

Workers
of the
World,
UNITE!

THE SPARK



ORGAN OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Vol. 5 No. 5 (50)

MAY 1939

Price 1d.

THE REFORMISTS IN CONFERENCE

The impending world war throws its dark shadow over all the activities of men. With breathless attention people follow the moves and counter-moves of those who play with the destiny, with the life and death of hundreds of millions in the convulsive struggle for profits and for power to their respective imperialisms. News of the crises is all important to the nervous millions who have no gold to ship to the United States, who have no stocks or shares, who have nothing to gain from the war, but everything to lose. But can anyone, who still retains some human feeling in these times of Fascism and war, blame the ignorant hundreds of millions who take no interest in anything except their daily bread? Can we blame them for not realising that they could put a stop to crises and wars, and that the war today is due to the sum total of their inactivity?

In South Africa there are many organisations supposed to fight against war and Fascism and for the enlightenment of the oppressed people. But one looks in vain to these organisations to improve the lot of the exploited. Not even a trace of change can be detected in their policy: in this twelfth hour they have nothing to say to the people about war, nor what they should do in the event of war. They go on as if nothing were happening. And if war comes they will continue with their old policy, provided they get the opportunity. They do not realise that these are the convulsions of a dying order; for they believe in capitalism and will support it to the last. These ladies and gentlemen will become the most ardent champions in the patriotic crusade for King and Country. The Stalinist People's Front, with their lie of Democracy versus Fascism, opens for them "glorious" possibilities in this field. One of these "champions" has already become what is virtually a recruiting agency for national service in time of war.

During last month many of these organisations held their annual or extra-annual conferences: the Trades and Labour Council, the Cape Federation of Trades, The Trade Unions Unity Committee, the non-Europeans United Front and the African Peoples Organisation. However much the tone, language and subject might differ in these debates and resolutions, they have all the same underlying basis -- Reformism. And what is the essence of reformism? Acceptance of the existing capitalist-imperialist order as the natural order of society, unconditional service to the ruling class, coupled with a pious endeavour to obtain reforms by persuasion and appeals to the rulers.

We intend to deal extensively with these conferences, because all these organisations put together influence a considerable section of the workers in this country and mould their views and ideas, because indirectly they impede the actions of the working class in the coming war, and finally because a fight against reformism is a fight for enlightenment and the success of the Revolution to come.

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The Trade Union conferences took place in Kimberley in a very strained atmosphere and ended in an open breach between the two Trade Union centres, the Trades and Labour Council and the Cape Federation of Trades. It was not at all concerned with the major question of the coming world war and the attitude that the workers must adopt towards it. No. The bureaucrats of the two reformist bodies were in complete accord on this point. It was not even on the question of industrial versus craft Trade Unionism that they divided, or on the pending Industrial Conciliation Act amendments. It was on the question of a delegation to the yearly conference of the arch reformist International Labour Office with the League of Nations at Geneva, an organisation formed and supported by the capitalists. Yet this is beside the point. The complete story lying behind this open rupture is known only to a few of the bureaucrats in the two organisations. But the facts that are revealed throw a sinister light on the whole affair. The Cape Federation was entitled this year to choose the delegate, and the Trades and Labour Council the adviser; the latter elected Mr. A. J. Downes before the Federation announced their elected nominee, Mr. H. Abrahams. Now Mr. Abrahams is a non-European, and the chauvinistic circles of the Trades and Labour Council raised a hue and cry against the "affrontery" to Mr. Downes, the "insult" to European prestige. "...A European will have to serve as an adviser to a non-European!" "...White Trade Unionism would not tolerate such a thing!" We do not know what happened behind the scenes; but the pressure from "various" quarters was sufficient to make the Federation agree to appointing Mr. Downes as delegate and Mr. Abrahams as adviser. The "prestige" of white Trade Unionism was thus saved and peace restored. But not for long. At the time of the conferences in Kimberley the Government announced its decision that only a delegate should go to Geneva. We can imagine how the Federation felt at the exclusion of their nominee; faced with repercussions in their Unions, they demanded an immediate joint protest to the Government. The reluctance and delay on the part of the Trades and Labour Council to accept this demand directly caused the breach between them.

It is possible that the Federation looked for a pretext to break their Unity agreement, which they did not like. We had already predicted this. But even if the Council is correct in accusing the Federation of planning the whole affair, its action from beginning to end deserves the severest condemnation from every class-conscious worker as chauvinistic and harmful to the interests of the working class. We do not know if the conference of the I.L.O. in Geneva will take place; we take no interest in this capitalist institution. And we are sure no benefits whatever will come to the workers by the presence of Mr. Abrahams or Mr. Downes at a bosses' conference. What concerns us is the chauvinist policy of the reformists in the Trade Unions, driving deeper the wedge between white and non-white in the working class; for this delights the ruling classes and leads directly to the victory of Fascism in South Africa.

In his presidential address to the conference, Mr. A. A. Moore, president of the Trades and Labour Council, proudly proclaimed that he is a reformist, and condemned Communism for its advancement of "greater economic and industrial opportunity for the Natives", which is to him often "embarrassing". He admitted that the non-European workers were organised and received attention only when the European workers thought they were threatened by non-European competition; but as the Non-Europeans in industry have come to stay, he advocated parallel or separate trade unions for them, which could be co-ordinated with European trade union through joint consultations. Presumably under the benevolent wing of the Trades and Labour Council. (The Government has decided on a still safer method, namely, to protect the Bantu from subversive influence and from Trade Unions by forming non-statutory organisations under its benevolent trusteeship. It is an idea adopted from former Czarist Russia, where the police department organised Trade Unions.) In the same presidential address Mr. Moore strongly attacked the attempts to split the European trade unions on racial lines and organise the Afrikaans workers in separate Unions. He said:

"I am sure you will all agree that if these separate organisations of Afrikaner workers should ever come about, it will bring consequences so disastrous that it must be tackled in earnest immediately."

quite correct! But this reformist, and with him all the bureaucrats of the white trade unions, cannot see that this statement defeats and condemns their own policy! Separate trade unions for non-European and White is just as disastrous as separate unions for English and Afrikaner. If the "Afrikaner Front" leads to Fascism, so does the "European Front". The reformists have for a long time tolerated and fostered the shameless appeals to colour and racial prejudice in the ranks of the working class, without considering the consequences; but now when Fascism uses the same weapon they squeal about the disastrous consequences to themselves. Yet as reformists they are unable to learn anything; even while they already see the writing on the wall, as in the case of the Mine Workers' Union, they still cling to the old road leading slowly but surely to disaster.

But reformism is not confined only to European organisations. The other non-European conferences this month revealed the same disease in no less degree. There were three of them in Cape Town; first in order of time, the conference of the National Liberation League. As was to be expected, the struggle between the People's Frontists on the one hand and the various other groups within the organisation on the other, resulted in a split. The oldest and most active members of the League left the conference in protest and disgust because the manoeuvres of the People's Frontists, who packed the hall with delegates from "branches" formed on the very eve of the conference, were too much for them. The victory of the People's Frontists leaves them with the shell of the League but without the body, for its main force, the Cape Town branch, is definitely against them. In a statement issued to the Press by the general secretary, Mr. J.A. La Guma, we read that at a meeting of the League held on April 12, it was decided to "repudiate the leadership of the president, Mrs. L. Gool, and those members of the General Council who supported her, Messrs. Kahn, B. la Kay, Watlington and Morley Turner." Although from this statement it may appear that the repudiation of the leadership is only because "the conference that elected the officers of the organisation was improperly constituted in so far that non-members were allowed to participate", it stands to reason that only a wide difference of opinion on questions of policy and the political line of the leadership could have produced such a split.

