not be able to make a step forward unless we do that. For that reason our paper concentrates chiefly in combatting the "white supremacy" ideology of the South, and clearing the way for united struggle of white and black toilers against Yankee imperialism. The deep crisis, eating away at the vitals of both Negro and white workers and farmers here, is doing much in the way of opening the eyes of the white workers towards unity in struggle with their black brothers.

I am sure that in the name of the readers of the Southern Worker, which is still but a very young paper, I can send our fraternal greetings of solidarity and best wishes for success in achieving your aims to the new international Negro paper of struggle.

Fraternally yours,

Jim Allen, "Southern Worker".

Note: The "Southern Worker" is a weekly paper of the Communist Party of the United States for the workers of the Southern part of the USA. We invite our readers to correspond with the paper. — Editor.

## Negro Workers' Review — Hamburg

Comrades:

I am a white marine worker. Greetings to the International class struggling Negro workers!

Gee!, things are rotten here in the South — soup lines, bread lines, flop houses; the city jails are full. The cossacks chase the unemployed workers out on the prairies to starve. The g. d. cowards wont fight back, many are doing the "dutch" Taking poison. For me I am waiting for the barricades, they can't come too quick for me. I am going up in my fifties but I'll fight the 100 percenters. Comrades send us some German papers, Negro workers of Africa write to your brother workers — white and black in the South. I am sending you in this letter some letters from other workers here at Galveston.

Revolutionary greetings

A. W. — Galveston, Texas, USA.

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### Starving ex-soldier for united fight.

Atlanta, Ga.

Am unemployed for 8 months. Was a soldier in the world war where I fought for Wilson's equality and democracy for Negroes. Because of the wounds I received in battle, I cannot get a job. They want younger fellows who they can work like the devil for nothing at all.

The City here opened up a Community Kitchen dump. Everyday, hundreds of unemployed, starving Negroes and whites, go there with their two cents and get a can of slop. But the Negroes, because of the discrimination there, are not going any longer. They would rather starve than be insulted as they are down there.

When a Negro does get past the insulting red tape and question cards he has got to fill out, then he finds that he must have two cents and a tin can in order to get a cupful of stinking mixed vegetables and a hunk of stale bread. The whites get their choice of soup or milk and even some of them have coal delivered to their homes.

The Negroes are not putting up with these miserable conditions and are organizing into the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, to fight discrimination of all kinds, off the job and on the job.

— Unemployed Negro Ex-Soldier.

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### Other News from the USA.

A "League of Struggle for Negro Rights" was organized at St. Louis, in the USA during September.

Charlotte, N. C. — Three Negro boys, aged 15, 16, and 17, were sentenced to serve 15 years in the penitentiary for wounding a 15-year-old white boy scout in a scuffle. The white boy scout had a rifle and one of the Negro boys a revolver. Solicitor Carpenter, of Gastonia fame, used all his arguments of "white superiority" and "patriotism".

Rochester, Minn. — The boss class is attempting to bar Negro, Indian, Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese workers from resident in certain parts of the city and enforce strict segregation.

Albany, Ga. — Eddie Marsh, 18-year-old Negro farm worker, was sentenced to death for killing his landlord, a pecan grower, in a quarrel.

Blanchard, Okla. — Following the discovery of the body of a white woman near a cave here, from 200 to 300 Negro families were forced to leave this region by the lynch terror, leaving all their property and crops, which were taken over by the white landlords.

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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
**INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE**  
**OF NEGRO WORKERS**

**UNITED STATES**

James W. Ford secy (in charge of Editing) — Trade Union Unity  
league

I. Hawkins, National Miners' Union

Helen Mc Clain, National Needle Trades' Union

George Padmore, R. I. L. U. — Negro Bureau

**AFRICA**

Garan Kouyatté, League for Defence of Negro Race, Darkar

Frank Macaulay, Nigerian Workers' Party, Nigeria

Albert Nzulu, Federation of Non-European Trade Unions, Johannesburg

E. F. Small, Gambian Labour Unions, Gambia

**WEST INDIES**

E. Reid, Trades and Labour Unions, Jamaica

alternate, M. Kotani, Johannesburg

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