

A COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE

PROPAGANDA AMONG NATIVES

BOTANY STUDENT TO ORGANISE

The Communists are preparing to open a new and vigorous propaganda campaign among the natives of South Africa. Mr. E. R. Roux, who has been studying botany at Cambridge, but up till a few years ago was actively engaged in the Communist cause on the Rand, is on his way to South Africa to take part in this new offensive.

It is understood that he will have a call on financial resources from overseas and that he and the other Communist workers in the Union intend to exploit to the fullest extent the dictum laid down in the Bunting appeal in the Eastern Division of the Supreme Court last week that the Native Administration Act does not prohibit the propagation of a "recognised political principle such as Communism" so long as there is no intention to promote feelings of hostility between the white and black races.

MR. ROUX'S OPINION.

Mr. Roux is coming to South Africa to organise for the non-European Trade Union Federation, which works in conjunction with the Communist Party. Before leaving England he took a sounding of feeling in quarters which are sympathetic towards the welfare of the I.C.U. on the subject of securing unity between the whole of the trade unions excluded from the European Trade Union Congress on the grounds of colour. He apparently had in mind the absence of discrimination against non-Europeans who were Communists or members of any political party. Mr. Roux did not beat about the bush on the subject of the future of the Communist Party in South Africa, and declared that "the position in South Africa is such that our party is destined to play an increasingly important role in the native labour movement."

OF DOUBTFUL MERIT.

Mr Roux, however, did not meet with much sympathy among the people overseas concerned and they include such well known figures as Miss Winifred Holtby, Mr A. Creech Jones, Mr. Walter Citrine and Dr Norman Leys. He was informed, in effect, that Communism for the Africans was a gospel of exceedingly doubtful merits. As a matter of fact, leading trade unionists in England who are interested in the industrial organisation of the South African natives too warmly endorse the policy pursued by the I.C.U since the advent of Mr. W. G. Ballinger, its European adviser, to counsel any change. In view of their experience of the Communists in Europe and the avowed object of the Communist Party they are all the more convinced that the I.C.U. has adopted the right course and that the movement should resist all temptations to link up with Communist associations in particular and political organisations in general, but rather to keep on with its purely trade union function. It is admitted that this may not be the easier or more spectacular line to follow, but that in the end it will prove the soundest and more far-sighted.

RECOVERING PRESTIGE.

Already the I.C.U., notwithstanding the toils or organisation through which it has been passing, is steadily recovering substance and prestige, and its officials to-day, as a vindication of their policy, point to the fact that the Wage Board inquiry to take place at Kroonstad next month has been conceded to them. They are determined to avoid contact with Communism and in this resolve they have the support of leading trade unionists in London. One of these has reduced his views on the subject of Mr Roux's mission to these terms:—"I warned him that if he stood in the way we would fight him, and have told him that the I.C.U movement, which has cost so much time and effort, should not be sacrificed for political intrigue. I have told him that it would be regarded as disloyal if, when a person like Ballinger was fighting considerable difficulties, people like he should soundest and more farsighted.

PROGRESS OF NATIVES

ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF INSPECTOR

MAKES APPEAL TO WHITE MEN

NEED FOR IMPROVING STOCK

An appeal to the white man of South Africa to help the native races "along the road of progress" was made by Mr. D. Malcolm, Chief Inspector of Native Education, in the course of an address delivered, last night, to the teachers attending the vacation course in geography at the Natal Training College.

The subject of Mr. Malcolm's address was "The Native Races of South Africa in Relation to their Environment."

CATTLE COMPLEX.

"There is one factor," Mr. Malcolm said, "common to most native areas, which I should mention, and that is the cattle 'complex.' To the native his cattle have assumed a value far in excess of their intrinsic worth. They are his bank, his sign of prosperity and the medium of his ceremonial customs. The trouble is that since the introduction of dipping, which has eliminated many minor diseases as well as East Coast fever, cattle have increased to such an enormous extent that they will become a positive menace to the native. The locations have become so overstocked that the cattle are dying of starvation and there is hardly any grass left.

"The end will be a great impoverishment of the native people, and their final abandonment of the country for the town, with its attendant evils. Their salvation lies in the limitation and improvement in the quality of their stock, and finally in changing over from pastoral to agricultural pursuits."

Mr. Malcolm said that the native had emerged into his environment and had become part of it. Even the thunders and lightnings, the most terrifying of his contacts with it, were the voices of his ancestors, and must evoke submission rather than any irreverent probings into its causes, or rebellious thoughts of avoiding its judgments.