This split in the National Liberation League produced inevitable repercussions in the so-called non-European United Front conference which came very soon afterwards, and which consisted mainly of the same people, together with "delegates" from various organisations existing mostly on paper. If the first conference that launched the "United National Front" a few months ago was a "success", then the conference of the "Non-European United Front" was an "unqualified success". (Note that the word "national" was silently dropped in the meantime.) For at the former conference the People's Frontists did not have a very easy time, even though attempts at criticism of the reformist programme of action were firmly suppressed by the Chair, with all possible "parliamentary" means. But attempts were made and quite a few of them; this time, however, they had it all their own way; there was no opposition at all and every resolution was adopted unanimously! The trouble was that there was nothing much to adopt; they had already tried out their "programme". They could not very well adopt a Petition day again, or a national day of prayer "when every minister will be asked to deal with segregation in his sermon", or another day of protest. These had not produced appreciable results after the previous conference. All they could do was to reaffirm the need for unity of all and sundry, and lecture again on "Unity is strength", as well as send a few more protest resolutions against brutal treatment by the police.

But those who stand for the People's Front do not feel happy if they have no other reformists or liberals with whom to unite in a "real" or "broader" People's Front. At their previous conference they had courted the Labour Party in the person of the Rev. Mr. Cadman, M.P., but they could not do it now, so soon after the Labour Party's outburst against those "trouble-makers" on the parade, and the demand to speed up the Government's segregation bill. Even the "Guardian" could not swallow it. It wrote:

"Mr. Madeley's speech in the debate on the events on Monday night will lose the Labour Party all support it may have from people who believe in democracy. He has shown that as long as he, and those who think like him, shape the Party's policy, it is a disgrace to the traditions of the Labour movement... The most violent Fascist could not go further than this.... The Labour Party must repudiate Madeley."

But the Labour Party and even the former Socialist Party member, Mr. Burnside, who re-entered the Labour Party, show no inclination to repudiate their leader for carrying out the Party's policy. Thus the Rev. Mr. Cadman could not deliver a speech this time. So now they had to turn from Labour to the African People's Organisation, the only suitable organisation left for a People's Front. With this end in view a strong representative delegation was elected to take part in the A.P.O. annual conference, due to take place a few days later, and propose to them a United Front. However, their overtures have failed. On some technical point their mandates were not accepted and they were turned away. It is a pity, for both together these two bodies could achieve great things! The only consolation left is that at a future conference perhaps the A.P.O. may not be so adamant.

This conference, as is usual for such a respectable organisation, was opened by the Mayor, and as usual it was dominated by the president, Dr. A. Abdurahman, who received plenary powers -- not to be confused with the plenary powers given to the French Premier. The Imperialist Press gave enormous publicity to the proceedings, eulogising the sound advice and wise statesmanship of Dr. Abdurahman. This is all a matter of course and perfectly in order. He has always been an outspoken servant of the ruling class. This policy is the same, segregation or no segregation. After all the Imperialists declared

publicly that he and his like will not be segregated.

The A.P.O. and its president have not changed. He said the same as before, "trust in the rulers and have faith in the Lord".

"I am convinced that the white man can never stand against the black man in South Africa, but the white man will always rule, if he will engage the affections of the non-EuropeanThe man who says that the coloured people must go ahead and demand their full rights is a fool."

We should have felt insulted by the last sentence, but strangely enough we are not. Let those who have believed in a United Front with Dr. Abdurahman feel that.

"I am not prepared to co-operate with the non-European United Front...I am not prepared to sacrifice all the work I have done to co-operate with anyone and every-one. You have some of the finest men and women in the movement, and you have also some of the worst."

The conference ended with the usual resolutions affirming their faith in the Lord, in constitutional methods and moral force.

And what was the answer of the ruling class to these resolutions and prayers? The Municipal congress at Oudtshoorn calmly disregarded the moral force, the prayers and appeals, and adopted the Draft Segregation Ordinance of the Administrator, Mr. Conradie. That means that if the Government does not adopt segregation legislation for the Coloured people, the Provincial council will. But there is no doubt the Government will do as required; it will reject the Nationalist Petition but will adopt and incorporate all the features of the Nationalist proposals in their own bill, with a softer and more hypocritical manner of speaking.

The outlook is very dark. The non-European United Front is as far from being a fact as ever, because every section is at present looking only to itself. The Indians are being kept separate by treacherous promises; the Bantu are still lethargical and dumb after the defeats and betrayals by their leaders. Reformism is still the triumphant master of the situation, and the oppressed will be defeated singly and separately. The question which dominates the pages of the Press with regard to the International situation can also be applied to the oppressed people of South Africa: Whose turn is next? And so long as the workers follow Reformism there will be no brightening of the horizon.

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A P O L O G I E S

WHEREAS Modern Books (Proprietary) Limited have circulated an issue of "The Spark", of March, 1939, containing false and defamatory matter reflecting against the honour and integrity of members of the National Liberation League of South Africa.

And whereas Modern Books (Proprietary) Limited circulates "The Spark" in the ordinary course of its business and is satisfied that there was no foundation for the defamatory statements, it tenders its sincere apologies to the members of the General Council of the National Liberation League and to any other person referred to and very much regrets any pain or annoyance which may have been caused.

Dated at Cape Town this Third day of April, 1939. Modern Books (Proprietary) Limited.
(Sgd.) Paul Koston, Director.

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WHEREAS the Undersigned was responsible for the making and publishing of certain false and defamatory matter in the issue of "The Spark" of March, 1939, reflecting against the honour and integrity of the members of the General Council of the National Liberation League.

And whereas the Undersigned is satisfied that there was and is no foundation for the defamatory statements, which it acknowledges to be untrue, the Undersigned unreservedly withdraws all reflections against, and tenders his sincere apologies to the members of the General Council of the National Liberation League and to any other person referred to, concerning whose character we know nothing detrimental.

We very much regret any pain or annoyance which may have been caused.

Dated at Cape Town this 31st day of March, 1939. For the Workers' Party of South Africa.
(Sgd.) C.R. Goodlatte.

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Ever since
the first of
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THE FIRST OF MAY

Ever since the first congress of the Second International, held in Paris in 1889, the first of May has been recognised through the major portion of the civilised world as Labour Day. The aim of the workers' representatives who instituted Labour Day was that each section of the International should use whatever means were at their disposal to enforce a complete cessation of work on the first day of May in each year. That is, the celebration of May Day was intended from the beginning to be an international act of defiance directed against the capitalist class, a foretaste of the revolution that would ultimately dispossess the capitalists and free the workers forever from their slavery. It was hoped that this act, in which all the workers would participate, might have the effect of increasing international working class solidarity, and thereby prepare the ground for the revolution.

