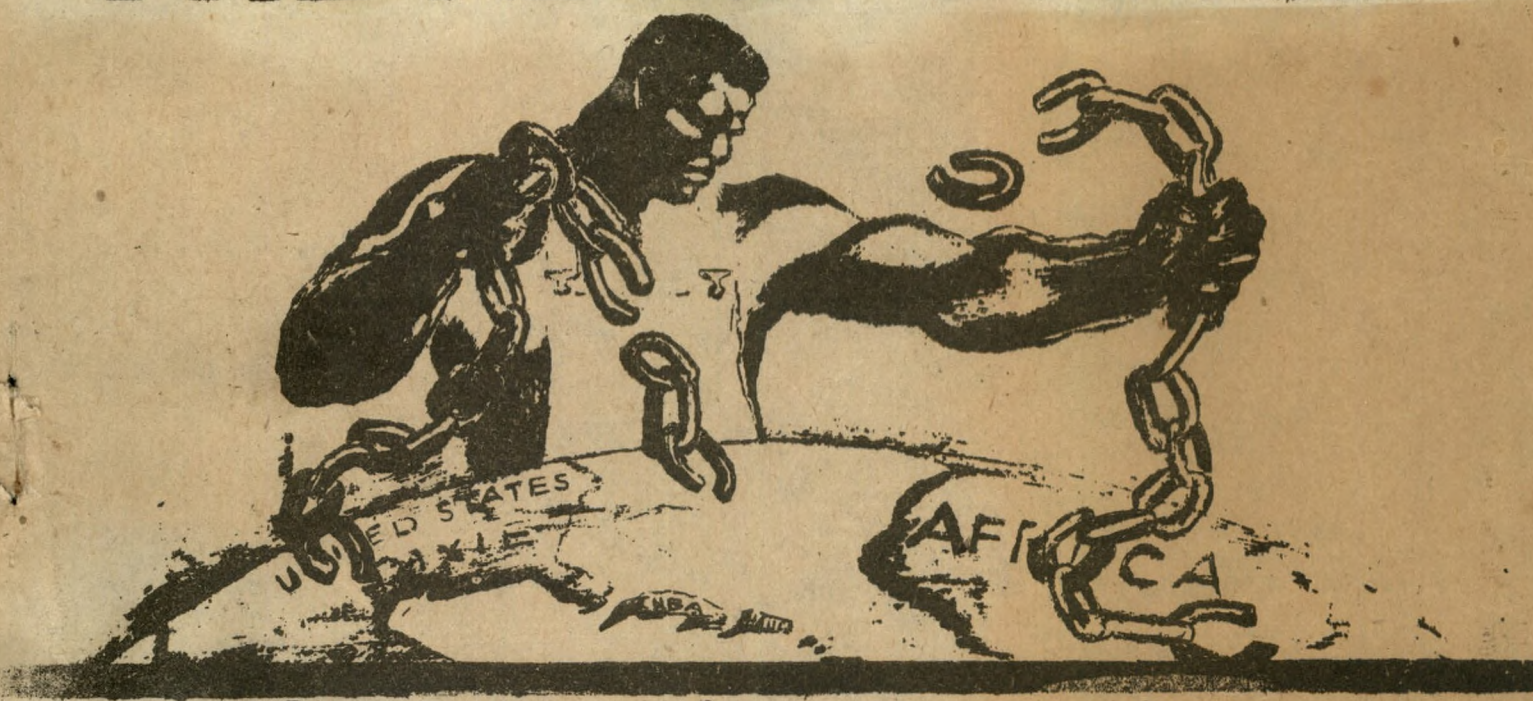


THE NEGRO WORKER



Vol 3 - Special Number.

15 October 1930.

The Hamburg Conference.

1. Appeals of the Executive Committee of the Conference to Negro Tailors & all oppressed Peoples of the World.
2. V. Chattopadhyaya --- The First International Conference of Negro Workers.
3. J. W. Ford --- Opening Speech of Conference.
4. George Padmore --- Report & Resolution on the Economic Struggles and Tasks of Negro Workers.
5. W. Wilson --- Report & Resolution on Forced Labor & Poll Tax.
6. Tom Marsh --- Report & Resolution on the War Danger & its Significance to the Negro Masses.
7. Special Resolutions
 - a) On Lynching in the U.S.A.
 - b) On the British "Labor" Government.
 - c) On the International Red Aid.
8. Elections of Executive Committee.
9. Purpose and Aims of the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers.
10. Hamburg Bureau.

-----000000000000-----
G. P A D M O R E .
 in charge of Editing.

Address all correspondence to: 8. Rotesoodstrasse, Hamburg, Germany.

Appeal to Our Readers and Editors!

In order to aid in the popularisation of the aims and decisions of the First International Conference of Negro Workers, the Executive Committee appeals to all readers of the "Negro Worker" to acknowledge the receipt of this bulletin in order to ensure future issues. The Negro press in America and the African colonies, as well as the revolutionary trade-union press of the metropolitan countries, are especially requested to reprint reports and resolutions adopted at the Conference. Additional copies of the "Negro Worker" and further information about the Conference can be obtained by writing to the Secretary-Treasurer, Negro Bureau, 8. Rotesoodstasse, Hamburg, Germany.