ROAD OF PROGRESS.

Mr. Malcolm appealed to the white man to realise that on him rested the responsibility of leading this backward people along the road of progress. It was not sufficient that he should tread the way himself and then turn round from the heights and beckon to his fellow-citizens who were still lagging behind in superstition and ignorance, to follow him. He should clasp him by the hand, and patiently, but resolutely guide him into the highways, where his environment was his servant, and where the natural forces were harnessed to his will.

"If the white man carries out his responsibility in this direction," Mr. Malcolm said, "think of the rewards that will come to him. If in the place of five scrub cattle, one good dairy cow can be made to live, if poultry and pigs can be raised, if where one bag of mealies grew before, a hundred are grown; if instead of one plough, ten are wanted; if instead of one suit of clothes, a hundred are required; if instead of 100 newspapers, 200,000 are subscribed for; what prosperity the country would enjoy. There would be work and scope for all."

ORIGIN OF BANTU.

Mr. Malcolm said there was considerable difference of opinion as to the origin of the Bantu, who constitute the majority of the native people of South Africa, but it was fairly generally accepted that they were not the earliest inhabitants of the country. They appeared to have come in successive waves of migration from the North-East, and to have displaced the Bushmen whom they found in occupation.

An examination of the river banks and overhanging rocks on the coast of Natal and Pondoland soon convinced one, Mr. Malcolm said, that at one time the Bushmen occupied all this country, and were only driven to the mountains, in which they persisted well into the middle of the 19th century, by the invading Bantu people.

In their choice of country, the Bantu had been influenced by climate. Vegetation was also an important factor to them. They wanted fuel, good grass for their stock, and cover for game. They were attracted, therefore, by the sparsely wooded grassland of the thorn-veldt and the more thickly wooded parklands of the subtropical coast.

IN ZULULAND

Mr. Malcolm described the country in Zululand between the Portuguese border and the Mkuze River, and between the Ubombo Mountains and the sea. From the foot of the mountains to the sea the country is as flat as a table, Mr. Malcolm explained. It has a large rainfall of over 50 inches, and a hot climate. The whole country is covered with a scrubby, thorny bush, interspersed with glades of grassland, and dotted with thousands of palms. As far as animal life was concerned, it is a hunter's paradise.

The natives in this geographical environment were not very robust physically, Mr. Malcolm said. Malaria is endemic and has probably lowered their vitality. They are of Tonga stock but do not look like the Tonga. They want to be regarded as Zulus, and a curious fact is that while the men speak and understand Zulu, the women preserve their original Tonga speech and use it almost exclusively.

Mr. Malcolm continued with a description of the customs and habits of these people. He then dealt with the natives living in an area about 20 miles north-west of Ladysmith.

NATIVE SCHOOL FOR VILLAGE

SHARE BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The erection of a native school at the Native Village to be rented by the Education Department was agreed yesterday by the Finance Committee, City Council. The Education Department is to equip and pay the running expenses of the school.

It is proposed that two class rooms and the necessary sanitary conveniences be erected at an estimated cost of £1,040 and intimation had been received by letter from the Chief Inspector of Native Education to the effect that the Administration was prepared to lease the class rooms, with effect, from February 1, 1930, at a rental to be calculated on the basis of 7½ per cent. of the total cost, provided that such rental would not exceed £6 10s. per month.

The City Treasurer reported that the rental of £78 per annum would at 7½ per cent. amount to a total expenditure of £1,040.

This was agreed to unanimously.

THE CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

To the Editor of The Star.

Sir,—May I refer to the letter from Mr. Howard Pim appearing in your issue of Monday regarding the proposed conference between the Dutch Reformed Church and other Christian churches to be held at Bloemfontein in September next? I am unable to understand why Mr. Pim should have written as he has done without prior consultation with the convener of the conference, the Bishop of Bloemfontein, or some other person interested in it.

The conference is not meeting primarily to consider General Hertzog's proposed legislation at all, nor as a public conference. It is merely an unofficial round-table conference to enable the leaders of the Dutch and English-speaking churches to understand better each other's point of view on the native question and to prevent, if possible, a division of Christian public opinion and a repetition of the recent spectacle of politicians playing the churches off against each other. It is complementary to, not competitive with, the proposed general conference on General Hertzog's Bills, which, I understand, is to be called by the native welfare associations.

