

THE NEGRO WORKER



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SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST CONGRESS

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I.

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFERENCE
OF NEGRO WORKERS

The Negro Delegation of the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism and fraternal delegates from colonial and European countries and the U.S.A., in a special Negro Workers' Conference at Frankfort, Germany, July 26, 1929, discussed the conditions and situation of the Negro workers throughout world and their relationships with workers of other races. At the close of the Conference A CALL WAS ISSUED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NEGRO WORKERS TO TAKE PLACE IN LONDON, IN JULY, 1930. A Provisional Committee of Negro Worker representatives from the various countries was elected to carry out preliminary organisational plans. Details of the Conference and other plans will be announced later.

The following is the provisional Committee, which is to be increased :

United States America

William Pickens, NAACP. F. Premice, Furriers' Union.
E.L. Doty, Plumbers' Union. Otto Hall, Negro Dept. TUEL.
Isaac Munsey, Miners' National Union. Mary Burroughs, Teachers' Union.

South Africa

W. Thibedi, Federation of Non-European Trade Unions.
Andrews, T.U. Congress.

East Africa

Johnstone Kenyatta, Central Association of Kenya.

Haiti and West Indies

George Padmore, Printers' Union.
Henry Rosemond, Furriers' Union (USA).
Dicadosse.

France

Ali, C.G.T.U.

England

M.E. Burns, T & G.W.

Chairman : J.W. Ford (International Trade Union
Committee of Negro Workers of the RILU).

Organisations represented :

The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers of the RILU.
American Negro Labour Congress.
League for the Defence of the African Race.
The Federation of Non-European Trade Unions, South Africa.
Trade Union Congress, South Africa.
National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (U.S.A.).
Central Association of Kenya. East Africa.
Indian National Congress.
Trade Union Educational League (USA).
All-China Trade Union Federation.
T & G W England.
C.G.T.U. France

International Trade Union Committee
of Negro Workers of the RILU.

II.

THE NEGRO QUESTION

Report to the IIInd World Congress of the League Against
Imperialism
by Comrade FORD
(International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers
of the RILU)

Comrades: - My report has three tasks: It must point out the conditions

and situation of Negroes under imperialism in the present phase of imperialist expansion in Africa and the territories of the Negro peoples; secondly, it must point out how the Negroes themselves must meet these conditions and circumstances; thirdly, it must point out the task of the League Against Imperialism with regard to these conditions in its general struggle against imperialism.

I. - Imperialism: General Statement

The so-called Negro "problem" has been consistently misstated for so long that a survey of it is needed, especially with regard to the conditions of Negroes under imperialism and capitalism. From the political report made here on the opening day we have already seen the general decay of capitalism, and the sharpening antagonisms that are producing a real serious crisis in capitalism and imperialism and are really characteristic of capitalism at the present time. This period is of tremendous significance to the international working class and oppressed peoples and is of very great importance to the Negro people themselves. The future history of the Negro in the struggle for liberation, for political, social and economic advancement depends immeasurably upon how they estimate the present period of imperialism, the concrete tasks of organisation they set themselves to achieve these things and the unity they establish with the international working class in the struggle against imperialism. Indeed the Negro people are passing through one of the most important periods of struggle for liberation. We have already seen the great struggles of the Chinese workers and peasants, we see rising waves of revolt and struggle in India, we are witnessing great waves of revolt of the working class and proletariat in the "home-lands" of imperialism.

Imperialism and the Negroes

For our purpose, in dealing with the special question of the Negro, imperialism is that stage reached by capitalism when the whole globe has been divided and distributed amongst a few capitalist powers (this especially applying to Africa); and when there is going on amongst the Negroes of America class changes, the development of a Negro bourgeoisie which by subordinating itself to the big white bourgeoisie causes a more intense exploitation of the Negro toiling masses of America. Imperialism nurses and stimulates racial hatreds amongst the workers of various races and exploits Negroes by means of racial oppression. Imperialism "declasses" the Negro intellectuals and professions and either draws them into the ranks of its own reaction or throws them limping into the ranks of the working class. Imperialism has chains forged around the neck of the working class, has bound nations and races of all countries into enslavement by means of starvation and the brutality of capitalist state coercion including the police and the militia. Finally it has grabbed within its clutches, by means of "small" wars and punitive expeditions, colonies and semi-colonies, where the grinding oppressed colonial peoples groan under the weight of its slaver's yoke.

World War Awakes Negroes

During the imperialist war of 1914-18 hundreds of thousands of Negroes for the first time were brought into direct contact with western customs and culture; millions of Negroes were brought from the agricultural and peasant regions of the southern part of the USA into the industries of the North and became a fixed part of the industrial proletariat of America; millions were driven into the imperialist armies. Imperialism has, further carried industrial development into the colonies of Africa and is producing, though small, yet a substantial proletariat, especially in South Africa.

Already the post-war period has given rise to a class-consciousness and organised revolt of the Negro toilers against imperialism. But in order to understand this new period of the Negro's struggle it is necessary to understand the old periods of capitalist exploitation and oppression of the Negroes.

II. Modern Imperialism and the Negro

1. - The process of the economic and political enslavement of the Negro peoples has extended over a period of 300 years and may be divided into three stages.

(a) The classical period, the period of Merchant-capitalism which stood everywhere for a system of snatching slaves, marked the birth of the notorious African slave trade. This was the time when the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British were at the high-tide of their business of dealing in slaves. It is estimated that over a hundred million Negroes were torn from Africa during the course of 300 years. Fabulous fortunes have been made on the slave traffic. It is estimated that profits ranged from 100% to 150%. In the early colonial days in Massachusetts the rum-slave traffic was paying 100% profit. The average price of slaves were : in 1840 - \$325, in 1850 - \$360, in 1860 - \$500. It was on slave traffic profits, including the rape of India, that England was able to lay the basis of her British Empire; it yielded tremendous profits to America, too. Thus capitalist exploitation and profits were at the very basis of the beginning of the enslavement of the Negro people.

(b) The second period, the period of industrial-capitalism, saw the beginning of the territorial division of Africa, and the capitalist exploitation of its natural resources through the exploitation of the labour power of the natives. At the same time, because the slave traffic and this method of securing labour supply became too costly and wasteful, this period witnessed the liquidation of the "legal" slave traffic. This stage marked not only the period for supplying the primary resources of the growing manufacturing enterprises of England, but also saw, in America, the slave traffic give away to the intense plantation exploitation of the Negro slaves as the main source of profits and the basis laid of the present might and wealth of American imperialism. Over 75 million bales of cotton were produced in America from 1826 to the opening of the Civil War of 1861-65, and from the close of the Civil War to 1884 over 15 million bales. Thus the cessation of the slave traffic really increased and carried forward the profit making of the previous period.

(c) The third stage (and this is the period that we are most concerned with), is the epoch of imperialism and marks the completion of the partitioning of Africa and the complete enslavement of its people. It sees, in addition to the already intense exploitation of the Negroes by white big business class demarkations amongst the Negroes themselves, in which the rising Negro bourgeoisie is working hand in glove to support the exploitation of the Negroes by the big white bourgeoisie. The already extreme racial barriers continue the special exploitation of the Negroes. All in all this stage is marked by the most intense exploitation of the Negroes.

Policy of Imperialism

2. - What is the present policy of imperialism with regard to the Negro peoples? Whereas in the early history of India, England followed a policy which unrooted and tore down old customs and institutions and feudal systems (which amounted to a social revolution), in Africa, excepting possibly South Africa, British imperialism is following the policy of maintaining the old customs and hindering the industrial development of the country and is ruling Africa through native chiefs while she sucks profits from the territories. Thus it perpetuates a degrading policy which hinders the advancement of the toiling masses of Africa.

French imperialism, while tearing down old customs is at the same time in actuality exterminating whole populations in the territories under its sway. Taking the healthiest and fittest men from the villages to work on railroads, etc., it thus leaves whole villages and settlements to die a slow death.

