

Garment Workers will succeed only if ALL STAND UNITED!

A wage board has been appointed to investigate the clothing industry, and a trade unionist has written this article for 'New Age' on the demands the workers will put to the Board.

THE expansion of the clothing industry has been phenomenal. In 1932 the industry employed 14,331 workers. This had risen in 1951/1952 to 45,279. Of these workers approximately 35,000 are organised in the registered trade unions, and another 5,000 in the African unions for men and women on the Witwatersrand which are not registered because Africans are debarred from being members of unions registrable under the Industrial Conciliation Act.

In 1939, the output of the S.A. clothing industry amounted to £8,000,000, whilst imported clothing totalled nearly £6,000,000. In 1952 the industry had advanced to the extent that its output was £50,000,000 being nearly 80 per cent of the clothing consumed in South Africa during that year.

RACIAL COMPOSITION CHANGES

Of great significance is the change in the racial composition of the workers employed in the clothing industry during this period. In the early days, outside of the Western Cape Province where Coloured labour was employed to a considerable extent, the industry was mainly a sphere of "White" labour.

The picture has changed. Whereas in 1939/40 the industry employed 58 per cent Europeans and 42 per cent Non-Europeans, by 1951/52 there were only 31 per cent Europeans and 69 per cent Non-Europeans. Included in the 69 per cent Non-Europeans are approximately 10,000 African men and women many of whom are employed on jobs that are amongst the most skilled in the industry, for example, machining, pressing and higher grade needlework.

For the first time a joint memorandum has been presented to the Wage Board by all the most important registered unions—the Garment Workers' Unions of the Cape Peninsula and Natal, and the G.W.U. of S.A. (formerly led by Mr. E. S. Sachs as General Secretary now banned from this post). Until recently these unions were at daggers drawn and the united front represents a step forward that is to be welcomed.

NO INVITATION

But the united front is incomplete. No invitation to join in presenting this memorandum was issued to South African Clothing Workers' Union, representing 2,000 African men mainly in the Transvaal, or the 3,000-strong Garment Workers' Union of African Women who were formerly members of the Garment Workers' Union of S.A. and were excluded when African women were removed from the definition of "employee" in the Industrial Conciliation Act. They have therefore presented their own memoranda.

This reveals the tendency even on the part of the Cape and Natal Unions, which are almost entirely Non-European in membership to ignore the necessity of co-operation with the African Unions which is essential if present standards are to be safeguarded and advances made in the conditions of work of the clothing workers as a whole.

GRAVE DANGERS

And make no mistake about it, the clothing workers in South Africa are faced with grave dan-

gers coming both from inside and outside South Africa, dangers that can best be met if their ranks are as closely knit and as well organised as it is humanly possible to achieve.

Inside South Africa we have taking place, what has been taking place in the United States of America, where employers seeking to escape from the well-organised industrial centres in the Northern States removed their industries lock, stock and barrel to the Deep South and employed unorganised workers at low rates of pay.

Here, too, the move has been away from the Rand, first of all to other centres like Kimberley, Kroonstad, Standerton, and also to Natal, and even to Swaziland. In Natal, notwithstanding the presence of the G.W.U. of Natal, the rates of pay are far lower than those on the Rand, and in Mbabane, Swaziland the miserly wage of 12/6 per week is being paid to African women in clothing factories.

Wages vary to a great degree even amongst the organised industrial centres in South Africa, and the best wages have been achieved where the greatest and most militant struggles were conducted, that is in Johannesburg and on the Rand which has a 40-hour week and the highest wages and most advanced industrial agreement as a whole.

MORE STRIKES—MORE WAGES

In every other area where the workers are organised wages differ and are lower than those on the Rand—in ratio to the struggles and militancy of the workers' organisations.

The main demand by the coordinating registered trade unions to the Wage Board, is to fix a uniform basic wage for the whole of the Union of South Africa with £8.10.0 for the main categories of male workers and £5.10.0 for female workers (exclusive of cost of living allowance).

