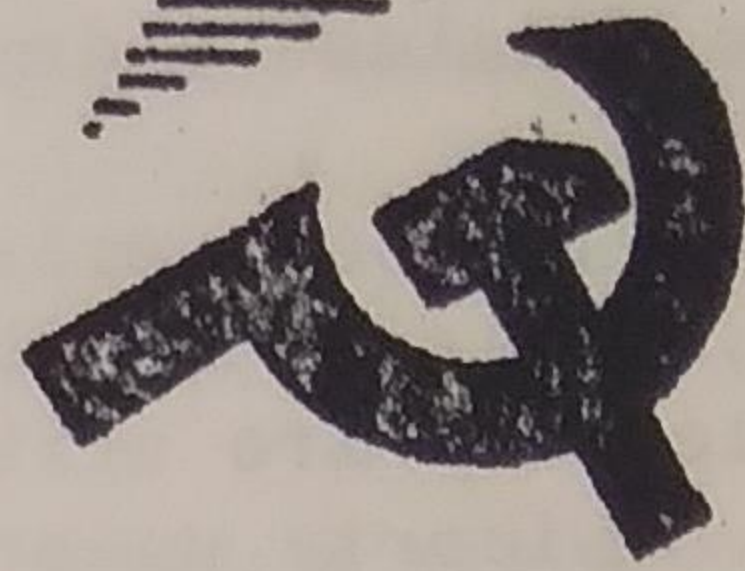


Workers
of the
World,
UNITE!

THE SPARK



ORGAN OF THE WORKERS' PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Vol. 5 No. 6 (51)

JUNE 1939

Price 1d.

THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT FACES A NEW ROAD

A whole epoch is drawing to a close. What will be known in history as the epoch of capitalist democracy is labouring in its death agonies before our very eyes. In a month or two, when the world war starts, it will receive its final death blow. Although we shall be told that only temporarily suspended, it will disappear into the dustbin of history, never to return again. Twenty five years ago Imperialism succeeded in tricking a whole generation into defending it, simply by using the bluff of "a war to save democracy". To-day, it seems, Imperialism is going to play the trick successfully again. The question arises: why should Imperialism deliberately destroy the valuable weapon that has served Capitalism so well for two hundred years, and makes it possible to send millions of people to kill each other for its glory, profit and survival? Isn't it hastening its own end by discarding this weapon?

Imperialism has no choice. The bourgeoisie could never forget the revolution that followed the first world war. Although Social Democracy saved them that time, they realised how unreliable such an ally would be in the coming mortal combat between Capital and Labour. Moreover they realised the danger of this sort of democracy, bourgeois democracy, for the maintenance of Capitalism. They had to find other methods of self-preservation; undisguised force had to take the place of the sweet hypocrisy and lying phrases usually found so useful in the class struggle. Imperialism has had to throw off its mask -- democracy -- and show its real face -- fascism -- in country after country. Even in those countries who still style themselves "the democracies", the mask wears so thin that even the greatest efforts of the professional liars cannot produce enthusiasm in the masses to die for democracy. For what is left of democracy in Britain and France?

Sixty years ago even great socialists could imagine a peaceful revolution in Britain at least as a theoretical possibility, although not a probability. The people enjoyed various democratic rights and a parliamentary tradition; and there was no standing army nor a fixed, hardened bureaucracy. But they cannot boast of these things any more. Even a few months ago the Left Press in Europe maintained that the British working class would never accept conscription in peace time. Yet the people were never asked to express their opinion through a general election. Much has changed in the last quarter of a century and even more in the last few months; the much-boasted freedom of the Press, of speech, of meetings and of asylum have been steadily reduced to nothing by wireless censors, press censors, laws against libel, seduction and disaffection, and by all kinds of police supervision and interference.

Yet in a month or two even the remaining shadows of democratic rights will disappear. They will be extinguished as soon as war breaks out and Capitalist democracy will vanish from the historical arena for ever. For if Capitalism survives the coming war its form of government can never be anything else but fascist. Reformist Social Democracy, which for more than half a century firmly believed that bourgeois democracy would gradually and peacefully give way to Socialist Democracy, will also disappear from the scene,

despised and cursed by the workers whom it has betrayed. But for the Social Democrats, the world would be marching today under proletarian democracy towards a classless society; instead, it is precipitated into another Imperialist slaughter.

Bourgeois democracy, which was undoubtedly a great step forward from feudal autocracy, and certainly valuable for the education of the workers towards the class struggle, has nevertheless always been narrow, hypocritical and deceptive. As Lenin said: it always remained a democracy for the rich and a deception for the poor.

The bourgeois apologist will no doubt exclaim: "But democracy means liberty, equality, decision by the majority! And what can be higher than these?" The trouble is that while they are written down in big letters in the Constitution, all the same they are a lie. Liberty under Capitalism, even in the most democratic states, has always meant liberty to exploit labour, the liberty of the minority to grow rich and fat on the sweat and blood of the workers; it has meant the liberty of the majority, who own nothing, to sell their labour power, to go hungry and die. It is liberty to speculate on food in time of famine, to speculate on war, on the lives of millions of workers and peasants, to make war-profits from the slaughter of innocent and ignorant men. It is liberty to employ thugs and mercenaries to break strikes and shoot the workers down; it is liberty to employ Klu Klux Klans to lynch negroes in the most democratic republic and to send innocent Sacchos and Vanzettis to death in the electric chair, and keep Mooney in jail for 22 years, though they knew he was not guilty. Such are the liberties of bourgeois democracy!

Yes, and we must not forget the freedom of the press, of speech and of meetings. It is a fraud and a farce to speak of the freedom of the press when the monopolists, speculators, shareholders, landowners own the buildings, the printing-presses, the paper. The capitalist is free to buy the press and hire the journalists to feed the public with bourgeois lies and distort public opinion. What chance has the working class, too poor to set up anything against the powerful and wealthy "freedom of the press"?

Freedom of meetings. Of course, for the rich. They have the halls and the leisure to meet, they have the bourgeois apparatus to protect their meetings, But the workers have none of these. And if they resolve to meet and defend themselves, they are faced with military power, with tear gas bombs and bullets.

Of the few democratic rights the workers possess, such as the right to organise, to strike and form trade unions, they were not granted by the bourgeoisie but acquired in the struggle by the workers themselves.

As for equality, the second pillar of bourgeois democracy, the lie is so outrageously clear that it hardly needs explanation. They spoke of equality for all citizens without distinction of sex, race, religion or nationality. But where is it, except as the great French writer, Anatole France, expresses it in the ironical remark:

"The law in its majestic equality forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and to steal bread".

What a majestic equality! The millionaire and the pauper, the capitalist and the labourer, the landowner and the landless serf. What a contrast between their pompous phrases and the ugly reality of the law, the inequality of women, their inferiority in marriage, the divorce laws, the burden of the illegitimate child, etc.

The usual retort of the bourgeois used to be that the socialist wanted to make all men alike. Marx and Engels laughed at this silly imputation. They said:

"Equality is an empty phrase if under equality is not understood the destroying of classes in society. We want to destroy classes and in this respect we are for equality. But to pretend that we want to make all people equal to each other is a silly invention of an intellectual who twists words and empties them of meaning".

Without destroying classes in society, without destroying capitalism, there can be no freedom or equality, social or political, but only a sham equality of possessor and dispossessed, of satiated and hungry, of exploiter and exploited.

It requires all the cynicism of robbers to speak of "the decision by the majority" in a bourgeois state. As Marx called it: the right every few years to record which set of exploiters shall rule and oppress them. The reality behind this hollow phrase is the power of capital, the power of those who put up a candidate and support him with the whole machinery of the press and wireless, with bribes, with threats against the workers' candidate, who has no means of counteracting such power. If he does have a meeting the

police will see to it that "order is restored", that is, that the meeting is broken up. So much for "decision by the majority".