Leaving only the old men, women and children, the fields are left uncultivated or the crop ungathered this meaning death by starvation for the whole population. But France is no worse than Portugal, Holland, Belgium or any other of the "civilised" countries that have taken upon themselves the "burden" of adapting the "backward" races to European civilisation.

The policy is actually a policy of retarding the industrial development of the country, a policy which results in retarding and hindering the advancement of the African people. And as its complement you have the agrarian policy - the policy of maintaining Africa as the "countryside" for the European Imperialists, as the leading source of raw materials, as market centers, as centers for the loaning of capital accumulations gained through the exploitation of the workers in the home countries. As sources of raw materials, as market centers and as centers for surplus capital accumulation, Africa is leading to intense rivalries and contradictions amongst the imperialists themselves, and is one of the determining factors leading to another war.

Industrialisation in Africa

3. - This does not mean that industrialisation is not taking place in Africa, quite the contrary. Let us examine this.

The figures on the export of capital to Africa from Britain are significant:

<u>Year</u>	<u>British cap. to Africa</u>	<u>Total export of capital</u>	<u>% to Africa</u>
1925	£14,832,000	£60,162,000	244

This capital is going in one form or another, towards the development of industries in Africa. This does not mention large amounts of capital from French, American and Belgian sources. This represents a decrease in British capital export to Africa since 1923-24. But on the other hand, there has been a gigantic growth in American capital export to Africa.

As a result of these imperialist interests in Africa tremendous industrial developments are going on---the building of railroads, the developing of mines, steel mills, etc. The chief industries in the Belgian Congo (extraction of copper, gold, diamonds, silver) have in the last few years trebled their output as the following production figures show; Copper in 1921 - 31,000 tons, in 1926 - 82,000 tons; diamonds in 1921 - 157,896 carats, in 1926 - 1,114,383 carats; gold in 1921 - 2,228 kilog., in 1926 - 3,645 kilog. Exports were: 126,210 tons in 1923, in 1926 - 203,000 tons; imports: 330,000 tons in 1923, in 1926 - 666,000 tons.

In South Africa the output of gold, coal, lead, zinc, etc., has taken tremendous strides. Production has reached tremendous figures involving also much native labour. Gold production in 1927 was 10,299,200 ounces, valued at £43,685,300. Lead production in Rhodesia in 1927 was 5,857 tons, and in the first quarter of 1928, 1,495 tons. Copper in Tanganyika, in December 1927, showed 9,800 tons produced, and in the first quarter of 1928 - 37,600 tons.

Rhodesia produces the CHEAPEST ZINC IN THE WORLD, with one plant producing at the rate of 18,500 tons per year.

The report of the Union mines of Haut-Katanga, Belgian Congo, showed a production of 1,730,000 tons of copper for 1927. The report also showed a business total of 410,025,734 francs, and a profit of 140,297,877 francs. This is the production of copper, tin, radium, cobalt, uranium.

At Pretoria in South Africa a large steel mill is under construction.

On the West Coast of Africa the British are carrying intense industrial developments.

In LIBERIA we find that a USA rubber concern, the Firestone Co., has entered this part of Africa. There are 30,000 acres planted with 6,000,000 rubber trees; 10,000 natives are working for less than 30 cents per day.

The Native Population (Proletariat)

The overwhelming majority of the South African population is native and coloured (about 5 1/2 million native and coloured people and one and a half million white). The Negroes constitute the majority of the WORKING CLASS. Let us take the figures:

White	176,072	(27%)
Coloured	467,013	(73%)
	<hr/> 643,085	

	<u>White</u>		<u>Coloured</u>	
1) Mining	39,029	(11%)	305,589	(89%)
2) Transport	66,139	(62%)	40,830	(38%)
3) Production	71,004	(37%)	120,594	(63%)
	<hr/> 176,072		<hr/> 467,013	

In the Belgian Congo in 1929 in the gold, copper and diamond mines there were 31,655 native workers, in 1926 there were 61,182. In the Union mines of Catagu there were 16,448 native workers.

Agriculture

4. - Here again South Africa is typical. The native and coloured population may be divided as follows:

- 1) Natives on their own tribal lands (reserves) 51%
- 2) Detribalised natives on European-owned land 34%
- 3) Native workers in mines and city areas 14%

In 1910 the agricultural export of South Africa was £9,500,000 in 1927 it was £22,000,000; in 1910 the agricultural export was 18% of the total exports, in 1927 it was 32%. This, too, in face of the increased gold export for the same year - from £32,000,000 to £42,000,000.

The number of dairy factories in South Africa increased during the period 1915-25 from 59 to 124. In Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia and in the whole West Coast of Africa vast agricultural developments are going on.

In South Africa the native reserves form only 1/8 of the total land of the union, and natives are not allowed to purchase land outside the reserves. Certain areas of crown land which it was once suggested might be added to the reserves are being alienated to the whites, e.g., large areas in the Northern Transvaal which were regarded as suitable for cotton growing. The existing reserves are hopelessly inadequate for the needs of the present population, and large numbers of natives are compelled for this reason, not forgetting taxation and pressure from their chiefs (who act as government agents), to go out to work in the white areas. At any moment over 1/3 of the adult male population of the reserves is away at work in the towns or on the white farms.

Now let us refer to a few statements of leading imperialists of Africa. General Herzog last year said: "The farmer would have to exert himself to keep the natives on the land, for there is the danger of the native becoming an industrialist instead of an agriculturist... that might prove a disaster for the farmer of South Africa".

The king of Belgium, in opening up a railroad in the Congo, said: "The railroad will assure the development of agriculture, which alone keeps the natives to the soil."

Major Christy of England in a recent speech said: "African equatorial regions contain inexhaustible supplies of vegetable products and lie almost at the front door of Europe. For the world distance does not mean what it did and the difficulties of Saharian transport are rapidly being overcome. In the near future, as I see it, the native of tropical Africa will, with encouragement, be the producer of a large proportion of the vegetable raw materials of the world."

Political Situation

5. - The native population has in South Africa no electoral rights (with the exception of the Cape province), the power of the State has been monopolised by the white bourgeoisie which has at its disposal the armed white forces. The white bourgeoisie, chiefly the Boers, defeated by the arms of the British imperialism at the close of

the last century, had for a long time carried on a dispute with British capital. But as the process of capitalist development goes on in the country, the interests of the South African bourgeoisie are becoming more and more blended with the interests of British financial and industrial capital, and the white South African bourgeoisie is becoming more and more inclined to compromise with British imperialism, forming together with the latter a united front of whites for the exploitation of the native population.

In West Africa and other parts we have practically the same situation: Imperialist rule by indirect methods through native chiefs with the overwhelming population without any political expression. In French Africa they rule by the iron hand of the army and constabularies, this being true also of the Belgian Congo and Portuguese Africa.

6. - America and the West Indies

America

In America there are upward of 12,000,000 Negroes of which two-thirds are peasants and agricultural workers living in the South. During and since the world war there was a great migration of Negroes from the South into the industries of the North and this has created an industrial Negro proletariat.

The general outline of the economic and industrial development in America is fairly well known to all. The general situation of the Negro worker and the Negro peasant cannot be separated from that of the white and other workers and farmers of America. There are, however, some very special and characteristic features of the Negro's exploitation and conditions under imperialism in America that must be considered by us.

86% of the Negro population live in the South; of this number 74% reside in the rural districts and depend upon agriculture for a livelihood. Approximately one-half of these rural dwellers live in the so-called "black belt" where they constitute more than 50% of the population. The great mass of Negroes are subjected to the most ruthless form of exploitation and persecution. American imperialism utilizes peonage, share-cropping, landlordism, etc., for the super-exploitation of the Negroes and to suck out superprofits. In order to perpetuate this super-exploitation there has grown up and constantly extended its hold a system of political inequality, lynching, segregation, "jim-crowism", etc.