To All Toilers of the World!

To All Negro Workers and Peasants!

Comrades:

This International Conference of Negro Workers realises that action of the MacDonald Labour Government in refusing to permit the Conference to be held in England is instigated by fear of the rising revolt of the workers and peasants of the colonial and semi-colonial countries upon whom the imperialist Briton has grown fat.

The magnificent struggles of the Indian and Chinese workers and peasants against their continued exploitation by the foreign imperialists and their lackeys, the native bourgeoisie, together with the struggles of Negro workers and peasants of Nigeria, Gambia, South Africa, Kenya, etc. has frightened the British imperialists into the suppression of the elementary rights of meetings and discussion. This action of the MacDonald Government, which has up to now sought to wash its responsibility for the butchery, exploitation and slavery of the native workers in the colonial countries behind the pretext of the rights of the Dominion Government of South Africa, etc., exposes its true anti-working class role and shows its true imperialist color.

It further reveals the complete unity of MacDonald and the British Labour Party with Hertzog in imposing the anti-native laws and with the imperialists' plunderers and murderers in Africa, West Indies and other colonies and as well shows the falsity of the leaders, Garvey, Some Thaele, etc., are seeking to delude the Negro masses by statements that Hertzog, Pirow, Smuts, etc. are acting without the consent and in opposition to the MacDonald Government when they suppress and murder the native toilers.

All the murders, plunderings and bitter exploitation of the Negro toiling masses have been carried out with the direct participation of the Labour Government, are carried out with the knowledge of MacDonald, Thomas, Lord Passfield, all of whom are held responsible for all the crimes committed by the agents of British Imperialism in the colonies.

The MacDonald Government is part and parcel of the Second Socialist and Amsterdam Internationals. The "socialists" and reformists of all countries fully support capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression in the colonies. The socialists of France, Belgium, Holland, the U.S.A., and other countries are all imperialist allies helping to maintain and strengthen the existing conditions in the colonies. The Amsterdam and Second Internationals on a world scale collaborate with the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, and are doing everything in their power to find new ways and means for suppressing the revolutionary movement of the colonial peoples for the purpose of disarming the toiling masses in the colonies, and for preserving the slave conditions of labour of the colored peoples.

Negro workers and peasants, only by means of active revolutionary struggle will it be possible for the working class to obtain its liberation. Only by following the splendid example of the Russian workers will the colonial peoples be able to bring about their "October", and by overthrowing imperialist supremacy, build up a Socialist society, where national discrimination and race hatred will vanish for ever, where peace, liberty and equality for all workers will reign supreme.

Down with the Robbers and Bloody Imperialists!

Down with the Social-Fascists and reformists from the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, lackeys of Capitalism and traitors of the working class!

Down with the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, agents of the International Robbers!

Long live the United Front of the Workers of all countries, nationalities and races!

Long live the relentless struggle against all exploiters and oppressors!

To the Workers of all Countries!

To all Oppressed Peoples of the World!

Comrades,

The International Conference of Negro workers has gathered at the time of the most acute sharpening of the class contradictions all over the world. The agrarian and industrial crisis is gnawing at the capitalist world. The plundering classes are endeavouring to unload all the difficulties of the crisis onto the backs of the working masses. The impoverishment and pauperisation of the peasantry is steadily growing, tens of millions of workers throughout the world are thrown out of work, exploitation is taking on ever more cruel and merciless forms. This offensive of the exploiters calls forth ever-increasing resistance on the part of the workers. The struggle is seething in all parts of the globe. However, nowhere has it taken on such a gigantic swing as in the Colonies. The colonial world has come to be the most important sector for the Anti-Imperialist Struggle. China, India, Indo-China---three countries in which practically one-half of the human race live, are embraced by a most powerful revolutionary movement, directed against Imperialism, against their own and foreign oppression.

The united forces of the Reaction, comprised of the imperialists, rich landowners, bankers, manufacturers, and militarists do not stop before even mass executions, murders and inhuman tortures, for the purpose of suppressing the Chinese Revolution, to stop the movement of the Chinese workers and peasants, struggling for their independence, for land, for radical improvement of their labor conditions, for a decent human existence. The united dark forces succeeded in physically destroying the vanguard of the proletariat and the peasantry, and temporarily to hold up the movement. However, this did not last long. Having gathered fresh forces, and reorganised their ranks, the Chinese workers and peasants waged a new struggle. They have created their class political and trade union organisations, in the fire of the struggle they have hammered out their worker-peasant Red Army, are firmly establishing themselves over a significant part of the territory of South China, setting up their worker-peasant Soviet Power, doing away with the oppression of the landowners and capitalists wherever they come, building up a new life, governed by the workers themselves.

In India, where already more than three hundred years that the ruling classes of Great Britain have been existing on the blood and sweat of the natives, a gigantic revolutionary movement is developing today. More than two years since the workers of Bombay and other industrial centres, in a number of stubborn fights conducted an heroic struggle against foreign and national capital for better living conditions. This struggle has served to awaken and bring into action the town poor and peasant masses. The British "Labor" Government who refused to permit our Conference to convene in London, does not stop before the most cruel repressions in order to suppress the movement of the toiling masses. The India bourgeoisie is already about to compromise with British Imperialism. The toilers of India, however, will continue the struggle, for their own living interests are concerned, for only complete independence, an agrarian revolution and the establishment of the worker-peasant government are able to radically improve their living conditions.

