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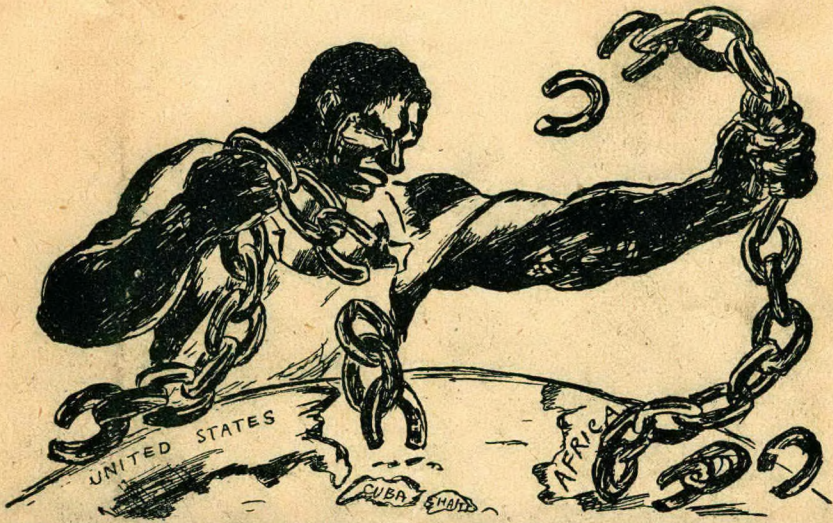
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# THE NEGRO WORKER

Vol. 1

June 1931

No. 6



**ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE  
OF NEGRO WORKERS, 8 ROTHESOODSTR., HAMBURG, GERMANY**

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Germany. — J. W. Ford, Editor-in-Chief.



*Workers of the World Unite!*

# THE NEGRO WORKER

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## The Revolutionary Movement in Africa

By G. PADMORE.

The revolutionary movement in Africa is rapidly assuming new forms of a higher political character. The anti-imperialist struggle is passing over from the agitational stage to open mass demonstrations of the workers and peasants, as well as armed clashes with the military forces of imperialism.

### South Africa

The revolts which have broken out in various sections of Africa, during the past year show the wide extent to which the militancy and radicalisation of the Black toiling masses is taking place. For example, in the **Union of South Africa**, the struggles between the native population and the British and Boer imperialists are more acute today than ever before. Several armed clashes have occurred in the most important industrial centers of the country between the black workers and the armed forces of South African fascist dictatorship.

These struggles culminated in one of the most militant demonstrations in Durban on Dingaan's Day (December the 16th, 1930). Despite the attempt of the police to prohibit the workers from demonstrating, thousands of natives headed by the Communist vanguard bearing a red banner defied the police and took possession of the streets. Hundreds of police re-enforced by armed bands of fascist-hooligans made a vicious assault upon the demonstrators who stood their grounds and retaliated, **blow for blow**.

### East Africa

Revolutionary ferment is also assuming wider and wider proportions in East Africa. The British so-called Labour Government tries to conceal its repressive colonial policy with "left" phrases about "paramouncy of native interests", but the conditions of the toiling masses in Kenya and the other colonies is hardly any better than slavery. The Kenya Government tries to crush all manifestations of political awakening among the natives by suppressing their organizations of struggle, but the revolutionary movement continues to bring in increasing masses of toilers. Because of this general unrest, the British "Labour" Government through its colonial minister, Lord Passfield, has recently enacted a law which makes it a criminal offense for natives to collect funds for any purpose except religious. The object of this law is to prevent the workers, especially the agricultural labourers, who are semi-serfs on the plantations of the white landlords from developing any effective organized methods of struggle. For instance, the **Kikuyu Central Association**, the only revolutionary political organization among



the natives of Kenya has been declared illegal. Yet in the face of this open imperialist terror and oppression, MacDonald has the nerve to talk about "trusteeship of native interests", in the recently published White Papers. The Africans, however, can no longer be fooled by such hypocritical gestures of the social-fascist, the open defenders of British imperialism. The East African toilers are still carrying on agitation on the plantations and on the reserves, and will find new forms and methods of organizing their forces in order to drive the landlords and the official representatives and agents of British imperialism out of their country.

### British West Africa

In order to find a solution of the present financial situation the British colonial governments, as well as the various commercial interests who dominate the economic life of West Africa are cutting their African staffs, while at the same time the governments are increasing taxation on the toiling population. This led to a revolt in the South Eastern province of Nigeria, in December 1929. The peasant women refused to pay the special tax which the government attempted to impose upon them. Over 30,000 women demonstrated and drove the tax collectors away from their villages. Native soldiers commanded by European officers were used against the demonstrators. About 83 women were shot and 87 others wounded before the uprising was suppressed.

The most recent peasant outbreak occurred in Sierra Leone during the middle of February 1931. This was one of the most serious outbreaks which has broken out the West Coast since the crisis. Despite the attempts of the British Government to suppress all information about the uprising, the native petty-bourgeois press of Sierra Leone openly writes that the principal causes for the revolt were economic. Hundreds of natives led by a bataillon of 50 men armed with guns invaded the Kambia District in Sierra Leone which lies next to the neighbouring French colony of Guinea. In February the peasants under a man called **Hydare**, a Negro moslem leader who is reported to have had tremendous influence over the natives of Kambia, thousands of whom he converted to Mohamedanism, organized an anti-imperialist movement against the British government. After arming his followers Hydare raised the standard of revolt by calling upon the peasants to refuse to pay their hut taxes and to drive the British officials away from the province. Hydare also demanded that all crown land in the protectorate of Sierra Leone be confiscated and divided up among the landless peasants in order that they might be able to grow food to feed themselves in view of the fact that the palm kernels industry which is their chief source of income, has completely collapsed due to overproduction. In order to avoid starvation the peasants are turning their attention to the cultivation of food crops, such as rice, but the government officials, are opposed to this and are demanding the immediate payment of taxes. Hydare's agitation had tremendous influence throughout the Kambia province. The British Government attempted to arrest him, but the natives threatened death to all Europeans who entered their territory. The situation became so alarming that the Central Government in Free-Town ordered a detachment of the Royal West African Frontier Force to the scene of the rebellion. The soldiers, mostly natives drawn from the other sections of Sierra Leone, commanded by British officers, while attempting to embark in Kambia were fired upon by the insurgents. Skirmishes followed during the course of which several natives and soldiers were killed including Hydare and Captain H. J. Holmes, the English officer in command of the troops. After several days of



fighting the soldiers thanks to their overwhelming numbers and superior arms were able to put down the revolt. After this the most repressive campaign was launched. Hundreds of huts of natives who took parts in the uprising were burnt to the ground, and men and women arrested and thrown into jail or deported from the territory.

### Task of International Revolutionary Labour Movement.

The international revolutionary movement, especially the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Britain Section of the League Against Imperialism must render every possible assistance to this growing revolutionary movement in Africa.

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## May 1-st Struggles in South Africa

By J. P. S e p e n g (Johannesburg).

The First of May 1931 has shown a historical point in Johannesburg unknown before in the history of South Africa. In January of this year the United May Day Committee sent an invitation to the Communist Party and Native trade Unions asking delegates to attend their Committee. Four delegates were sent from various Unions, two being Europeans and two being natives. As soon as the members of the United May Day Committee saw the two native delegates, they became indifferent, and thereupon passed a resolution saying that no natives should be included in their Committee. As these native delegates left the meeting, some of the Europeans left with them in protest. A Conference was convened by the Communist Party, and African Federation of Trade Unions, and set up an all in all Committee called the **African May Day Committee**.

On Friday, May 1st, three meetings were held, at Newtown Square another at the Trades Hall, and the third at the City Hall. At about 11 a. m. the procession marched from the City Hall to the Trade Hall, and thence to the Newtown Square where the contingents met. The attendance was by that time about 6,000, white and black. Two platforms were set up and both black and white speakers addressed the huge gathering.

At 11.45 a. m. the meeting decided to march to the City Hall and sweep away the meeting of the reactionary United May Day Committee. The workers assembled under their respective banners such as the Communist Party, S. A. Unemployed Workers Union, Garment Workers Union, Furniture and Mattress Workers Union, Clothing Workers Union, Laundry Workers Union, Bakery Workers Union (Ikaka La Basebenzi), (Labour Defence) and such banners bearing the inscription: **Down with starvation of the Government! Chisani Amapasi!** — **Burn the passes.** **Down with Pirow's Slave Laws!** — **No Wage Cuts!** — (Weg met werkeloosheid). — **Down with Unemployment! and Defend the Soviet Union!**

The demonstration organized by the African May Day Committee marched along to the Pass Office and hostile shouts and boos were made to the officials, accompanied by cries of "We Want Bread" — "We Want Work". Thence to Marshall Square (Police Barracks) with the same hisses and cries. At the City Hall the meeting of the United May Day Committee was in progress, about 200 strong. The demonstrators crowded to suffocation round the platforms and were



again addressed by black and white speakers, attacking and denouncing the Social Fascists meeting. After 10 minutes the reactionaries found it impossible for them to address their meeting, and finally they left, and the whole crowd came to the African May Day Committee. After 1 p. m. the demonstrators again formed themselves under their respective banners and marched along to the Carlton Hotel, rushed the doors, trying to gain admission, crying "We Want Food", but the Police had already guarded the place. The demonstrators marched to the rich Rand Club with the same object. Here a collision took place between the demonstrators and the police resulting in 8 arrests, 6 being Europeans and 2 being natives. The Demonstrators went to Marshall Square and demanded the release of their Comrades. The police victims appeared before the Magistrate, charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act, one of Pirow's slave driving laws.

**May Day 1931 in Johannesburg was one of the largest demonstrations ever witnessed in South Africa.** Workers of all colours, Europeans Natives, Coloureds and Asiatics demonstrated their solidarity against all forms of oppressive and repressive legislation.

The workers of South Africa are beginning to realize that for years they have been deceived by the rulers and that every one of these rulers who wants to satisfy his political ambition does so on the backs of the workers. But the revolutionary leaders are exposing these treacherous Social Fascists. **The African workers are rising from their long sleep and will fight their enemies.** Long live International solidarity of the Workers of the world. Defend the Soviet Union the First Workers State. Down with British Imperialism.



INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY — On May 1st at Hamburg, Germany, 100,000 revolutionary workers carried the above banner in their demonstration



## Negro Revolutionary Martyrs

J. W. NKOSI — African Revolutionary Martyr

Comrade NKOSI joined the Communist Party of South Africa as a kitchen 'boy' in Johannesburg. His political career, however, began earlier than that. As early as 1919 he was already engaged in the struggle being one of those who took part in the strike against the pass laws in that year. He also took part in the strikes led by the Red Trade Unions in Johannesburg

At the beginning of 1929 he was appointed C. P. Organizer for Durban where he has since worked hard in pushing forward the cause of the African workers until he met his death at the hands of the brutal police thugs of Pirow and Hertzog on Dingaan's Day, 16th December 1930.

An uncompromising fighter, he died as he lived, fearless and conscious of the great fight in which he was engaged, as his final message, short but characteristic shows. The message addressed, in Zulu: "To the Workers of South Africa: Never, under the sun has a nation been so shackled with the chains of slavery. We are not even allowed to voice our opinion on the state of affairs in our Motherland. Why not awake and stand on our feet? Men, women and young-women, we must support organizations that fight for our freedom."

A thousand Africans must take the place of Nkosi. Let his cowardly murderers know that the African Giant is awakening and nothing will stop his progress.

**Long live the name of Nkosi! Long live a Free Africa!**



J. W. NKOSI

## Death of Gilbert Lewis

A REVOLUTIONARY NEGRO WORKER.

The working class has suffered a great loss in the death at Yalta in the Soviet Union on June 1st 1931 of the young Negro comrade, Gilbert Lewis, an active member of the Communist Party. It can be said that comrade Lewis died as a Martyr directly as a result of his treatment by the capitalist bosses in the south of the U. S. A.

Born of working-class parents in New Orleans, La, in 1904, Comrade Lewis from an early age felt the pangs of capitalist exploitation and national oppression. Forced to leave school when still a boy in order to make a livelihood, Lewis



drifted from state to state, doing whatever work he could lay his hands upon. As a migratory worker he reached New York in 1928 where he obtained employment as a window cleaner. Comrade Lewis was an active member of the window cleaner's union, here he helped to organize the opposition, led the struggle against the trade-union reformists, and won the union over to the red trade-union movement. He also took an active part in the New York subway strike. These activities

led him into the ranks of the Communist party in 1929, from which time he became an active party functionary.