The American imperialists faced with the growing revolt in the ranks of the great mass of the Negro workers and peasants, either must see these revolts grow in size and momentum or try to hamper them by granting concessions and even assisting the development of a Negro Bourgeoisie; they are openly supporting the development of Negro big business enterprises. To take two cases this is being done by such outstanding plutocrats as Rockefeller and Julius Rosenwald of Chicago. Rockefeller has recently organised a bank for Negroes in New York.

Besides the Negroes themselves are feverishly building big business enterprises, in Chicago, New York, North Carolina, and throughout the country. Thus the lot of the great masses of Negro workers and peasants is becoming doubly hard, the exploitation is like a double edged sword. The Negro has no political rights in the South where the great bulk of his race live.

West Indies

The West Indies are typically agricultural country. It is the biggest market place for the export of goods from America, more so indeed than any of the Latin and Central American countries. The whole of the West Indies are under the iron hand of the American marines. The Independence of Haiti, gained by the overthrow of French domination during the Haitian Revolution, has been completely nullified by the American marines, the people are garrotted and ruled, in addition to the marines, by a fake illegal president who is nothing but a tool of American imperialism. The country in spite of its natural richness is in poverty, the like of which has never been seen since the days before the Haitian Revolution.

7. - Forced Labour

I must draw special attention to this question. We have recently had from the pen of a French journalist a vivid picture of the effects of forced labour in Equatorial Africa. He tells of how the natives in building the Ocean-Congo railroad work with only pick and shovel and without the aid of other mechanical devices and transport; how they have to carry building material hundreds of miles on their heads; how they must work ten and twelve hours a day at a stretch, half starved, almost naked, without shelter or other protection from the inclemencies of the weather; how they die off like flies. For every kilometer of railroad laid down the toll is 200 deaths; already 17,000 Negroes have perished in laying the railroad. In the forty years that France has ruled the Congo the population has gone down 75%, principally from the effects of forced labour.

Mozambique Treaty

This treaty allows the Rand mineowners of South Africa to recruit native labour in Portuguese East Africa for certain definite considerations at the rate of 75,000 natives per year, each native so recruited works for a period of 18 months. Many natives have died in making the long trips because of the change in climate, because of inadequate transport facilities and protection on the way; half of the native's wage is retained until his return at the end of his contract period. Portuguese Negroes indentured in this way find themselves in extremely bad conditions. All articles taken out of South Africa are heavily taxed, workers have to pay additional fees if their passports are prolonged.

West Africa

In West Africa railroads and bridges are built by forced labour. In Portuguese West Africa, in British South West Africa floggings and vagrancy laws are resorted to to force the natives to work. In certain sections boys 14 years of age are forced to labour. In other sections taxation had recourse to to get ablebodied men conscripted for periods of 6 days at a time.

West Indies

Here we find the same kind of "community" improvement resorted to; natives at the point of US marine bayonets are forced to build roads without compensation; natives are conscripted for work on the Cuban sugar plantations.

Southern U.S.A.

In the southern part of the USA facts come to light daily of the existence of peonage by which Negroes are worked on the plantations of the South as forced labourers. In some cases Negroes have been discovered who have been in this bondage since the Civil War, not knowing even that bond slavery had ended with the War. Recently reports have come out in which the police forces of Florida are forcing Negroes to build roads without pay. Negro convicts are leased to mine owners and plantation owners in the South.

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Comrades, I have referred only briefly to some of the territories that are under the heel of imperialism. Some, such as Liberia, Abyssinia, etc., I have not mentioned to any great extent. But as you will readily realise the imperialist oppression of the Negro peoples of the world covers a very wide field that would take days to go into in detail. But we have had a general picture, now we must work out a line and policy for our fight against imperialism.

III. - Tasks and Tactics in the Struggle Against Imperialism

1. From the foregoing certain very definite conclusions follow. The League's programme demanding Independence, independence in its very essence, is correct.

The toiling masses of the Negroes throughout the world can see no hope for rectifying their conditions under imperialism indeed there

is no hope, not the slightest chance. The Negro toiling masses must look forward to mobilising their forces for a joint struggle against imperialism, for independence and self-rule.

Independence, Self-Rule and Self-Determination

South Africa

The inception of Negro reformism, as a result of the corruptionist policy of the white bourgeoisie, constitutes the characteristic fact of the present political situation in South Africa.

The united front of the British and South African white bourgeoisie against the toiling Negro population, backed by the white and Negro reformists, creates the possibility for uniting the white and black proletariat and the landless black peasantry for a struggle against British imperialism, against the white bourgeoisie and against the white and black reformist leaders.

South Africa is a black country, the majority of its population is black and so is the majority of the workers and peasants. The basis of the South African question is the black peasantry whose land has been expropriated by the white exploiting minority. Seven-eighths of the land is owned by the whites. Hence, the national question lies at the foundation of the struggle against imperialism in South Africa. The black peasantry constitutes the basic moving force of the revolution in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class.

To complete and carry forward these demands we must put forward the central slogan—AN INDEPENDENT NATIVE **SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC** BASED UPON THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' ORGANISATIONS WITH FULL SAFEGUARDS AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL NATIONAL MINORITIES.

America

In America the main struggle, as we have seen from the foregoing, is by which the Negroes are bound down against the political, economic and social inequalities. It is the Negro agricultural labourers and the tenant farmers who feel most the pressure of white persecution and exploitation. Thus, the agrarian problem lies at the root of any Negro liberation movement in America. Their objective position facilitates their transformation into a tremendous force against U.S.A. imperialism. Under the leadership of the proletariat, these toilers will be able to participate in the joint struggle with all other workers against imperialism. We must fight for full emancipation. We must fight for complete political, economic and social equality. In the Southern part of the U.S.A., on the "Black Belt" where they constitute the majority of the population we must support the right of self-determination.

We must carry on a relentless struggle against the terrorism of the fascist Ku-Klux-Klan and the American Legion; against mob violence and lynch law; against all forms of racial chauvinism, all forms of racial discrimination and segregation.

West Africa

Complete national independence for all the colonies of West Africa (Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Gambia and Nigeria).

Liberia

The complete independence of Liberia and the immediate withdrawal of American imperialist agents from Liberian territory.

The Belgian Congo

The independence of the Belgian Congo.

Abyssinia

The unqualified independence of Abyssinia; the abrogation of all treaties that provide for the partitioning of Abyssinia.

Haiti

The complete sovereignty and independence of Haiti; the cancellation of all debts and the restoration of the Customs; the abrogation of all treaties which are directed towards the political and economic subjugation of Haiti.

Jamaica

The complete separation of Jamaica from the British Empire.

Central American Countries

For all the Central American countries we must demand for the Negro subjects full and complete political, economic and social equality.

East Africa

For all the colonies of British East Africa we must struggle for:

- 1) The British evacuation of the Colonies.
- 2) The return of expropriated territory of the natives.
- 3) The abolition of "Corvée system" and forced labour.

2. - What Must Be Done? (Trade Union Organisation)

The fight for the emancipation of the Negroes depends, as we have seen, upon the fact that the great majority of the Negro people are workers and peasants. Included in this struggle, however, may be intellectuals and even bourgeois elements with some very characteristic limitations of which we shall speak later. We must have organisations and programmes.

The revolutionary labour movement---because it is homogeneous, because it brings together great masses of workers who have the same demands and the basis for common and mutual unity, because it does not limit itself to local and national demands but unifies great masses of workers throughout the world on the basis of identical demands against an identical enemy---is the real form of organisation for the struggle against international imperialism. The Trade Union is the characteristic form of organisation. Unified in the trade unions, the working class, can be relied upon to carry the struggle through to its ultimate end. There will be no vacillations such as we see in the ranks of the intellectuals. For example, in America the intellectuals formerly put forward and fought for social equality, but now we see quite a characteristic change in these intellectuals; they are now denying the struggle for social equality and falling in with a new reformist programme of collaboration with the capitalists in the exploitation of the Negroes. The working class, however, will go on to the end; it has the courage; it has the energy; it has the numbers. Therefore the essential form of organisation to carry out our demands must be the trade union with a clear-cut programme.