With great force is the revolutionary movement in Indo-China developing, this being the basic colony of French Imperialism. For long and as it seemed, patiently, have the peasants and workers of Indo-China suffered from the horrible exploitation of the French capitalists, bankers and officialdom. The last two years show that the workers of Indo-China, under the leadership of their revolutionary vanguard have begun a relentless struggle against their oppressors. In spite of the savage treatment, in spite of executions, torture, mass arrests, etc., the movement is extending. The banners with revolutionary slogans, with the emblem of the hammer and sickle, are flourishing to-day not only in China and India, but also in Indo-China.

The whole colonial world has been brought into action. Not only Asia, but also the countries of Latin-America, and finally Africa, are being drawn more and more into this great struggle.

The International Conference of Negro Workers, for the first time in the history of humanity uniting the representatives of one of the most exploited and oppressed divisions of the Labour Army, cannot pass by this heroic struggle. With great animation and enthusiasm, of which only class brothers, allies and comrades are capable, are we following up these great events developing in China, India, Indo-China and throughout the whole colonial world. We hereby send our warm fraternal greetings to the heroic fighters. We solemnly promise to intensify our own struggle against the oppressors, to widen the front of the struggle of the oppressed classes and peoples against World Imperialism, threatening the world with fresh wars, with new deaths and suffering, with ever sharper and more acute methods of exploitation.

Down with the bloody, plundering imperialism!
Long live the struggle of the oppressed classes and nations!
All hail the heroic workers and peasants of China, India, Indo-China!
Up the United Front of the Oppressed Colonial Peoples and the World-Proletariat!

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NEGRO WORKERS.

THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF NEGRO WORKERS.

By V. Chattopadhyaya.

The idea of an international conference of Negro workers was first mooted at the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism held in July 1929 at Frankfurt am Main, where among the 400 odd delegates that had come from all parts of the world, there were a number of Negro delegates from Africa and America, besides various non-Negro delegates directly interested in the organisation of the Negro masses for the struggle against imperialism. The reports submitted to that Congress on the conditions of life of the Negro masses under British, French, Belgian, Portuguese and American imperialist exploitation showed clearly (1) that there was a considerable similarity in those conditions in the various African colonies: (2) that the Negro workers in the various colonies were isolated from one another and from the workers of other countries; (3) that the vast Negro masses were completely unorganised; and (4) that they were being politically misled and deceived for the benefit of the capitalists and imperialists by Garveyism, pan-Africanism, national reformism and trade union reformism. It was felt that it was essential to undertake the organisation, particularly the trade union organisation, of the Negro workers, the coordination on an international scale, and the organisation of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Negroes on a class basis as against the racial nationalism that was being preached by black capitalists and agents of imperialism. In order to achieve these ends, a Provisional International Committee of Negro Workers was constituted under the chairmanship of James W. Ford, National Organiser of the Trade Union Unity League, U.S.A., and it was resolved to convene an international conference on July 1st, 1930, to take place in London, the metropolis of the largest Slave Empire of the World.

But at the critical moment the profits and privileges of the British slave-drivers are being carefully protected by the "Labour" Government and the organisers of the Conference were informed on May 21st that his Majesty's Government would not allow the Conference to be held

in London. The facts have been published by Comrade Glyn Evans in answer to an editorial note in the I.L.P. organ, the "New Leader", which in all matters relating to the struggles of the colonial peoples has systematically supported the imperialist policy and actions of the MacDonald Government. The meaning of the Home Secretary's refusal "to give any sanction to the proposed Conference or to authorise facilities for the attendance of delegates" is perfectly clear. Not only were no facilities authorised but steps were taken to prevent Negro workers' delegates from landing and to harass those that were in England. The "Daily Herald" declared in its issue of June 8th that "orders were issued yesterday that all port officials should keep a lookout for Negro delegates who may try to enter this country."

And the mandated delegates of Negro workers' organisations from the Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, etc. who arrived in London with passports perfectly in order were followed and harassed by Scotland Yard detectives till their position became intolerable. These Negroes are all British subjects who in their own countries ^{are eternally} told how proud they should be to be members of the free and democratic British Commonwealth of Nations!

While the MacDonald Government thus prevented the Negro workers from meeting in London and from denouncing the crimes of British imperialism in Africa, the Colonial Governments did their part by refusing passports to Negro delegates to leave their country. The result was that the South African delegates, representing important militant unions, the delegates from the French and the Belgian Congo, from the Portuguese Angola, and other territories were unable to be present at the Conference.