Early in 1931, when the party and the revolutionary trade-union organizations undertook organizational work in the south, Comrade Lewis was sent to the state of Tennessee as an organizer of the revolutionary trade-union work. During his stay in the south he did much to draw the Negro industrial and agricultural workers into the revolutionary movement.

Despite the terroristic conditions under which his work had to be conducted, under the constant threat of the Klu Klux Klan against his life, Comrade Lewis unflinchingly carried out the tasks of the party. He was frequently arrested and at one time sentenced with a chain gang. These semi-legal persecutions had a deleterious effect upon his health and it was at this time that he contracted tuberculosis.



GILBERT LEWIS  
on chaingang, in Tennessee

After a temporary recovery, Comrade Lewis was sent to the Soviet Union for rest and medical treatment. But shortly after his arrival in Moscow he suffered a relapse to which he finally succumbed.

Besides being an active organizer, Comrade Lewis was a regular contributor to the Daily Worker, the central organ of the American Party, and to the columns of other revolutionary journals.

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## Smash Lynching 8 young Negroes

8 Negro boys framed-up on the charge of two notorious white prostitutes and sentenced to die by electricution on July 10 by a farcial speedy trial of capitalist "justice" in the State of Alabama, U. S. A.

The "trial" was conducted in the midst of surroundings (a special carnival drawing hundreds of poor white farmers, thugs, police and other agents of the ruling class to the city) at which the Ku Klux Klan and other fascist agents of the ruling class made speeches, demonstrations, intimidations, letting loose the most vicious lynch law and mob violence spirit, with the object to make certain that



lynch law would have its way and that the Negro workers would once again have an object lesson if they dare to rise against their oppression.

The Negro masses however are awakening and beginning to follow the Communist Party and the Red Trade Unions. This and the fact that both the Negro and workers in the South, in the midst of the greatest misery experienced by the working class of America caused by the crisis of capitalism, are beginning to realize that their misery suffering, exploitation and oppression do not flow from differences in race but from the rottenness of the capitalist system. This is resulting in growing unity between white and black workers for combined struggle against American capitalism and is throwing the ruling class and especially the landlords and mill barons of the South into a rage of white terror directed against the whole working class and especially the Negro toilers.

Despite the stirring up of racial prejudices by the ruling class, confusing the minds of poor white farmers and workers and thus misdirecting their fight against unemployment and starvation from them (the ruling class) into lynching bees



THE 9 NEGRO BOYS, ranging in age from 14 to 19 years, in the hands of the State soldiers

against the Negroes, interracial workers' solidarity is beginning to show itself by joint strikes against wage cuts and lengthening of hours of work, by joint mass demonstrations against unemployment and starvation and vicious jim-crow practices — against the whole capitalist system.

This is what is frightening the capitalist bosses not only in the United States but all the imperialist powers that are subsisting on sucking the life blood out of the Negro toilers. That is why the capitalist bosses, frightened at the growing



class consciousness of the Negro masses are intensifying white terror, lynch law, mob violence, police and soldiers massacre everywhere against the Negroes, trying to stop their rising revolts against oppression.

That is why the present wave of lynchings rage in the U. S. A. That is why over 40 Negro workers were lynched last year in the U. S. A. and over 15 already this Year. That is why only a few weeks ago in the State of Texas two white organizers of the Red Trade Unions, for organizing black and white workers, were kidnapped, beaten, thrown into a river and left to die by the fascist Ku Klux Klan of the ruling class.



A Negro worker lynched in Florida, U. S. A.

### Terror in Africa.

Not only in the United States is the resistance of the Negro toilers against capitalist-imperialist oppression and exploitation being met with fascist white terror, in South Africa native workers are being murdered by the bourgeois, state policy for mass protest against taxation, pass laws and oppression. In Nigeria of West Africa native women and men are shot down by imperialist troops of the McDonald "Labour" Government for protesting against taxation. In Sierra Leone imperialist troops are suppressing the resistance of the natives by shooting down the population. In East Africa and the West Indies the imperialists are drowning the movements of the workers in blood.

The frame-up to burn these 8 young Negro workers in Alabama is but a link in the chain of imperialist terror against the Negro workers in order to try to stop their growing militancy. The frame-up to "legally" lynch these boys by the steel barons and landlords of Alabama is an attempt to destroy and outlaw the Communist party and the revolutionary Trade Union and their growing influence among the Negro workers. This is a crime against the working class.

These 8 workers are sentenced to die on July 10th. **The International Trade Unions Committee of Negro Workers calls upon the International working**



**class to rally to the support of our class brothers.** Only the firm hand of the International working class can stop this execution. Only mass protest and action of the international working class can stop the bloody fascist hands of the capitalist bosses of the state of Alabama.

The Negro masses in turning to the Communist Party and the Red Trade Unions in the U. S. A. are turning from the hired and paid petty bourgeois reformist Negro lackies who betray them into the hand of the capitalists bosses. The Negro workers in the U. S. A. are turning more and more to the International revolutionary movement in unity with their oppressed and exploited brothers in Africa, with their brothers in China and India and the other colonies, and with the revolutionary workers in the capitalist countries; and what is more the Negro workers are understanding more and more that the success of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union is the cause of the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world.

**We demand the release of these young workers!**

**We demand the release of our class brothers in South Africa and all class war prisoners!**

**We demand for the Negro Workers the right of revolutionary trade union organization!**

**We demand the right of Negro and white workers to fight jointly against unemployment, starvation and low wages!**

**Death to lynchers and imperialist slaughterers of Negro toilers!**

**Against forced labour, slavery, taxation and pass laws!**

**For full equality for Negroes! For the right of the Negro masses in the black belt of the south to self-determination!**

**For the complete independence and self-determination of the Negro-colonies!**

**For a native republic in South Africa!**

**For the defense of the Soviet Union!**

**For international solidarity!**

**International Trade Unions Committee of Negro Workers.**

\* \* \*

The following protest has been sent by Negro and white workers at Hamburg to the Governor of Alabama:

Hamburg, April 25th 1931.

"B. M. Miller — State Capitol — Montgomery Alabama.

