

WHITE AND COLOURED WORKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

By E. R. ROUX

THE recent visit to this country of Kadalie, the South African native trade union leader, has prompted the Executive of the South African Labour Party to pass the following resolution :—

That the British Labour Party and I.L.P. be advised not to interfere with, or express uninformed opinions upon the burning question of colour in South Africa. After years of struggle the South African Labour Party has succeeded in establishing the principle of acceptance of the Coloured man [as distinct from the pure native] on terms of equality with whites (that is, equal work, equal pay). The Native, however, who is still in a state of semi-savagery, has not yet been so accepted, and any outside interference will be, we are sure, a great hindrance to any forward march, and no help to the Native or Coloured man, but will tend to excite feelings that are undesirable.

The S.A.L.P. may well try to discourage any "interference" in what it considers its own preserves ; for the more the British working class learns of conditions in the "dark continent" the more hideously reactionary will appear the policy of the S.A. "Labour" Party. Not only is the above resolution as evasive as could be, but the statement with regard to the status of the mulatto is a palpable untruth. The coloured man certainly has a little more freedom than the native, but this has been so for generations, and is in no way due to the S.A.L.P. Coloured men and natives in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal are excluded not only from the Labour Party, but also from the trade unions. The "Labour" members in the House of Assembly have recently supported "colour bar" legislation of the most oppressive kind. A little while back the Communist members on the Johannesburg May Day Committee aroused the most vehement opposition from the "Labourites" because they suggested the participation of native workers in the May Day demonstration !

In an endeavour to placate the South African Government and prepare the way for affiliation to the I.F.T.U., Kadalie, last

December, brought about the expulsion of the Communists from the native trade union. The C.P. remains the only organisation in the country which includes both black and white workers, and which strives consistently to secure a united working-class front. This is illustrated in a recent decision of the Executive of the South African Trades Union Congress. This body has submitted the following resolution to its constituent organisations :—

That the Executive invite all workers' organisations, irrespective of colour, to affiliate to the Trades Union Congress and that the Executive arrange a meeting with the Executive of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (the native organisation) for the purpose of discussing matters of mutual interest.

The chances of this resolution securing a majority in the S.A.T.U.C. (a purely white affair) may appear rather slender at present. Kadalie, however, claims that the very fact that the Executive could be induced to come forward with such a resolution constitutes a victory for native trade unionism. No doubt it does ; but Kadalie fails to mention that resolutions of this sort have resulted almost exclusively from the efforts of the Communists in the S.A.T.U.C. who are continually fighting for co-operation with native trade unionists in the face of opposition from the majority of orthodox race-prejudiced white workers. W. H. Andrews, who is Secretary of the T.U.C. and a member of the Communist Party, has gone as far as the rank-and-file of his organisation will let him in approaching the native union. The I.C.U. leaders take credit for this, but fail to mention that Andrews is a Communist.

Thus, while the native members of the Communist Party have been expelled from the I.C.U. and are compelled to work outside it, the white Communist trade unionists continue the struggle for inter-racial working-class unity inside their own organisations. This state of affairs cannot last : it is only a matter of time before the native masses in the I.C.U. replace Kadalie and other reactionary officials by fighting members of the Communist Party.

The World of Labour

	PAGE
INTERNATIONAL : The Paris Conference of the I.F.T.U.	634
INDONESIA : The Trade Union Movement	636

INTERNATIONAL

The Paris Conference of the I.F.T.U.

THE characteristics of the International Federation of Trade Unions are that it is practically confined to European Workers (the membership, it may be added has continuously declined since 1920), and secondly, that the finances are practically all paid by the German and British Trade Unions—all the other countries together paying in affiliation fees in 1920 less than a third of the amount those two countries paid, although the English contribution sank from 52,000 florins in 1924 to 36,000 in 1926 and the German from 89,000 to 54,000 in the same period. The lowest contribution of all was paid by the French Confederation—about 2,000 florins. As a result the International is financially bankrupt.

The I.F.T.U. maintains intimate relations with the League of Nations Labour Office. It is also anxious to get the American Federation of Labour to affiliate. At the recent Conference at Paris, Grassmann, the German Trade Union leader, remarked that, important as it was to get the Colonial workers, it was still more important to get the American Federation.

Under these circumstances, naturally, any idea of rapprochement or co-operation with the Red Trade Unions was out of the question, and when the English leaders found it necessary to keep up the appearances of fighting capitalism, as was done by Purcell in his presidential speech, he roused the ire of the ex-Anarcho-syndicalist Jouhaux—who instead of confining himself to the usual formalities of an address of welcome went bald-headed for him. Incidentally the British delegation struck a truly British note in their defence of Purcell against “them foreigners,” which called up reminiscences of the recruiting platform—and rather aptly illustrated the flimsiness of the international veneer.