The Dutch Reformed Church is sending no natives to the conference, because it was not invited to send any. This is not intended to be a general conference, but a particular meeting for a particular purpose. I think Mr. Pim's suggestions that the composition of the conference was deliberately framed to exclude natives and that the Dutch Reformed Church is in some way responsible for this, are quite unjustifiable. A very simple inquiry before writing would have shown him that they had no foundation in fact.

EDGAR H. BROOKES.

Transvaal University College,
Pretoria.

view, it is true that the possession of millions of acres of the best land in four of the best districts, a finger in most of the mining ventures which are the property of their subsidiary companies, besides the control of the railways in which they own some 80 per cent. of the shares, constitute a very solid stake in the country. The British South Africa Company will for a long time continue to be the most powerful corporation, employer of labour, and political influence.

THE LAND AND THE DEBT.

The worst tangle is that created by the Crown ownership of the land. The Company, so long as it retains administration, manages the land through what is euphemistically called "The Land Settlement Department." This is, in reality, an office controlled from London Wall, whose function it is to deal with requests for land. It has no policy of land settlement to justify its title, nor could it have, as it has no connection with government. At the time of writing as the company has been given to understand that any money it can make out of land during its tenure of office will be so much to the good, the price has gone up. Land which is to be sold for the benefit of Chartered shareholders must be treated as a trust. The directors cannot give it away or make it cheap simply to encourage immigration. It is a perfectly honest position for the company—but for a country desiring population above all things, how disastrous! It is sometimes suggested that we shall be asked to take over the deficits as the price of the land. It must be clearly understood that we have no responsibility for the deficits. They were incurred by the company as the Imperial Government's agents.

If we are asked to take over the debt as the condition of getting self-government, it is tantamount to selling us what is our birthright. Or are we to be made to buy our land—the land that never could have been reclaimed from savagery without the white settler—from the Imperial Government? Such are the suggestions made, but we still wait for the voices of authority. We have no fault to find with the Chartered Company except the fundamental one—that it is a commercial company, but we do feel very keenly that the Imperial Government should approach the problem in a generous spirit. This intensely British, progressive, prosperous colony may be an immense asset to the Empire. Our strategic position was of great importance in the war. We sent to the front a higher proportion of our adult male population than any other colony, and only the Jeweler on the fringes of Empire knows what a sacrifice that is to such a country as ours. We are anxious for self-government not in any spirit of over confidence, but because the difficulties of our present position are more evident every day, and because we see no other satisfactory alternative. Lord Milner himself warned us that Crown Colony government would be a difficult alternative. We realise that. The native question we are prepared to leave as now, directly under control of an Imperial official.

[If our information from London is correct, Mrs. Tawse Jollie and others will be agreeably surprised at the generosity of the forthcoming proposals.—Ed.]

LURE OF DIAMOND DIGGINGS

A Fascinating Gamble

Mr. T. G. Trevor, Inspector of Mines, Pretoria, giving evidence before the Unemployment Commission in Johannesburg, was asked by Professor Lehfeldt to give his opinion on the alluvial diamond fields as an industry.

"Five years ago I gave an opinion on the matter, and they were looking for my blood after it," announced the witness amid some amusement.

"It is rather a difficult question to answer. Last year there were altogether 18,000 whites on the diamond diggings. It is the biggest industry in the whole country.

"Now the average takings per man for the year before were £12 a month. Some men, however, had found stones worth thousands. The fact is that there is no maximum, but there is a minimum—which is nothing!"

"It is quite evident that far more were below the average than above. In my opinion the whole river diggings are a very bad thing for the country, for they do not lead to a sound industrial method of living in the majority of cases.

"But there are perhaps 500 or even 1,000 professional diggers who are most capable. They run several big plants apiece, work in a thoroughly business-like fashion, and are an excellent type of men.

"Probably, however, they would do well in any walk of life, and better at something else than digging.

"Then there is another class. There are farmers too lazy to put in crops who go to the diggings for a spree and an easy life as it is, the way they dig.

"There are also numbers of impossible poor whites getting poorer each day, whose children have no opportunity of growing up except as paupers.

At the same time do not let me say anything against the diggers themselves. They are the best and the most hospitable people in the world. If I were broke I should join them tomorrow."

The Chairman (Mr. H. L. Lindsay): Indeed? Why?—Because the first man I met would give me a meal; the second would give me a coat; and the third anything he had that I wanted."