Negro and white seamen and workers gathered at a mass meeting at Hamburg, Germany, protest against the frame-up and plan to lynch by burning 8 Negro workers. We further voicing the protest and indignation of the toilers of Africa and the West Indies hold the officials and the state of Alabama responsible and denounce this continuous white terror and massacre against Negro toilers in Africa and the West Indies. Long Live the Internationals Solidarity of the Workers!"

\* \* \*

Mass protest demonstration are being held throughout Europe, protest telegrams are pouring into the Governor of Alabama from workers throughout the world.



# Race prejudice in "Democratic" England

By Margaret Clyde (London).

At this period when mass meetings are being held all over the world, when workers are demonstrating in thousands in the streets of New York, and other American cities, when letters and telegrams are being poured on the Governor of Alabama, protesting against the attempt to legally lynch nine young Negro boys in Scotsboro, Alabama, U. S. A. We must remember that white chauvinism operates, not only in U. S. A. but that in „democratic" England also. Jim Crowism and segregation of the Negroes is used to foster race hatred and antagonism.

We read that on April 16th, in the House of Commons, Ellen Wilkinson M. P. drew the attention of J. R. Clynes, Home Secretary to the refusal of certain English hotels to accept coloured guests, and asked if he would consider it an offence under the Licencing Law for proprietors of licenced hotel premises in Britain to refuse to let rooms to coloured people'. Clynes replied, that he had not the power to issue such an instruction.

"The West African Mail and Trade Gazette" on May 2nd, quotes from "West Africa" an article to the effect that Roland Hayes the famous Negro tenor, has been refused accomodation in leading London hotels, owing to his colour.

The discrimination against the coloured races however does not stop with the refusal to allow the coloured bourgeoisie to enter England's aristocratic hotels. The press campaign conducted against the Negro seamen last year shows more clearly the extent to which the coloured workers are oppressed by caste laws, colour bar, etc. In June, 1930, both the "Manchester Guardian" and the "Daily Herald" official organ of the "Labour" Party, contained a report by the Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste children. Under the chauvinistic heading of "Negro Menace at Ports", the "Daily Herald" prints a vicious article, pointing out how in their own country the Negroes cannot mix with whites, and yet in England they are allowed to form unions with white women. Not contented with this campaign against inter-marriages, the Herald gives publicity to the appeal of the Association to prevent Negro seamen entering the country, by replacing them with white men on all British ships coming into English ports.

The "Manchester Guardian" reports that the economic conditions of the Negro seamen, the fact that his earnings are scarcely sufficient to keep his family above poverty line, are largely responsible for his inferior home conditions, the fact that his wife is often driven to prostitution to keep the home together, while his children, half-castes are depressed, degraded, and unable to obtain employment, the girls forced on to the streets, and the boys into petty vice or mere idleness. The Manchester Guardian, however, also finds the solution to this in the segregation of the Negroes, and the prevention of Anglo-Negroid marriages, and suggests that coloured Seamen should be forced to sign on in Africa, in which case it would never happen that they would land in England with money in their pockets.

Ellen Wilkinson adopts the role of "emancipator" of the colonial oppressed by championing the cause of a handful of the coloured burgeoisie, but never raises her voice against the racial prejudice and bitter hardship imposed upon the Negro workers and seamen in England. She does not protest against the "Daily Herald" article, nor the threat of G. R. Clyne to arrest the delegates to the International Conference of revolutionary Negro workers in London in June 1930, thus forcing them to go to Hamburg. Ellen Wilkinson does not link hands with



Negroes of South Africa, for example, where the British Imperialists and the white South African bourgeois rulers control the principle industries, mining, manufacturing railroad enterprises, agricultural production and export trade, and squeeze millions of pounds yearly out of toil and agony of the Negro workers. Neither does she assist in the building of the Dockers, Transport and Railwaymen's Union, the present centre of revolutionary activity, which has been formed in Durban, arising out the Dingaan Day struggles, under the leadership of the militant South African Federation of Trade Unions; or join in the protest against the bloody oppression measures which have been adopted against the rising Negro toilers. Instead Ellen Wilkinson makes her plea on behalf of the Negro bourgeoisie in a cleverly worded sentence — "Since this (the refusal of the hotels to accept Negro guests) was causing indignation among the coloured peoples in the Empire", or in other words, "Since this causes indignation among the coloured bourgeoisie and hinders the progress of British imperialism", Ellen Wilkinson is a member and supporter of the notorious British Labour government, of exploitation, oppression and terror, therefore the Negro workers will not be deceived by this gesture of this so-called "left" ally of British Imperialism.

In contrast with this evidence of race hatred and segregation, we turn our eyes to Soviet Russia, and to the Statement of the **Negro Delegation to the Fifth Congress of the Red International of Labour Union in Moscow**, in connection with the case of the two white American workmen who became infuriated because a Negro workman, employed as they were at the Stalingrad tractor factory, was eating with them on a basis of full equality, in the dining room provided for American workmen, and for which, after workers in the factories and mills in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities had organized meetings of protest, they were deported from the U. S. S. R. It says — "In all parts of the world Negroes are browbeaten and Jim Crowed by caste laws, colour bars and legislative measures. In no part of the world where there are Negro toilers are they free from the vicious venom of race hatred, prescribed by the ruling class as a means of the most brutal suppression and exploitation ... But opposed to race hatred and racial oppression in the Soviet Union where class conscious workers and peasants rule, is the basic principle in actual practice of equality of all races and nationalities. Therefore, in the Soviet Union where the class consciousness of the proletariat has reached such a high level, the assault on a member of an oppressed race is regarded as an attack of agents of the bourgeoisie upon the highest principles of the Soviet system ... The manner in which the Russian workers have handled this case is a great lesson to the Negro workers as well as the white workers not only as a lesson of protest, but a lesson as how to mobilize mass action against capitalist abuses and capitalist traditions ... We declare the Soviet Union to be our fatherland. We have seen that the Soviet Union is the only country in the world that has solved racial and national problems. We see here the living example of the right to self-determination in practice. We see the Communists and especially the Communist Party of the U. S. S. R., as the only Party that has set itself the task of overthrowing imperialism and emancipating oppressed peoples from the clutches of imperialism and building a new society of free and equal people."