Any Marxist worthy of the name knows this. So long as property, that is, the means of production, remains in the hands of the capitalists, any kind of democracy is only a concealed bourgeois dictatorship. The workers and the oppressed must choose between bourgeois and proletarian dictatorship, not, as the traitors to Marxism, the Stalinists, maintain, between Fascism and bourgeois democracy. The ruling classes tolerated the concealed form of dictatorship with its limited rights only so long as it was no danger to them; but as soon as a crisis threatens to arise it is replaced by open, brutal, terroristic class-dictatorship. This is what will take place in a month or two. This will be the end of bourgeois democracy.

When the marxist, or revolutionary party, realises these facts, they demand corresponding action from him. The life of a Reformist party begins and ends with bourgeois democracy, with legalism and constitutional methods. But the life of a revolutionary party does not end with the expiration of the "permit granted by the bourgeoisie". The revolutionary party which fights for the oppressed and exploited and represents the interests of the majority of mankind, must live. It cannot stumble over the hurdle imposed by the bourgeoisie and called -- law. They can proclaim laws taking away "Free" speech, "free" press, etc., but they cannot take away the right of the majority to fight for their liberty. If this fight cannot go on openly it must find other ways. It must go on and it will go on. The autocracy of the Russian Tzar drove the Russian movement underground, only to hasten its inevitable fulfilment. So it is today. The revolutionary movement will continue in illegality with more energy and determination.

x x x x x x

When we turn now from the general analysis of the period of bourgeois democracy to South African democracy, it is like arguing that nothing is nothing. For if it is possible to argue about the shadow of democracy in Britain and France, what can be said for the democracy of South Africa -- a slave State? Need we tell our Bantu readers what South African democracy is? Need we tell them that they, who form the majority of the population, are deprived of all political, economic and educational rights? Perhaps they do not realise it, being so completely oppressed? Perhaps life is so hard for them that they have no time to stop and think about it?

South African democracy has drawn an ineradicable line between master and servant, placing the servant outside any law relative to the master. It has deprived the Bantu of any freedom of movement; he cannot go where he likes, he must not settle in the towns or buy land there to build a house. He must remain in his enclosure, in the places reserved for him; he must carry a pass with him, going just where his master permits. He cannot sell his labour in a free market; in the towns, in industry and in the mines, he may stay only so long as his contract allows him or the master needs his services. If not, he is repatriated back to the Reserves, to develop "on his own lines". South African democracy deprived him of economic rights: he may not own property in a town, he may not be a member of any liberal profession, not a lawyer, not a doctor, not an attorney, nor a clerk, nor an artisan, nor a skilled tradesman. He can only be an unskilled labourer, on the land, in the mines or industry; he can only be a servant, a hewer of wood or a drawer of water. He must be educated according to his station in life; he must not receive education which would do him harm, such as dangerous ideas about freedom and equality, but only what is suitable for a slave to learn. He cannot be an apprentice either, or form trade unions; he may not handle machinery or tools. And he is not admitted into the armed forces.

Now South African democracy is dealing in the same way with the Coloured and the Indians; for it is reserved for the white rulers -- the land, the power, the law.

The revolutionary movement in South Africa is weakest perhaps of both hemispheres, not only numerically but also in proportion to its population. It has never been a danger to the rulers. The Natives and the Coloured have always been too oppressed and ignorant of their oppression to accept a revolutionary doctrine. At the same time the white workers were too far up on the economic ladder and too deep in the mire of colour prejudices and colour bars fostered by the ruling classes, to accept a revolutionary movement that fights for the most oppressed and exploited people. Yet the rulers have been afraid of this small movement because of its potentialities. The Riotous Assemblies Act, and others, which were intended to reduce the so-called freedom of assembly and of speech to nothing, could not stop the Bantu eventually finding his way to the movement. The decisive turn in Native policy, the new slavery acts, were bound to lead to an awakening of the great sleeping Bantu masses to national and class consciousness and to the

the new cond
or to make cr
other alterna

realisation of their oppression. The new segregation policy has had the same effect on the Indian and the Coloured; the rulers have themselves created and ripened the conditions necessary for a Non-European United Front. Such a United Front could put the revolutionary movement on a new and higher plane by breaking all colour barriers among the non-Europeans and finally between the European workers and the non-Europeans. It is a prospect to fill the oppressors with fear. They are realistic enough to be aware of the change: the hostility of the great Bantu mass; the open hatred of the Coloured, the bitter feelings of the Indians. Instead of cheerful manifestations of loyalty to king and flag displayed on similar occasions by the Bantu masses 25 years ago, instead of finding the Indians and the Coloured willing to form labour battalions, the ruling classes are met with hostile silence or threats in the present war crisis. Today, instead of a crowd of 10,000 Coloured wildly defending the Union Jack, it is a crowd demanding their rights.

The answer of the rulers is everywhere the same -- more oppression, more Fascist laws. And Herzig is ready, this time with three new bills, against the press, against organisations and against teachers.... The object of all three of them is to inflict a deadly blow to the revolutionary movement.

It does not require very much understanding of a capitalist state and the part that the Press plays in its service to realise that the bill is aimed, not against the Press, but against a very small section of it, the Revolutionary press. There were some misgivings in certain quarters about the possible repercussions of such a press-law on the newspapers which do not support that section of the ruling class at present in power. (As nothing is permanent, the unity between the mine magnates and the landowners -- the United Party -- may some day break up, so that those now in power may form the "opposition"). There were doubts, then, as to whether the bill was intended to stultify criticism of the "opposition", at some future date. They are unfounded. The Prime Minister quickly gave the "House" and the "Press" the assurance that it is not aimed against any part of the Press belonging to the ruling class. He promised the members of Parliament a pleasant time when they pass the bill. The meaning is obvious; there will be no party-political bickering that so much spoils the friendly afternoon-club atmosphere of "our" Parliament. There is no fundamental difference between any of the parties on any important question. Not one single member of this House is against Capitalism-Imperialism, or colour-bars, or oppression of the Non-European by the trustees, in short, Africa for the white man. Nothing could give greater pleasure to our 150 legislators than the hounding out of Communism, "the enemy of law and order, the disrupter of peace, the seducer of the innocent minds of the people". How justified they are, if we accept what they mean by law and order, peace and innocence of mind! -- the law of the Masters and Servants Act, the order of perpetual "trusteeship" over the Non-European, the peace of oppressors, and the innocence of the slave mind.

In order to allay any possible misgivings the Prime Minister called a conference of the "responsible" journalists of South Africa, the chief editors of the newspapers and magazines, for discussion and consultation. This secret conference took place on the 15th May and it transpires that the chiefs have asked for consultation with their colleagues. No doubt a formula will be found to reassure and safeguard the freedom of all sections of the Capitalist press, beginning with Hofmeyr and ending with Weichard. The purpose of the bill is not to stifle the opposition of Malan, for the policies of the Government and the Opposition are fundamentally the same. Stuttaford's anti-semitic Bill was not any better than Louw's but the dressing was more acceptable to parliamentarians and Journalists. And Stuttaford's Indian Bill is much more drastic than anything contemplated by Malan. Yet Stuttaford is a "liberal" of the old Cape school; he is more skilful than the Malanites themselves at disguising the thrust of the knife into Indians and Jews.

The Press Bill may perhaps affect the semi-yellow, semi-pink "Forward" and "Guardian", but even if they have to dispense with the cartoons of the quasi-liberal variety, their existence is not in danger. "The Left Book Club has a lot of good stuff in it", says their friend, Mr. Stuttaford, and they appreciate it and say: "Not a bad fellow, this Mr. Stuttaford".

But the new Press law will be deadly to the revolutionary press and the liberation press of the non-Europeans. Any real criticism, any exposing of the Government's measures, bills, actions, speeches, in their true meaning, will be impossible because of the group-libel clause. Not only criticism of the Government, the executive of the ruling classes, becomes impossible, but also of the ruling classes themselves. Anything that smells of offensive to them will be covered by this clause. And as there is unfortunately no hope of any effective opposition to this fascist measure, the burning question for us is: what are we to do?