The Mexican incident was another instance of the same kind. Having accepted an invitation to send delegates to Mexico, and refused to do so when it was discovered that the R.I.L.U. had also been invited, the Amsterdam leaders were furious when they found that Purcell, Brown and Fimmen were determined to go on their own. An attempt was made to make out that Brown, the British Secretary, had been guilty of a breach of discipline, and he was told he ought to resign his post as secretary. He then turned the tables by reading the following letter from the Dutch Secretary, Oudegeest, to the French leader, Jouhaux, in regard to the relations with Russia.

Confidential

November 6, 1924

L.J. 52

To M. L. JOUHAUX, Paris.

DEAR LEO,

Enclosed I am sending you a copy in French of the letter we received from Tomsky. It was written in a very bad English. It seems to me to prove that the Russians are making a genuine attempt to co-operate with us, and for that reason it seems to me that it is time for us to take the offensive. Still, it is possible that they will decline to hear of our relations to Geneva.

In our answer we might, e.g., ask what they think of our principle of the absolute independence of our affiliated organisations from every political and religious influence, of the autonomy of the national executives, which is guaranteed by us but which they infringe with their nuclei work, what they think of our relations to the International Labour Office (which they in distinction to us look on as co-operation with the bourgeoisie) or of our activity in the Disarmament Commission of the League of Nations.

Since the last meeting of the League of Nations, much interest has been aroused in various countries for their work which people are so keen to see carried on that, in my opinion it would be opportune to hear what the Russians have to say on this point. If we allow this occasion to go by of making the matter clear to the European workers, it will not be easy to find another.

When we meet on December 1, the Englishman Hicks will be there, as a substitute for Purcell, who has gone to Russia. Does it not seem to you that it would be well under the circumstances if we, in consultation with Mertens, were to agree among ourselves on the answer to be given before a discussion takes place on the subject in the Executive? I am well informed about this, namely, that the defeat of the English Ministry has called for a lively reaction against the Communists. Purcell lost his seat in Parliament in consequence of the Zinoviev letter, and I ask myself whether his Communist sympathies will be as strong as they were last year. In any case, it seems to me desirable that in our answer to the Russians we, as I have already said, should play as trump cards the points which I have already alluded to, English autonomy and the nuclei, by which I hope to strengthen our position.

OUDEGEEST.

Naturally enough, Oudegeest's letter had to be explained away—it finally had to be admitted as genuine, after stammering all sorts of excuses—it was deplorably in disorder—possibly errors in translation, &c.—and so the matter was allowed to drop.

The English section certainly left the Conference in a huff, but the dispute was more personal than political and the incident was passed over at Edinburgh.

An attempt is now to be made to disguise these awkward facts by changing the offices to some other country and pretending that the International has been reconstructed—but the spirit that dictated the Oudegeest letter will remain.

Among the letters not read at the Congress were the replies from the Indonesian Trade Unions and the All-China T.U. Federation to the invitation to co-operate—in which most inconvenient home truths were told and the solidarity of these movements with the R.I.L.U expressed in no uncertain fashion.

Summary of Resolutions

(1) The resolution in favour of the organisation of professional workers &c., calls for the separate organisation of each worker. This met with the opposition of the Belgian Trade Union leaders, who are trying to split the Professional Workers since Communists are accepted by them on equal terms. The resolution was passed.

(2) The resolution in favour of international assistance in strikes, &c. The demand for an international fund was rejected—although proposed by the Austrians and Dutch.

No country is to receive any aid whose Federation is not a member of the I.F.T.U. unless prevented from joining by political considerations. This would cut out any aid for a union connected with the R.I.L.U., and is in glaring contrast with the fact that the Russians gave many times over for the miners the amount given by the whole Amsterdam International.

(3) The Resolution on the Eight-Hour Day calls on the workers to fight for eight hours—and for the ratification of the Washington Convention.

(4) The Resolution on international action against war calls for a general strike against war. The report on the question was given by Jouhaux, who spoke for exactly five minutes.

(5) Most characteristic is the resolution on the economic position of the workers, where after what is probably not an inaccurate analysis of the present position, describing the miserable condition of the workers, and recognising that capitalism now means the degradation of the workers, the only remedies suggested are to fight against protective tariffs and to support the work of the League of Nations in favour of the trade union control of international and national cartels. The effort of cartels to maintain prices must meet with the greatest resistance from trade unions, &c. It calls attention to the necessity of developing the home market and the spending power of the workers as a means of stemming unemployment.