All Negro workers must understand that racial question can only be settled with its solving of the social question. Only through the overthrow of the capitalist system will the exploited masses of all races and nationalities be freed. Together, on the basis of real equality and fraternity of workers of all colours can we go forward to emancipation from the capitalist yoke. The Negro workers must be



organized, must be drawn into the revolutionary Trade Union Movement. The International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers must be built up, strengthened and become the powerful, revolutionary mass instrument of the Negro workers» struggles. Support the revolutionary Trade unions, the Minority Movement in England, the Trade Union League in American. Help the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers. Send in your name and address to 8, Rothesoodstrasse, Hamburg, Germany. Write to the "Negro Worker". Send articles, letters, and pictures about your day-to-day struggles and problems. Co-operate in building "The Negro Worker", not only into a popular journal of the Negro masses but also as an effective weapon for their liberation.

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## To the South African Federation of Trade Unions

(Editors note: The following open letter of guidance to the revolutionary workers of South Africa is issued by the Executive Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions.)

Dear Comrades,

The profound and ever-growing economic crisis in South Africa, which leads to the intensification of the capitalist offensive against the working masses reduced wages for railwaymen, miners, etc.; introduction of part time work; increased unemployment, etc.), gives rise to growing dissatisfaction in the whole of the working class, and particularly to a great radicalisation of the native workers (the East London strike, the anti-pass demonstrations, growing membership of the Communist Party). However, despite the fact that the objective conditions favour the development of the revolutionary trade union movement, TU activities are still the weakest spot in the growing revolutionary movement of the country. The Trade Union Federation still continues to lag behind the developing struggles of the masses; the revolutionary trade unions embrace but insignificant groups of workers in the secondary industries, whilst the basic cadres of the working class, employed in the mining industry, in transport and agriculture, have not yet been approached by the Federation.

We are able to note with satisfaction that the Federation is taking steps to remedy the existing unsatisfactory state of affairs (steps taken to organize transport union in Durban; organization of groups in several mines; commencement of activities among agricultural workers), as is to be seen from Comrade Nzula's letter. Nevertheless we must emphasize that this is only the beginning of the turn, and that in order to achieve a determined improvement in all the activities of the Federation, in the leadership of the working class struggle, it is necessary undeviatingly to carry out the decisions of the Fifth R. I. L. U. Congress. In order to realize this speedily the Federation must follow the line of developing the economic struggle, and simultaneously should intensify its organizational activities. The Federation must direct all its efforts to organize new unions, strengthen the existing revolutionary unions, and form revolutionary groups inside the reformist and reactionary unions, whether of European or non-European workers.

The organizational campaign should be carried out on the basis of definite demands of the workers of each given mine, farm, railway shop. The Federation



must seriously confront itself with the question of preparations for the economic struggle. The demands presented by the workers during strikes should include all the requirements of each individual group, and the workers themselves must be got to participate in drawing up these demands, by organizing special meetings, and where for legal reasons this is impossible, by organizing small meetings of groups.

The preparations for and development of the economic struggle should be linked up with the general organizational activities of the Federation for the formation of new unions and strengthening of the existing unions. Only by adopting the line of determined struggle against the exploiting elements, thoroughly preparing the workers for the economic struggle, and independently leading this struggle, not permitting the reformist leaders to betray the workers' interests, will the Federation succeed in extending and strengthening its ranks and building up powerful mass trade unions.

### Organizational Tasks.

**1. Mining industry** legal and illegal methods will have to be combined in organizing the miners, taking into consideration the peculiar conditions in which the miners have to work. viz., the compound system, pass system, the Master and Servants Act, etc. Therefore the Federation should publish leaflets for the miners in its name and organized near the compounds open air meetings to popularise the slogans and demands drawn up by the Federation for the miners. These should not be loud-sounding phrases, incomprehensible for the workers — the slogans and demands should be based on the everyday needs of the miners, for instance: 1) improved food; 2) wage increases; 3) equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race, sex, and nationality; 4) abolition of the "colour bar"; 5) complete abolition of corporal punishment; 6) abolition of the pass system and special guards in the compounds; 7) repeal of the laws for special city districts for the natives and the right of the native workers to live in any city district; 8) repeal of the Master and Servant Acts and the abolition of the contract system; 9) annulment of special taxes for natives and all anti-native laws; 10) free education for native children and free courses for adult workers; 11) freedom of organization and meeting.

The compound meetings must be linked up with practical organizational measures, such as the formation of initiative groups inside the compounds on the basis of which trade union organizations should be formed. In recruiting members to the initiative groups special attention should be paid to drawing in the miners who are members of the **National-Revolutionary Organizations**, such as, for instance, **likhotleng la bafo**. The Initiative Groups must receive definite directives as to the methods of carrying on their agitational work and recruiting new members to the groups.

The Initiative Groups must closely acquaint themselves with the needs of the workers in each individual compound, and on the basis of these needs draw up concrete demands for each pit, mine, etc. These demands in the process of our open agitation and organizational activities must be linked up with the general demands of the working class. The Initiative Groups must conduct thorough preparations for economic struggles, mobilizing the masses around the programme of immediate demands.

**2. Transport.** A no less important task of the Federation is to organize the transport workers. Great possibilities open up before the Federation in this field. The dockers' strike in Durban and the railwaymen's strike in East London in 1930



prove the extremely favourable grounds for revolutionary trade union work. At the present now that the Government has instituted an attack against the railwaymen it is most easy for the Federation to approach not only the native and coloured workers, but also the White workers. This situation should be taken advantage of for the establishment of the united front of all railwaymen, irrespective of race or colour. The organizational campaign in this field to must be carried out on the basis of the concrete everyday demands of the workers in all the transport services.

As the existing railwaymen's and transport workers' unions only embrace the top strata of skilled, chiefly White workers, initiative groups should be organized in individual shops, depots, stations, ports, etc. The tasks of these groups is to prepare the basis for the formation of industrial unions of railwaymen, transport workers, and dockers. The groups and new unions must recruit workers irrespective of their colour or race. The unions and groups must be organized on a strictly industrial basis and should unite all workers whether skilled or unskilled. The Federation, particularly, in its agitational-propaganda activities must explain to the workers the reactionary anti-class character of the "policy of civilized labour". This policy, which was supposed to be adopted in the interests of the white workers, by introducing splits in the ranks of the workers facilitated the capitalist offensive on the workers to worsen their position.