To start with the "Spark", there are two alternatives. One is to accommodate it to

the new conditions, to publish articles that will not be offensive to the ruling classes or to make criticisms indirect, with some such disguise as Aesop used in his fables. The other alternative is to close the "Spark". Otherwise it would have to learn the art of all the Reformists, the kind of innocuous, mild criticism that is more an approval than a reproach. It would have to print articles on the value of temperance for the national health or the importance of sport or the danger of veld fires to our soil, and similar vegetarian and humanitarian trivialities. The language of Aesop's fables is useless under South African conditions; if the meaning is clear to the Bantu readers it will be also clear to the rulers and may therefore lead to prosecution. If it does not, it is a sure sign that the meaning is entirely lost. Thus the first alternative points either to betrayal of everything that the "Spark" stands for, or the dragging on of an impotent existence. More than four years of the "Spark" have given the readers a sufficiently clear answer to this choice of action. Only the other remains; to cease publication rather than submit to the enemy.

The position is clear. From one side comes the war danger, to be followed immediately by martial law; on the other side the Press law makes the existence of a revolutionary organ like the "Spark" impossible as a legal paper. It will have to go the way of the revolutionary press in Tsarist Russia 50 years ago, in Fascist Italy, in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Spain, in semi-fascist Poland, Roumania, Japan, in the Baltic countries, in the Balkans, in Latin-America of today. The period of legal existence within bourgeois democracy is over. A new era and new conditions require altogether different methods of struggle. We must learn from the Russian revolutionary movement, from the "underground" movement, their methods and their courage.

Naturally reaction does not stop at the Press law, although the main attack is directed against the voice of the movement. The second of the three bills is calculated to be a blow against the movement itself. It makes it obligatory for all organisations and societies to register with the authorities; Government will have the right to grant permission or refuse it. This in itself would not be so alarming. It would not prohibit the existence of circulating libraries, for instance, or musical or literary or dramatic circles. But there is a much more dangerous and sinister clause in the Bill -- the registration of the name and address of every member.

If twenty years ago membership in a social-democratic organisation was considered quite respectable, and therefore without danger, it is not so today. It is just as respectable and harmless as ever, but nobody would willingly expose himself after the lessons of the fate of the Social-democrats in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Spain. The South African Labour Party is a parliamentary party serving Capitalism. They may proudly submit to a Fascist law which they themselves have assisted in bringing to pass. But a revolutionary organisation will never submit its list of members to the enemy. It is childish to expect it to do so.

We have always known that the period of legality was temporary and we have tried to make use of the opportunity. We knew that one day we should be faced with illegality, only it has come sooner than we expected. Revolutionary organisations must draw the necessary conclusions and not wait till it is too late. Even if this means a temporary silence, it does not mean death. The brutal dictatorship of Nicholas, when all freedom of word and opinion was stifled, did not succeed in enslaving the people. The heavier the chains, the stronger grew the longing for freedom. And the dictatorship was destroyed by the glorious revolution of the workers and peasants in 1917. So it will be everywhere. The Fascist dictatorships are the last attempt of Capitalism-Imperialism to maintain its domination, to maintain slavery. The agony will not be long now; it is doomed. The ultimate triumph of the social revolution that will smash all bonds of oppression and exploitation is assured. Out of the present anarchy, out of the present brutalities and hatreds, will arise a new world order based on freedom, abundance and progress.

Today darkness descends over the world, but the sun must rise and will rise, bringing liberty to the workers and the colonial slaves. The capitalists may run amuck, they may plunge the world into war, but they will perish. The victory of the world revolution is certain.

the new conditions, to publish articles that will not be offensive to the ruling classes or to make criticisms indirect, with some such disguise as Aesop used in his fables. The other alternative is to close the "Spark". Otherwise it would have to learn the art of all the Reformists, the kind of innocuous, mild criticism that is more an approval than a reproach. It would have to print articles on the value of temperance for the national health or the importance of sport or the danger of veld fires to our soil, and similar vegetarian and humanitarian trivialities. The language of Aesop's fables is useless under South African conditions; if the meaning is clear to the Bantu readers it will be also clear to the rulers and may therefore lead to prosecution. If it does not, it is a sure sign that the meaning is entirely lost. Thus the first alternative points either to betrayal of everything that the "Spark" stands for, or the dragging on of an impotent existence. More than four years of the "Spark" have given the readers a sufficiently clear answer to this choice of action. Only the other remains; to cease publication rather than submit to the enemy.

The position is clear. From one side comes the war danger, to be followed immediately by martial law; on the other side the Press law makes the existence of a revolutionary organ like the "Spark" impossible as a legal paper. It will have to go the way of the revolutionary press in Tsarist Russia 50 years ago, in Fascist Italy, in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Spain, in semi-fascist Poland, Roumania, Japan, in the Baltic countries, in the Balkans, in Latin-America of today. The period of legal existence within bourgeois democracy is over. A new era and new conditions require altogether different methods of struggle. We must learn from the Russian revolutionary movement, from the "underground" movement, their methods and their courage.

Naturally reaction does not stop at the Press law, although the main attack is directed against the voice of the movement. The second of the three bills is calculated to be a blow against the movement itself. It makes it obligatory for all organisations and societies to register with the authorities; Government will have the right to grant permission or refuse it. This in itself would not be so alarming. It would not prohibit the existence of circulating libraries, for instance, or musical or literary or dramatic circles. But there is a much more dangerous and sinister clause in the Bill -- the registration of the name and address of every member.

If twenty years ago membership in a social-democratic organisation was considered quite respectable, and therefore without danger, it is not so today. It is just as respectable and harmless as ever, but nobody would willingly expose himself after the lessons of the fate of the Social-democrats in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Spain. The South African Labour Party is a parliamentary party serving Capitalism. They may proudly submit to a Fascist law which they themselves have assisted in bringing to pass. But a revolutionary organisation will never submit its list of members to the enemy. It is childish to expect it to do so.

We have always known that the period of legality was temporary and we have tried to make use of the opportunity. We knew that one day we should be faced with illegality, only it has come sooner than we expected. Revolutionary organisations must draw the necessary conclusions and not wait till it is too late. Even if this means a temporary silence, it does not mean death. The brutal dictatorship of Nicholas, when all freedom of word and opinion was stifled, did not succeed in enslaving the people. The heavier the chains, the stronger grew the longing for freedom. And the dictatorship was destroyed by the glorious revolution of the workers and peasants in 1917. So it will be everywhere. The Fascist dictatorships are the last attempt of Capitalism-Imperialism to maintain its domination, to maintain slavery. The agony will not be long now; it is doomed. The ultimate triumph of the social revolution that will smash all bonds of oppression and exploitation is assured. Out of the present anarchy, out of the present brutalities and hatreds, will arise a new world order based on freedom, abundance and progress.

Today darkness descends over the world, but the sun must rise and will rise, bringing liberty to the workers and the colonial slaves. The capitalists may run amuck, they may plunge the world into war, but they will perish. The victory of the world revolution is certain.

THE POOR WHITES

One of the main functions of the capitalist press is to deceive the masses as to the cause of their misery, to set up a smoke-screen behind which the ruling class can pursue its policy of piling up profits at the expense of its victims. Nowhere is this function of the press more clearly demonstrated than in its handling of the poor white problem. To a Marxist this problem is not essentially different from the problem of any other section of the oppressed masses, and it can be solved in the same way, that is, by the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialist economy. But for the bourgeoisie the Marxist solution means the end of their domination, their power and their wealth, and it is therefore in their interests to hide the real nature of the causes of poor whiteness, in order to divert their victims from the only course of action that will lift them out of the mire, that is, a revolutionary struggle in conjunction with all the other oppressed.

In a leading article entitled "Dependence" the Cape Argus (15/5/39) does good service to the bourgeoisie by once more putting forward plausible, but none the less nonsensical, explanations of the distress of the poor whites.

"The material causes of the poor white problem", the article begins, "have been largely removed by the Government's labour policy, its land settlement and relief works. The moral causes remain. And these in their nature are the most difficult to combat. A new line of approach has been found through the Youth Movement of the Department of Labour. Since the publication of the Carnegie report, if not earlier, it has been recognised that the poor white is handicapped not merely by lack of education and vocation qualifications, but also by a psychological aversion to manual labour -- an aversion which springs not from laziness but from an inborn belief in the indignity of labour. Until this is corrected, State services, directed to the relief of the poor white, are likely to effect more harm than good. This, broadly, was the theme of an address given by Mr. S. D. Mentz, organiser of the Youth Movement, to 500 teachers, officials and children in the Transvaal".