In spite of these impediments, a more determined effort ought perhaps to have been made to hold the Conference in London and thus to challenge the "Labour" Government to use force in suppressing it. This would have even more clearly exposed its true imperialist character. But the organisers decided to hold the Conference in Hamburg, where, after unavoidable delays occasioned by the change in its venue, it was opened on July 7th. There were delegates, including a woman, from seven important Negro unions in the U.S.A. (miners, railway workers, needle trades, etc.) and delegates from Jamaica, Nigeria, Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast and from the former German colony of Cameroon, as well as a white delegate from the South African Negro workers' organisations. Owing to the absence of representation from the French colonies, from East Africa, from the Belgian and Portuguese territories, and from the Latin American countries, it was obvious that this first meeting of Negro workers was more a preparatory Conference, the political importance of which is none the less very considerable. The very fact that such a conference was held, and the clear line of policy and action laid down in the resolutions are bound to have a strong influence upon the development of the struggle.

The agenda of the Conference included all the important aspects of the problem. After messages of solidarity had been personally delivered by the fraternal delegates of the League Against Imperialism and the International Red Aid, and letters and telegrams had been read from the R.I.L.U. from the Red Sports International, from the Proletarian Congress of Labour, Manila, etc., a comprehensive report on the work of the International Committee during the eleven months of its existence was made by James W. Ford, showing the great difficulties met with in getting into touch with the Negro workers in most parts of Africa, as well as the successes achieved by the organisers in the short time at their disposal. The various delegates dealt with the conditions of the Negro workers in their respective countries special interest attaching to the report made by Small on behalf of the Bathurst Trade Union which had conducted a valiant fight at the end of last year against the Margarine Combine. A very clear and instructive statement was made by George Padmore, of the Negro Trade Union Committee of the RILU, on the "Economic struggles and tasks of the Negro workers". He summed up the effects of imperialist exploitation on the condition of the Negro masses; pointed out that the mass struggles of the millions of super-exploited Negroes in Africa, and America against the imperialist offensive (South Af-

rice, Haiti, the West Indies and the U.S.A.) coincided with the revolt of other colonial peoples (India, Indochina, etc.) and with the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in the capitalist countries; warned the workers against the national repression of the Negro middle class and intelligentsia; drew attention to the increasingly favourable objective conditions for the development of working class leadership, and sketched the outlines of a programme for the revolutionary organisation of the millions of toiling peasants. These facts were incorporated in a resolution that was unanimously adopted.

Wilson, of the American Negro Labour Congress, made an appeal for a more "vigorous struggle against forced labour and poll tax". He warned the Negro workers against the legislative illusions deliberately created by the League of Nations and the International Labour Office and called upon them to resort to direct action to recover their lands, refuse to pay tax, repudiate indentures, to fight against the "pass" and the "compound" system, to fight against their tribal chiefs who are agents of imperialism etc. Very important at the present moment is the resolution on the "War Danger and its significance to the Negro Masses" presented by Tom Marsh of the National Democratic Party of Nigeria. After pointing out how black troops have been used for decades as cannon fodder by the imperialist powers and how they have even been employed to crush the revolutionary movement of the workers in the imperialist countries, the resolution shows the growing danger of war and of an imperialist attack on the Soviet Union. It points out that "in case of such an attack it is the task of all Negro toilers to struggle on the side of the Soviet Union against the imperialists".

Special resolutions were passed against lynching, against the white terror in Alabama (U.S.A.), protesting against the MacDonald Government for refusing permission to hold the Conference in London, and against the South African and other Governments for refusal to grant passports.

A new International Committee was elected consisting of James W. Ford (U.S.A.), I. Hawkins (U.S.A.), George Padmore (U.S.A.), G. Reid (West Indies), Tom Marsh (Nigeria), G. Miller (Gambia), Albert Nzula (South Africa), Kouyaté (French West Africa). Representatives of Haiti, Liberia and East Africa are to be added.

During the proceedings, a delegation of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (Trade Union Opposition) arrived in the hall and were warmly greeted by the Negro delegates, while on the second day there was a crowded meeting of Hamburg workers who extended an enthusiastic welcome to the Negro delegates a few of whom spoke at the meeting.

The Conference which was marked throughout by enthusiasm lasted, three days and ended fittingly with the singing of the "International". An official invitation was extended to the delegates to proceed to Moscow to attend the Fifth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. as guests. Eleven delegates have already accepted the invitation. Those who were unable to do so have sent the fraternal greetings of their organisations to the Congress.

There is one observation that deserves to be recorded regarding the Negro Conference. There was a marked difference between the Negroes from the United States who are industrial workers with completely proletarian psychology and outlook, and the delegates from Africa who have more of the mentality of the small farmer. The conditions of the problem in Africa necessitate different methods and tactics from those in the U.S.A., and there may be a tendency for the Negro workers from the U.S.A. to look at the African Negro question too much from the American point of view. Nevertheless, it is a gain to the African worker to come into contact with the representatives of the far more advanced Negro proletariat of America. This contact has been achieved by the Conference.

The Following is a Summary of the Comrade Ford's Speech to the Conference

Comrades,

1. The International TU Committee of Negro workers had its beginning in 1920 when we noticed the introduction of rationalisation speed-up in the Metropolitan and colonial countries. These capitalist methods in industry were introduced in order to enable the bourgeoisie to squeeze as much as possible out of the workers. Rationalisation led to strikes and in the course of which the workers set up independent strike leadership.