Besides organizing new revolutionary unions groups of the revolutionary opposition movement must be organized inside the existing railwaymen's unions, in order to conduct the struggle against the reactionary trade union bureaucrats to win the working masses, for independent leadership in the struggles of the railwaymen and transport workers.

**3. Agriculture.** Besides the mining and transport workers the agricultural workers likewise form one of the most important sections of the working class in South Africa. Their organization, therefore, is one of the fundamental tasks of the Federation. In carrying out this task the Federation should endeavour to lead the workers to the open struggle on the basis of demands which in **each individual instance should be in conformity with the conditions obtaining in the given locality and the special needs of the given section of the agricultural workers.** The general demands of the agricultural workers should include the following: 1) increased wages; 2) equal pay for equal work; 3) complete abolition of corporal punishment; 4) abolition of all overseers; 5) abolition of passes, taxes, and anti-native laws; 6) freedom of organization and meetings; 7) free education for native children; 8) all crown and municipal lands to be given over to the toiling peasants: confiscation of all big landowning corporation and missionary lands, to be distributed between the toiling masses.

In developing activities among the agricultural workers the Federation must pay great attention to the possibilities of utilizing the workers who go from the villages to the towns and back again.

**4. Unemployed.** Work among the unemployed is beginning to acquire great importance in view of the tremendous increase in unemployment in South Africa. Unless the Federation in the immediate future develops a widespread campaign to draw the unemployed under its banners they will fall under the complete influence of the fascist elements, who already strive to instil white-chauvinist tendencies, and which are very strong among the more backward sections of the white workers. Such slogans as "**drive the natives out of industry and give their place to the White workers**" is one of the greatest dangers threatening the class



interests of the workers, and must be determinedly combatted. In all our campaigns we should point out to the workers the development of the capitalist offensive, the demands for an all-round wage cut and the wage cuts already carried out in many industries. The struggle of the unemployed should be linked up with the struggle of the employed workers, putting forward the following demands: 1) immediate material assistance to the unemployed, irrespective of race or colour, by the government and municipalities; 2) compulsory non-contributory unemployment insurance; 3) the introduction of the eight hour day for adults, 6-hour day for adolescents under 18 years, and 4 hour day for adolescents under 16 years of age; 4) prohibition of employment of children under 14, whether in industry or in agriculture; 5) no dismissals; 6) no wage cuts in any industry whatever.

In order organizationally to reinforce our influence among the unemployed broad Unemployed committees, elected at the general meetings of unemployed workers, should be set up under the leadership of the Federation. These meetings and committees should be organized in the Labour exchanges, locations, or according to the dwelling places of the unemployed, depending upon the conditions in the given locality.

The Federation must expose the reactionary character of Hertzog's "System of subsidies". It must explain to the rank and file white workers that this plan does not solve the problem of unemployment, and that jointly with the native and coloured workers they must fight for the general demands of the unemployed. The propaganda must be conducted in such a manner as to make the workers understand that as long as capitalism exists crises and unemployment are inevitable, and that only in the Soviet Union are there no crises and unemployment, or will there ever be such, as the toilers, having taken power in their hands work not for the capitalists, landlords, imperialists, but for the common welfare. In conducting the campaigns among the unemployed the successes of socialist construction in the Soviet Union must be popularized, so that every worker knows how the Five Year Plan is being carried out and what this plan gives to the working class.

**5. Activities in the reformist unions.** Besides working to organize the unorganized, a struggle should be waged to win the masses of workers organized in the reformist unions. For this purpose groups of the revolutionary opposition movement should be organized in the reformist bodies, whether of European or non-European workers. The oppositions inside the trade unions are to conduct the struggle against the reformist leaders, systematically exposing their betrayal of the working class interests. The opposition inside the white unions must conduct an untiring struggle against white chauvinism and for class unity.

**6. United Front from below.** The Federation must put down as one of its basic tasks that of establishing the united front from below, on the basis of the concrete class demands, of the native, white, coloured and Indian workers. Only by establishing the united front from below is it possible in South Africa to organize a genuinely revolutionary trade union movement. Only by the united front from below is it possible to mobilize the broad working masses for the struggle against exploitation and oppression.

In this connection we are able to note that the Federation acted correctly in giving assistance to the white furniture makers of Johannesburg. This was a genuinely revolutionary reply to the treachery of the reformists, who acted as scabs during the mattress makers strike last year.



## **The Federation: the Revolutionary TU Centre of South Africa.**

The Federation, as the only revolutionary trade union centre of South Africa, should bear in mind that though work among the natives is its central task, as the natives form the predominating majority of the toiling population in the country, nevertheless the Federation is not a race, but a class organization, and therefore, should come before the entire proletariat as the leader of the economic struggles, irrespective of race or colour of the workers who are fighting. This likewise is the best means of combatting the fraudulent "unity" manoeuvres, such as, the formation of the South African Trade Council, the chief object of which is, firstly, to instil among the masses of South African workers desiring unity the illusion that the realization of unity is possible on the basis of the old reformist line under the old leadership; secondly, to seize control of the native unions and thereby ensure the dominating positions for the white labour aristocracy, who fear the growing competition of the native and coloured workers; thirdly, to form an apparatus, which would be capable of stopping, or at least weakening, the development of the revolutionary movement among the workers and preventing the development of the class struggle.

The new leadership of the Federation correctly estimated the manoeuvres of the social-reformist bureaucrats. In the future still more attention must be devoted to expose these manoeuvres, instilling in the minds of the working masses the realization that genuine trade union unity is only possible on the basis of the revolutionary class struggle.

### **Training Native Cadres.**

One of the most urgent problems confronting the Federation is the question of training cadres of native trade union functionaries. Native workers should be promoted to all the responsible positions in the union, unemployed committees, strike committees and other militant organs of the working class. Steps must be taken immediately to organize short-term trade union courses, trade union circles, self-education circles. Trade union courses of an elevated type, and where possible correspondence TU courses, should be organized for the better prepared comrades.

Comrades: the conditions for our activities are more favourable at the present time than ever before in the history of South Africa. You must use all measures to combat the vacillating opportunist elements, who still clutch at the old social-democratic traditions. Only bold revolutionary leadership will succeed in carrying out the decisions of the Fifth R. I. L. U. Congress and creating a powerful revolutionary trade union movement in South Africa.