Many factors have contributed to the defeating of this purpose. First of all, even before the Paris congress had met, the Knights of Labour in the U.S.A. had already achieved some success in their agitation to have the first Monday in September recognised as Labour Day, so that from the beginning the international character of the day was marred by the abstention of the American workers. Even today there is in America not one Labour Day, but two, certain states, both in the U.S.A. and in Canada, recognising the first Monday in September, and others the first of May.

However, this factor alone is quite insufficient to account for the failure of May Day to bring any important results. The chief factor is to be found in the corrupt leadership of the working class. In the early years of the Second International some of the European parties did their best to act in the spirit of the Paris resolution, and many sanguinary conflicts with the police resulted. And then the "leaders" decided that a "better" way was to negotiate an agreement with the bourgeoisie, and have the day officially recognised as a labour holiday. Thus an instrument that was intended to serve as a weapon in the hands of the workers was transformed into a "gift" from the bosses. In Britain the policy of class collaboration went so far that May Day is celebrated not on the first of May but on the first Sunday in May, when it is least disturbing to the bourgeoisie. And in Germany the degeneration of the working class has gone so far that the arrangements for the celebration of May Day are entirely in the hands of the bourgeoisie. In Italy the fascists have totally prohibited the celebration of May Day. And in South Africa the working class is so backward that the day is recognised only in a few trades.

It may seem to some of our readers that we are making too much fuss about a mere holiday. What does it matter, they may ask, whether the workers have their holiday on the first of May, the first Sunday in May or the first Monday in September? Our answer is that it is not for any sentimental reasons that we complain of the confusion, but because it is symptomatic of the lack of international working class solidarity, which is a necessary condition for the success of the workers' revolution. Since the founding of the Second International that solidarity has never been so conspicuously absent as it is today, and it has never been so urgently necessary. At a time when the decay of capitalism is about to involve the world in the greatest catastrophe it has ever seen, the only force that is capable of preventing that disaster and starting mankind on a new and better road is disunited, broken into a thousand futile fragments. Only the revolutionary action of the international working class can prevent the threatened war, or stop it after it has begun, but at present we can see no evidence of a mass movement in this direction.

But if the workers of the world are indifferent to the significance of May Day, if they regard it merely as a holiday, a welcome relief from the daily drudgery, the duty is all the more strongly imposed on us to emphasise its meaning. It is our duty to remind the workers of the original meaning of May Day, and to show them that it is not less important but infinitely more important today than it was in 1889. And to do this it will be necessary to examine the present international situation, to explain how the tension arose and what its outcome is likely to be.

The present situation is, quite simply, a pre-war situation. Naturally the bourgeois press is doing its best to conceal this plain fact, and is trying to make the workers believe that war may still be prevented by conferences, diplomatic manoeuvres, anti-aggression pacts, warning statements by Roosevelt, and the like. We are invited to believe that everything depends on the will of a Hitler or a Mussolini, and that if only the dictators can be scared by a show of superior strength the world may still be saved. Behind this again is the carefully fostered belief that Hitler and Mussolini are men who by reason of superior ability, strength, daring or cunning have contrived to subjugate the whole of Germany and Italy and use their countries as a means to their

own personal advancement and glorification. Germans and Italians are pictured as unwilling slaves of their respective tyrants, submitting helplessly and hopelessly to all manner of restrictions and impositions.

If this reading of the situation were correct, then every period of history must have had its dictators, for there have always been men like Hitler and Mussolini, and there would always have been someone to assume undisputed authority over his country. The truth is that no man has ever been strong enough to rule over millions without the consent and co-operation of at least a minority of his fellows, and unless he has ruled in such a way as to satisfy the demands of that minority. History contains not a few examples of tyrants who have sought to override the interests of the ruling class from whom their authority was derived, and have paid the penalty with their lives. Hitler and Mussolini could not keep their positions for a moment if their actions were not strictly determined by the needs of the ruling class, that is, of the bourgeoisie. They are the representatives and servants of capitalism, and must do as their masters order. It follows therefore that the drive towards war comes not from them personally but from the capitalist class.

Are the capitalists then in some mysterious way different from other people that they should desire to make war? No, they are intrinsically no more or less bloodthirsty than the workers. To suppose that their personal characteristics are to blame is to make the same sort of mistake as attributing all the blame to Hitler and Mussolini. It is the capitalist system that is responsible for the catastrophe that is about to overtake the world. And obviously no coalition of "democratic" powers, no "peace Front", no threat of armed resistance from the United States or any other country can stop the drive to war, because all these measures are dictated by the same capitalist system.

Let us try to explain this in very simple language. Capitalism means that the land, the mines, the factories -- all the material resources of the world that are needed for feeding, clothing, housing and amusing the people -- are in the hands of a few people who defend their "possessions" against all the others with the aid of police and soldiers. The capitalists cannot use these possessions solely for their own enjoyment, and if they tried to do so the starving masses would know how to deal with them. Indeed, they would never have become capitalists if they had tried to do so, for another important feature of capitalism is that the things people need can be made much more quickly and cheaply in factories run by steam or electricity than by workers who own their own tools and workshops. Capitalism succeeded and grew because it could supply more and cheaper goods than the people had been able to get under the system that went before it. But in order to do this the capitalists had to hire workers to run their machinery, and they soon found that by paying the workers as little as possible and charging as much for their goods as people were willing to pay they could get much more money than they were able to spend on themselves. It was natural then that they should spend some of this money in building new factories and buying new machinery. In the European countries where capitalism began this process went on until the factories could produce more goods than the people were able or willing to buy, and the capitalists then tried to sell their goods in other countries, and particularly in backward or uncivilised countries. And at the same time they found that they could get some of their raw materials much more cheaply from uncivilised countries than from their own countries. They simply took possession of those countries and turned them into colonies, without regard for the interests of the original inhabitants.

But here the troubles of capitalism began to be very serious. British and French capitalists turned their attention at about the same time to the uncivilised world, and as they could not come to an agreement with each other to share the spoils, they fought each other. British capitalists had the advantage of an earlier start than their French rivals, and the result was that they took possession of India and North America. But this did not settle anything finally, for capitalism went on expanding, and the need for colonial markets and new sources of raw materials grew with it. Presently Germany became a powerful capitalist country, and the competition for colonies became acute. By the end of the 19th Century practically the whole of Africa had been stolen by Britain, France and Germany, with Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Spain claiming smaller portions. At the same time the strong capitalist powers were establishing "spheres of influence" in China, South America and elsewhere, which was practically the same thing as turning these countries into colonies.

But these acts of robbery brought no more than a temporary relief to capitalism. The accumulation of excess profits did not cease merely because there were no new markets to absorb the goods that could be made. There was nothing left for it but to steal the colonies from those who had got in first, and that is precisely what German capitalism tried to do in 1914. The world war that started in that year was nothing more or less

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than a war between Britain and Germany for the right to possess a colonial empire. Capitalism had expanded to such an extent that there was no room in the same world for both British and German imperialism. They simply had to fight. And now that German capitalism has recovered to some extent from the losses it suffered in 1914-1918, it has no alternative but to fight again, for British imperialists will not give up their possessions without a struggle.