Let us examine first the claim that the material causes of poor whiteness have been removed by the government's labour policy. This policy aims at recruiting otherwise unemployable whites for unskilled labour in public works such as the building of national roads, at wages that are only slightly higher than those paid to unskilled coloured workers. That is to say, people who previously had no regular source of income are now enabled to earn the princely sum of 4/- per day. And the Argus has the colossal impudence to describe this as the removal of the material causes of the poor white problem! Are the poor whites who accept the government's terms going to enjoy the benefits of modern civilisation? Will they be able to build comfortable houses, buy adequate clothes, to say nothing of wireless sets, refrigerators or motor cars? Will they be able to take their families away for an annual holiday? Will they even be able to buy enough food to keep themselves and their families in health? It is not necessary to answer these questions. The government's "solution" is no solution at all, for it leaves the poor whites in abject poverty. No solution can be considered adequate unless it brings within the reach of the poor whites all the material benefits that are now enjoyed by a minority of the population. And such a solution is impossible as long as the capitalist class remains in control.

But even if the wages offered to the poor whites under the government scheme were doubled or trebled, it would still be incorrect to say that the scheme has removed the material causes of the poor white problem. Even if the Malanites could persuade the government to increase unskilled wages from £5. a month to £12. (debate in House of Assembly, 26/5/39), the problem would still remain. For we can be absolutely certain that the Department of Labour would never consent to employing all the able-bodied poor whites at such a rate as long as there are coloured workers who can be hired at 3/- a day. The guiding principle of capitalism is to amass profits at the expense of those who have nothing but their capacity for labour. It is therefore unthinkable that a capitalist government should voluntarily dispel the poverty of even a small section of the working class. The only thing that can compel the capitalists to pay a living wage is the impossibility of obtaining the labour they require at a starvation wage. In the case of skilled workers this impossibility arises from the scarcity of men who have the necessary qualifications. But in the case of unskilled workers this natural compulsion does not exist, and the force must therefore be applied by the workers themselves. How can this force be applied? Only by collective action of the workers organised in nation-wide trade unions. As long as the unskilled workers are unorganised, the bosses can bargain with them individually and force them to accept starvation wages.

Now I
even if they
meet the comp
to poor white
members a
small

Now let us see how the poor whites stand in this respect. They have no union, and even if they had one it would be of little use to them, because they would still have to meet the competition of the non-European workers. A union whose membership was confined to poor whites would be worse than useless. It could not compel the bosses to employ its members as long as there were unorganised coloured workers who were prepared to accept smaller wages. And even if the coloured workers were organised in a separate union the position would be no better, for in that case the struggle for better conditions of employment would degenerate into a war between the two unions, each trying to undersell the other. Such a union would merely constitute an additional burden on the backs of the workers. But if all the unskilled workers, white and coloured together, were organised in a single union, then it might be possible to compel the bosses to pay a living wage to all of them.

However, it is in the interests of the bosses to prevent the European and non-European workers from uniting in a common struggle against capitalism, and a great deal of their propaganda is therefore directed towards fostering a belief in the poor whites that they are in every respect superior to the non-Europeans, that it is degrading for them to associate in any way with coloured or Bantu workers. So that when the government declares that it is deeply concerned about the plight of the poor whites, this must be interpreted in the light of the class interests of the bourgeoisie. Its purpose is not to initiate any real effort to lift the poor whites out of the mire (if it were, something would have been done long ago), but to keep the gulf between the European and non-European workers as wide as possible, and at the same time to prepare the way for the introduction of full-blown fascism in South Africa. We shall return later to this second point.

Let us turn now to the so-called moral causes of the poor white problem. These include what the Argus calls "a psychological aversion to manual labour -- an aversion which springs not from laziness but from an inborn belief in the indignity of labour". This surely is one of the most nonsensical utterances ever made in the capitalist press, or any other press. The idea that a whole class of people can be born with a belief in the indignity of labour, or any other belief for that matter, is so fantastic that it hardly seems necessary to refute it. It is quite possible that certain individuals may be born with constitutional defects that cause them to shrink from any sort of labour, but such individuals are not confined to any one social class but are distributed over the entire population. It is a scientifically established fact that the biological inheritance of one class or race is not in any important respect different from that of any other class or race. And therefore the aversion of the poor whites to manual labour is not inborn but is a product of their training and social environment. It is, in fact, a direct result of the imperialist policy of making distinctions of class correspond as closely as possible with distinctions of colour and race.

In European countries, where the social classes all belong to the same race and speak the same language, the character of the class war cannot be easily disguised by irrelevant distinctions, but in colonial countries it is comparatively easy to justify the war waged by the capitalist class against the working class on the ground that the working class is drawn from a different and "inferior" race. This policy worked well enough as long as capitalism was expanding, as long as it was possible to pretend that all the members of the "superior" race were also members of the ruling class. But capitalism is now on the decline. It can no longer afford to keep a large army of Europeans in idle luxury for the sole purpose of maintaining the fiction that the social distinctions in South Africa are not class distinctions but are based on the differences between "inferior" and "superior" races. In other words, the whites who have failed to remain in the ruling class must now maintain themselves by selling their labour power. But they cannot do that without entering the labour market in competition with the non-Europeans whom they have hitherto been taught to regard as the "natural" labourers. So when they embarrass the government by expressing an aversion for manual labour, they are not proving that they have an inborn belief in the indignity of labour, but are merely repeating the answers they were taught to give in more prosperous times, answers that are no longer palatable to the bourgeoisie.

What are the capitalists going to do in these circumstances? To ignore them entirely would be dangerous, for sooner or later they would recognise the community of their interests with those of the Bantu and the coloured. Pirow has found a "better" way to treat them. He certainly has not neglected the post-war history of Europe, and in particular has learned a great deal from Hitler and Mussolini. He saw how in Italy and Germany the fascist parties were able to utilise the discontent of the "lumpen-proletariat" (literally, the ragged workers, that is, casual labourers, unorganised workers, unemployed, etc., or those who in this country are called "won't-works") and enrol them in the fascist hordes. In the absence of a clear revolutionary lead from the socialist and communist parties, those people readily swallowed the empty promises of Hitler and

Mussolini, and joined the troops whose function it was to smash the organisations of the workers, and secure for a few more years the reign of the very capitalist system that had brought them to misery. Pirow tried to emulate the fascist dictators by forming Special Service Battalions for the poor whites, but his scheme did not succeed very well, partly because there was no immediate need for violence in handling the proletariat, but mainly because of the smoke-screen of race differences with which capitalism had tried to obscure the class structure of society. It was beneath the "dignity" of the poor whites to do "kaffir" work, and they had therefore no use for the battalions.

...dation.
...ature of Mr.
...the Cape, i.e.
...rganised labour
...whose co...

And now the Youth Movement of the Department of Labour comes to the rescue. If the older poor whites cannot be induced to give up their cherished superiority to manual labour, the discontent of the youth can be harnessed to the sinister purposes of capitalism, as it was in Italy and Germany. These young men will be trained and disciplined before they have had time to acquire the miserable habits of their fathers. And when the war forces the capitalists to intensify their attacks on the working class, the young poor whites will supply all the criminals and murderers that are needed. Such is the destiny that rotting capitalism is preparing for the people whose misery is causing so much "concern" to the ruling class.

There is one alternative, and no other. The workers, whether they are black, white or coloured, whether they belong to the "aristocracy" of labour or to the "lumpen-proletariat", must realise the identity of their interests, and unite in a revolutionary struggle against their common enemy -- the bourgeoisie. Only in the coming socialist society will the problems of all the oppressed be solved. But that society will not come into being by itself. It must be fought for, and by all the workers united in a single proletarian army.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TRADE UNION LEADERS -- SERVANTS OF CAPITALISM

The trade union movement in this country is dominated and controlled by a bureaucracy whose reactionary role can hardly be surpassed by any in the world. The comparatively few organised workers, led blindly by the bureaucracy, live in abysmal ignorance of what part they should and could play in the struggle to liberate themselves from the yoke of capital. The employers and the Government can rest assured that they have worthy guardians of their interests, in the labour leaders. For these gentlemen are stealthily bringing the workers movement on to a safe plane, safe both for themselves and for the ruling class. They are doing all they can to minimise industrial strife and any disputes that are likely to bring to light the sharp contradictions and antagonism between the employers and the Government on the one hand, and the workers on the other hand. They are seeking to blur the class differences by effecting a system of peaceful "co-operation" through industrial councils. Their final objective is to divert the struggle of the workers by killing any militancy that may exist amongst them, and offering them as lambs for slaughter on the altar of class collaboration.