(a) A Trade Union Programme

Comrades, the Negro toiling masses are subjected both to capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression---they suffer as members of an oppressed race and of the working class. In this country or in that one or the other form of oppression predominates.

The struggle of the Negro toilers for liberation is insolvably bound up with the wider struggle of the international proletariat and the Negro workers must line up in the international revolutionary class struggle the world over, by organising their forces for joint struggle. In order to help the establishment of such a united front between the Negro workers and their fellow-workers, in order to liberate the Negro workers from the influence of reactionary nationalistic petty-bourgeois ideologies and draw them into the lines of the revolutionary class struggle it is necessary to follow a trade union programme.

Equal Pay for Equal Work. - As a general rule Negro workers are working at lower wages than white workers. In South Africa for example the wages of native workers are from four to five times lower than of white workers; in America the constant lowering of the wages of Negro workers, the employment of Negro workers only upon their acceptance of lower wages than white workers, not only means the lowering of their own standards of living, but the standards of white workers as well: in the West Indies and in Cuba on the sugar plantations Negro workers toil for only a few cents per day. In order to raise the standards of living and subsistence of Negro workers it is necessary for them to struggle for "equal pay for equal work", irrespective of race, colour or sex. At the same time the fight for raising the general standards of living of all workers must be continued and carried on by Negro

workers in conjunction with their fight for equal wages.

An Eight-Hour Day. - Of equal importance also to Negro workers is the question of hours of work. In most industries and at all kinds of work Negro workers are forced to toil from 10 to 12 hours per day, in some parts of the world, especially in the colonies, Negroes work 16 hours and some times longer per day. In the main, Negro workers must struggle through their trade union organisations for the eight-hour day. In the meantime they must begin to agitate for, and achieve ultimately, a seven-hour day and eventually a six-hour day.

Forced Labour. - Forced labour we have already touched upon. We must fight it wherever it exists, also against being forced to work for no pay at all as for example "for civic improvement" which is nothing but a disguised form of slavery; in the West Indies against the U.S. marines forcing natives to work for nothing at the point of the bayonet; against the forcing of West Indians into Cuba to work on the sugar plantations of the American imperialists; in South Africa against forced labour which is sanctioned by the Mozambique Treaty; in French Equatorial Africa against the forcing of natives to work the railroads; in the USA against forced labour on the roads such as recently came to light with regards to Negroes being forced to build roads in Florida; the peonage system which is wide spread in the South; against Negro convicts being forced to work in the coal mines and plantations being leased out by the police officials.

Labour Legislation. - In our programme of trade union activity there must be demands for legislative provisions, for the adoption and enforcement of insurance laws covering accident, sickness and old age pensions, etc., to be a charge on the employers.

Protection for Women and Youth. - Any trade union programme must focus especial attention on the question of women and youths, and equal pay for equal work, equal benefits and proper working conditions for them. Especial attention must be paid to the question of protection for expectant mothers working in production, vacations before and after child birth, full payment and nursing intervals during the working day after returning to work.

Freedom of Trade Unions. - For the right to organise trade unions, the right to strike and the right of free speech; for all of these very elementary rights wherever they do not exist?

Against Class Collaboration. - Already we see the Pullman Company (in the case of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters) fighting the workers by means of company unionism and other such schemes. We must fight against all such, against governmental force and coercion, compulsory arbitration; against all reformist class collaboration.

Against Racial Barriers in Unions. - Here is where the reformists compromise. While they mouth phrases about fair treatment, etc., they deny admittance of Negroes into their unions upon an equal basis, even if at all. Most of the AF of L unions either have definite restrictions or they have unwritten laws which prevent Negroes from freely entering the unions. The first prerequisite for a victorious struggle against imperialism is the admittance of Negro workers into the unions and a 100% organisation of all Negro workers into trade unions. We therefore must put up a relentless struggle for lowering the racial bars in the trade unions and the opening of all unions to Negro workers regardless of race, colour, sex, etc.

Special Unions of Negro Workers. - Realising the necessity for trade union organisation where special bars are not lowered against Negro workers and unions refuse to admit Negro workers, special unions of Negro workers must be organised. In cases where there are white unions admitting Negro workers but treating them as second class members with unequal rights and privileges, special unions of Negro workers must also be organised.

Against White Terrorism--Organisation of Defence Corps. - We must carry on a relentless struggle against terrorism in all its forms--against lynchings, police and soldier terrorism, against the assassination of trade union leaders and social workers amongst Negro

workers, against their arrest and deportation. For this purpose it is necessary at times to organise special DEFENSE corps. These corps should protect Negroes in the organisation of trade unions, the holding of meetings, etc., and really protect workers against the fascist terror of the bosses.

Housing and Social Conditions. - The housing of Negro workers is the worst in the world wherever they live. We must demand adequate housing conditions and that adequate attention be paid to the prevention of disease and the protection of health, and the well-being of their families. We must absolutely oppose the compound system that exists in South Africa; and in general work for better social conditions amongst Negro workers and their families.

Agricultural Workers. - Of special significance are the conditions amongst agricultural workers; these conditions are worst of all amongst Negro workers. We must fight for special demands for Negro agricultural workers: shorter hours, special social legislation, protection of women and children, etc., etc.

Against Confiscation of Peasant Lands and Communals, Poll Tax and Hut Tax. - Of particular significance is the land question and the agrarian policy of the South African Government. We must fight against the confiscation of the land of the natives and its reservation for white settlers in different parts of Africa. This policy is carried out by means of special taxes, POLL AND HUT. We must fight against these taxes and for the restitution of all land confiscated in the past to native communities and for the abolition of all taxes.

Civil Rights. - In our main struggle against imperialism we are out to achieve all civil rights and the abolition of Pass Laws and all other laws abrogating the rights of Negro workers, to achieve universal suffrage, freedom of speech, freedom of workers' press. All colour bars and systems existing in the West Indies and South Africa and elsewhere must be abolished. These are elementary rights which are at the very basis of any TU activity and must be the basic part of any TU programme. Included also are such questions as SELF-DETERMINATION, THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE AND IN SOUTH AFRICA A NATIVE REPUBLIC. IN THIS WAY THE UNIONS ALSO MUST participate in the political struggles of the workers which cannot be separated and eliminated from the purely economic struggle of the trade unions. A special task of the unions is to struggle against reformism also in the form of the religious and nationalist and petty-bourgeois ideologies which befog the minds of the workers.

Struggle Against War. - The struggle against war which we shall discuss under another heading must also be part of the trade union programme.

The Negro workers of the U.S.A. must concentrate their forces in the unions of the Trade Union Educational League. Its special Trade Union Department for Negro workers is organised to deal with the special problems of the Negro workers and struggle for their admittance into all unions of white workers in America upon an equal basis.

The Non-European Federation of South Africa must strengthen its forces and upbuild their organisations. They must extend their influence among the agricultural workers, penetrate and organise the big basic mining industry, and struggle to build a strong revolutionary movement in South Africa based on all the workers and peasants regardless to race or colour. They must struggle against the Amsterdam International and all reformism whether represented by Kadalie or by Ballinger of the General Council of England.

(b) Liberation Movements

The liberation movements of the Negro masses take different forms in different sections. The essential characteristic of Negro Liberation movements must be that their central question is the question of the relationship to the Negro masses. They must be based upon the great bulk of the Negro populations, their demands, their specific and special demands. Liberation movements cannot hope to be successful

unless they have this characteristic. Liberation movements cannot go far, cannot play a final role in the liberation of the Negroes if they put forward what are merely partial, middle-class demands. If the middle class and intellectuals wish to serve in the liberation of the masses they must be organisers and servants of the masses. The liberation movements also demand programmes that offer the masses real assistance in their desperate needs and conditions. The liberation movement must be a struggle towards social liberation. Social liberation like economic liberation must lead towards self-determination, towards the elimination of all of those social fetters that are confining the Negro masses to narrow and limited paths, into "ghetto" life, into isolation whereby they can be more easily exploited, into places of oppression, into narrow political surroundings whereby they cannot freely express themselves. All of these demands mean, in actuality, a struggle for separation from imperialist domination; for imperialists foster these conditions the better to oppress and exploit their victims.