Is there then no possibility of the rival imperialists reaching some sort of agreement for a redivision of the colonial world, as the press has been suggesting for many months? The answer is "no". For consider what such an agreement would mean. It would mean that British capitalists would no longer be able to sell their goods at what they consider to be a reasonable profit in any colonial countries that were handed over to Germany, and they would simply stop producing those goods. This in turn would mean that a section of the British working class would be thrown out of employment, and in order to prevent those workers from revolting against the loss of their livelihood the capitalist class would have to provide additional unemployment relief. And as the capitalists always contrive to make the workers pay, this would mean a lowering of the standard of living of all the British workers. The result would be strikes, involving further losses for the capitalists, and perhaps a marked growth of the revolutionary movement. British imperialism will not willingly face these possibilities, especially as it has already suffered heavy losses through the expansion of German trade in South-Eastern Europe, South America and elsewhere. It has, in fact, no alternative but to fight German imperialism.

In short, the coming war will be, like the war of 1914-1918, essentially a conflict between rival imperialist groups for the right to draw profits from the colonial peoples. It is made necessary by the fact that capitalism has expanded to the full limit of its capacity, and no new sources of profit are to be found. All that the opposing groups can do now is to steal from each other.

What then should be the attitude of the workers on this May Day of 1939? In the first place they must realise that the coming war is not their war. The workers on the winning side may be a little better off than those on the losing side when the war is over, but on both sides they will be much worse off than they are now. They will have to submit to drastic wage cuts and all manner of civil and political restrictions, and on top of all that they will be called upon sooner or later to prepare for another and still more terrible war. For war cannot cure the disease of capitalism; it can only transfer the severest symptoms from one capitalist group to another. As for the colonial peoples, they must inevitably be the losers, even if they are not required to take up arms in defence of their present slave drivers. For those who gain control of them will exploit them more ruthlessly than ever in order to recover as far as possible the cost of the war.

But if war cannot cure but can only aggravate the disease of capitalism, and if war is the only means by which capitalism can try to cure itself, it follows at once that the only way to prevent war is to smash capitalism and build up a new society based on some other system. But is that possible? It most certainly is. For it must be remembered that the sole reason why human beings organise themselves into a society is that by doing so they can satisfy their needs. If everyone were to live an isolated existence, if there were no division of labour, humanity would soon be wiped out by the adverse forces of nature. The form that human society takes depends ultimately on the resources that man has at his disposal, on the means by which he can produce the things he needs. And if new modes of production are discovered, making it possible to satisfy more needs, but the existing form of society makes it impossible for those means of production to be utilised to the full, then a new organisation of society must be devised. Thus feudal society, based mainly on agriculture and stock farming, had to disappear when it hindered the growth of capitalist production, which could satisfy needs more easily than the old methods of individual production.

The position today is that the capitalist system has developed enormously powerful instruments for the manufacture of the innumerable things that people want, and can satisfy needs that even half a century ago would have been regarded as evidence of insanity. But although the machinery is there, and the people are ready and willing to consume the goods it can produce, the motive that keeps the wheels turning is not the needs of the people but the possibility of making profits for the capitalists. In other words, the capitalist organisation of society has the effect of preventing the existing instruments of production from being utilised to their full extent for the benefit of humanity. And that is why we are always insisting that capitalism must be smashed. It is not because we dislike individual capitalists, but because capitalism is no longer an advantage to humanity, has, indeed, become a terrible menace.

So the next thought that should occupy the minds of the workers on this May Day is

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that the destruction of capitalist society is an urgent necessity, not only because it will remove the cause of war but also because it will clear the way for the organisation of society for the benefit of all humanity. But there are a certain number of hampering prejudices that prevent the workers from grasping the full significance of this point. Some of them believe, for example, that the wheels of industry cannot be kept turning without the organising ability of the capitalist, and others, still more simple-minded, cannot see how industry can be run unless somebody provides the capital. Dealing with the second point first, it is only necessary to say that the source of all capital is labour. The capitalist does not manufacture his capital out of nothing; he gets it by buying the labour power of his workers and selling the product of their labour for more than he pays for it, or, to put it in another way, he extracts more work from them than he pays for. But if that is so, then it follows that in a society without capitalists the workers can produce all the new capital that is necessary by simply working a little longer than is required to meet all the immediate needs of humanity. There is nothing more complicated in it than that. In practice it means that while the majority of workers will be engaged in producing the goods that people consume, a certain proportion will be engaged in the making of new machines to replace worn out ones, or to reduce still further the amount of human labour required. With regard to the accumulation and investment of capital the main difference between our present society and the socialist society of tomorrow is that in the new society the capital will belong to its rightful owners -- the whole body of workers, and decisions as to its investment -- that is, as to the kind, quality and quantity of goods to be produced -- will depend not on the possibilities of profits for a few but on the needs of the community as a whole.

The other prejudice -- that industry needs the organising ability of the capitalists -- is no less easily disposed of. There is plenty of historical evidence to show that the workers have no lack of organising ability, even if we do not mention the Russian revolution. As long ago as 1871 the workers of Paris ran their own society and their own industry for a period of three months. And it was not because they ran it badly that the Commune came to an end, but because the French bourgeoisie crushed them with overwhelming military force. While it lasted the Paris Commune was an undoubted success. It was the first real proof that the workers can organise a better society than the capitalists. A more recent example is that of the Milan workers who, shortly before the fascist "march on Rome", seized the factories and ran them for their own profit. They forced the highly paid technicians to remain at their jobs, they bought the necessary raw materials and sold their products, and incidentally made some startling discoveries as to the amount of profit their bosses had been making out of them. But again, it was not inefficiency that brought the Milan experiment to an end, but the military force of the bourgeois state.

And this brings us back to the point about international working class solidarity with which we began. The Paris Commune, the Milan factory seizures, and even the Russian Revolution were all isolated instances of independent action by the workers. In each case a victory was won over the bourgeoisie, but in each case it was only a partial victory, because capitalism as a whole had not been crushed. In the first two cases the victory was confined to a single city, and the national bourgeoisie soon came to the aid of the expropriated capitalists. In the last case the revolution was confined to a single country, and although world capitalism was unable to defeat it by military intervention it has never ceased to work for the ultimate failure of the revolution. And what is more, it will succeed in that purpose unless the workers of the world unite in a common struggle against capitalism. World unity of the working class was never more urgently needed than it is today, and that is why we, members of the newly founded Fourth International, repeat the advice of the founding congress of the Second International, to make the first of May a day of working class defiance against the bourgeoisie. If they learn the lessons of May Day now, they will be all the better prepared for the struggle that will soon be forced upon them by the bitter experiences of the coming world war.

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THE NEGRO UNDER CAPITALISM

(We publish below excerpts from a pamphlet issued by the Revolutionary Workers League of the United States.)

