

Race Prejudice.

By J. M. G.

The struggle going on to-day on the Rand between capitalists for, and the white workers against, the introduction of a body of coloured workers with a low standard of living, is very imperfectly understood by the white workers. Their prejudices against colour is warping and distorting their understanding of the question. They fail to grasp the economic basis of the problem. They do not understand the evolutionary forces in society.

This struggle for and against the employment of the coloured worker is very similar to the struggle that took place between the capitalists and workers on the introduction of machinery to take the place of the hand workers. The blind resistance of the workers against machinery was futile. They were beaten in that struggle, and the forces of evolution triumphed.

So to-day the evolutionary forces will win. You cannot keep back the coloured workers. They are here to stay. The capitalist class want cheap labour, and the supply is here ready to meet their demand.

The white workers will have to divest themselves of their race prejudices. They will have to look at the problem from an economic standpoint, and not from the social or sentimental point of view. Their only hope is to organise these coloured workers with themselves in a strong industrial union. By doing so they will be able to control the condition of their labour and raise the standard of living of these coloured workers to their own level, failing this the white workers must inevitably fall to the coloured standard of living.

Labour power is the commodity the workers have to sell for wages. The amount they receive on the average is determined by the cost of production, that is a bare subsistence which keeps them physically fit to continue working and reproducing other workers to take their place when they fall out and are scrapped as useless by the capitalist class.

This bare subsistence wage is subject to the fluctuations of the market, that is supply and demand, which sometimes sends wages slightly above and sometimes below the line of bare subsistence.

The white worker, in offering his labour power in competition against the coloured worker with his low

standard of living is offering a commodity which costs more to reproduce and must therefore go under.

The capitalist system is not run on philanthropic lines. The capitalists are after profits all the time. They tell us, quite truly, "there is no sentiment in business;" they want cheap labour, no matter what colour, and coloured labour with its lower standard of living is going to be introduced by the employing class.

Industrial Unionism is the only solution to the problem, organised on the broad lines of no colour bar. The workers will be able to put up a strong fight against the capitalist class, if united on the principle that the interests of the working class, irrespective of colour, are identical and irreconcilably opposed to the capitalist class. There can be no compromise. Capital is organised to maintain and extend its power to exploit labour. The worker must therefore organise to unite ALL WAGE EARNERS to combat capital.

The white workers must descend from the pedestal of race prejudice, must cease to have an inflated idea of their own value as a superior race. The Bantu races are quite capable of doing all the necessary unskilled and semi-skilled work required by the employing class. They are doing it to a great extent to-day, and will displace the white workers still more in the near future.

This is not a question of loving your Black Brother, nor yet of loving your white brethren, but a simple question of economics. The coloured workers need the help of the white workers, and they in return must unite with the coloured workers to combat the insidious demand of the capitalist class for cheap labour.

The only hope for both races is to be united in an industrial organisation. They may then look at the future with confidence, pressing forward unitedly step by step towards the goal, the emancipation of labour from the thralldom of capital.

To you the worker, no matter what your race or colour, belongs the future. You are the only class to take control on the disruption of society as at present formed. Yours is the historic mission to inaugurate the Co-operative Commonwealth, abolishing all class distinction, all class rule.

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