How strange that these unions which are largely female in composition should accept the "inferior" position of women who are called upon to do the same work as men for a wage nearly 50 per cent lower. The clothing industry lending itself to the employment of women, must still be regarded as a field of exploiting women at low rates of pay.

The unions submit a weekly budget for a woman garment worker living on her own which works out at £8.6.8 (without any caviare or champagne)—which the great majority of women in the garment industry in South Africa are not getting be they European or Non-European. The unions also demand a 40-hour working week and three weeks paid leave plus all public holidays and May Day on full pay as well as two weeks paid sick leave per year.

GUARANTEED WAGE

An interesting new demand is for the payment of "Guaranteed Annual Wage" which is the method suggested by them to combat one of the evils of capitalist society that is so prevalent in the clothing industry from time to time—the laying off of workers on so-called "short-time." The unions propose that this be met by either a guaranteed annual

wage or by limiting short time to 12 days per year. In the United States of America, the automobile and other workers have in recent months succeeded in establishing their rights to such a procedure being embodied in their agreements with employers.

A striking fact is the increase in the number of Non-European workers in the clothing industry, a feature of the whole industrial

development of South Africa. Economic forces are bringing this about in spite of all obstacles, legal and otherwise, erected to hamper or hinder this development.

With the smell of enhanced rates of profits employers in the clothing industry are seeking to use more and more African labour at lower rates of pay. The solution to this is not to bar Africans

EVATON BUS BOYCOTT



The Evaton to Johannesburg bus boycott is now in its tenth week and our picture shows the militant spirit of the workers who, travelling to Johannesburg by train, queue up for the only bus that runs from Evaton station to the township. Many hundreds walk miles to the train every day. The latest development in the boycott is the withdrawal by the company of all its buses on the Johannesburg run. Settlement seemed almost in sight last week when the company offered to return to the original fares, but this offer was withdrawn at the last minute. The company's second offer was turned down by the Evaton People's Transport Council, which is conducting the boycott, as an unsatisfactory offer to the people. There have been nine further arrests of boycott supporters and organisers on various charges, but the boycott goes on—the people are holding out for victory.

from skilled employment—as has been proposed by Nationalist-inspired white garment workers in Germiston—nor does it lie in ignoring the existence of the African workers as has been done by the registered trade unions in their approach to the Wage Board.

ALL WANT LIVING WAGE

All workers want a living wage—that is the cry of all the garment workers even those misguided workers in Germiston. The African workers cry out against their terrible conditions of employment; they want to live too; they want to work too; they want a better life too for themselves and their children—all these are natural human demands.

The way forward is for a united front on the part of all the workers in the clothing industry for all to enjoy equal pay and equal conditions with equal opportunities for all. By these means all inequalities will be destroyed and the workers will win their demands.

"We Stand United with Africans"

Naicker's Message to ANC

DURBAN.—"The Indian people of Natal will stand united with the African National Congress in the struggle for liberation and for the defeat of apartheid oppression," is Dr. G. M. Naicker's message to the Natal African National Congress conference to be held this week at the Bantu Social Centre.

As President of the Natal Indian Congress Dr. Naicker assures the delegates to the conference that "the Indian people will be rallied in Natal to respond to the call of our leader, Chief Luthuli for one million signatures in support of our Charter for liberation.

"Dr. Verwoerd," continues the message, "has announced that African women will be issued with reference books from 1956, and this announcement has rightly caused much indignation among African women, who have always opposed the pass laws. We are solidly behind them in their just opposition as we are behind every just opposition to apartheid oppression in the Union."

Washerwoman Annie

(Continued from page 6)

Irritation lit her cool grey eyes. Ma Dlomo stood with heaving breast, her hands slumped at her sides.

"You Native girls are all the same . . . You look only at your side of things . . . Now, I've . . . We look well after you . . ."

"Missis, I'm work. I'm work, work . . . Look my hands!" Her hands were a record of years of unremitting toil. "And still childrens . . ."

"Don't shout at me!" "No, missis. I'm not shout. I'm tell Missis I'm want money . . . five shillings . . ."