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to popular opinion, the special problem of the Negro under capitalism is not created by the physical differences existing between the Negroid and other peoples of the earth. Propagandists of race hatred invariably over-emphasise the real biological differences and assert the existence of other (imaginary) differences which they base on such superficial considerations as skin pigmentation, lip thickness, character of the hair, and flatness of the feet. These superficial features are the product of the influences on the human body of the African climate, desert soil, and jungle life over thousands of years. They are slowly being altered by social changes in Africa and throughout the world, by miscegenation and racial blending, and by the influences of other climates, temperatures, soils, and foods.

The racists still employ the term "hybrid" in connection with the off-spring of race mixture. But this term applied to mankind has no real meaning. In its fundamental biological sense it means a cross that cannot reproduce, such as the mule in the horse family. With humans, however, should the lowliest pygmy miscegenously reproduce with the highest, titled "blue-blood", the off-spring could go on reproducing. In other words, there are no basic biological divisions in the races of man. As a matter of fact, this fundamental biological fact, disregarded by the racists, confirms our revolutionary prospect of worldising all of human society.

To understand the problem of the Negro we must turn from these superficial differences to the larger social forces of economics, politics, commerce, industry, and agriculture. But in doing so, we cannot altogether ignore the wide vogue enjoyed by the exaggerated contentions and fantasies of the racial propagandists.

"White superiority", "the white man's burden", "natural antipathy", and "white assimilation" are cynical theories designed to conceal the economic, political, and social motives of the ruling class which concocted them. In other words, while the racists may be aware of the social forces, they invariably justify racial suppression. Just as in the past they endorsed the rape of continents and the victimisation of millions of humans in the vicious (but profitable) slave traffic, so today they apologise for the vilest form of race plunder by the imperialists.

WHENCE DOES RACE HATRED ARISE?

Throughout the ages racial agitators and propagandists have served to strengthen the power of the rulers of society. They have helped mould religions (especially the white man's religion of aggression, Christianity), laws, penology, philosophy, and education of all class societies in such a way as to keep mankind divided along racial lines. Inter-racial division invariably strengthens the ruling class parasites who usurp the wealth produced by the labour of the broad masses.

Complex institutions and ideologies have been fostered to develop race discrimination and division. These institutions obstruct the scientific understanding of the whole question. In fact, so imposing is the influence of race discrimination in class society today that even Negro enthusiasts become infected with it. They exalt "Negro culture" as constituting an "empire within an empire", complementing and supplementing the culture of capitalist civilisation of which lynching is an integral part.

For example, the movement initiated by Booker T. Washington was and remains a movement based upon the principles of social separatism. Various Negro institutions, universities, churches, fraternal organisations, and the Y.M.C.A. seek to inculcate in the minds of the coloured peoples the idea of self-advancement within the sphere of their own "ghettoes" or communities. The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, founded by the brilliant W.E.B. DuBois, and now led by the famous author, Walter White, and the National Negro Conference headed by John P. Davis, confine themselves to similar insulating education and activity. More reactionary are such organisations as the Garvey movement, Father Divine, and the National Urban League. The first is a back-to-Africa movement, an attempt to solve the Negro problem in the United States by running away from it; the second is a backward religious sect seeking to divert the attention of the Negroes from their real problems to the realm of "spiritual" obsessions and fanaticism. The National Urban League, pretending to be an organisation for the improvement of the Negro Peoples is fundamentally a training ground and supply depot of coloured

"scabs" for the big corporations. These and other Negro organisations like them have one aim in common: to maintain the barriers which separate the white and the black peoples. Some actually help strengthen these barriers.

PHYSICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Europe and Africa are distinct as environments -- the physical conditions in which men struggle with nature to live and advance socially. Environment leaves deep imprints upon men's bodies. Europe has a mild climate and a fertile soil. It is easy to raise crops and sea food is easily accessible. There are no impenetrable barriers either by land or water. Cultural traits are easily transmitted. The soil, climate, and rainfall of Europe made the development of agriculture relatively easy. The under-ground resources of Europe -- coal, iron, and other ores -- facilitated the development of basic industries. Natural bays and harbours encouraged commerce by sea.

Almost the opposite was the fate of Africa. Vast deserts, stretches of barren soil, and dense forests retarded the development of agriculture and transportation. Its coastlines are even yet almost inaccessible. Its underground resources are deep, and though valuable, are not those from which basic industries can be built. Thus Africa the continent restrained the development of the African peoples. At the time of the rise of the mercantile capitalist system the Negroes were "backward peoples". Africa was isolated from the world. Its peoples were isolated from one another. They founded many cultures, but were unable to transmit them. Social development was consequently slow.

Because of that backwardness the coloured races of Africa were victimised by the powerful European merchants launching out over the world in pursuit of trade, wealth, and exploitation. The rising capitalist rulers of European society did not hesitate to exterminate the aborigines in Australia, the West Indies, and in other parts of the world. It enslaved the inhabitants of Africa, the Americas and even the lowest strata in Europe itself. Due to similar environment the Europeans colonised the West Indies and the New World generally centuries before colonising Africa. Slave trade, a natural product of the mercantile and colonial systems brought the Negro from Africa into the modern world. Millions of captured Africans were transplanted as slaves into colonies in North and South America and in the West Indies by Portugese, Spanish, English, Dutch, Danish, and other European merchantment, who trafficked in the flesh of Africa for over four centuries.

Out of this forced transplantation of Negroes and their mixture with Indians and whites in the New World evolved the Mestizoes, Zambos, and Mulattoes who make up much of the populations of the islands of the West Indies, Mexico, and Central and South America, plus the 13,000,000 "yellows" or "browns", as they have been called, who constitute an overwhelming section of the United States population of African origin.

In the United States anyone with "African blood" in his veins, no matter how "white" he is, is considered as a Negro. By this criterion there are 35,000,000 Negroes in the New World. The population of the United States of Brazil alone is over 30% Negro. The densely populated islands of Jamaica, Haiti, and Barbadoes are almost entirely Negro. Cuba and many of the small islands, the Canal Zone, Colombia, Venezuela, and Guatemala have a high percentage of Negro population. In fact the Carribbean area is characterised as the "Black Belt of the Carribbean". This same Carribbean section of the world more than any other provided the markets which made it possible for North American manufacturers to emerge as a class and free the North American colonies from British rule. Later this same manufacturing class challenged and defeated the rule of the slave masters of the South to establish what is today the dominant capitalism of the world. But United States capitalism, like European never dealt squarely with the Negroid peoples. It always discriminated against them. Even where Negro slaves fought gloriously and freed themselves and established their own government, as in Haiti, the United States and most other capitalist governments, refused for many years even to recognise them politically. Liberia, for example, was founded by freed Negroes sent to Africa by United States capitalist philanthropists as part of their struggle against the slave masters of the South in the early part of the nineteenth century. Yet Liberia was not recognised by the United States government until after the Civil War.

In the struggle of the South American colonials against their mother country, Spain, the United States lent little positive support. The little Republic of Haiti gave far more. Rather it should be said that the U.S. capitalists prevented them from uniting and consolidating as nations. Through its Monroe Doctrine and Pan American Union it has divided them so as to dominate them more easily. In a word, United States capitalism, like European, has functioned to keep the Negroid peoples on the lowest rungs of the social ladder.