INDONESIA**The Trade Union Movement**

(Report of Javanese Delegation to the Pan-Pacific Labour Conference, Hankow, China, May 24, 1927)

INDONESIA has been exploited by foreign capitalism for over 300 years. Dutch imperialist-capitalism, when it first began its work, crushed national capital in order to monopolise the whole wealth of this country, so that nowadays trade and industrial capital are in the hands of foreign capitalists. Dutch imperialist-capitalism is comparatively weak. It cannot exploit so rich a country as Indonesia by itself. It has therefore arranged for other big foreign capitalists to assist in this process. The "Open door" policy of Dutch imperialism attracted many foreign capitalists, including English, Japanese, French, and American. The Dutch imperialists used the policy of *divide et impera* to smash the unity of the working class of Indonesia. In this way the Javanese and Malay workers were for a long time separated from each other, and were even a source of cheap labour. Hundreds of thousands of workers were suffering very much from the treacherous and barbaric acts of Dutch imperialism. The very low wages, long working hours,

and bestial treatment were the cause of demoralisation and corruption of the Indonesian working class. The average wages of the Javanese coolies in coal, tin, iron-mining, and especially plantation-workers and other industrial workers, varies from 30-50 cents per day. From these poor wages the Javanese coolies have to pay taxes imposed by the government. No labour security is given by the employers, and because of lack of labour protection, hospitals, and fit dwellings for miners and plantation-workers, there is a high death-rate among coal, tin, ironmongers and tobacco-plantation workers.

Early in the year 1910, the exploited colonial people of Indonesia began to struggle against the arbitrary and barbaric acts of the exploiters. Next to the political organisation there arose trade unions. The Rail and Tramway Workers founded trade unionism in Indonesia, and were closely followed by the Sugar Workers' Union, the Pawnshop Workers' Union, Government Teachers' Union, and many others. Nearly every branch of industrial and plantation workers have their own union. The growth of trade unionism in this country was so rapid that even handicraft workers, house-boys, tailors, &c., established their Unions.

Even before the end of the great war, important trade unions, such as the Railway Workers' Union, the Sugar Workers' Union, and the Government Pawnshop Workers' Union, were trying to enter into political activity, demanding the right to vote, acknowledgment of trade unions as representing the labouring masses, &c., although little success had been obtained. The Government granted to some trade unions, the Rail and Tramway Workers' Union, the Postal Workers' Union, and the Pawnshop Workers' Union, the establishment of the so-called "Complaint and Grievance Committee" to settle labour conflicts and difficulties. This reformist arrangement existed for a few years only. No satisfactory result was ever achieved by this body. Trade unions were tired of it. The Government, protector of the capitalists' interest, suppressed all developing revolutionary trade unions. Hence the series of strikes in Indonesia.

The trade unions of Indonesia, trained by strikes and facing many labour difficulties, were able to resist the arbitrary acts of the exploiters. The well-known Sugar and Plantation Workers' strike in 1919, and the strike of the Railway Workers in 1923 which lasted over two months, proved the power of the Indonesian workers. All attempts made by the exploiting class to create disunion in the ranks of the workers failed completely.

The trade unions of Indonesia, brought up and developed by strikes, and taught by the treacherous lessons of the exploiting class, understand now that Javanese and Malay workers are but one class, the exploited class, and understand the necessity of building the united front against their exploiters and the government. (It is necessary to explain the word "government." The Dutch government, ruling a population of over 50,000,000, has monopolised all the wealth of Indonesia since the establishment of the notorious "Dutch East-Indian Company." It has become one of the biggest monopolists in Indonesia. Most of the traffic and communication, railway, post, telephone and telegraph, are financed by it, and it has the monopoly of salt, opium, teak wood and pawnshops, so that 60 per cent. of the foreign capital is Dutch.)

In the year 1918 a committee was established to federate the existing trade

unions under the leadership of the Railway Workers' Union. In the same year a congress was held at Mid-Java attended by delegates from the following unions :—

Railway and Tramway Workers' Union.
 Sugar Workers' Union.
 Pawnshop Workers' Union.
 Opium Workers' Union
 Salt Workers' Union.
 Teachers' Union.
 Seamen's Union.
 Postal Workers' Union.
 Forest Workers' Union.
 Printers' Union.
 Tailors' Union.
 Carriage and Drivers' Union.
 Bond van Militarian (Military Society).

The Congress represented 300,000 organised workers. At this congress the Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch Indian Army was represented by one colonel to control military delegates. The congress lasted four days and decided on the establishment of an organisation of all workers in Indonesia called "De Indische Vakcentrale." The Committee was formed with two members of the Railway Workers' Union ; one, Sugar Workers' Union ; one, Pawnshop Workers' Union, and one member of the Irrigation and Municipal Workers' Union. Owing to differences between revolutionary and reformist members of the I.V. no important work has been done and no definite programme has been adopted by this body. One of the reformist members accepted election as a member of the People's Council, and the other trade unions proposed to exclude him from De Indische Vakcentrale.