"What cheek! There are many Native girls who want work . . . I'm want fifteen shillings . . . Ten years I'm wash . . ."

"How dare you talk like this to me! Get out of here!"

Ma Dlomo pulled herself together. She knotted the ten shilling note in her handkerchief. She placed the two bundles of washing on her head. She turned to Jane. "Good-bye, my child."

"Good-bye, Ma."

Mrs. Field's eyes fell on the paper bag containing the broken food, and on the neat white bundle at its side.

The lawn-mower whirred in the garden. "Is Annie gone, Jane?"

"Yes, Missis."

At that moment an ageing washerwoman was plodding uphill with two bundles of washing on her head.

* * *

ADJUDICATORS' COMMENT

This is one of the best stories we read in the competition and was a "near miss" for first place. The writer displays a good style and can create fine images, natural and true to character and the situation. Very memorable, for instance, is the image of the "drawn-out scraping of spoons on enamel plates" striking home the hunger of the children. This is real imaginative writing. For powers of observation, a swift sympathy without melodrama or bathos, and the ability to create a situation of genuine poignancy, this writer is clearly talented.

The story's shortcomings, in our view, came from a rather "scattered" construction and a really basic flaw in the presentation of the character, Mrs. Field. The reader has too many distractions in the way of getting to know the central character, Ma Dlomo. So the old woman remains more a symbol than a vividly seen and living person. The flashbacks to Ma Dlomo's childhood, her father and husband fill

up the whole first half of the story and the effect is to slow down the narrative. It must be emphasised that the writer is tackling a big and serious task and it is easy to criticise and give advice. We do so only because we feel the material in this story is first-class and the writer has the ability to get more out of it.

With its present construction of a series of separate narrative events, the story must move faster, have more impetus, the characters jump into life more vividly. Incidentals could be toned down and more interest concentrated on Ma Dlomo. An alternative treatment would be to start with Ma Dlomo's setting out in the train and work backwards, the past flitting swiftly through her mind in snatches of broken thought, and culminating in the conversation with Mrs. Field.

The white woman is, we feel, not clearly seen. She is presented as a fairly sympathetic "charitable" type. Ma Dlomo has got to know her over 10 years. How is it she turns out such an inhuman person? If she is, then Ma's judgment of her character has proved incredibly wrong. The conversation and the character of Mrs. Field need more thought and the picture made more convincing. This is too good a story to spoil.

RAND INDIANS TO BE FORCED INTO LENZ CONCENTRATION CAMP

JOHANNESBURG.—The one-time Lenz military camp is to be used to accommodate Indian families faced with ejection, and, says the City Council, those crowding backyard rooms.

For years the Council has not lifted a finger on Indian housing, and has turned a deaf ear to all proposals that flats be built for Indian families in Fordsburg or such areas. Now that the Group Areas Board is at work the Council feels confident that the Indian Group Area will be Lenasia, and those in most dire need of housing are being persuaded to move to the Lenz camp.

The old military camp once used for the Cape Corps is separated from Lenasia by only a fence. Up to now Lenasia has been entirely boycotted by the Indian people and all there is to be seen in the new township is a township's office, one old house and the school built for 500 Indian children but which only 30 attend.

Lenz is 20 miles from Johannesburg along the Potchefstroom road. 10 MILES TO SHOPS

A station lies just opposite the camp barracks but only a coal train stops there four times a day. The nearest shops are about 10 miles away in Kliptown or Evaton.

The 26 barrack-like huts are in a bad condition: the floors caving in in many rooms. Throughout there are communal latrines and shower baths.

The entire camp is surrounded by an 8 foot high barbed wire fence—"rather like a concentration camp" was one comment.

The camps is also unbearably dusty, with red sand flying about continuously.

Even presuming that Indian families who have nowhere else to go can be induced to live in the Lenz barracks, how will the men travel in to work, and the women do their shopping?

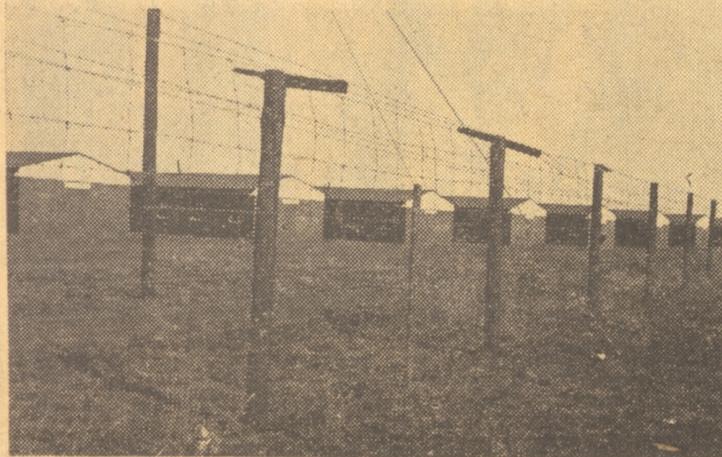
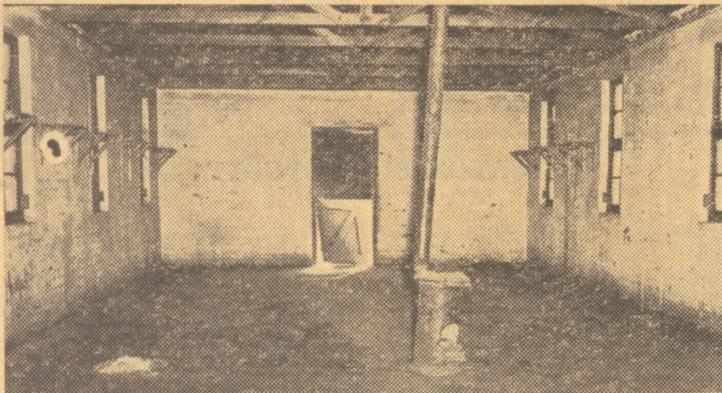
The feeling among the Indian people is that the proposal to house families in the Lenz barracks is the thin end of the wedge to force Indians to settle in the proposed Lenasia ghetto.

CONGRESS PROTEST

In a vigorous protest to the Johannesburg City Council the Transvaal Indian Congress outlines the long negotiations it has had and its

concrete schemes for proper rehousing of Indian families in utility flats on available land in Fordsburg.

"We . . . pleaded with your Council on the grounds of justice and equity not to assist the Government in implementing its policy of apartheid," says the Congress.



Two views of the grim Lenz camp to which the City Council plans to send Indian families. Above is an interior of one of the military hutments with its broken-down door and rotting floor. Below is a general view of the squat hutments behind a barbed-wire fence. All facilities are communal with lines of taps, sinks, lavatories, etc. totally unsuitable for families.

Pointing out that the Council has taken a far-reaching decision to force people into Lenz against their wishes, the letter states:

"We again suggest that the project of setting up utility flats in the City be considered in the light of the foregoing and thus avoid unnecessary misery and hardship. Your Council must agree with us that it has treated the Indian people most shabbily in so far as housing is concerned. The Council has not spent a single penny towards housing the members of the Indian Community in Johannesburg and now that £58,000 odd is to be spent it is used for the ulterior motive of uprooting and driving the people out of the city.

The Congress asks the Council to stay any proceedings in connection with Lenz and to meet a deputation.

FREEDOM CHARTER was signed by many hundreds at a recent mass meeting in the Bochabela Freedom Square, Bloemfontein.

ARNOLD'S XMAS HAMPERS
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Boy is Refused Medical Attention—Dies

DURBAN. THE colour bar was probably responsible for the death of twelve-year-old Suresh Magrajh last week and the noble principles of the medical profession were forgotten when this seriously wounded boy was refused attention because he was an Indian.

Shot through the side, Suresh was rushed to St. Aiden's Indian Hospital where the absence of a surgeon made it impossible to give him the necessary treatment.