The solution
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HOW MARXISM SOLVES THE PROBLEM

The solution of the Negro question lies in fundamental social change. We live in the era of Proletarian Revolution. The first stage of this era has already begun. The solution of the deep-going social questions of today (the industrial question, the agrarian question, the colonial question, the national question) are bound up with the problem of the Negro. The colonials are the natural allies of the proletariat, but they will not and cannot be won over to the proletarian revolution as long as the proletariat identifies itself with the capitalist exploiters of both. It must develop its own revolutionary class programme.

PROGRAMME FOR THE UNITED STATES

The United States provides the setting for the fullest possible and most immediate incorporation of the Negro question into the programme of the revolutionary proletariat. The first steps in this direction are: (1) dissemination of the above scientific analysis of the Negro question to the working class as a whole; (2) a firm stand against every form of white chauvinism in all working class organisations; (3) a vigilant struggle against white chauvinism wherever it manifests itself -- on the streets, in the theatres, hotels, work shops, passenger trains, busses, street cars, both in the north and in the south; (4) an intransigent fight for full social, economic, and political equality for Negroes; (5) a consistent demand that Negroes be elevated to positions of leadership within all working class organisations wherever they are qualified, and policies be inaugurated to develop such qualifications of leadership; (6) special Negro education for work in the class struggle and in all phases of Marxism; (7) at all times create and develop solidarity between all workers, black and white, native and foreign born -- regardless of nationality, race, or prior condition of life; (8) help orient the Negroes toward the class struggle, into both the elementary organisations (unions) and into the Marxian party.

The demand for full social, economic, and political equality for Negroes and Negroid peoples cannot be limited to the United States alone. It must be made a world-wide demand. The first steps toward this objective differ in different regions. They are determined by the social position of the Negroes or Negroid peoples in those regions. On the whole they can be more immediately realised in the United States than in the islands and countries south of the United States because here the Negroes are more advanced technically, economically, industrially, and politically. The islands and countries south of the United States are next in importance because their cultural and social development is more advanced than that of colonial Africa. The following programme is therefore primarily designed for the United States.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE SOUTH

1. The Marxists in the United States must take up again the task of the organisation of the south. This task must proceed in the teeth of the laws, customs, and institutions of the southern caste system. The assembly of Negro and white workers in the same meeting hall in the south is forbidden by segregation law and custom. For Negroes to participate as equals in meetings, with full right of voice and vote, or as secretaries or chairmen of meetings is a violation of southern chauvinist ethics. To participate with them in social affairs, to dine with them at a banquet, to play with them at games, or to dance with them at union dances, are all violations of southern customs and laws. To elect them as delegates and send them with delegations to be put up at hotels is to bump directly into vile segregation customs and laws in the north as well as in the south. This means first, then, that the organisation of the south cannot proceed an inch without fighting for the special Negro demand: **DOWN WITH SEGREGATION CUSTOMS AND LAWS!**

2. Where strikes are conducted in the south, especially where the Negro workers are part of the organisation and struggle of the union, the first retaliative measure the southern masters will make is to charge strikers with "vagrancy" and to sentence them to the chain gang. This means that the organisation of the south cannot proceed effectively without fighting for the demand: **DOWN WITH THE CHAIN GANG SYSTEM OF PERSECUTION.**

3. In such an organisational drive involving strike struggles of which the Negro is part the lynching machinery of the southern Bourbons will be brought into play. It is directed primarily against the Negro and white organisers of the movement. Unless these men are adequately protected the movement will be crushed. This means that the organisation of the south, to be successful, must take up the special task of organising **ARMED DEFENCE AGAINST LYNCHING.**

4. The organisation of the south is unthinkable without a class struggle policy. This includes the defence of all class war prisoners, Negro and white. The special

have one peoples.

Negro demand for NEGRO JURYMEN goes hand in hand with the general working class slogan,
DOWN WITH CAPITALIST JUSTICE.

5. The organisation of the south demands THE RIGHT OF THE DISFRANCHISED NEGROES TO VOTE, THE RIGHT OF NEGROES TO JOIN UNIONS WITH WHITES and THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE INTO A REVOLUTIONARY WORKING CLASS PARTY.

6. Though the organisation of the south should go on primarily in the industrial centres, the agricultural workers, Negro and white, will become part of the movement. The organisation of tenant, share-cropping and other farmers, however auxiliary to the main problem, will involve fighting for special Negro demands.

7. Segregation of the Negro extends throughout the whole United States, north and south. There are Negro ghettos in practically every American city. Here also, special Negro demands must be advanced in the teeth of the bitter opposition of the reactionary terrorist organisations of capitalism, the Klu Klux Klan, the Black Legion and others.

The execution of the above programme of special Negro demands in conjunction with the general revolutionary programme of the proletariat will lay the basis for unity in action of the black and white worker in their common struggle against the capitalist system, for a workers government and a new society. Without this unity the proletarian revolution in the United States cannot succeed. With it is invincible!

- Down with segregation customs and laws!
- Down with the chain gang system of persecution!
- Armed defence against lynching!
- Defend all class war prisoners!
- Down with capitalist class justice!
- Enfranchise the Negro! Demand that he sit on juries!
- Enforce the right of the Negro to join and organise unions!
- Demand the right of the Negro to organise into a revolutionary working class party!
- Full social, economic, and political equality for Negroes and Negroid peoples!
- ORGANISE THE SOUTH!

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BANTU PROBLEMS THROUGH THE EYES OF
A BOURGEOIS ECONOMIST

(Continued from April Spark)

The fourth lecture is devoted to the economic status of the Urban Native. As in the previous lectures, the basis, the statistics, the arguments and deductions are drawn mainly from the Economic and Wage Commission of 1925 and the Native Economic Commission of 1932, and some correct facts are drowned in a mass of contradictions and fallacies. A lengthy digression on the history of White Trade Unionism and its wrong policy obscures the major issues.

The first section -- and a very meagre one indeed -- deals with the position of the Bantu in the Mines. We know that any lecturer in Economics in a South African University has to tread delicately on the subject of Mines. The question of wages and conditions in the mines, as well as the question of a plentiful supply of cheap labour, requires a "very nice judgment", as the lecturer himself admits. What is this judgment? He admits that the system of a huge labour recruiting and rationing agency was established by the Chamber of Mines with the specific purpose of depressing Native wages. He also admits that "the status of the recruited Native is important, for the low wages paid to them have a depressing effect upon urban wages generally". Yet on all the three important issues, the recruiting system, the low wages and the compound system, he accepts the point of view of the Chamber of Mines! He says:

"But at the present state of South Africa's economic development the continuance of the recruiting system would seem to be an inevitable evil".

He adopts the same apologetic attitude to the question of wages. He intentionally separates the mine Natives from the other Bantu in urban areas, and then he comes out with a shrewd defence of the low wage policy:

"These recruited labourers are not wholly dependent on their wages, for they have some income from their possessions in the reserves. They go to the mines to obtain cash to augment their farming income. They can, therefore, accept wages that are less than sufficient to support a man and his family dependent entirely upon their urban earnings."

