

Amter (America):

Comrades, the Negro question when regarded on a world scale, is not merely a colonial question but also a race question. For the French party, British Party, and others, it is principally a colonial question.

The workers in imperialist countries are not interested in the Negro question. They are living to a great extent on the profits derived by the bourgeoisie from the colonies, and therefore are opposed to movements for the liberation of the colonies or the betterment of the status of colonial people.

The French Party must be criticised for great laxness on this question. I will mention three points. 1) On a certain occasion within the last two years, they excused themselves for not carrying on any direct propaganda against French imperialism on the ground that the French government had adopted a very liberal policy towards the colonies. 2) They have also refused to demand the liberation of the colonies, stating that as they were a part of France, all that could be demanded for them was autonomy.

3) They have ignored the use of black troops by the French Government. Black troops are not only being used in the Ruhr, but are also being trained and used in France. The Government has plans for a black army of 660,000 for use in France and for the protection of French imperialism abroad. They are also constructing a railway from Central Africa to the Mediterranean for the sole purpose of transporting troops without resort to the sea.

Two years ago, the British Government in South Africa used bombs and aeroplanes against a whole village, where the people had protested against attacks which made it impossible for them to live on their land at all. No Negro can leave South Africa unless he leaves it as a sailor or smuggles himself away.

The white trade unions are prejudiced against the black trade unions, and the native unions are very weak, because as soon as they get a capable leader, he is corrupted and bought over by the capitalists. A change will take place in South Africa, however, in the near future, as a law which prevented a native from working in any skilled position, has just been declared invalid. This will affect the status of the white workers and open the way for the admission of the Negro into the white unions.

In the U. S. A. the problem of the Negro is primarily an agrarian problem and not an industrial one alone. The Negro is most often a tenant farmer, and he belongs to the most impoverished class in the U. S. A. In industry they have sometimes been used as strikebreakers, but where they are recognised by the white workers, they stand firmly beside them, as was shown in the steel strike and the miners' strike. There are in the U. S. A. 488 Negro local unions.

The Negroes must make their own demands. They should first organise a general conference, demanding admission to the regular unions. Then the Negroes in Africa and in America must be linked up together by propaganda. The intellectual leadership of the Negroes is in New York, and the movement could be led by the press of the United States. Sailors should take pamphlets, suitably written for the native, to Africa and thus start propaganda there. Wherever Negro troops have been organised by the imperialistic powers, these troops should demand to have their own commanders, and, in the African colonies, not to be used outside the colonies, for it must never be forgotten that the main use of black troops in the future will be that of shock troops of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat.