

AND SOUTH AFRICA?

While the underground rumblings of the approaching eruption can be heard by anyone who has ears, while the arming of South Africa is proceeding on an unheard of scale, shown in the feverish buying of aeroplanes, bombers, tanks, and guns, while our Steel Works in Pretoria are preparing to turn out our own armament-weapons, and new munition factories are being erected, while the young men are being militarised, ~~++~~ (all getting ready for the ~~x~~ slaughter) ~~+++~~, the country is being lulled by parliamentary squabbling and the idle talk of senile, would-be politicians about the Status Act and our independent rights. Now, it is certain that you never see a sober man arguing that he is not drunk; and these <sup>futile</sup> arguments in Parliament are just as amusing as the babble of a drunken man arguing that he is sober. British Imperialism is so strong in this country that it can safely allow to M.P.'s the pleasure of talking, if this consoles them.

But, although the parliamentary debates are really amusing, (what, for example, can nowadays make better reading than the idea of solving the Poor White Problem by establishing a hostel for 100 girls in Johannesburg?), yet the time is far too serious for mere amusement. Moreover, it does not lie within the scope of this article to deal with our "talking shop" and enter into an examination of its parties. It is sufficient to mention that the workers and oppressed, the overwhelming majority, have no representation in this "democratic" parliament which consists solely of their enemies. Needless to say that we have no ~~x~~ illusions whatsoever ~~x~~ concerning bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism. The strength of the working class of South Africa, both potential and real, is not reflected in parliament. But South Africa is not exceptional in this. Even in the United States a proletariat of ~~thirty~~ thirty millions has no representatives in Parliament.

In the same way the strength of the real rulers is also not reflected in their number of M.P.'s. The real ruler of South Africa is British Imperialism, and its ~~finance~~ finance capital is ruling not through Parliament, but through the three Chambers of Mines, Commerce, Industry. All talk about the Independence of South Africa secured through this or that Act, through this or that Seal, is sheer nonsense. The Chamber of Mines has more to say than the majority in Parliament (e.g., the quitting of the Gold Standard). The Chambers of Commerce and Industry have more to say than the Government (e.g., the Minimum Wage Bill, the Tariff system, the regulation of Holidays). And for support of this fact we need not look back to a recent statement in Parliament, made by a prominent front-bencher, that the salaries of all the members are paid by the Gold Mines. Never before was the grip of British Imperialism on this country so strong as it is to-day, as a result of the chronic crisis in ~~our~~ agriculture and the dependence on the mines.

Fusion is the political expression of this economic penetration and financial grip. And it is very important to realise this and to keep it in mind when we deal with the question which most nearly concerns us at this moment: the War Question. For when we come to decide what should be the tactics of the Revolutionary Party in relation to the war question, it is necessary to know whether we may rely on the presence of an irreconcilable antagonism of South African Capitalism versus British Imperialism, or whether we may presuppose that by making a few concessions British Imperialism will have the full support through thick and thin of South African Capitalism, both industrial and agrarian. The <sup>con</sup>cessions to be made by British Imperialism would be: the dropping of the Cape Native Vote, the support of the Native Land Bills (designed by Dutch landowners), and lastly, the handing over to the Union of the three British Protectorates, without which the Government's Segregation dreams cannot be realised.

This, then, is the position. We see on the one side the reluctance of Britain to hand over the Protectorates until after full investigation, and on the other side the reluctance of the Government of South Africa to subscribe to a "general" scheme of Imperial Defence until the occasion arises. Evidently it is a matter of bargaining, if we accept as true the reiterated statements that Sir

Maurice Hankey's visit was not entirely successful and that there are no secret agreements. But is a suspicion or a doubt not justifiable in view of experience gained from the past war? And is there not corroborative significance in the House of Commons incident, when the British Prime Minister assured members that Sir Maurice Hankey's visit to South Africa was of an entirely ~~entirely~~ ~~the~~ private character, but later, on being confronted with the Report which showed its official character, was proved to be a liar even though there is no record that he blushed? We admit that so far we have not all the facts which would prove beyond any possibility of doubt the incorrectness of the official statements. But, when we take into consideration the economic interests and inter-relations between Britain and South Africa, the investments, the control of the whole economic life; when we consider the vital importance of South Africa to Britain in time of war, in connection with the trade routes to India, Australia, and New Zealand, the ~~the~~ the supply of food-stuffs and raw materials, ~~when we consider~~ ~~this~~ copper and gold; when we consider all this, we are convinced that, Protectorates or no Protectorates, when Great Britain declares war, South Africa will come in on her side. No sensible man can seriously accept the possibility of South Africa remaining neutral and trading with both sides — trading, be it remembered, under the protection of the British Navy!

Yet, some may object, wasn't there a good deal of time during this parliamentary session devoted to Simonstown and our right to neutrality? True, there was. There was very much talking from the side of the Malanites, and at the same time a complete agreement of all the other parties, Fusionists, Stallardites, Labourites, Roosites, with the views of Smuts and Pirow. But even these talks revealed the factious character of the Malanite opposition. It was ascertained beyond any doubt that the same Dr. Malan (just like General Hertzog and all the others), when he was a member of the Cabinet, supported the policy of British Imperialism, of secret negotiations and agreements (such as the Smuts-Churchill agreement), which are now being logically developed by Pirow. It must be understood that we are not concerned with Dr. Malan or with Dr. van der Merwe individually, but with that part of the so-called national bourgeoisie which supports them. The question is whether they are going to put up a real fight against British Imperialism and resist the dragging of South Africa into the war. In a case of this kind, if the national bourgeoisie becomes a Revolutionary national bourgeoisie, it is the duty of the working class to support the fight against Imperialism, because anything which gives a blow to Imperialism strengthens the Revolutionary cause. Unfortunately, in South Africa we have no ~~such~~ Revolutionary national bourgeoisie.

Here as everywhere the bourgeoisie has long ceased to be a revolutionary factor. In 1871 the French bourgeoisie (in the person of Thiers) joined hands with their national deadly enemies (in the person of Bismarck), in order to crush the Paris Commune.

In 1905 the Russian liberal bourgeoisie betrayed the Revolution and reconciled themselves with the Tsar. In 1922 the Indian National Bourgeoisie, under the leadership of Gandhi, called off the civil disobedience movement and reconciled themselves with British Imperialism as soon as they saw the beginning of a real Revolutionary struggle.

In 1927 in China the Revolutionary national bourgeoisie, the Kuomintang, "betrayed" the Revolution for the same reasons and joined the foreign Imperialist powers against the Revolution.

Still worse is the position in South Africa, where the national bourgeoisie is divided. The predominant part of the Dutch section of the population has abandoned the fight and is openly supporting ~~the~~ Imperialism, while the minority is merely putting up a sham fight in Parliament.

Let us make no ~~no~~ mistake. A fight against British Imperialism is not conceivable unless as a Revolutionary fight on a grand scale, that is, unless the great bulk of the oppressed and exploited (black and white) can be drawn in.

Can it be supposed that the Malanites will accomplish this? Consider firstly that they cannot be identified with the national colonial bourgeoisie of India and China on account of their racial bonds with Imperialism and their hostility towards the Native population. Consider further that the Malanites, or rather their leaders, are too well aware of the nature and strength of British Imperialism not to understand that a serious struggle requires an upheaval of the Revolutionary masses. But it is precisely the Malanites who are the most reactionary part of the bourgeoisie, who are the zealous advocates of full and complete Segregation, of the brutal oppression of the Natives and of more and more repressive legislation against them. It is the Malanites who, more than any other section, are afraid of the Natives and have to fear the upheaval of the Revolutionary masses. To expect therefore that the Malanites will engage in a National Revolutionary movement, will wage a civil war, to keep South Africa out of a new Imperialist war, would be most naive, foolish, and therefore dangerous. The most they will do will be to indulge in talk, protest, rejection of the military vote, and pacifist propaganda.

Is this our road? No! Our fight for peace must be a Revolutionary fight. The fight for peace cannot be divorced from the Revolutionary struggle, from the Class struggle. The fight for peace means the fight against Capitalism and Imperialism — the causes of war.

War is inseparable from Capitalism. Therefore the abolition of war is possible only through the elimination of Capitalism. Here in South Africa the fight against Imperialism is inseparable from the fight against Capitalism. For that reason we cannot look for allies in the bourgeoisie. In the fight we have to look solely to the working class and poor or landless peasantry and that part of the petty bourgeoisie which will support our Revolutionary fight.

But even if, at the beginning, we are a handful only, we will keep high the banner of Revolutionary Marxism and in company with Lenin, Liebknecht, and Trotsky, "learn to swim against the stream".

DOWN WITH IMPERIALIST WAR!

DOWN WITH CAPITALISM!

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF ALL WORKERS & OPPRESSED!

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**WORKER'S PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1933-1935**

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