Here he finds an "excellent" reason for the Chamber of Mines not to pay even that minimum which is required for a Bantu to live. And remember that the "minimum" is usually worked out by the economists in the pay of Capitalism. We wonder if any university lecturer's salary is reduced because he may have some other source of income, from land, shares or an inheritance, to supplement his earnings. He quotes the Chamber of Mines with the statement that an increase in wages would reduce the labour supply, and the absence of comment implies approval on his part. He concludes this scanty section on the mines with the following sentence:

"The compound system, severe restriction on individual liberty though it is, does something to mitigate the evils of the situation".

We may thus arrive at the conclusion that as far as the mines are concerned the Bantu have no problems. A very nice judgment indeed!

The lecturer now turns to the "very different" growing class of people who live permanently in the towns and who "have become full-time citizens". It is a little difficult for us to reconcile this "full-time citizenship" with the segregation laws, with the life in the locations, the raids, the pass laws, the poll-tax, and exemptions, restrictions and prohibitions in every sphere of life. But our lecturer has no such qualms, his tranquility is not disturbed by such trifles. He proceeds to give a page of statistics taken from the latest Union census and from the Union Year Book, 1937, showing (a) that among approximately 800,000 workers employed in mining, in privately owned factories, in municipal and Government owned establishments and Government railways, over 530,000 are Bantu. (Those engaged in commerce and domestic service are not included in these figures.) (b) the wage per head of European miners is about £354 as against £31 for the Bantu. We would have no cause to quarrel with the lecturer on this section, if the two passages opening and closing it were not to some extent misleading, and requiring amplification, especially as they sound so true. Here is the first:

"The whole industrial growth of South Africa has been built upon the foundation of Native labour and the Native worker has come to play a more and more important part in the economic welfare of the country".

And the last:

"It is clear that the economic prosperity of the country must depend in a large measure on the labour given by those Bantu workers".

Perfectly true, the Native workers are playing a more and more vital part in the economy of South Africa, in the production of wealth. But to speak of the economic welfare and prosperity of the country is misleading. This is one of the old humbugs of capitalism which the lecturer so innocently accepts. Under capitalism, and still less under imperialism, there is no such thing as the prosperity of the country. There is prosperity only for the ruling class. For the exploited classes there can be at most only a shadow of prosperity. In imperialist South Africa to speak of the prosperity of the "country" without pointing out whose prosperity it is, which class has it, is to fall a victim to capitalist bluff.

First of all it is time to realise -- and the lecturer cannot be unaware of it -- that the Bantu who plays a vital part in producing this wealth and prosperity, hasn't got a country. He is deprived of citizenship in the land of his birth. He is just cheap labour "born to administer to the needs of the white man". In the second place, how could the lecturer gloss over the fact that those Bantu workers who play such an important part in producing, play no part whatsoever in sharing, in consuming the fruits of their labour? While some crumbs have been given to the white miners in this most prosperous industry, no benefit has fallen to the Bantu miners. Their wage has remained at £31. per year as it was ten, fifteen years ago. The gold premium, the sixty shillings per fine ounce, the prosperity belong to the mine magnates, the shareholders, the ruling classes, but not to the exploited workers.

Let us now resume the study of the economic problems of the Bantu in the towns -- through the eyes of the lecturer. The further Mr. Houghton proceeds the more he entangles himself in a mass of contradictions from which there is no escape. For they are not

the result of his personal faulty thinking, they are the insoluble contradictions of capitalism. When in his second lecture he came out definitely against giving the Bantu more land, his plea was that their real line of progress lies in carving out an industrial future in the rough and tumble of modern life. In other words his solution would be: leave your land to the white farmers who "surely can make better use of the land", and go to the towns where you can organise and struggle for better conditions and a higher standard of living. (P.19) In the fourth lecture, however, he forgets what he said in the second; he complains that the influx of Natives from the reserves is constantly depressing the urban wage rate. At first he said there was no future for them in the reserves; he denied the existence of an agrarian problem and advised them to turn to industrial life; now he blames them for going to the towns. He suddenly discovers that:

"Security against exploitation - using the word to mean payment at a lower rate than the industry could reasonably afford to pay (!) and still continue to work at a profit -- is in the case of the great majority of Native wage-earners, therefore, mainly a question of the adequacy of the Native reserves and locations". (.39)

When he was dealing with the reserves, the town was the solution; when he is dealing with the towns, the reserves become the solution. But how the reserves can be adequate without giving the Bantu land -- for he is against giving them more land -- remains a mystery.

Yet he is not perturbed by this contradiction, which is just one out of many. He glosses over it and finds the necessary scape-goats to bear the burden of the blame, and looks for the kind of remedies that are typical of capitalism. In the Reserves he found the cause of Bantu poverty in overstocking and wasteful farming. On the white man's farms he found it in low productivity and inefficiency of Bantu labour. So naturally our economist presents the old liberal explanation of Bantu poverty in the towns, thus:

"The standard of living of the industrialised Native population, divorced from the land, is necessarily rising to that of the unskilled white labourer. Living permanently in the town, the Native has the same items of expenditure to face. The family eats European food, wears European clothes, has to pay rent at urban rates, has to find money for transport to and from work, has to make provision for the education of the children, and has to allow something for medical attention, medicines and unforeseen incidentals. The wages generally earned do not cover the necessary items of expenditure, hence the distressing poverty and increasing slum problem in most urban areas....The natural remedy should be sought in raising wages to a level at which they will cover the necessary expenditure of the workers, but this does not occur because the urban wage rate is constantly being depressed by the influx from the Reserves."

From this explanation it follows that the Natives themselves are responsible for their appalling condition. The part played by the capitalist employers is conveniently forgotten. One might even be inclined to think that the capitalists would gladly raise wages to the level of the necessary expenditure of the workers, "but this does not occur because the urban wage rate is constantly being depressed by the influx from the Reserves".

From this explanation only one logical step is needed for accepting the solution put forward by the Government, by the ruling classes -- the Native Laws Amendment Act, 1937. And Mr. Houghton takes this step.

"This, while it imposes severe restrictions upon personal liberty, may, in the long run, improve conditions in the towns, if it secures more permanent and better paid conditions of service there." (p.44.)

He repeats this argument at the end:

"The restriction of immigration to the towns, while it is a considerable interference with personal liberty, may do much to raise urban wages by preventing the competition of those with homes in the Reserves." (P.54.)

The lecturer's memory is short indeed. He has already said that the Bantu should not ask for more land, because it would not be in their best interests to do so: the future lies, not in the reserves, not in the land, he said, but "in carving out an industrial future in the rough and tumble of modern life in the towns". Now he says exactly the opposite. Which line is the Bantu to follow?