The bureaucrats of the trade union movement have consistently preached the need for co-operation between the employers and the employees, showing the "benefits" gained by such co-operation. They have utilised the provisions of the Industrial Conciliation Act and formed unions and industrial councils, and entered into agreements with the employers to fix minimum wages for various industries and occupations over defined periods, a year, two or three years, as the case may be. They do this work not so much for the sake of the workers as for their own. They are mortally afraid of losing their jobs, which depend upon industrial peace. They can always persuade the employers to pay a penny or so more, and the latter will do it, where possible, rather than risk the possibility of industrial strife. Where the employers do not want to pay more, they find other ways of getting out of it. They, with the help of the trade union bureaucrats, drive a wedge between the workers and divide them into antagonistic camps fighting amongst themselves and thus weakening their own strength against their oppressors.

The Government introduced the "White Labour Policy" which was openly accepted in the North, i.e., by the Trades and Labour Council. In the Cape, the Cape Federation of Labour Unions are opposed only in words, though they are loudly shouting to this day that they will have no discrimination based on colour in their unions. That sounds very well, but it is under these fine words that they cover their pernicious deeds. They use these very fine words to break the unity of the working class; to stop the formation of National unions. While our leaders in the Cape Federation of Labour Unions condemn discrimination against Non-Europeans, they accept and encourage it in deeds. To give one

Illustration. In the last parliamentary elections, the Cape Federation supported the candidature of Mr. Emmerich who stood for the Labour Party. This meant that organised labour in the Cape, i.e., the bureaucracy of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, which leads organised labour by the nose, agrees with and supports the policy of the Labour Party whose corner stone is segregation. It is common knowledge that the infamous Native Bills, which deprived the Bantu people of the last vestige of citizen rights, and reduced them to the position of slavery, were acclaimed by the Labour Party. This is not all. This year, Mr. van der Berg, a Labour Party man, showed openly that their segregation policy was not only carried on against the Bantu but against the Coloured too. (Debate on the Bill for electric wiremen.)

The bureaucrats of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions and those of the Trades and Labour Council are the same. They are equally reactionary with nothing to choose between the two. Their methods of betrayal may be different, but their objectives and the results are the same. The difference in method is due to the difference between the North and the South in traditions and in the growth of industry. The Trades and Labour Council grew up in a reactionary atmosphere where colour prejudice was rampant. So that from the beginning the workers organised themselves according to colour. At the same time, there were advanced workers, militants, some of whom had had European experience in trade unionism. These forced the bureaucrats to adopt left phraseology in order to keep their positions. Separate trade unions for White and Non-Europeans, and left phraseology for the White unions, was and is the policy carried on by the Trades and Labour Council.

The Cape Federation, emerging from a different background of conservatism, in which, nevertheless, there was room for a "liberal" attitude towards Non-Europeans, adopted a policy that bore the mark of its background. The complete lack of militancy amongst the organised workers made it unnecessary for the bureaucracy to adopt left phraseology, and the predominance of Non-Europeans employed in industries doing unskilled and some skilled or semi-skilled, forced the bureaucrats to organise all employees according to the type of work they did and irrespective of this colour. But they have never gone out of their way to organise the Native workers in those industries which employ predominately Native labour. So we see that the ultimate aim and the policy of the two bureaucracies is fundamentally the same. The only difference is in method. Both lead to treachery and betrayal, to "Co-operation" with its employers.

With the growth of industry in South Africa, the growth of monopolies and trusts spreading throughout the Union, it becomes necessary to organise trade unions on a national scale - national Unions. Due to the backwardness of the working class in South Africa and to the weakness of the left wing this attempt to form such unions did not come from the workers themselves. The bureaucrats of the North, the most highly industrially developed centre, took the initiative.

The growth of industrial organisation (trusts and monopolies, etc.) forced them to this step. Although their motives were reactionary, the step was a progressive one. It would have been better of course to educate the masses of workers so that they would themselves feel the need for such a unity and fight for it. This our bureaucrats would not do, for it would mean teaching the workers the correct methods of struggle, and there is no knowing where they would stop. Who knows they may not follow the "horrid" line of revolution? The conservative bureaucracy of the Cape would not hear of such a unity, because in the first place, it would mean deposing some bureaucrats and secondly they are afraid of the empty left phrases used by their opponents in the North. So that while the unity agreement between the two bodies has been signed on paper, it is in reality far from being an accomplished fact. The road to unity is being blocked at every stage, attempts at wrecking even the paper unity are being constantly made by the leaders. The Cape Federation of Labour Unions demands that the Trades and Labour Council gives up certain principles including colour bars in their Unions. This is of course a huge farce, for the Federation itself upholds the principle of segregation, as is shown above. It is merely a tactic to stop progress towards unity.

As it does not cost the Trades and Labour Council much to make promises on the colour issue, they make them, but still the Federation raises other obstacles. It will be remembered that the Trades and Labour Council, as one of the conditions, agreed to give up its local committee and in return got 6 seats on the General Council of the Federation. These six delegates were to have full powers as the other ordinary Federation Delegates to the General Council. All seemed well while the Unity Agreement was signed in East London, but our shrewd bureaucrats of the Federation soon saw a loophole. They had to find a way of checking progress to unity. Hiding behind constitutional technicalities, they proceeded to curtail the rights of the six Council delegates. They objected to their participation in the election of the chairman and secretary of the General Council of the Federation. This was deliberately done in order to make the six

delegates position untenable and thus break the attempt at Unity. The big boast of the Federation leaders, that they are in disagreement with the Trades and Labour Council on the question of colour, and that they will not unite with them until that question is settled, is a lie. They know that the bureaucracy in the North dare not come out for equality for all in the Trade Union Movement irrespective of race, colour or creed, because they are afraid of losing their positions. The spirit in the North is strongly in favour of the policy of "no equality between Black and White in state or church".

The recent incident which took place in connection with the labour delegation to Geneva must have opened the eyes of many people. In accordance with the agreement arrived at by the two bodies, it was the Federation's turn to elect a delegate and the Council had to send an adviser. A great majority of the unions affiliated to the Federation nominated a Non-European who was finally elected by the General Council of the Federation, as the official delegate to represent the working classes of the Union of South Africa in Geneva. The Trades and Labour nominee as an adviser was a European. Prior to the Eastern conferences in Kimberley, the National Joint Committee consisting of equal representatives of both bodies, met to discuss the agenda for the Kimberley conference.

When the representatives of the North learnt of the anomalous position created by the Geneva Delegation whereby a white man was to go as an adviser to a Non-European, a European filling an inferior position to that of the Non-European, they could not stomach the idea. They sent a recommendation to the Federation Council that the position of the Representatives in Geneva be reversed. The white man was to be the delegate and the Non-European his adviser.

