## The Position of the Native, and Coloured Workers.

Some Reflections.

The "International" has tackled this problem fearlessly from time to time during the two years of its existence and its readers have become familiar with the position of the International Socialist League. That the ideals underlying its attitude have attracted general attention was apparent during the Provincial Council Elections, particularly in Benoni. It largely supplanted the war as a burning question, and hundreds of votes were probably given to the S.A.L.P. man in consequence of a panic started by othe local labour leaders on the familiar anti-vative lines.

It is just as certain that any personor organisation discussing without prejudice the relationship of black and white will be met with the parrot cry Do vou mant vour sister or daughter to marry a nigger?" as that any one discussing the position of affairs in this. war from a detached point of view will he taünted as pro-enemy—in England pro-German, in Germany pro-English.

We have survived the pro-German err and its hellowness is being discovered. We shall have to face the dishonest innuendoes of labour? leaders as well as the honest prejudice of more reputable people.

In order, however, to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings amongst our friends as well as our critics it seems to me necessary to state clearly the general lines on which we seek to guide working class opinion on this question.

Some of our comrades deny that there is a native or coloured problem. "It is purely an economic and working class problem" they contend, and with

a great deal of truth.

There is no doubt that much of the prejudice and hardship to both white and black would disappear if there were no distinction in the economic field. There comes the rub however. The standard of living, degree of education, civil liberty and political power are all factors which influence the economic status of the native and coloured people and have to be taken into account. In any case, whether we consider it reasonable or not, when we touch this problem and attempt to solve it with a formula, our fellow workers want to know what our views are regarding matters that affect their prejudices and passions as well as their pockets. E.g.: -

Do we believe in unrestricted marriage between the white and black?

· Are we prepared to give them the same educational facilities ache rest of the community? etc., etc.

We have got to answer these questions if we are to justify our claim that we are a political body, and not evade them by vague generalities about the Socialist or Co-operative Commonwealth.

For the purpose of discussion, in order to clarify our ideas, the following points are submitted:-- ...

First.—The people under discussion are not to be considered passive creatures waiting for their white brothers to emancipate them. They will have to be very fully consulted in all matters of interest to them. When using the term working class, proletaria, etc., if we would be sincere we must without reservation include this section of the people. To do otherwise cuts away the foundation on which we seek to build the abolition of all class privileges. It follows then that being workers they must fight for the full reward of their labour, and must organise for that purpose industrially. Whether in the white unions in the initial stages or in parallel organisations is a matter of tactics which native and white workers must mutually agree 1110011.

Equal pay for equal work is the first effect of such organisation, and becomes a stepping stone to the larger demand for which the native and coloured workers must fight intelligently in common with other workers.

Civil Equality.—In order that they may organise at all, the removal of special laws and regulations becomes necessry. Possibly, as other workers have done, they will have to begin organising outside the law and having-become articulate, force the repeal of laws barring their fur her progross. It is interesting to notice here that civil equality has to a large extent been accomplished during the war period: but it has been of a levelling down character. The white were or in England, and to a lesser degree here, has now arrived at the degree of ciril liberty enjoyed (?) by indentured Indians. and natives. He has his mass or hadge like a washboy or ricksha puller; he mar not strike nor leave his iob without his employer's sanctions He is registered, rationed and regimented in a wav the Kaffir would not tolerate. Having reached this stage it should not be difficult to convince the white worker that the whole working class must be elevated if he is to regain his lost lib-. erty and increase it.

Political Power.—This need not be worried about. The capitalists will give large masses of their native and coloured workers votes long before they are class-conscious and class-organised sufficiently to be a danger. At the present stage of native education such as do exercise the vote are largely found supporting reactionary institutions and organisations.

Intermarriage.—This is entirely an individual matter and does not in the least depend on civil or political equality. Quite the contrary. It is notorious that slavery, where absolutely no civil liberty exists, produces half-breeds. In a lesser degree servile and low naid lahour results in cohabitation of considerable numbers of the poorest of both races. This would not necessarily increase as the result of a great rise in the standard of living and education of the natives and coloured and consequently of a large number of the poorer whites. Probably the contrary would be the case. We may safely leave to a more enlightened and just ordering of society the decision on this point: it is at present complicated by economic factors which would then be absent.

To sum up this rather rambling statement.

- 1. The native is part of the working class. He must take his full share in his own upliftment and must not be regarded as a subject for experiment independent of his own desires and aspirations.
- 2. Being a worker he must be included in the industrial organisations of the industry in which he is for the time engaged. The method: parallel. or identical unions as may be mutually agreed upon, the ideal being identical unions.
- 3. Civil equality that he may functiono as a wage worker in co-operation with his fellows. All special laws based on race must be abolished. This lies chiefly with him and will follow powerful industrial organisations.

4. Political power. Quite a secondary matter if above methods adopted. The reaction will give it as a barrier against the revolutionary section of the workers.

4. Intermixture of race not likely to be more general when industrial, civil, political and educational equality are attained than at present. Probably less. A community living on a higher social plane than we do can be safely trusted to discountenance any practice contrary to the wellbeing of the Commonwealth.

W. H. A.

What a noor chance stands a politicol party whose entire stock-in-rade consists in a knowledge of the solitary fact that Citizen, So-and-so is not to be trusted

MARX.

"Would you have Jim Sixpence to ten?" But Jim Sixpence will very soon be in a position to stop your tea and your bread and butter. What will you do then? The butcher's hor brings your meat. The kitchen boy makes your dinner. His brother carries the bricks to build your house. Jim Fish makes the bricks. His cousin digs the gold to pay for them. He can do without your tea. Can you do without him?

Since the second reading of that Native Affairs Bill, Jim Sixpence's Military ardour seems to have cooled. The camps are full of white conductors waiting for blacks to conduct.

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