As a matter of fact, both ways are wrong. It is a Utopian idea to think that in the general state of decline and crisis in capitalism, industry in South Africa can expand to such dimensions and with such rapidity that it can absorb the millions of Bantu at present

in the reserves. The majority of the population will remain on the land for a long time to come. Admitted that the chronic crisis in agriculture can no longer be solved under capitalism but only under socialism. But all the time the lecturer speaks from the point of view of the capitalists, stressing the fact of "things being as they are". Capitalism, in fact, has not and cannot have any solution for the Bantu either in the towns or in the country. When we say that the main question for them is land, we do not imply that they should neglect industry, commerce and transport. What we mean is this: the solution for the Bantu lies in giving them access to agriculture and industry which at present is open only to the white ruling class. Only an incorrigible member of that class finds the solution of the urbanised Bantu problem in prohibitions, restrictions and legislation imposing slavery upon them. The mantle of the economist, who "must not pass judgment on the aims and direction of public policy", simply does not serve to cover up the lecturer's true position. He has exposed himself as a straight upholder of Imperialism-Capitalism in South Africa with all the oppression and exploitation flowing from it.

Nevertheless let us meet this central argument in a dispassionate way.

- (1) If the migration of Natives from the country to the towns is depressing Native wages, then obviously the migration of whites should also depress the wages of white labourers. Then why doesn't the Government, which is seemingly so concerned with the well-being of the town-worker, close the towns to the white immigrants also?
- (2) The wages of the Bantu workers were never sufficient for their needs, or anywhere near it, no matter whether there was a surplus of labour or a scarcity. This major factor is due to the Bantu being deprived of the right of bargaining; they were forbidden by law to form Trade Unions or to strike; they were exempted from the Wage Act and the Industrial Conciliation Act; they were, and are, handed over to "the tender mercy" of every employer.
- (3) If the elimination of a surplus labour supply in the towns would automatically raise the level of wages, then the wage of the Bantu in the mines would long ago have risen above the present level; for the labour supply is always scarce there. But, as the lecturer himself admits, "Thus Native mining wages have never been allowed to rise to their natural competitive level..." It is only logical to conclude that the same "remedy" which was found by the Chamber of Mines in 1889 in the centralisation of the labour recruiting and rationing agency, can also be found by the Chamber of Industries if the need for such a measure arises.
- (4) Finally the argument that the urban wage rate is being constantly depressed by the influx from the reserves is false, because the main depressing effect on Bantu wages in towns is produced by the low wages in the mines, which are the chief source of Native employment. Their wage in the mines sets the standard for their wage in industry, commerce, etc. The lecturer himself was aware of this in his chapter on the mines and only now does he conveniently forget it.

Yet perhaps even he is not quite satisfied with the explanation he offered for the urban Bantu's poverty: he tries to find another scape-goat besides the Bantu themselves, namely organised white labour!

".....This has given rise to bitter resentment from the white working class whose influence in parliament was successful in introducing restrictive legislation. A greater handicap to the Native worker - greater even than the restrictive legislation - is perhaps the opposition of organised white labour....White labour, particularly in the Transvaal, has come, not unreasonably, to regard the black worker as the tool of the capitalist to be used to oust him from his present position. This accounts for the strong anti-native policy of the trade unions there."

We certainly have no desire to defend the reactionary chauvinistic policy of the white Trade Unions in the Transvaal or the still more chauvinistic policy of the South African Labour Party. Our policy towards them is sufficiently known and clear. But a careful perusal of the above quotation will reveal its sinister purpose cleverly concealed. Not only is this half-truth intended to drive deeper a wedge between the workers, but the main effect is to divert the attention of the Bantu workers from the struggle against their real enemy - the capitalists. Not a word is said about them; they are not even mentioned as the factor of oppression and exploitation. What he says in effect is this: to the white workers, that the Bantu are tools of the capitalists to oust them; to the black workers, that their greatest obstacle to progress is organised white labour. Note that this is described as "an even greater handicap" than the restrictive legislation, which is thereby thrust into the background, intentionally.

First of all it is not correct to blame the white workers entirely for the restrictive legislation; they are guilty only of the crime of lending their assistance. At no time - even when they entered the coalition - were they the main factor. Labour was never strong enough in or out of Parliament to force its policy upon the country, however reactionary that policy might have been. The colour bar and all the anti-native legis-

lation including the three slavery bills were adopted because the ruling classes, the farmers and the Imperialists, the slave owners and the mine-owners, wanted them.

Secondly, it is absurd to say that the opposition of organised labour is an even greater handicap to the Bantu than such legislation. Can anything be a greater handicap than the oppressive laws which bar him from every avenue of progress and keep him in slavery? Would the opposition of organised white Labour be possible without the legislation that erected an artificial wall between the two sections of the working class in order to set the one against the other?

Mr. Houghton is opposed to the colour bar, on economic grounds, yet he accepts it, on political grounds! He says:

"Whatever criticism we may advance against the colour-bar legislation, we must take it as an objective fact and consider what future there is for the urban Native worker, conditions being what they are." (our emphasis.)

The same eternal language of all the liberals and the hypocrisy of preachers - you may mildly criticise it, but once it has been adopted by the legislature you have to accept it as law and submit to it! You must take it as an objective fact!

And what has the lecturer to offer with regard to the future of the urban Native worker? To put it bluntly - nothing. And because he has nothing to offer he abandons his role as economist and transforms himself into a preacher. After telling them that they "must not antagonise the white Labour Unions more than necessary", and advising them piously to put their trust in a change of heart on the part of the white workers, he concludes with the following passage:

"Greater specialisation, more continuous application to work, higher education, better living conditions and the restraint that comes from living as a member of an organised and permanent social unit, would do much to raise the general level of efficiency and thus enable the urban workers to earn higher wages."

This would sound very well from a second-rate church preacher. But from an economist it is absolutely laughable. Even without the sermonising the passage is ridiculous. Let us look into it. (1) "Better living conditions.....would enable the urban workers to earn higher wages." That means that if they lived in better houses, ate better food, wore cleaner and better clothes, had better sanitary and medical provision, had social services and insurance, had more recreation etc., then they would be able to earn higher wages! Every economist knows (and not only they) that better living conditions are a result of higher wages. But our economist has brought forth a new theory that if a man lives better, he gets higher wages. Many people have been sent to jail for trying to put it into practice in our capitalist society.

(2) "Higher education.....would enable the urban workers to earn higher wages." Here is insult added to injury, particularly in conjunction with the phrase, "conditions being what they are." The lecturer knows perfectly well that the Native is prevented from getting even a lower education and that 75% have none at all; he knows that even the few who do get higher education are shut out from skilled trades and all avenues are closed to them except preaching and teaching.

(3) "More continuous application to work...." and (4) "greater specialisation..... would enable the urban workers to earn higher wages." What we have already said also applies here. How can they specialise when they are barred by law from apprenticeship and skilled trades? The only specialisation left is unskilled manual labour, and this will never bring him a higher wage! "More continuous application to work..." With the present anti-Native legislation this leaves them at the mercy of any policeman or petty official of the Native Affairs Department. In these conditions it is not necessary to advise continuous application to work; they are forced to do it. For the loss of a job may mean ejection as a "redundant", superfluous Native, and that may bring ruin.

To sum up: the lecturer has not any solution for the Bantu in the towns, just as he had none for them in the Reserves and on the farms. The bankruptcy of Capitalist economy can only be covered up with hypocritical phrases, fallacies or prayers.

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(Issued by the Workers Party of South Africa, P.O.Box 1940, Cape Town. C.R.Goodlatte 33, York Street, Salt River, is responsible for all political matter in this issue.)