This matter did not concern the N.J.C. It was outside its jurisdiction. Nevertheless they agreed upon it and brought it to the General Council of the Federation. Some of the so-called left wing of the Federation spoke strongly in favour of the recommendation of the N.J.C. and the result was that it was adopted. Here the Federation itself conceded on the colour issue but when in Conference at Kimberley it became known that the Government was only allowing the Delegate and not the adviser to go, they put the blame on the Trades and Labour Council. They accused the Council of dilly-dallying with the colour issue and made that as an excuse to bring about an impasse, to make a rapprochement between the two bodies impossible. Whatever their protestations be, the fact is that the leadership of the Cape Federation is as bad as, if not worse than, that of the Trades and Labour Council. Their policies are fundamentally the same even on the colour question. To quote one more illustration -- it will be remembered that it is policy of the Government not to allow the Natives to be organised into Trade Unions on the same terms as the other workers. This principle is embodied in the Industrial Conciliation Act. The definition of the word employee in that Act excludes a pass-bearing Native. Now the Government is seeking to introduce a law to bring the Native Trade Unions under the direct control of the Native Affairs Department. This matter was dealt with at the Federation Conference at Kimberley. What conclusions did they come to? Don't get a shock. You would expect that these great champions of the principle of "no differentiation on the ground of colour", would not even discuss the matter but would reject it holus bolus, because it introduced segregation into the movement. But what did they decide on? That the Government be asked not to put the Native Trade Unions under the Native Affairs Department but that they should be put under the supervision of a special committee composed of representatives from the Trade Union Movement and an equal number from the Government. Is this segregation not segregation because it has been introduced by the Federation? Is it any better than that passed by the Trades and Labour Council at the same time and place, that there should be parallel unions for whites and blacks?

This is quite sufficient to expose the reactionary role of the present leadership of the labour movement. It is not necessary to go on enumerating the treacherous policy. We may only add or emphasise once more that unity is not an accomplished fact despite the agreement, and it will not be achieved along the lines now followed. The task of an honest left wing is to expose tirelessly the lies of the present bureaucracies of both sides, and point out to the workers that it is only by uniting that they will be able effectively to carry on their struggle, and that the ultimate end is not the amicable settlement of disputes with the employers and the Government through industrial councils, but the liberation of Labour from the yoke of Capital.

WORKERS OF AFRICA, whatever the colour of your skin may be, UNITE in one strong Trade Union Movement.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN POLITICS -- LATEST TURN

The government has in this session introduced the Asiatic Land and Trading Bill. The Minister of the Interior, in introducing it, described it "as an interim measure designed to peg the present position in the Transvaal and give the Government time to devise a solution of the Asiatic problem in its wider aspects". This bill further curtails the already severely limited rights of Asiatics to reside and trade in the Transvaal. It is therefore in conformity with all past anti-colour legislation, with its restrictions of trade and licencing, its land and immigration restrictions, its White Labour Policy, its restrictions of the employment of non-Europeans in skilled trades, and so on and so forth.

One might have expected that the onslaught of the ruling classes on the rights of the Indian people would have some effect on the parties and leaders of the Indians. But nothing of this kind happened. As will be seen from the following, the muddle is greater than ever.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN CONGRESS

The questions that the South African Indian Congress has always brought into prominence are questions dealing with the trade and land rights of the Indians. The problem of the living conditions of the Indian labourers, the struggle of the Indian peasants, if it appeared at all in any memorandum or on the agenda for any meeting of Congress, was merely dragged in through the back door, and even then the hardened old Congress bureaucrats would have nothing to do with it.

Congress concerns itself wholly with the troubles of the slum land-lords, the merchants, and the oppressed petty bourgeoisie. It is essentially an organisation of these groups. Its programme bases itself on constitutional reform and loyalty to the British Empire. Its methods of struggle have always been purely passive. Every time the governmental machinery has manufactured a new restriction, deputations have come to the Weeping Wall -- the Cape Town Parliament -- and wailed for ameliorative measures. But since the Weeping Wall remains immune to pleas and lamentations, they turn despairing eyes to Mother India. "We must definitely revise our policy of propaganda; we must let the world know of our sufferings, and the cruel laws that have been imposed on us and further ones to which we may still be subjected. Such laws have been unduly harsh since Union. We must fight them tooth and nail; if necessity arises, we must send capable men to lay our case before India. Let the Congress of India bring pressure upon the Indian Government to take a firm attitude on our behalf with the South African Government". (a letter written in "Indian Views", and typical of the line of the Congress.) The "Indian Views" itself writes: "The influence of India must, as we have pointed out before, be an ever increasing one. Though we have also at times insisted on the necessity of our own concentration on the solution of our own problems, it might be just as wise to make some effort to strengthen the bonds between ourselves and India...." (24/2/39)

But the people of India have their own troubles. Themselves colonial slaves suffering under the yoke of British Imperialism, they are powerless to intervene on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, victims of the same British Imperialism.

In February of this year, a deputation from the South African Indian Congress waited upon Mr. Stuttaford and submitted the usual memorandum. They were completely ignored. So they sent their President, Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi, to India in order to lay their case before the Indian people. A great public meeting was held in April in Delhi under the auspices of the Indian Overseas Central Association, at which the Indian bourgeoisie made the usual frantic, but meaningless protests. The meeting was composed of the leaders of the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Indian Chamber of Commerce, right wing members of the Indian National Congress, and old imperialists who stressed "the importance of negotiation and diplomacy". There were vague murmurings of withdrawal of the Indian Agency in South Africa as a protest, but all that emerged from this was that a deputation would visit the South African government.

Meanwhile the South African government has imperiously declined to receive it. Mr. Stuttaford said that "he is not prepared to negotiate with a delegation, as his predecessor Dr. Malan had done on two occasions. He would speak to two or three representatives only....."

At the same time, the Agent-General for the Government of India in South Africa sent for "one of India's honoured sons, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University".

It is not the first time that Congress has employed courtesy visits as one of its methods of struggle, and relied on this manoeuvre to court liberal whites in this country. The Congressmen, like all petty-bourgeois Gandhists, believe that the visits of famous men, and philosophical lectures delivered to university students ("our future Parliamentary rulers") will change the hard hearts of the oppressors. Says the "Indian Opinion": "Let us hope that the sweetness of his words will not have been wasted on the desert air. The interview he gave to the 'Natal Daily News' the other day forms a significant message to White South Africa. If it helps to inspire the ruling race to stay their hands from enacting unjust and unrighteous measures against the voteless and voiceless of the community, Sir Radhakrishnan's mission to South Africa has not been in vain". (April 7th) Radhakrishnan is not the first show-piece the Indian leaders have produced to "change the hearts" of the government.

THE TRANSVAAL INDIAN CONGRESS

In the Transvaal we witness the eclipse of Nana, faithful disciple of A.I.Kajee, from the leadership of the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the rise of Dr. Dadoo. And this rise of Dadoo has been effected by the addition of one word to the past passive methods of struggle of the Indian people. That word is "resistance". So that instead of having just passive methods, we have "passive resistance methods". For did not Dadoo, the "socialist", declare that "we must follow in the footsteps of our leader Mahatma Gandhi"?

"Passive resistance" is not a new method of struggle. Nor is it a great change from the old tactics of the Indian petty-bourgeois. According to the "Indian Views" (12/5/39),

"Any kind of threat is foreign to its spirit. The Indians have no intention of pitting their strength against the Europeans, and challenging their authority, in this country. Meekness, humility and self-suffering rather than truculence and defiance are the keynotes of Passive Resistance. All that the Indian Passive Resisters desire to do is to evoke the good in the European -- to arouse his conscience and pity. There is danger that this motive may be misunderstood and that the Passive Resistance campaign may be regarded as a malicious attack on the European, more subtle and vicious than open violence".

This word "Resistance", we repeat, in no way changes the policy of Congress. It is in line with the past methods of passivity, and is no new recipe for the solution of the problem of the whole of the Indian people in South Africa. Moreover the field of "passive resistance" limits itself to the minority section of the Indian population of South Africa -- its most reactionary section -- the trading and slum land-lord class!

The "Indian Views" has this to add, "that we will not resort to such a step until every way of escape has been tried, every protest proved ineffective...."

We cannot allow this statement to pass unchallenged. Dadoo accepted the position of vice-chairman of the Transvaal Indian Congress last year in order to reform it, to change the petty-bourgeois character of its politics, its indecisiveness, its vacillation and its wholly sectarian Indian character. Dadoo thought he could change the politics of the ultra-reactionary slum land-lords of the Transvaal and their allies the traders. How can one conceive of such a thing! Changing an association of slum land-lords and traders into a revolutionary workers and peasants organisation! This is either political naivete or just ignorance.