A Programme

Here we cannot outline any detailed programme such as must require a more careful study according to conditions. We cannot outline any one programme that would serve the Negro people identically throughout the world. We can merely point out a general direction :

a) The Land Question

- 1) Expropriation of land formerly held by Negroes.
- 2) Abolition of all taxes, such as poll and hut taxes.
- 3) Support for agriculture by providing seed, implements, stock, credits, etc.
- 4) Repeal of Land Acts.
- 5) Establishment of agrarian organisations of poor peasants and the formation of farm labourers' unions.

b) Civil Rights

- 1) Freedom of speech, assembly, press, etc.
- 2) Abolition of pass laws.
- 3) Evacuation of imperialist soldiers and marines from the lands of Negroes.
- 4) Abolition of peonage.
- 5) Abolition of jim-crow laws and segregation.
- 6) Universal suffrage.
- 7) Abolition of caste systems and racial divisions.

c) Taxation

Abolition of all forms of taxation that have as their purpose the enslavement and placing of great burdens of debts upon the working population, including loans, custom regulations in the hands of the imperialists; the weighing down of the people with great revenue taxes.

d) Education

Stamping out of illiteracy; establishment of free universal education.

e) Social Conditions

Elimination of ghetto life and conditions; elimination of congestion detrimental to health; proper provision of hospitals for children and especially for women in pregnancy, free hospitals and free dispensaries.

f) Labour Conditions

Establishment of labour inspection laws; abolition of child labour; establishment of full trade union rights.

Form of Organisation

These are only partial demands that must be enlarged upon. The form of organisation must be such that it includes all sections of the Negro working population; student groups, young workers, intellectuals, middle classes, etc.

These two programmes---Trade Union and Liberation---are very closely and indistinguishably connected with the struggle for self-determination, for native republics, for separation from imperialism and

capitalism and as a result are direct blows centered at the very heart of imperialism.

IV. - Reformism and the Negroes

The upper strata of the working class in the imperialist countries tend more and more to express the interest of the imperialists and are moving hand in hand with them. These include chauvinistic TU bodies such as the AF of L, chauvinistic International Labour Organizations like Amsterdam and the Pan-American Federation of Labour; it includes the IInd International and all of its affiliated socialist parties, generally called social-democrats and "reformist" because of their policy of seeking reforms under capitalism and imperialism. Included under this heading are many Negro organisations and individuals all inimical to the interests of the great masses of the working population and especially inimical to the interests of the colonial and oppressed peoples. These we must make a militant struggle against, as also against imperialism itself.

The IInd International

1. - The IInd International is chauvinistic to the very core. The point of view of the IInd International with regard to Negroes is an attitude of "superiors" to "inferiors". The point of view of Kautsky, the leading theoretician of the IInd International, is essentially one of considering Negroes "inferiors". His literal expressions is the following.

"If the question (the Negro question) amounts exclusively to the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, then there is no need for any struggle for the social equality of the oppressed race, and such a struggle is harmful, since it interferes with the fundamental struggle. Let the Negroes wait until the advent of socialism; the emancipated proletariat will proceed to emancipate all other oppressed peoples, including the Negro race of America... the only road to progress for the latter is to give up striving for independence and to assimilate the achievements of civilisation."

Another gem from a socialist leader :

"The working class cannot fight against the extension of capitalist colonial expansion."

Hildebrandt declared some years ago "that the mass of 290-300 millions of people in the crowded Western half of Europe must claim their right to colonise, by means of their far superior culture, such backward, thinly populated countries as Africa, which are incapable of development."

The Brussels Congress, 1928

It is from these fundamental premises the adherents of the reformist II International proceed. Let us take a look at the colonial thesis drafted at the Brussels Conference in August, 1928. The colonies are divided into three groups. The first group comprises those colonial races who now fill the so-called requirements of modern independent civilisation; the second group those colonies which, through reforms, will tend to achieve the right of self-determination and such degree of self-government as may be demanded by the inhabitants; and the third group "colonies with primitive culture", which through certain vague safeguards, can expect provisions against the evils of excessive exploitation and oppression, and can also expect some aid from the support and the extension of the mandate systems of the League of Nations. In this latter group all Negroes are included; are not all Negroes "primitives" and "inferiors," then, according to the professed tenets of the II International?

Or take another example, "Comrade" Fontanier of the Socialist Party of France is speaking of the "civilising mission" of capitalism with regard to the recent uprising in Equatorial Africa. "The insurrection must be considered as the reflex of the aggravation of our mistakes down there, but at the same time we must admit the enormous

achievement of France in educating the primitive population of French Equatorial Africa... the insurrection is particularly due to the excitement of the most backward religious elements of this region against European civilisation."

According to them Negroes are made by "God" as instruments of toil and degradation at the hands of some responsible "civilising" capitalist government. Their practices at the recent Brussels Congress shows that they do not stand for the right of complete equality of Negroes. What about the so-called "civilising" missions of capitalism? Let us examine the situation in Equatorial Africa.

The IInd International adherents hope to profit from the fact of the retardation of industrial development in the colonies which gives them hope of bigger industrial opportunities in the home lands; and they hope to share in the capitalist robbery in the colonies; they hope to beat capitalism at its own game. For example, "comrade" Mathieu, a socialist member of the Belgian Parliament, is manager and director of a Company which is backed by a socialist bank of Belgium, and socialists have founded a cotton company in East Africa and in the Congo. Thus we can characterise the "socialist" II International as being essentially a European International. If the leaders of social-democracy continue their present policy of social-chauvinism, of collaborating with the Imperialists in the subjugation of oppressed peoples the revolutionary colonial masses and the revolutionary proletarian masses in the imperialist countries will have to take up open struggle against them equally against imperialism itself.

2. - British Labour Party

Upon the coming to power of the Labour Party depends our next approach to the colonial question. On the fundamental question of rationalisation in England the present British Labour Party will turn towards the colonies and extend imperialist oppression. Compared with the highly developed technique of America and Germany rationalisation in England is far behind these two countries. Rationalisation in England is in some of the initial stages of development, whereas in Germany and America it has passed over to its highest stages of development. Can England approach this development? The facts are that in the physical aspect of English industry we will find that it will be practically impossible for England to reach the development attained by America and Germany because of the old standards of English industry and because of the in practicability of meeting, for example, the requirements of rationalisation in the mining industry. It is for this reason that the Labour Government will have tremendous difficulties in carrying out the capitalist plans of rationalisation and will be forced, in order to make up for these inadequacies, to turn her attention to a more galling exploitation of the colonies. It is for this reason that the present Labour Government will betray not only the toiling workers in England, but most assuredly the toiling masses of the British Colonies. Therefore we are compelled to put the question squarely before the leaders of the British Labour Government: what is our policy and what is your intentions with regard to the colonial toilers? But we need have no illusions; we know that the Labour Government is nothing more nor less than a government of imperialism.

The "Pittsburg Courier", a petty-bourgeois Negro paper, enjoying a wide influence and circulation amongst Negroes, and pretending to be informed on international questions and their bearing upon the Negro masses, in an editorial entitled "Africa, America and Labour's Victory" in the June 15th issue makes comments which we summarise as follows :

1) "The Labour Party of Great Britain is a political party of working people committed to the proposition of introducing working class rule in the British Empire.

2) "It has consistently fought the British imperialists who would steal the land of the natives in Africa, India and other lands ruled by the British but inhabited by coloured folk.

3) "The Labour Party is bitterly opposed to war and its coming to power will mean the postponement to a more distant date of that conflict.

4) "James Ramsey McDonald was opposed to the late war.

5) "McDonald was an active member of Dr. DuBois' Pan-African Congress which met in London a few years ago.