(Signed) **A. Losovsky**, General Secretary: R. I. L. U.

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# 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 R. I. L. U. make it known to this corner.)

## Rise and History of the Trade Union Movement

(Continued from February issue.)

As during the period of imperialism, the activities of the trade unions during the epoch of industrial capitalism, depend directly on the social and economic conditions of this period and the relations between the exploiting ruling class and the workers.

The period of industrial capitalism, was, in the main, a period of 'free competition' a period of a steady development and expansion of capitalism throughout the whole world when the as yet unoccupied colonies were being divided up and conquered by armed force; a period of continuous growth of the contradictions of capitalism, the burden of which fell mainly upon the plundered, crushed and oppressed colonial countries.

As we pointed out, the main feature of capitalism is that the economic development of the various countries differ. In each country therefore spring up those distinct national features which distinguish its economic and political life from similar development in other parts of the world. It is these developments that determine the different forms of the labour movement in the various countries, during the epoch of industrial capitalism.

### Character of trade union movement during industrial capitalism

The characteristic feature of industrial capitalism is that the means of consumption were produced in the main (textiles being the chief branch of industry). The production of capital goods (machinery, equipment, etc.) was only an auxiliary process to the whole of the production process. The predominance of the means of consumptions meant that far less machinery was used, industry was not as highly concentrated as it is to-day, all these factors giving rise to the differences in the groups of the proletariat engaged in industry. The skilled workers began to play a prominent role in production. This gave rise to craft interests among the workers, and it was these cleavages in the composition in the working class that prevented the amalgamation of all the various groups of workers into one organic whole.

The Trade Union movement arose in all the industrialised countries with industrial capitalism. Hence the development of the trade union movement con-



tinued side by side with the differentiation of the whole labor movement. This differentiation is to be seen in that the labour movement of one country has completely different aims, its character is different and even its methods of organization differs from similar movements elsewhere. In one country (England, for example) the aim of the movement was to get only a few small improvements in conditions (reforms). There is no mass independent political party of the proletariat to-day in England. In another country (to take Germany) we see the movement developing under the banner of Socialism; a political party of the working class is built up, the unions being organized in the various industries, etc. Similarly, the movement being developed in France differs from the movements in the other countries.

Capitalism creates various conditions not only for the workers in the different countries, but for the various groups of workers inside one and the same country. This depends on the significance of the given group for the production process and on how quickly the members of these groups can be replaced from the reserve army of labour — the unemployed. This gives rise to a division in the working class between the better paid and the less paid workers. The better paid groups are better organized, and thus we see the unions catering mainly for their interests, since their membership is made up mainly of these categories of skilled workers.

What is the trade union movement that sprang up in the various countries during the epoch of industrial capitalism? First of all, we observe that its forms of organization vary greatly. There are three basic forms — British Trade Unionism, the German-Social-Democratic unions (Gewerkschaft) und the French Syndicalist organizations. Each of these three forms reflect the degree of industrial organization of the particular country, as well as the pace of industrial development, the character and composition of the working class, the conditions of the class struggle and the level of class consciousness of the workers, i. e. their attitude to the political struggle.

**Trade Unionism** is an ideological-political type of trade union organization based on a craft outlook. These unions have very narrow aims as regard improving working conditions, the rates of pay and the general economics position of the working class. If they do resort to political action it is only to protest the right of the unions to struggle within the framework of capitalism not going outside it. Trade Unionism, which raised no independent political tasks for the proletariat, represents in reality the "Bourgeois policy of the working class", for under trade unionism, the working class and its unions completely support the bourgeoisie.

Trade Unionism arose as a specific type on the world labor movement, thanks to the monopolistic position held by British capitalism on the world markets throughout the Nineteenth Century and the influence the bourgeoisie were able to bring to bear on the workers. In every part of the world the workers in capitalist society connected in a thousand and one ways with the petty-bourgeoisie, were subjected to the ideological and political influence of the bourgeoisie during the period when the workers parties were being formed. This phenomenon, observed in all the capitalist countries, took on different forms in the various countries thanks to the historical and economic conditions. With complete political freedom and the monopolistic position that England enjoyed for long past, the liberal bourgeoisie in England managed in a few decades to corrupt and influence the bulk of the class-conscious workers (Lenin). This corruption and enslavement of the British workers was achieved by means of concessions that the British Bourgeoisie were able to grant to the Workers who put forward different economic demands. British capital was able to make certain concessions



to its workers at home at the expense of its monopolistic position and the super-profits it was squeezing out of the colonies. England was the "work shop of the world" so long as capitalism did not reach a high stage of development in the other countries. Further, Great Britain owned many colonies. These conditions enabled this country to turn over an insignificant part of its super profits to the workers when the latter put forward their demands. This in England, to use Engels' words — 'a bourgeois proletariat' sprang up, convincing that it would improve its position within the framework of capitalism. —

(To be continued.)

## "Race Hatred on trial"

A Book Review.

Price 10 cents, Workers' Library, P. O., 148 Sta. D. New York

The public trial of Comrade Yokinen, a member of the Finnish Workers' Club of New York City and also of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. has established a precedent. Comrade Yokinen was charged with entertaining views "contrary to the program of the Communist Party and detrimental to the interests of the working class". He was charged with "giving expression to the white superiority lies that have been developed consciously by the capitalists and the southern slave owners".

In the pamphlet "Race Hatred on Trial", we find a detailed account of the facts which led up to the trial of Comrade Yokinen and to his expulsion from the American Communist Party. Comrade Yokinen acted under the influence of the capitalist ideology of "white superiority".

The trial itself was a ruthless analysis of the social phenomenon termed "race hatred", "race prejudice", "white chauvinism", and on occasions, "national chauvinism". The pamphlet will bring home to the millions of workers of America, black and white, who have heard of the trial only by name, or upon whom the tremendous class significance of the trial has been lost a comprehensive picture of the source and nature of "race hatred". It shows the progressive nature of this malignant social cancer which gnaws upon the very vitals of the working class.

What are the basic principles of Communism which have a direct bearing upon these questions of "racial prejudice", "national chauvinism", "white chauvinism"? What interests has the working class which are common to black and white workers alike, which are common to the exploited and oppressed masses of every nation? "Race Hatred on Trial" answers these questions clearly, forcefully, and irrefutably.