Dadoo has come out openly in support of the United Front movement launched in Cape Town in February, 1939, and on the strength of that was elected to the Committee of the Non-European United Front that met during April, 1939 in Cape Town. His first public act after that was to call for a "Passive Resistance Struggle" for Indians only, and only those Indians who owned property and traded!

Dadoo has succeeded in exchanging the old, weak dogmas of the Congress for new dogmas, just as weak and just as thoroughly contemptible. This movement would confine itself to the "passive resistance" struggle of a minority section in South Africa, because the Indian worker and peasant, not to speak of the Bantu and Coloured workers and peasants, would be excluded from it. This is not the first time that a "socialist" has fought for private property! Dadoo has successfully wrested from Nana the leadership of the Transvaal Indian petty-bourgeoisie. The latter's fall was due to the rising desperation of the class he led, a class that was becoming increasingly discontented with the advice of its leader. "Wait", said Nana, "until the government's segregation scheme becomes law, and then decide on a line of action".

Manilal Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi, condemns the Transvaal Indian Congress for

compromising on the Feetham Recommendations. These recommendations, if put into effect, will give a negligible amount of security to the land-owning section of the community. Congress, as their mouthpiece, is prepared to accept any crumb, although not one poor Indian will benefit thereby. In his paper "Indian Opinion" Manilal Gandhi writes:

"The Government of India... for the sake of their own honour and the honour of India should insist that the Feetham Recommendations over which six years have been spent at the cost of £16,000 should not be allowed to be watered down.... Should the responsible leaders of the community... be a party to any watering down of these recommendations... they will have betrayed the community".

Not a word about the betrayal of the labouring masses! Manilal Gandhi speaks here for the slum land-lords and the merchants in a voice even more strident for the privileges of the few. He has at all times declared his opposition to the Non-European United Front. "The Indians have sufficient troubles of their own to cope with to be able to meddle with those of others", he writes. (Indian Opinion, 19/5/39).

And what shall we say of the redoubtable leader of the Indians, President V.S.C. Pather? "'Passive Resistance' is unconstitutional", he says, "and must not be resorted to, for it will injure our cause".

From Nana to Pather, from Kajee to Dadoo, we discern the same species, the followers of Gandhi, the protectors of private property, who can find no better way of struggle than to crawl on their bellies before British Imperialism.

AND NATAL

The local Indian press carries a notice to the effect that the Natal Indian Congress is meeting on the 24th June in Durban "to consider the formula of amalgamation of the Natal Indian Congress and the Colonial Born and Settlers Association, and its reference to Mahatma Gandhi".

To the South African Indian community this news is both startling and puzzling and consequently forms the chief topic of conversation. For nine solid years these two bodies have carried on independent organisational existences and, presumably, as it was thought at the time of the split in 1930, independent political existences. Subsequent events have proved this supposition to be erroneous.

Albert Christopher, son of an ex-indentured labourer, was the recognised leader of both the agricultural and industrial workers, and of the Natal Indian peasantry. As such he came within the fold of the South African Indian Congress. He was president of this body at the time of the split, which occurred over the question of the 1930 Colonisation Scheme. The World Economic Crisis had created a serious situation for the South African Indians, thousands of workers on the sugar plantations and on the land being forced out of employment and off the land. To meet this situation, it was proposed, under the Colonisation Scheme, to deport "redundant" Indians to distant countries -- Fiji, Borneo, British Guiana, West Africa, etc., -- there to settle permanently. The majority of the Congress officials signed this infamous document, and by doing so clearly demonstrated to what class of the Indian community they owed allegiance. This open act of betrayal on the part of the S.A.I.C. officials left Christopher with no alternative, if he were to retain the leadership of the Indian peasants and workers, but to break away. He immediately founded the Colonial Born and Settlers Association, and devoted himself to what he called "the problem of the Indian masses."

The C.B. & S.A. became a movement of the Indian workers and peasants, and contained a number of the other dissatisfied elements of Congress. Its programme was more advanced than that of Congress in so far as it turned its attention to the organisation of the Indian peasants and workers, but it never went beyond petty-bourgeois radicalism. Its policy, like that of all similar organisations, was a policy of class-collaboration, sectarianism and hanging on to the coat-tails of British Imperialism. A most regrettable feature was that although Christopher was the legal adviser of several Indian Trade Unions, he never attempted to link up the struggle of the Indian workers and peasants with that of their Bantu and Coloured comrades. And when we read his latest pronouncement on the onslaught of the South African ruling class on the position of the Indians, we are bound to express our disappointment and disapproval. He says:- "I suggest rich and poor unite in the struggle to maintain their rights in this country. The Transvaal Indians will not fight because they are afraid for their money. Wealth might rule the Transvaal Indian, but I say of Natal that numbers over-rule money..." He ought to know better than that.

The step that Christopher took in 1930 was correct -- to "the problem of the Indian masses". Why did he not carry that step a little further -- to "the problem of the South African masses"? He led the Indian masses away from the corrupt merchant and slum land-lord class, but he led them not to the promised land of unity with Bantu and Coloured workers and peasants, but into the wilderness of Indian sectarianism and isolation! Sectarianism and isolation have yielded NO RESULTS. Now, instead of taking the only correct way out of isolation, he plunges back into the hopeless Indian swamp. Unfortunately even his friends and well-wishers can find no other explanation for this except that in a desperate effort to retain his leadership of the Indian masses he leads them back into the S.A.I.C., goading them on with false slogans of "Indian Unity" and "reference to Mahatma Gandhi." How convenient the name of Gandhi becomes in rescuing Indian petty-bourgeois leaders from a political impasse!

The Indian workers and peasants of South Africa have learned the tragic lesson of relying on Congress and its leadership. Their salvation lies not in the class that has already betrayed them, but in unity with those who, like them, have nothing to lose but their chains -- the Bantu, Coloured and White workers of South Africa.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THE WAR CRISIS

The Question Is No Longer, "Will There Be a New World Imperialist War?" but Merely, Exactly When, and How, and with What Lineup, Will the War Start?" And Now that We Are to Be Asked to Give Our Lives For Democracy, It Is Well to Understand What Millions Will Be Dying For.

When, on a mountainside, prolonged action of the elements, alternate thaws and freezings, the beating of rains and flow of quiet springs, have loosened a great mass of rocks and earth, a trivial, seemingly chance event - a tree uprooted by the wind or a poised rock unbalanced by a twig - can start the avalanche which will devastate the valley. That the avalanche will come, this the student of the mountainside will know. But no man can predict with accuracy the exact moment of its descent. What we can know is that all major conditions are at hand, that we await only the small "accident" which completes the cause.

So, also, with a social avalanche, with war or revolution. It is only within rough limits that we can predict the precise date of the outbreak of a great war or revolution. We can know that the major conditions are all present, that a stage has been reached when resolution of the problems directly facing society can be reached only through war or revolution; but the moment of the first battle will depend also on the "accident", on an isolated border clash, an assassination, perhaps on the excited emotion of a neurotic statesman.

The world has now reached that stage, reached it six months or even a year ago. The question is no longer, "Will there be a new world imperialist war?" but merely, "Exactly when, and how, and with just what lineup, will the war start?" An appropriate order from Benes or Sirovy might have begun the war in September. Whatever the wishes of Daladier or Stalin or Chamberlain, it is not plausible that the battlefield could have been squeezed within the Versailles-made borders of Czechoslovakia. September passed, but the world soon understood that the peace of Munich was not salvation but another step toward the inferno.

WHAT MAKES WORLD WARS

The Peace of Versailles assigned political boundaries to the world in approximate correspondence to the relative economic and military strength of the great Powers at the conclusion of the last war. Pious phrases and legal formalities, distinctions among mandates and protectorates and colonies and dominions, should not deceive us. It is comparable to the ending of a hard-fought strike: the agreement finally typed out and signed is filled with neat legal phraseology, often with fine verbal tributes to industrial harmony and the joys of collective bargaining; but the agreement simply records, in its own way, what was decided by the direct test of strength in the struggle. In 1918 Germany and Austria were smashed by superior arms, finances and economic resources. The provisions of the Treaty summed up what had already happened.