6) "The Labour Party is the only group in English political life that stands for a square deal for black and brown native populations."

Hypocrisy of Negro Petty-Bourgeoisie Exposed

This is a combination of lies, deceit and ignorance, and exposes the true role of betrayal of the petty-bourgeois Negro who not only licks the boots of the imperialists and capitalists but cringes before the reformist agents of imperialism who are bent on assisting the imperialists to tighten the yoke of enslavement around the necks of the Negroes in the British colonies. But the most condemning fact is the contempts with which these so-called leaders hold the intelligence of the Negro workers to say nothing of the contempt it displays towards the intelligence of the Indian and Chinese toilers who have put up a tremendous fight against British imperialism and who are well informed through practical experience of the role of the McDonald Government.

It shall be over the Colonies that the Labour Party will disgrace itself and break its neck.

It was the McDonald Labour Government in 1924 that passed the notorious Bengal Ordinance under which Indians (those brown people the Pittsburg Courier refers to) have been imprisoned without trial.

It was under the McDonald Labour Government in 1924 that troops were called out to massacre and to shoot down 50 unarmed, starving Bombay cotton strikers.

It was during the term of the McDonald Government that bombs were dropped on the ~~Isakis~~ and it was under that Government that Mr. Leach (of the Air Office) made the following defence of the bombing before Parliament :

"Bombs have been dropped on five occasions in Irak during the period referred to... The Objectives selected were the encampments and grazing grounds of the offending tribes... In this period there have been no casualties to the Royal Air Forces in Irak during the bombing operations... Where VIOLENCE IS HABITUAL, AIR ACTION, HOWEVER REGRETABLE THE NECESSITY FOR IT, IN MANY CASES CHECK AT AN EARLY STAGE DISTURBANCES WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE CAUSE GREAT LOSS OF LIFE."

It was the McDonald Government that goted millions of dollars to a British syndicate in the Sudan, a concern paying 25% dividends; and which sent troops and cruisers to the Sudan to suppress a nationalist uprising.

During the rule of the Labour Government British troops and South African police shot down native workers who were protesting against an unheard of exploitation.

While McDonald was sending congratulations to the opening of the Egyptian Parliament, at the same time 16 Egyptian working class leaders were being tried for the "crime" of taking a leading part in strikes in Alexandria.

During the Longshoremen's strike in Trinidad in 1924 the Colonel of the garrison was only restrained from using the troops out of fear of an uprising. But after the strike was over the strikers' leaders were arrested, some were imprisoned and others deported.

This is a short record of the McDonald Government when it was in power in 1924. But this is to say nothing of the fact that war materials and troops were sent freely to China during the Chinese Revolution in order to crush the Chinese workers and their movement against British imperialism.

And here I must put the question squarely to Comrade Maxton : Where do you stand? Why did you support the Labour Party and now offer amendments to its programme? It must be clear to all opponents of

imperialism that we cannot serve two masters. The greatest danger to our struggle against the Labour Party is the attitude of Maxton. Mr. Maxton must choose between hope for reforms inside the Labour Party and making a militant struggle against imperialism, which means a struggle against the Labour Party exposing it as a collaborator with imperialism.

In America the AF of L and the Socialist Party pursue a jim-crow policy towards the Negroes. They are both committed to the policy of supporting American capitalism. Recently the American Federation of Labour put out newspaper releases against the mingling of Negro and white workers upon an equal basis. During its whole existence the AF of L has pursued a policy of keeping Negro workers out of the Labor Movement. Only recently the president of the AF of L betrayed the brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by calling off their strike.

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x

Comrades, we Negro toilers can have nothing to do with such "socialism", such labour "unity", that at one time declares for socialism and at the next moment is working hand in hand with the imperialists in the exploitation of Negroes. We can have nothing to do with such labour organisations that at one moment declare for "equal rights regardless of race, etc.", and which in actual practice bar, segregate and jim-crow Negro workers (thus making it easier for the imperialists to exploit both white and black workers) and at the same time sell out and betray Negro trade unions such as the AF of L in the case of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by Wm. Green.

Comrades, the struggle against imperialism is too serious, and indeed too tremendous a struggle, for us to go in the same direction with social reformism. We must find another path and if this path leads to open struggle with social reformism, with jim-crow tactics, with jingoism, we accept open struggle rather than their deceitful "co-operation."

3. Earnest Kirk, Social Reformist of India

Comrades, I must now give a few remarks to Earnest Kirk, editor of the Labour Review of India. Mr. Kirk in the May issue of the Labour Review had occasion to refer to a speech which I made at the January meeting of the Executive of the League Against Imperialism as follows :

"According to the "Negro Worker"... Comrade Ford, speaking recently at the Enlarged Executive Committee of the League said, 'The League must support all struggles for national independence and for workers' and peasants' control... It must fight against reformism in all its forms. It must be for militant struggle against imperialism. And his prefatory notes on the speech the editor of the same journal remarks: "The League is now faced with the task of becoming a real militant organisation which would undertake the PRACTICAL work of mobilising all anti-imperialist forces. The League must become a real mass organisation. Without losing its connections with individual petty-bourgeois organisations and workers who might bring it a certain measure of advantage, the League should direct its chief attention to the mass of workers and peasants and particularly the Trade Unions, and concludes with the significant words : "The Convocation of the Second World Congress of the League this year is to strengthen the League organisationally and TO DRAW A MILITANT REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME FOR ITS ACTIVITIES." (Kirk's emphasis).

Mr. Kirk comes to the following illuminating conclusion : "And to think that the All-India Trades Union Congress is affiliated to the League and is committed to sending two delegates to the Congress."

Who Is This Kirk?

Comrades, I do not know who this Mr. Kirk is, but one can safely come to the conclusion that he is an Indian petty-bourgeois reformist who sees the liberation of India only in relation to his small group, who capitulate before the British exploitation of the great mass of Indian workers and peasants, who cannot see that only complete inde-

pendence from British imperialism through the course of revolution can assure the Indian masses freedom from exploitation. It is not necessary for me to give figures here on the poverty degradation of the Indian masses. Perhaps some of our Indian representatives here will do this. What I want to point out is the despicable character of these national reformists who would, hand in hand with the British, continue the exploitation of the Indian masses and hope by means of gradual reforms to relieve the masses. Mr. Kirk in the same issue made the following remarks in regard to another critic who had pointed out the evils to the Indian working masses of British capitalism: "We fully agree and appreciate 'Trade Unionist's remarks about exposing the evils of capitalism and advocating remedies... We agree there is room for improvement." This is reformist to the core, this is the type that exists in Europe, America and that is also rising amongst the Negroes of America and Africa. It is just this type of reformist who is responsible for the decline of the Indian movement since 1922. We see them growing at the present time; frightened by the great mass movement of the workers in Bombay and other parts of India now they are fast going over to supporting British imperialism.

It is just for these reasons (which recent events have proved) that I said at the January meeting of the League Executive that the League must part with such creatures, that the League must be a militant organisation based on the workers and peasants if it is to struggle in reality against imperialism. That this type of reformist is international, that we must purge our ranks of him and his kind is clear to every honest opponent of imperialism. Comrades, I hope our Indian comrades will speak more of the situation in India with regard to reformism. I now pass to Negro reformism and reaction.

4. - Negro Reformism and Reaction

America. - At the present time there are four principal organisations in America purporting to represent the interests of the Negro race. Two of them are international in outlook. They are the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the Urban League, the Pan-African Congress and the Garvey movement.

Urban League. - The Urban League co-operates with the U.S. Labour Department, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and with managers of industrial and manufacturing concerns employing large numbers of Negroes. They advance the idea that the American imperialists and capitalists are friends to the Negro workers. They do not concern themselves with the working conditions, wages, etc., of the Negro workers, but on the contrary say that Negro workers should accept the conditions of "their friends" and resist their striking fellow-workers. This is a policy we cannot follow nor advise our Negro comrades to follow.