From 1920-1925, Indonesian Trade Unionism showed great activity. Nearly every Union possesses its own organ, weekly or monthly, distributed to its members. Monthly, or once in three months, private or general meetings are held in many provinces. Weekly courses are given to organised members and special propagandists are appointed to travel from country to country to increase membership and to give instructions on labour questions.

The series of strikes carried out by the Indonesian Trade Unions which often ended with the defeat of the workers did not, however, discourage the spirit of the revolutionary labourers : on the contrary, they became stronger and acquired experience. In 1923 the political and trade union situation changed. Many reformist leaders were defeated and replaced by revolutionary ones, so that now the most important trade unions are in the hands of the revolutionary leaders who lead the masses to real class struggle. Courses, lectures, leaflets, and papers are available for members and non-members. Soldiers and police unions are affected by the revolutionary influence of the trade unions.

In the middle of last November revolution broke out in Java and Sumatra, but was defeated by strong military forces. In some parts of Indonesia, revolutionists are continuing guerilla war. As a result of this historical event, over 500 labour and political leaders have been deported to New Guinea for life, hundreds sentenced to ten to fifteen years' hard labour, and four

sentenced for life imprisonment. The government proclaimed martial law, prohibited private and general meetings and disbanded revolutionary labour unions. During the rising, workers were rigidly watched and forbidden to meet each other.

There are still many trade unions, besides the revolutionary trade unions. The latter are now temporarily suppressed, but not disorganised. Left Wing groups are arising in the reformist unions, such as the Teachers' Union, Pawnshop Workers' Union, or Seamen's Union. By doing so we may be certain that within a few years the trade unions in Indonesia will again be able to renew the attack on their enemies.

We, Javanese delegates, are trying to unite all the labour and peasant movements of Indonesia and to link them up with the labour and peasant movements of China. The Javanese labour and peasant movement will do its utmost to help the workers and peasants of China to hasten the world revolution.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- The Raid on Arcos and the Trade Delegation of the U.S.S.R.* (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 3d.)
- The Disinherited Family.* By Eleanor Rathbone. (Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 345 pp., 6s.)
- British Trade and Arcos.* Foreword by W. H. Hutchinson. (L.R.D., 1d.)
- Letters of Protest.* By Kate Crane Gartz. Edited by May Sinclair. (Pasadena, Calif.)
- The Soviet Union Year Book, 1927.*
- Bolshevism, Fascism and Democracy.* Francesco Nitti. (Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 7s. 6d.)
- Oil Imperialism.* The International Struggle for Petroleum. By Louis Fischer. (Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 245 pp., 7s. 6d.)
- Anglo-Soviet Trade, 1920-1927.* Its Extent and Prospects of Development before the Severance of Relations between Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. (Trade and Engineering Review, 44 pp.)
- Is Britain Over-populated.* By R. B. Kerr. (R. B. Kerr, 118 pp., 1s.)
- Les Judas de Jésus.* By Henri Barbusse. (Flammarion, Paris, 12 francs.)
- Handbuch der Biologischen Arbeitsmethoden.* (Urban and Swarzenberg, Berlin, Mks 30.)
- Consumers' Co-operation in the U.S.S.R.* By N. I. Popoff. (Co-operative Printing Society Ltd., 46 pp., 6d.)
- The Truth about Oscar Slater.* By William Park. Introduction by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. (The Psychic Press, 186 pp., 3s. 6d.)
- The Bombay Textile Labour Union.* First Annual Report. (Bombay Vaibhar Press, 28 pp., As. 6.)
- Marx and Engels.* By D. Ryazanoff. (Martin Laurence, Ltd., 224 pp., 7s. 6d.)
- Karl Marx, Man, Thinker and Revolutionist.* A Symposium edited by D. Ryazanoff. (Martin Lawrence, Ltd., 282 pp., 6s.)
- The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class.* By Nikolai Bukharin. (Martin Lawrence Ltd., 220 pp., 7s. 6d.)
- Modern Denmark.* Its Social, Economic and Agricultural Life. By Hugh Jones. (P. S. King & Son, 83 pp., 2s. 6d.)
- Trade Unions and the Law.* By Arthur Henderson. (Ernest Benn, 286 pp., 6s.)
- The Woman with the Basket.* The Story of the Women's Co-operative Guild. By Catherine Webb. (205 pp., The Co-operative Press Agency.)
- Early Socialist Days.* By F. Sanders Stephens. (Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.)
- The Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia.* (International Labour Office, 287 pp., 4s.)