Today the political division of the world no longer corresponds to the relative economic, financial and military strength of the powers, nor to their imperious needs. Nor is there any longer room in the world for a half-dozen great powers. Times are

sharper than in 1914, the cupboard emptier, the wolves howling more fiercely. There is not enough to go round. The battle is for survival, against national death; and someone must lose out. Already the altering of the Versailles balance has been plainly enough recorded. Japan takes Manchuria and moves into China; Italy, Ethiopia; Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia and Memel. Treaties, laws and moral ideals bow helplessly to the death struggles of imperialism.

How pitiful an illusion that the re-division of the world could be accomplished by negotiation, agreement, discussion! What is at stake is the life of the imperialist powers. Those that lose out now are wiped off the historical scene forever. Puppets and pawns -- Manchurias and Austrias and Ethiopias and Czechoslovakias -- can be forced to commit suicide. But the masters will fight to the end.

The avalanche is ready. We live in its path, waiting for the dislodged stone that will send it hurling down on our heads.

WHAT DELAYS THE WAR?

Why is it that England did not go to war in September? Why did England adopt the line of appeasement -- for it was England, of course, that was the major agent in shaping the course that led to Munich. All of the popular explanations -- that Chamberlain is lacking in patriotism, that he is "traitor to democracy", that there were not enough British airplanes, that Lindbergh spread tales out of school -- are superficial.

England did not go to war because the British ruling class fears the war, because the British ruling class has everything to lose and nothing to win from the war. England is caught in a trap: it is threatened almost equally by not fighting or by fighting.

The main enemy of British imperialism is not Hitler. He is a threat, a serious threat, true enough. But if it were only a question of Hitler, England would not have to be afraid. The resources in money, material and men upon which England, together with her easily obtainable allies, could count are enough to overwhelm Hitler.

But the main enemy is within, and it is that enemy which the British ruling class above all fears. The main enemy is the four-hundred-millioned masses of India, stirring restlessly, the tens of millions of African Negroes, the Arabian masses pounding at the gates of British power in the Near East, the people of Eire sending their Valentine bombs to the City, the peoples of the dominions who do not intend to fight forever for the London banks, yes, and the English workers who, in spite of the parliamentary traitors who officially lead them have not yet permitted a conscription law.

The Empire, the gouty, senile tyrant that is left of the triumphant giant who conquered the world in the virile manhood of capitalism, is breaking up from within. Chamberlain understands what is happening. He knows that the yoke of the war dictatorship is not strong enough, once the casualty lists begin mounting, the work hours stretching out, the bombs falling, the food growing scarce, to hold in leash those straining centrifugal forces.

Yes, India has given us a few months or a year of peace, to the English workers and the French workers and the workers of the United States. It has given us these precious weeks before the war dictatorship, in which we can still speak the truth publicly; time for some hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands more to learn what the war means, to prepare to meet it, to resolve to lead the way out of it through the overthrow of the whole system of wars. Philistines wonder, sometimes, what Marxists mean when they use their cold, abstract phrases about the alliance between the class struggle of the workers and the struggle of the colonial peoples for national liberation. This is what they mean. It is not that the hounded Indian peasant, fighting desperately for a bowl of rice against the whip of the British Raj and his native deputies, thinks about the American workers, not that the peasant has any conscious interest in the goal of international socialism. But the fight for life of the Indian masses is a fight against the war and the war-makers, against the system of imperialism from which wars issue. And the fight, open and threatened, of the peasants of India has been enough to delay the war; and will, after the war starts, be the first aid in transforming the imperialist war into a war of world-wide Revolution.

When we reflect on these things, how openly does the hideous true face of social-patriotism show itself! The Stalinists and reformists, in the name of freedom and socialism, tell us to fight England's war against her rival, Hitler! What then, do we say to the peasants of India, the African Negroes, the Arabian peoples? No: England's war is not our war. Our war is the war of the Indian masses, and that war is against England, against British as well as Hitler's imperialism.

espised and cursed by the workers whom it has betrayed. But for the Social Democrats, the world would be marching today under proletarian democracy towards a classless society!

POOR LITTLE POLAND (OR IS IT ALBANIA?)

England will have to fight. There is no other way. But the British ruling class still seeks to delay, to put off the day which begins the end of the British Empire. Chamberlain, pursuing his tortuous course, makes a "new turn" in connection with the imminent crisis over Danzig and the Polish Corridor. And at once there follows a new somersault for all the columnists and editorial writers, all the reformists and liberals, for the whole crew which thinks that wrint about history means co-senting on the latest platitudes which are belched out of the most prominent shirt fronts. Chamberlain is no more the traitor of Munich. Almost, he is the Galahad-leader of the world battle for democracy. Good old Neville, he has learned since September. Doubtless he has been reading the "Nation" and "New Leader", perhaps even the "Daily Worker". These British Public School men, they have the right stuff in them after all, when the crisis comes.

Shortness of memory seems to be rather a social than a psychological disease. Men, unwilling or unable to face the world they live in, blot it out by forgetting each yesterday and feeding on the fantasies of tomorrow. We no longer wish to remember the stern British indignation once over Manchuria. We have forgotten those days of the sanctions campaign and all the brave moral nothings over Ethiopia. Yes, we have thoroughly forgotten those two days just before Munich when Chamberlain became for an evening the hero even of Heywood Brown, when his ringing denunciation of Hitler, his moving summons to the conscience of mankind drew all virtuous hearts to his side.

It is the same Chamberlain who speaks today that spoke at Munich; it is the same voice, the voice of the British ruling class, painfully manoeuvring its way through the imperialist rocks, tacking now to windward, now to leeward, building toward the occasion when conscription and the war dictatorship will meet no effective resistance, seeking the most favourable moment for the launching of hostilities, testing for the most persuasive moral issues.

It is not excluded that a war will break out over Poland; in general, it is no longer excluded that war will begin tomorrow. But it is sure enough that Chamberlain doesn't want, doesn't intend to have a war this month over Poland. His current "Stop Hitler!" phrases are, for him, an easy prelude to still another Munich.

From both the military and the ideological points of view, Poland is not propitious. Just what would the defence of Poland mean from the military aspect? The shrewd Lloyd George underlined the military difficulty:

"If war occurred tomorrow we could not send a single battalion to Poland. France could not. She would be confronted with fortifications which are infinitely more formidable than the Hindenburg line which took us four years to break through with casualties running into millions.

But what is going to happen to Poland while we are blockading Germany -- a blockade for which she is much better prepared than in 1914-13 -- and while the French are breaking through very powerful fortifications?"

France could operate only from the west; she would have to throw her armies against the Siegfried Line in an offensive strategy which all military commentators agree is the most costly and dangerous method of modern warfare, and would meanwhile be exposed on the Spanish and Italian frontiers. The British Fleet could, perhaps, blockade Danzig and the German ports; but in the first months this would prove little hindrance to the German legions.

The armies which would have to bear the full brunt of the defence would have to come from the east, from Poland itself and from the Soviet Union, and perhaps from the south, from Rumania. This, true enough, might not be too displeasing to England. If her world could remain static while the mass armies of the Soviet Union and Hitler wore each other out, she could get ready to step in more strongly as decisive arbiter. But no wonder Poland, held in so gigantic a pincers, with her own territory sure to be the battlefield, is wary. And little wonder that the Soviet Union, remembering also her Eastern flank is, in the words of Roy Howard's dispatch, "coy as usual".

And on the moral side, the Polish issue is no more savory. "Poor little Poland!" it sticks in the craw a bit. Not half so rich a flavour as "Poor little Belgium!" In every respect inferior to "Poor little Czechoslovakia!" Poland: the land of permanent military dictatorship; of hundred-thousand aced landlords and peasants living like cattle; of sweated, starving workers; of out-lawed parties and always-suppressed civil liberties; of pogroms and ghettos and endless persecutions. The goods are rather frayed and tarnished to be put over on the ultimate consumer.

Now that we are once more about to give our lives for democracy, it is well to know what we shall be dying for. (Reprinted from "The New Internationalist" April, 1939)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

(Issued by the Workers Party of South Africa, P.O.Box 1940, Cape Town. C.R. Geddiatte 33, York Street, Salt River, is responsible for all political matter in this issue.)