"It is a most irrational form of life, however, and most fascinating," added Mr. Trevor. "They remain there all their lives, and if you are making money it is certainly a lovely existence."

THE MILLION ACRES

To the Editor, "Bulawayo Chronicle."

Sir,—I do not wish to ignore the Reserves Commission's elaborate table of gains and losses, but do you think yourself that it quite fairly represents the facts? I do not.

Take, on the gains side of the balance-sheet, the reserves allotted for natives in the Wankia and the Mtoko's districts. Are these rightly to be reckoned as fresh presents of free native land? When most other districts had had reserves demarcated provisionally in 1898, or not so very long after, were not the districts in question left without any reserve demarcation? Are not these particular reserves (now telling up in the gains table) in reality back debts belatedly paid rather than free benevolences newly assigned?

As to the "Reserve Reserves" in the table, I admit that these have the specious appearance of being acreages of gain that may be fairly taken to balance acreages of loss to our natives. But I ask you, what practical consolation will result to a native evicted from free tribal land, say, near Salisbury, if he be told that he may make good on free land in Selungwe, sleeping-sickness permitting?

You have printed some significant words from the Rev. John White as to 27 acres and a goat. I comment them to you. If you doubt them, why not ask Mr. White to give you an itinerary and put you in the way of verifying his view of the character of some of the reserves' acreage. Why not explore the Sabi Reserve or the Wedza Reserve for yourself, or depute a special correspondent to do so? Do you seriously wish to contend that the give-and-take as to rocks, etc., is generally about the same on some of the native reserves as on settlers' properties of a like extent? When one famous company (about twelve years ago) was being allotted a huge ranching area in Southern Rhodesia—is it not the fact that a concession was made to them as to the exclusion of rocks from the amount of land they were asked to pay for? As to waterless desert—will you please come a trip with me in the south-east part of the Sabi Reserve next dry season, if it may be? Will you please after that give me your opinion on the proposed reduction of that great reserve, about one-third of which its own Native Commissioner has surmised roughly to be not good, nor indifferent, but bad land.

Is it likely that a professedly final settlement, which involves an enormous loss on an old tentative settlement, will commend itself to one like myself who seems to see three facts of the up-to-date native position fairly plainly? (a) Natives have a tendency to multiply in Mashonaland; (b) natives have got a move on in their agriculture; (I suppose there are well over 1,600 ploughs owned by natives in our own native district of Charter); (c) natives have been dislodged, or are under the shadow of eviction from various properties outside their old provisionally assigned acreage now under sentence of reduction.

I want to append, at the risk of deletion, a quotation. Will it share the luck of Mr. White's letter's two deleted lines? I hope not. Please remember that it is from Longfellow, tolerated as a standard author in Southern Rhodesian schools, despite his negrophilism!

There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
And shake the pillars of this Commonwealth,
Till the vast temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

I thank you for the courtesy of your former replies, and ask you to print this rejoinder. As to the Sabi Reserve—please let us try next dry season to penetrate regions unexplored by the Reserves Commission, the two of us together. And let us not forget, either of us, to bring a water bottle on trek!—I am, &c.,

ARTHUR S. CRIPPS.

Enkeldoorn, Jan. 7.

[We are inclined to think that in the above letter the Rev. A. S. Cripps is commenting upon something that has appeared in The Rhodesia Herald. Of course, there is no reason why we should delete his Longfellow quotation, which applies to America, and not to Rhodesia. Longfellow's "Poem on Slavery" were written at a time and amid conditions which gave good cause for being a negrophilist. We fail to see their application to this territory, where, if the coloured races are still behind those of the United States in social development, they are also free from such atrocities as are perpetrated nearly every week on the other side of the Atlantic. We would be glad at some time to accept Mr. Cripps's invitation and to meet him in the sphere of his labours, without any ambition to improve upon the enquiries and decisions of an honest and impartial Commission.—Ed.]

The first moving pictures of the pygmies of the African Congo have been shown to the National Geographic Society at Washington.

Oil-soaked hair is a novel form of coiffure introduced by the Russian ballet which has opened in Paris. The women dancers have cut their hair short and so saturated it with oil that it looks like a skull-cap. Their eyebrows are painted in a long fine line which runs right back to the roots of the hair, giving the face the appearance of a Polish doll.

Chamberlain's Colic and Diarrhoea Remedy has relieved more pain and suffering, and saved more lives than any other medicine in use. At

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