From there he was taken to the Addington General Hospital, for the relatives had been told that although only Europeans and Coloureds were admitted, as an emergency case the boy would receive attention.

"HELP US!"

On arrival at the Addington Hospital Suresh's relatives appealed to the authorities to help the boy whose condition was now critical. Coldly they were told that Indians could not be admitted and an ambulance was ordered by the clerk to remove the boy to the King Edward Hospital, four miles away, as his condition was too serious to allow him to travel by car.

Meanwhile Suresh was left to lie on the back seat of the car to await the ambulance. He was conscious, feverish and in pain. It was obvious that a blood

transfusion was required immediately, his pulse-beat was dropping dangerously low.

HALF-AN HOUR PASSES

Half-an-hour went by. The ambulance had not yet arrived. European patients were being carried into the hospital and doctors, surgeons, nurses and sisters were milling about inside.

Members of the staff walked past the car and some, moved by curiosity, looked in and went on, all unresponsive to the boy's struggle for life.

Another fifteen minutes went by and still the ambulance did not come. Two young girls, sisters of the boy, helplessly watched Suresh bleeding to death. They begged for help but again the reply was firm: Indians and Africans could not be treated there.

HE MIGHT HAVE LIVED

For the third time the clerk phoned for an ambulance, which had not yet left the station.

In desperation the relatives drove the boy to the King Edward Hospital. A blood transfusion was administered but the boy died as his body was laid on the operating table.

If Suresh had been attended to earlier, said the doctor, he might have lived.

J.A.

Arnold's Xmas Hampers

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Mr. T. Phirayane, last known address 16 Miller St., Sophiatown.

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3. Customers must notify the office if their agents are not calling on them regularly.
4. Agents must call in regularly to the office to make their payments.
5. All agents must have their accounts square by November 15th. Parcels cannot be delivered to the customers of those agents who owe us money.

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Congress Movement Denounces Swart's Raid

JOHANNESBURG.

The Union-wide police raids dare not be allowed to pass without the strongest protest by the people, said a joint statement issued by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the S.A. Congress of Democrats and the S.A. Coloured Peoples' Organisation. The Congress movement warned that the raids, which invaded the privacy of hundreds of citizens of all races in their homes, offices and schools, are a most serious manifestation of the growth of the police state in our midst.

Like the whole series of police raids which have continued since the beginning of 1954, and which culminated in the encirclement of the Congress of the People by masses of armed police, these raids purport to be an "investigation" of alleged treason, sedition and the like.

IN FACT THE RAIDS ARE INTENDED AS ACTS OF INTIMIDATION, AND TO RESTRICT THE LEGAL RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO CARRY ON LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION TO THE NATIONALIST PARTY GOVERNMENT. ANY LEGAL PROSECUTION FOLLOWING THESE RAIDS CAN ONLY, WE ARE CONVINCED, BE A DELIBERATE "FRAME-UP" DESIGNED TO FRIGHTEN THE PUBLIC, AND TO PROLONG THE RULE OF THE NATIONALISTS ON THE PRETEXT OF SOME FANCIFUL "PLOT" FOR AN UPRISING FOR THE CONGRESS MOVEMENT.

There is no such plot. Indeed, the talk of "sedition" and "treason," of "black uprising" and "Communist bogeys" are in a fact a propaganda trap, designed to cover up the real danger to the country—the sinister conspiracy of the Nationalists and the Broederbond to set up a Fascist republic.

We warn the country not to be deceived by this trap. The democratic people of South Africa will not be intimidated by such means. WE REAFFIRM OUR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE WITH REDOUBLED ENERGY THE STRUGGLE TO IMPLEMENT THE DEMANDS EMBODIED IN THE FREEDOM CHARTER, WHICH HAS BECOME THE RALLYING-POINT AND INSPIRATION FOR ALL WHO WORK FOR A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA IN WHICH ALL WILL BE SECURE FROM ARBITRARY RAIDS AND INFRINGEMENTS OF THEIR RIGHTS.



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