National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. - This is another organisation that has the support of white capitalists like as Julius Rosenwald, the multi-millionaire of Chicago, and John Rockefeller Jr., the oil king, the ammunition magnate DuPont of New Jersey and many others. It is quite natural that it must take a reformist character, i.e., it concerns itself primarily with trying to bring about reforms under capitalism in behalf of the Negro toilers. Its leaders, such as DuBois, have given up the struggle for full social equality of the Negro toilers. It tries to seek relief from lynchings by means of reforms in the legislature of the imperialist U.S.A. It is out and out a petty-bourgeois organisation that is beginning to represent the interests of the rising Negro bourgeois, similar to the native bourgeois of India, etc... We ask quite pointedly of the NAACP does it think it can gain anything for the Negro masses of America by seeking reforms under capitalism. We ask the NAACP if it will support the tasks outlined here as a struggle against imperialism?

The Pan-African Congress is another organisation, international in character, which from all the signs is a reformist organisation and

Negro workers, peasants and soldiers, turn the imperialist war into a civil war against your oppressors!

Fight to defeat "your" imperialist country in the war!

Down with race war, long live the class war!

Negro workers, peasants and soldiers defend the Soviet Union
Against Imperialism!

Join the united front of the toilers of all countries against imperialism for the final overthrow of the capitalist system of oppression and exploitation! Only hand in hand with the international revolutionary proletariat in its fight against imperialism and capitalism can the Negro worker and peasant attain their freedom from political, economic and racial oppression.

Negro soldiers, in the event of war, fraternise with the soldiers of the opposing armies!

VI. - Tasks of the League

After the first period we now enter the second period of the League. The second period of the League in regard to the Negro toilers must be characterised by organisation. Concrete organisational steps must be taken and support given to Negro organisations, particularly trade union organisations. Only by unifying and bringing the great mass of toiling workers and peasants into the struggle can we hope for success against imperialism. It is for this reason that support to the young Negro trade unions is so important. In the meantime we must support and gain contact with the liberation movements of the Negro people and guide and give them assistance in their struggle against imperialism.

At the same time the League must struggle against reformism whether it be national reformism or the reformism of the International Labour Movements. The struggle is becoming so sharp that, as we have already here, we must determinedly part with all reformists and all those who will not struggle against imperialism. All adherents and members of the League Against Imperialism must support the programme for Negro Liberation outlined above. We must cease to accept lip service and phrases; we must have action and active supporters against imperialism. This is the task of the League regarding the Negro toilers in this new period of the League.

VII. - International Character of Struggle Against Imperialism

The Negro toilers are learning that their struggle for liberation and freedom has an international aspect and that it is bound up with the struggle of the workers and oppressed peoples of all lands. We have already pointed out how imperialism is penetrating Africa and bringing Negroes more and more within the clutches of their exploitation. We have pointed out the large investments that are being made in Africa---which are increasing as investments are threatened and weakened in India, China. The exploitation of the Negroes becomes one of the main links of imperialism. This is undeniable.

But the Negroes' struggle for freedom cannot be fought upon the basis of race or nationalism solely. This also is true of the working class in the various countries and demands the strictest understanding and attention of both. The struggle is international, involving the need for unity of the Negro peoples with the exploited and oppressed of all countries. The Negro people must begin to break down all policies and tendencies that isolate them and isolate the workers and oppressed peoples of other countries from their struggles. This is of great significance since "race war" slogans and racial issues are being raised to obscure the real struggle against imperialism.

R. Palme Dutt in his book "Modern India" points this out very clearly by the following statement:

"European bourgeois writers have begun to speak, with their usual foolishness, of the Revolt of Asia and Africa and supposed menaces to 'White' Civilisation. This is, of course, nonsense, equally as much as the attacks these same writers make on the rise of the working class in their own countries. In either case, what is taking place is no mysterious menace or conspiracy, but a very simple process of millions of human beings endeavouring to free themselves from an existing subjection (a subjection that these same bourgeois writers would protest against very vociferously, if placed under it themselves.

"The 'White Civilisation' of which these writers speak does not mean the existence and livelihood of the millions of workers and peasants in Europe, who have their own problems to face, but means simply a certain system of subjection and exploitation established by force in Asia and Africa, and established also over the workers and peasants of capitalist Europe."

Besides, the American press is writing about the "Red Peril", characterising the Soviet Union as an enemy of the "White" races and as leading the brown, black and yellow peoples into struggle against white supremacy and white "civilisation". But what these imperialists really fear is the CLASS WAR. Down with "race war". We must join the class war in which the liberation of the Negro people will go hand in hand with the world movement of the working class and oppressed people against imperialism and capitalism.

At the same time the international working class must come to the full realisation that its struggle is intimately bound up with the liberation movements of the Negro people---that they cannot successfully struggle against imperialism when imperialism is extending exploitation amongst the Negro peoples. We have already pointed out how certain sections of the working class follow a policy of chauvinism, and even co-operate with the imperialists in the exploitation of Negroes. We have seen what the Labour Party of England in 1924 did regarding the colonies. We have already seen the passing of the recent Colonial Development Bill by the Labour Party which has as its aim the extending of imperialist exploitation primarily amongst the colonies of Africa.

But we are mindful that the British Labour Party and all the bureaucratic organisations of the Amsterdam International, AF of L., etc., do not represent the interest of the toiling workers in the home lands, that they are betraying the toiling workers. The workers of the home-lands of imperialism must awake to the situation, must chase out these bureaucrats, must bring themselves into the organised struggle against imperialism, must ally themselves with the toiling and oppressed peoples of the colonies.

The Negro toilers are beginning more and more to enter the international struggle, into the labour movement which has a revolutionary programme against imperialism. We will join in International Unity.

Finally, the Negro toiling masses, must realise that their struggle against chauvinism, against all discrimination whether carried on by the imperialists or by the social reformists or by backward elements in the revolutionary movement can only be overcome by their bringing their organised force into the struggle. We must have power that is represented by organisation. The sooner we have power, the sooner we will be respected in all quarters. We must have power through organisation to struggle against imperialism. We must realise that our cry for equality, for opportunity, etc., will only be heard when we are organised. I beg my people in all lands and climes to organise their forces for a unified and combined struggle for liberation.

III.

SPEECH OF COMRADE KOUYATE (OF FRENCH WEST AFRICA)
AT THE CONGRESS OF THE LEAGUE
AGAINST IMPERIALISM

Comrades,

At the First Congress of the League Against Imperialism in February 1927 our lamented friend Segghore Lamina represented the League for the Defence of the Negro Race. He died in November of the same year, while imprisoned in a French dungeon for his activities in exposing French Imperialism at the Congress. His services were typical of the risk and dangers which all who strive for the defence of the oppressed Negroes have to undergo. You are not unaware, comrades, that all along imperialism, leaning also on bought philosophical teachings, has served the greed of the capitalists. This is displayed in varied and complicated forms. In black Africa colonisation (in our era oppression is cloaked under this name) is destructive. In the Antilles it is the cause of the terrible poverty of the Negroes despite the deluding exterior.

The French Congo.

Recent events of a most appalling nature have attracted the attention of world Public Opinion to the French Congo. The population of this country, which is being exterminated by forced labour on transport and by sleeping sickness, has decreased from nine millions in 1900 to 2,850,000 in 1921. This country has been in the power of concession companies since 1899. These companies were afforded these privileges for thirty years through the French parliament. Here we come across the very essence of fraternal collaboration between capitalism and imperialism: the creation of riches for the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries at the expense of the colonial peoples. This is what the railway, the well-known "Congo-Ocean" line was required for, to get the produce to the coast. The building of the railway line of 140 kilometres cost 25,000 Negroes their life. The Batignolles Building Company, which was given charge of this thankless work, gave the natives no improved instruments. They forced them to dig the tunnels with spades and picks; the rails and hewn stone had to be carried on the backs of the Negroes. They worked 11 and 12 hours a day. The workers, recruited from all parts of the Congo, died in thousands: 25% died whilst being transported to the place of work; 37% died during work on the "Congo-Ocean" line from consumption, dysentery, tropical grippe (dengae), malaria, bad and insufficient food, the results of various brutalities, etc.; 20% died upon their return home---total 82% out of the first recruits died during the year. These are official figures. Albert Londres in his book "Terre D'Ebene" writes that 75% of those working on the Bribingui section died. Out of a party of 1,250 men working on the Likonala Mossak section only 89 returned. Out of the 174 sent to work on the Guesse sur la Sangha section only 80 arrived in Brazzaville, and there were only 60 when they arrived at the place of work. In three months time there were only 36 of them. In other parties the death rate was in the same proportions.