2. About the same time the imperialists began an intense programme of colonial exploitation, especially in South Africa, while in the Union of South Africa the white and native workers closed ranks and began to fight shoulder to shoulder for the first time in the history of the country. All of this intensified the old pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and oppression of the Negro toilers to an unheard of extent.

3. American imperialism also intensified its policy of exploitation in the Caribbean area. At the same time we witness sharp class struggles in the United States in which the Negro workers were drawn more and more into the struggle. During this period of the revolutionary upsurge we witness the heroic struggles of the Chinese proletarian masses against world imperialism.

4. In the midst of this world situation the Fourth Congress of the RILU took place, at which an analysis of the struggle was given to the workers. The Congress discussed the role of the reformists and social reformists. It was great inspiration to the revolutionary working class. And as one of the delegates I could not help but being inspired by seeing the way in which the various problems of the workers of the world were handled. After the Congress, I took the opportunity as a representative of the Negro Workers of America to make certain proposals to the Secretary of the RILU. These proposals culminated in the organisation of the Negro Trade Union Committee of the RILU. I felt that such an organisation was absolutely necessary in order to combat the reformist tendencies not only among the AF of L and other organisations in America but also trade union organisations such as the ICU in South Africa. The Committee from its very beginning emphasises the necessity of stimulating trade union work among Negroes. In order to carry out our task effectively we brought into being the "Negro Worker", which is still the collective organiser and agitator of the Committee. I am pleased to state that this bulletin during the last 18 months met with a great reception both in the United States and in the colonies.

5. It is also significant to note that the trade union committee of Negro Workers of the RILU came into existence just about at the time when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Union were launching their historic Five Year Plan which is moving forward at a tremendous tempo, in the same time undermining world capitalism, and brilliantly laying down the principle of the self-determination of racial minorities.

6. Despite the achievements of the Negro Trade Union Committee we felt it timely to make preparations for the convening of an International Negro Workers' Conference. With this object in view we called together a small group of Negro Delegates who attended the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism last summer in Frankfurt am Main. There we set up a provisional committee for making necessary preparations for the calling of the First World Conference of Negro Toilers. This assembly to-day here in stumping is the culmination of our efforts, and the spirit which is evinced here justifies the calling of the Conference.

7. The question which immediately arises in our minds is: What is our task? We must struggle against class oppression and against racial oppression. We must declare most emphatically that we are a part of the class struggle against imperialism and reformism. In this respect we, the delegates here assembled, representing millions of oppressed, black toilers in Africa, America, and the West Indies, etc. must draw inspiration from the struggles of our comrades in China, India, and other parts of the world and more especially from the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union.

the building of socialism in a sixth part of the earth's surface and at

Together with our general organisational and propaganda activities among the Negro masses we must be on the guard against the impending war danger. We must do everything possible to oppose the plans of the imperialists in their attempts to impede the building of socialism in the Soviet Union by making war upon the proletarian dictatorship. In conclusion, we must emphasise the necessity of this Conference to give active leadership and support to the Negro Workers throughout the world, and in order to do this the following steps must be taken: 1) we must organise our forces for unless we do this, we will not be able to struggle successfully against our oppressors, 2) we must prepare cadres for the struggle for a clear ideological leadership, and we must draw up a program of action.

THE ECONOMIC STRUGGLES OF THE NEGRO WORKERS

Reporter - Comrade George Padmore.

Comrades,

This first International Conference of Negro Workers is meeting at the time of deep economic crisis, when the capitalists of all countries are intensifying the offensive against the wages and working conditions of the workers in all imperialist and colonial countries. It meets at a time when the workers are resisting their exploiters with ever increasing militancy and struggle which in the case of a number of colonial countries has assumed the character of armed revolts -- India, Nigeria, Haiti, etc. and when the workers everywhere are more and more developing the counter-offensive against the capitalist under revolutionary working class leadership.

The crisis has affected with particular force the millions of super-exploited Negroes in both Africa and in the Americas. It has aggravated unemployment, wage cuts and speed-up among the Negro workers and accelerated the expropriation and ruination of Negro peasantry -- all of this taking place under conditions of the most brutal colonial (racial) oppression has immeasurably deepened the misery and poverty of the Negro workers everywhere.

The Negro toilers goaded to desperation are answering the imperialist offensive by increasing mass struggles. The recent mass uprisings in South Africa, Nigeria, French Equatorial Africa, Congo, Madagascar, Haiti, the tremendous growth of the strike movement among the Negro workers as manifested particularly in South Africa, Gambia, the West Indies and in the increasing participation of the Negro workers together with white workers in strikes in the United States -- all shows that the Negro masses have awakened and are adding new and powerful forces to the struggle against capitalist imperialism.

Even before the crisis the conditions of Negro toiling masses were unbearable. Everywhere they are confined to the most unskilled labour, for the same amount of work they receive less than the whites; numerous methods are employed for wringing super profits from their exploitation.

The social-fascist parties and trade union organisations whether affiliated with the Amsterdam and II International or the American Federation of Labour in the United States, have not defended the interests of the black and white workers, but on the contrary, apart from their strike-breaking activities in the metropolitan countries, these parties actively support the plundering and murdering of colonial and subject peoples by the imperialists.

However, the most dangerous obstacle to the development of the struggles of the Negro workers in Negro reformism.