It directs the capitalist society in which we live, it discloses its class nature, it exposes the inherent antagonism of these classes, and the ceaseless struggle of the working class to escape from the maw of capitalism which through unemployment, wage cuts, and the lengthening of the working day, imperialist wars, which takes their toll of lives of working class men, women, and children.

The pamphlet unfolds the manner in which this small ruling class in capitalist society maintains its position of power, of life and death over the untold millions of toilers. It shows how the control by this ruling class, of propaganda — the press, schools, theatres, churches, and so forth, enables them to spread among the working class the unscientific, pernicious doctrine of "white superiority".

It shows how subtly this is carried on in America, splitting the ranks of the working class, pitting white against Negro. Negro against foreign born, and thus the better to exploit the working as a whole.



The pamphlet brings to the forefront the program of the Communist Party for the united front of the workers of all nations against the united front of the exploiters of all nations.

The program of the Communist Party conclusively shows why the white workers must help this fight. The pamphlet proves this to be the very acid test of "real international solidarity of the American white workers". This little pamphlet shows how the campaign to secure full and complete social, political, and economic equality for the Negro masses must be carried into action. It discloses how the struggle for the right of self-determination for the Negro masses in the Black Belt of the southern states which constitute an oppressed national majority, is the very pivot of the whole struggle for the unity of white and black workers in America.

This pamphlet "Race Hatred on Trial" must find its way into the hands of millions of workers of every nation and color. No American worker, be he active revolutionary or not, can afford to miss this exposure of the struggle of international capitalism against the internationalization of labor.

William Patterson.

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## WORKERS CORRESPONDENCE

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"Negro Worker" Hamburg, Germany

Dear Comrades

South Africa, as an Industrial and Agricultural Country, has and is suffering from a severe economic crisis. The depression is most acute in the rural areas.

I may first of all point out that native farmers through poverty are unable to acquire suitable ground for ploughing, and in addition they have not got the means of plowing, therefore some of them had to leave the "Reserves", and become squatters of rich white farmers, where they labour with their wives and children for mere pottage.

This depression has also affected the petty bourgeois Negro elements, who have lost 75 per cent of their livestock through drought, and were compelled to migrate together with the poor peasants into the Urban Areas, to swell the ranks of the unemployed which has and is increasing considerably.

The native influx from rural areas into Industrial Centres is very high. Natives are daily leaving their poverty stricken homes to seek employment in the towns, where they stroll through the streets from one part to the other, but in vain. The depression has threatened the existence of the workers to such an extent that no worker feels his or her job guaranteed. The crisis has and is sinking to the root of Capitalism, as revealed in the wholesale wage cuts and mass unemployment in the Government jobs such as, Railways, Post and (so-called) Civil Service. And is also reflected in the Native Recruiting Companies, which are to-day stagnate except in the case of juveniles at the rate of 15/- per month.

But in spite of these deplorable happenings, the revolutionary forces are daily accumulating. Hertzog's £ 5,000,000 loan to the rich farmers being but a fiasco in the proper sense of the word, while the whole population is left to starve and perish in the rural areas and the proletariat in the towns, irrespective of colour or race.

Yours fraternally,

Kotane, Johannesburg, May 12th., 1931.



Editor "Negro Worker"

The object of this letter is to furnish and acquaint you with conditions of Negroes in the rural areas of South Africa. The life of the Africans in the country side is despicable and intolerable in every respect. Parents, through both poverty and lack of knowledge, are forced to allow their children to grow up as herdboys, nurses for European children, and year boys for rich white farmers, where they work for a heifer or £1,10 each, or sometimes, if fortunate, £2, for a period of twelve months; which means in actual wages 2/6 per month.

It may well be said that, "but parents consented to that". I may be able to clarify this idea and myth. It came in this way: in the time of Paul Kruger, heifers were then very dear, sold at about £7 to £8 per head, and contracts were then framed for "Kaffir piccaninies" to serve a year for one. And Negroes being so afraid for these whites, and partly being forced to, they simply agreed. To-day it has become a tradition, and every Negro is proud of his or her son serving a year or two for heifers. I myself actually served two years for same at the age of thirteen, very rough work for my age.

Negro women work for ten shillings per month as Ayahs, from four o'clock in the morning till nine at night, with hardly any interval for food; as you know how cruel and callous these oppressors are, "Kaffir women must be forced to chop or hew huge blocks of wood, and to do any unnecessary and tough work unfit for any woman to discharge".

In the case of squatters, the whole family have to work for nothing but two acres a year at harvest. No schools are provided for squatters' children — not even religious schools children grow up as wild beasts unreared, with rotten and scanty food rarely any meat, sometimes once a month or none at all. Going about very ragged, barefooted and dirty, sleeping in hovels with no doors or windows, ill health and no medical aid; thrashed brutally to death for petty offences such as spilling a pail of milk, and escaping from farms because of the foul treatment.

In Native villages life is obnoxious and base, because of the fact that, the country is ruled by people who have no interests in Negro progress; people who are there to achieve their aim and object, that is, retrogression and subjugation. Illiteracy is rife, especially in the Transvaal where all educational institutions are controlled by Missionary Societies. All children are taught the bible, catechism line upon line; starting school at the age of thirteen up to sixteen and then, chosen for Confirmation after passing Sub B, sometimes Standard I. They are then forced to help their parent's Church taxes, predominantly high and unbearable.

Through poverty Negro fathers are unable to send their children to the high schools. All Headman or Chiefs who act as Magistrates are illiterate, unable even to sign their own names. Until recently, the Lutheran Church Ministers were prohibiting English being taught in native schools; but in this case Negroes stood firm till they got the rotten one they have to-day.

The natives ruling themselves does not exist in Africa; only the repressiveness and rapacity of imperialism rules supreme. Land is continually being taken away from poor Africans by Missionary Societies and Capitalist Government. What we do see is more slavery, more repression, more killings and more robbery, heavy taxation on poverty stricken African peasants.

All organizations have failed to fulfil their duties in this case; but through the lead and by the leadership of the Communist Party and the International Solidarity of Negro workers, we hope to attain our emancipation.

Yours fraternally,

M. (A Native Worker) South Africa.



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