Did all these Negroes willingly agree to go to such a death? No, comrades. The workers recruited by the local administration for private works and also for public works, are forced to work. This is how the administration of French Equatorial Africa starts to recruit these groups. The Governor-General at the beginning of the year, orders groups of workers to be conscripted, in accordance with the demands made, in each given locality. Whether the year is a good or a bad one, they have to be conscripted. It is easy to imagine the drama that takes place, the search for people which then begins. The Governor's assistants, by their own special orders establish certain districts where the workers are to be recruited. The administration of French Equatorial Africa provided for the conscription

tion of 23,250 workers in 1929, who were to be sent to various works. They were divided up as follows: the conscription in 14 localities of Gobon was to give 8,300 workers (decree of September 20, 1928), the monthly wage being 50 francs; the conscription in 11 districts of the Middle Congo was to give 4,950 workers (order of November 13, 1928), wage from 35 to 45 francs monthly. The recruiting in 9 districts of Oubangui Shari should have given 4,650 workers (decree of November 6, 1928); in 9 sub-districts of Tchad there were to be 5,450 workers conscripted (November 17, 1928), wage of 30 francs a month. The daily rations can be received in money, not to exceed 75 centimes. The law laying down 15 days' compulsory labour for public works, applies everywhere in the French Congo. The day rates of the workers on the railway line "Congo-Coean" are: general labourers get from 1 to 1.75 francs, gangers get from 1.25 to 2 francs (decree of November 22, 1928), and those who "voluntarily" renew the contracts after their term of conscription get from 2.25 to 2.50 francs. Of course one can only speak ironically of contracting workers in these conditions, as this contract is concluded against the will of the workers, the right being retained to interpret it to the disadvantage of the workers.

The wages which I have mentioned just now are starvation wages. As recognised by the Governor-General himself, the work on the line is extremely exhausting. The tribes which have suffered most are the Bayas, Bandas and Saras. When a new conscription of workers was to be carried out in November, 1928, the Bayas in Upper Sangha (Oubangui Chari) rebelled.

The suppression of this rebellion was most severe. The trees were converted into gallows, from which hung the lacerated Negroes; villages were burned to ashes after the population had deserted them; 200,000 Negroes escaped to the neighbouring British and Belgian colonies, the Negroes were castrated, had their stomachs cut open and their ears chopped off, as was the case in the village of "Fam Chef"--- such are the charms of civilising colonisation of the Twentieth century. The repressions have not yet come to an end. After the attempt at an uprising in the Lai district (Tchad) seven well-known natives were imprisoned in Bangui.

Comrades, you are often told that the sleeping sickness rages in the French Congo. We will attempt to explain the fact. The Tsetse flies, whose bites cause the sleeping sickness, like to live in the obscurity of the forests. The blazing heat of the sun kills them. The Negroes, persecuted by the police and the concession agents, hide in the forests, and thus fall into the danger of being bitten by these death-bringing flies. The depopulation of the districts increases the danger of the spread of this sleeping sickness. All these facts show that forced labour still exists, despite the touching care taken by the French Government against this, forbidding it in the decree of October 22, 1925.

The extermination of the Negroes in the Upper Ogoue district has never before been preceded: the agent of the forestry company in 1927 ordered 1,100 people to be killed because the amount of caoutchouc which was to have been produced was not reached. The population of Gobon since 1911 to 1921 has decreased from 1,050,000 to 300,000. Besides this, during the same decade vital statistics the French Congo showed a drop in population of 63% (official documents of M. Georges Bruel). According to other official data of the French Colonial Ministry, out of a population of 20,000 - 4,000 to 5,000 dies annually in the Upper Ogoue district. The uprising in this district was especially stormy. The mining companies of the Congo and the companies of Sangha-Oubangui during some two or three years easily succeeded in tripling their capital. You all know that the worst scourge in the French African colonies is to carry heavy weights. I will not dwell any longer on these questions.

The situation created by French imperialism in East Africa is about the same as that in the French Congo, only the following difference existing---there is no sleeping sickness there, the organism of the natives there is more enduring, the concessionaires are more limited.

Although forced labour has been forbidden by the decree of October 22, 1925, it is still in force. The local administration in 1929 resolved to recruit 245,000 workers from 20 to 40 years of age, of whom 50,000 have been used to form infantry squads. This means that under the decree of October 31, 1926, this contingent is recruited over and above the annual conscription. The Decree of June 3, 1926 applicable in Madagascar, is very similar to the above.

43,000 workers are to go to public works and serve the administration apparatus.

54,000 have been assigned for work in private, timber, agricultural, and commercial enterprises.

In accordance with the decree of July 30, 1929, the Negroes of French Eastern and likewise Equatorial Africa, are called up for military service for a term of three years. This does not take into account also the migration of 2,600,000 Negroes to the neighbouring British colonies. The Negroes wounded in the last war return home in extreme poverty. Thus for instance, a disabled Negro soldier receiving a 100% pension, and father of a family gets only 1,800 fr. a year, whilst French drafted soldier with a family to support gets an annual pension of 15,390 francs.

Comrades, you cannot imagine the inhumanity of the courts in black French Africa and Madagascar to which the Negroes are subject. For minor offences they sentence the natives to imprisonment up to 20 years, to life imprisonment and exile (Decree of March 22, 1924).

By the decrees of July 24, 1906 and October 8, 1925, we were deprived of our lands and they became the State property. In Togo and the Cameron, French Mandates, the natives were robbed in a similar manner (Decree of August 11, 1929). The Boulous and Bayas tribes are at the present absolutely terrified. The agrarian problem threatens to develop into a very nightmare.

We are deprived of the right to protest against all these crimes of imperialism; we have no right of assembly, to strike, freedom of speech and press; neither is there any right of migration. The "Negro Race", the official organ of our League, has been banned in these countries. There is the right for unions only in four districts in Senegal. This is the explanation of the existence of the Railwaymen's Union in Dakar. These leaders of our regional sections in Africa are under observation, they are baited and persecuted. We have been absolutely pauperised. The taxes press upon the workers, and in particular, on the peasants.

The reason why several Negro organisations of the French colonies in Africa are not represented is that in general there is only one organisation, and that is our organisation.

In the French Antilles: Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Guiana, the Negro workers are absolutely unorganised. They have their representatives in the French Parliament. But these Negro deputies, including the representative from Senegal, day by day more and more betray those whom they have been charged to defend. Arrayed in aprons, brush in hand, and with a brief case tucked under one arm, they resemble lackeys of imperialism. This is why the Negro masses in the Antilles, like their African brothers, are more and more beginning to reject any idea of representing the colonies in the French parliament.

You, comrades, all know that in September 1928 Guadeloupe was ravaged by a cyclone of rare force in September 1928. This cyclone resulted in the death of more than 1,200; 22,000 houses were destroyed; the coffee, cocoa and sugar plantations were devastated and the yield decreased by 70%. The French Chamber of Deputies, in an outburst of generosity, voted 100 million francs for the help of the district. After eight months of waiting, those who had suffered from the cyclone only received 80 guaranteed loans of from 1,500 to 25,000 francs, and 1,100 benefits of from 150 to 300 francs. Two barracks were built which could not house more than 100 persons, so that the sufferers, the agricultural labourers on the plantations and the workers sleep under the open sky and in abject poverty. Such good help was

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