The most subtle and therefore the most dangerous type of this reformism is Garveyism. Garveyism utilises the feelings of mutual sympathy which exist among Negro toilers in all parts of the world by virtue of their exploitation and oppression, NOT in the interests of the Negro toilers, but for the purpose of promoting reactionary utopias of the Negro bourgeoisie. "Back to Africa" means the substitution of the revolutionary struggles of the Negroes all over the world against capitalism by the utopian illusion of a "peaceful

return to Africa under imperialism." The logical development of this doctrine has ultimately led its leading exponent, Marcus Garvey, to alliance with the most reactionary forces against the Negro toiling masses, e.g. Garvey's approachment with the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S.A., his negotiations with reactionary Southern senators, his manoeuvres with British and French imperialism, etc.

Reformism among the Negroes has its social basis in certain sections of the Negro middle class and intelligentsia. The representatives of this tendency whether already in open alliance with the imperialists or whether still claiming to struggle for the liberation of the Negro masses are betraying the Negro masses and acting as a break to their class conscious development. In the struggle between the imperialist ruling classes, and the oppressed Negro workers and peasants there can be no middle road, but only the road of class struggle.

National reformism also has its agents in the Negro workers' organisations such as, for example, the leadership of such organisations as the I.C.U. in South Africa, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the USA, etc. The leaders of these organisations while pretending to fight for the interests of the Negro workers are betraying them at every step and constantly concluding reactionary agreements with the capitalists behind the backs of the Negro workers.

A relentless struggle against the above tendencies is a prerequisite for working class leadership in the struggles of the Negro masses.

In the past the economic struggles of the Negro workers have in the majority of cases been spontaneous and isolated from the international labour movement, and in the main under the leadership of reformists. All of this has contributed to many defeats.

However, the present struggles of the Negro workers are taking place under more favourable objective conditions for the development of the working class leadership. The absorption of Negroes in capitalist industry in Africa and America, which has proceeded with remarkable rapidity in the last years, and the formation of a considerable Negro proletariat in the most important colonies and in the U.S.A., creates the conditions for the development of a working class leadership in all future Negro liberation struggles.

The predominant mass of Negroes are however still tied to the land, where they live under semi-slave conditions, mercilessly exploited by the imperialists, landlords, and their henchmen in the agrarian districts --- usurers, native chieftains, etc. Politically and socially the Negro toiling peasants are as much oppressed and discriminated against as Negro workers, and in some case even more.

Without a mobilisation of this mass of Negro toilers the Negro industrial proletariat can not hope to successfully carry on its struggles for the overthrow of imperialism.

The representatives of the workers in the villages are the agricultural workers. It is through these that the industrial workers mobilise the toiling peasants as their class allies and leads them onward to the final liberation struggle.

Only the revolutionary trade unions which unite the workers of all races on a revolutionary class basis, together with the masses of toiling peasants, organised respectively in tenant leagues, peasant committees, etc. and following the lead of the working class -- only such combination of our forces in the struggle against capitalism can assure the victory to the workers.

Therefore the Conference calls the attention of the Negro workers to the following immediate tasks:

- (1) The better organisation and preparation of the economic struggles of the Negro workers.
- (2) The development of an efficient working class leadership, and the establishment of independent organs of struggle.
- (3) The preparation of a programme of demands which should include the following:

- a) Equal pay for equal work regardless of race, nationality or sex.
 - b) For the immediate establishment of an 8-hour working day, and further struggle for a 7-hour day and for a 6-hour day in unhealthy occupations.
 - c) For legal existence of Trade Unions, for the right to organise and strike.
 - d) Against racial barriers in Trade Unions.
 - e) For the establishment and maintenance of the closest unity between the workers of all nations in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism.
 - f) Refusal to pay taxes and rents.
 - g) Formation of peasant organisations to carry on the struggle.
 - h) Active struggle against all open or concealed forms of slavery and forced labour -- corvée, peonage, contract labour, etc.
 - i) Struggle against the reserve system and the forced expropriation of lands from the natives.
 - j) Against all forms of national oppression.
 - k) For the return of the land to the toiling peasants.
 - l) For the immediate evacuation of the imperialists from all colonies.
 - m) For the complete national independence and the right of self-determination.
- (4) The class education of the Negro workers through the utilisation of the lessons of the struggles of the working class as a whole. The spontaneous struggles of the Negro workers for equal wages against forced labour, segregation and colour bias, etc., must be developed into a conscious struggle against imperialism and the whole system of capitalist and colonial exploitation.
- (5) Special attention must be devoted to the leadership of the Negro agricultural labourers and through them connections must be established with the broad masses of the Negro agrarian population.

The Conference declares that the tasks of the whole revolutionary trade union movement is to unite with the Negro workers in their struggles and to fight against all forms of persecution of the Negro workers, and at the same time to conduct a broad agitational campaign for the purpose of warning them against all forms of persecution of the Negro workers, and at the same time to conduct a broad agitational campaign for the purpose of warning them against the attempts of the capitalists to isolate the Negro workers.

The development of the economic struggles of the Negro workers is an important state in the struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialism and a vital part of the general struggle of the whole working class.

FOR A MORE VIGOROUS STRUGGLE AGAINST
FORCED LABOUR.

Reporter- Comrade William Wilson.

Comrades,

Whether through the operation of special laws or methods of direct and indirect administrative pressure (expropriation of native lands, hut, poll and other special taxes), the coloured peoples generally, and the Negro peoples more particularly, are compelled to perform compulsory labour for the imperialist masters and their native agents.

Forced labour takes many different forms, such as, direct slavery, compulsory unpaid labour on public works of national or local importance, indentured labour, taxation paid in labour corvée, and peonage, but whatever outward juridical forms this or that particular kind of compulsory labour might possess, -- in actual practice all such labour is

slavery under another mask.

The imperialists, of course, try to give this masked slavery the outward appearance of "free" wage labour, whilst the imperialist powers are introducing bans on forced labour into their legal codes, they are at the same time tightening the pressure of taxation (taxes on women in Nigeria and the many new taxes in the Union of South Africa being cases in point), and are adopting other means whereby their respective administrations can press down the coloured peoples.

For the purpose of fostering the illusion that an effort is being made to put a stop to forced labour, the imperialists are making use of those two international bodies, the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. The international conventions relative to the abolition of slavery and the regulating of the employment of forced labour drawn up by these organisations can never effect the abolition of compulsory labour. While Geneva is continuing its policy of deceit, S. Africa, France, Belgium are devising new ways and means of subjugating the natives, of tightening their slave chains (anti-native laws in S. Africa, new taxes in Nigeria, etc

1. This First International Conference of Negro workers warns the oppressed masses of the toiling Negroes against any hope of liberation through legislative measures whatsoever, whether adopted by individual governments or by international federations of imperialists. This Conference solemnly warns the toiling Negroes of the world and the working masses of the colonies generally against the League of Nations and the ILO, and declares, further, that these international bodies are tools of the imperialists and have nothing in common with the work of defending the interests of the toiling and down-trodden masses of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

2. This conference condemns the treacherous colonial policies and activities of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, which are covered up by high-sounding phrases. These organisations act as the open agents of the imperialists inasmuch as they are furthering the enslavement and oppression of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. The colonial policy of the MacDonald Government, the representatives of the Second International is the best proof of the real policy of these imperialist agents.

3. The Conference declares forced labour can only be abolished by a merciless and uncompromising struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Only by fighting actively for national self-determination, only by a joint capitalist system will the Negro toilers effect their emancipation from the existing oppression and exploitation.

4. The Conference calls upon all Negro toilers to close their ranks and to fight for the return of all exploited lands to native tribes and communities, to occupy by direct action these lands and refuse to pay rent to any person or body whatsoever;

to refuse to pay any taxes whatsoever save those necessary to provide the needs of the particular Negro Community concerned;

to refuse to recognise the authority of the tribal chiefs who are agents of the imperialists; and to fight against native landlords and capitalists;

to drive out of their villages all recruiting agents and to repudiate the terms of all indentures and other contracts;

to refuse to knuckle under the compound system and to demand the final abolition of all compounds;

to fight against the "pass" system and against the segregation police;

to organise self-defence corps for protection against the agents of imperialism.

Our call is for a united front of all the exploited without regard to colour, race, nationality or religion.

Forward against Imperialism! Against Capitalism!

On to Socialism's Victory throughout the World!

Workers and oppressed of all lands and nations, unite!

Down with all form of peopage and concealed and open slavery!

Equal pay for equal work.

Against Masters and Servant laws.

For the freedom of political and industrial organisation!

THE NEGRO WORKERS AND THE WAR DANGER.

Reporter - Comrade Tom Marsh.

Comrades,

The first international conference of Negro workers is meeting at a time when the imperialists are feverishly preparing for a NEW imperialist war and especially for a NEW intervention against the Soviet Union. Even now the imperialists are conducting actual war against the toiling masses of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The attempts to stifle the liberation struggles of the Chinese and Indian toilers, the bloody suppression of the heroic uprisings of the Indo-Chinese and of the Negro toilers on the African Continent and in Haiti, clearly reveals the plundering nature of imperialism which can only maintain itself by wars and bloody oppression.

The Conference reminds the Negro toilers of their experience in the blood bath of 1914-1918. They were forced together with the other toilers to fight for the interests of the master class. Millions of workers and peasants were killed and maimed. The net result of the war to the masses of Negro toilers was the further increase of their misery and exploitation. Remember the days when in Africa the peasants were driven from their villages into the armies as soldiers and as carriers at the point of machine guns. Remember the way hundreds and thousands of Negroes were conscripted into the armies of the United States, England, France and Germany and driven brutally by the imperialist officers. They were massacred as shock troops enslaved as labour corps and as porters. These memories we must bear in mind and draw the proper lessons from them.

But not alone the past offers us experiences and lessons, the present teaches us similar lessons. In Africa Negro peasants and workers are conscripted into the Armies of France, England and Belgium. These armies composed of Negro toilers are utilised to suppress the revolts of other oppressed peoples (Singalese in Morocco, Algiers and Madagascar and the preparation of the French imperialists to utilise Singalese troops for the suppression of the revolt of Indo-Chinese). Black troops are also used against the working class movements in the metropolitan countries. (St. Etienne strike, France).

This conference declares to all Negro toilers throughout the world that this present deep crisis of the world capitalist system signalises the renewed attack against the already miserable existence of the Negro masses. The crisis is expressed by the fact that the capitalists are producing more goods than the increasingly impoverished masses can afford to buy. Millions of workers are permanently unemployed while the toiling peasants are reduced to a starvation level. The effects of the general decline of the capitalist system which were sharpened by the now developing economic crisis are felt by the Negro masses with particular intensity.

The crisis of capitalism finds its reflection in the acute rivalry among the imperialist nations and in their struggle for redistribution of the world which must inevitably culminate in an imperialist war.

The capitalists propose to wage this war at the expense of the toiling masses. They propose to use millions of toilers as cannon fodder. The toilers have nothing to gain from the imperialist war. **THE ONLY WAR IT RECOGNISES AND SUPPORTS IS THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR OF THE PROLETARIAT AND THE TOILING PEASANTRY AGAINST IMPERIALIST AND CAPITALIST OPPRESSION.**

1. While the capitalist world is on the decline, the Soviet Union is rising and successfully building a Socialist Commonwealth. The workers and peasants of the Soviet Union after the victorious overthrow of the capitalist system in their country, have since become the fortress of the revolutionary workers throughout the world. The Soviet Union is the only country that knows no oppression, knows no exploitation, has no imperialist aims and supports the revolutionary liberation movement of the workers and toiling peasants of all countries.

To the capitalist world engulfed in crisis, the Soviet Union which is successfully constructing its socialist industry on the basis of the great Five-Year Plan and raising the cultural level and the economic conditions of the more backward nationalities to higher level, has become the primary object of attack. Hence the bitter hatred of the imperialists to the Soviet Union and their campaign of lies and slander, the religious campaign.

frontier provocations such as the effort to seize the Chinese Eastern Railway, etc. It is the task of all Negro toilers to struggle against the danger of an imperialist attack against the Soviet Union and in case of such an attack STRUGGLE ON THE SIDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AGAINST THE IMPERIALISTS.

3. It is also vital to every Negro toiler to note the increasing armament race going on now between the imperialist nations. In order to mislead the workers the imperialists are organising "disarmament conferences". It must be distinctly understood that the result of each such conference was the increase in the war budgets of the imperialists (London Disarmament Conference).

Nevertheless, the agents of the imperialists, including the reformist trade union and party leaders with the Amsterdam Trade Union International and the Second International at their head, utilise these conferences and the imperialist organ, the League of Nations, for the purpose of pacifist manoeuvres while at the same time actively preparing the ground for the imperialist war. For example, in England, MacDonald's "Labour" Government, side by side with its strike-breaking efforts against the textile and wool workers in Great Britain, ruthlessly murders colonial workers in India, Africa and other places and leads the attack against the Soviet Union. The A.F. of L. the notorious strike breaker, supports the US Senate's programme of naval construction and the aggressive policy of US imperialism in Central America Haiti, etc.

4. At the same time the Conference warns the Negro toilers against the traitors in their own midst who are representing the interests of the Negro Bourgeoisie. Notwithstanding the differences between the Negro bourgeoisie and the imperialists, they are united on the questions of imperialist war, the attack upon the Soviet Union and in their attitude towards the proletariat and objectively serve the interests of the imperialists. The leadership of such organisation as the West African and South African National Congress, the National Association of Coloured People and the Urban League in the US actually sided in mobilising the Negro toilers behind the imperialist war machines in the past war.

5. In connection with the war preparation, the practice of dividing the black and white workers, of pitting one against the other on grounds of race - a policy which is the mainstay of imperialist oppression - is now being revived. The Hertzog Native Bills in South Africa, the new wave of lynching and mob violence now taking place in the Southern United States against the Negroes, and organised by the imperialists, is at the same time directed towards widening the artificial barrier between the black and the white workers and as such is an integral part of the offensive of the imperialists directed not only against the Negroes but against the working class as a whole.

THE NEGRO AND THE WHITE WORKERS MUST STAND TOGETHER AGAINST THE EXPLOITERS AND DEFEAT THE ATTEMPTS OF THE CAPITALISTS TO CREATE RACE HATREDS. The imperialists are well aware that the United front of the workers of all nationalities and toiling peasants will annihilate their plans and present a threat to their rule. Efforts are, therefore, concentrated to break down the organisations and suppress the struggles of the revolutionary workers as a part of the measures for preparing war. The fierce struggle waged by them are coupled to the suppression of the Communist Party and the revolutionary Trade Unions throughout the World. Besides these measures the capitalists everywhere enact and propose to enact laws hitting particularly against the Negro masses.

6. The war Danger is imminent! Therefore this Conference of Negro workers calls upon the Negro workers to:

a) organise into revolutionary labor and trade unions organisations, to build committees of struggle, to unite the forces of the Negro toiling peasants and workers and to connect these up with the international revolutionary movement.

b) On the basis of these class organisations, the Negro toilers will be able to organise a real revolutionary struggle against the war danger connecting it up with their economic struggles. To organise your forces for

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.