

A. B. C. of Trade Unionism for Negro Workers (Preface)

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The Negro worker is the most oppressed of the oppressed, a pariah among pariahs. He not only forms the material of which hundreds of millions of dollars are squeezed out, but he embodies in himself the whole system of oppression created by bloody capitalism. The Negro proletarian is oppressed both as a proletarian and a Negro. Capitalism succeeded not only in enslaving tens of millions of black workers but also in raising a Chinese wall between black and white workers.

Struggle Against White Chauvinism, Against Racial Isolation.

The theory of the lower race, the view that the black is a third rate sort of a man, this theory is inculcated into millions of proletarians in capitalist countries. White chauvinism, the most odious inheritance which the worker has received from capitalist society and consequently the question of the organisation of Negro workers is closely connected with the struggle against white chauvinism, against racial isolation and against the whole of that ideological corruption, which has been introduced in the labour movement by capitalism and reformism.

First of all about the organisation of Negro workers. In spite of the fact that there are tens of millions of black proletarians, the number of organised among them is quite insignificant. This may be explained in the first place by the fact that for long years the reactionary trade unions have placed obstacles in the way of the black workers. They prefer to exploit the black workers hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, than to fighting against capitalist exploitation hand in hand with the black workers. In the U. S. A. there are now still a number of unions which do not accept black workers in its ranks. There are other unions who formally admit Negroes, but they are placed in a special category, in a position of third rate citizens, who are tolerated but who are not afforded equal rights in a proletarian organization.

Condition of Life in the African Colonies

The same position obtains in South Africa where white chauvinism is raging among the trade unions and the white workers everywhere except in the revolutionary wing of the labour movement. But however hard the conditions of life and labour of the Negroes in U. S. A. and South Africa, these cannot even be compared with the conditions and the atmosphere in which the Negro workers have to live and work in the African colonies in Gambia, Sierra-Leone, Kenya, Congo and in the West Indian islands, in all these the Negro workers are slaves, in the literal sense of the word. The buying and selling of human beings, corporal punishment, the most absolute lawlessness, shootings on the least pretext and violence, naked and unabashed of a handful of white exploiters over millions of blacks, such is the picture of "white civilisation" on the black continent.

Only Revolutionary Workers Voice Protest.

But who raises his voice in protest against the unheard of oppression and subjugation of the blacks? Who raises the question of the removal of all racial and political barriers? Who holds out the fraternal hand of solidarity to the Negro proletarian, the oppressed of the oppressed? Only the revolutionary wing of the labour movement, only the Communist Parties and the revolutionary trade unions,

only the sections of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions.

Socalled Socialists Help Enslave Coloured Workers.

If we take the Second and Amsterdam Internationals, the Pan-American Federation and the American Federation of Labour, in general all the reformist organisations we see that in relation to the Negroes they keep to the same policy as their bourgeoisie. The socalled Labour Party is now in power in England? What did it do for the improvement of the conditions of the Negroes in the British colonies? Which measures did these leaders of the Second International adopt so as to equalise the rights of the Negroes with those of the white workers? They did nothing. Just as under the governments of Lloyd George and Baldwin, so also under the government of MacDonald, the Negro workers is the slave of the white master who can kill him for which he would, at best be made to pay a paltry fine. What is being done in this direction by the socialists of France and Belgium? What is being done by the reactionary trade union bureaucracy in the U. S. A.? What is being done by the sections of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals in South Africa? The very same that they do in relation to other coloured peoples. It is well known that the sections of the Second International are the most ferocious oppressors of the peoples of India, China, Indonesia etc. What they do in relation to the yellow races, that they also do in relation to the black.

Negro Workers Must Create FIGHTING Organizations

This unheard of oppression of the great Negro masses provokes not only the muffled resistance, but also the conscious protest of the Negro workers. There is not now a Negro colony where a strike of an elemental rebellion does not from time to time break out as a protest against the continuing exploitation. But elemental revolts, elemental protests cannot lead to anything. To attain definite results, the Negro workers must create their own organizations. There is no colony where there are no wage workers. This means that the question of the formation of trade unions is now ripe for all countries. There are unions in U. S. A. and in South Africa, but this question must be put concretely also for Gambia, Sierra-Leone, Nigeria, the Congo, Kenya, Guadelupa, Martinique,, the Gold Coast — in all places where there are Negro workers. The question of the establishment of workers' organizations must be raised.

Role Negro Petty-Bourgeoisie.

It is true that such organizations have arisen in a number of Negro colonies, as for instance, in Trinidad and British Guiana. But these organizations, which are only labour by their composition, are largely under the influence of the petty-bourgeois nationalist elements or under the influence of the reformists of the imperialist countries. Every worker should ask himself: why should the reformists, who are not in favour of the independence of the colonies, worry about the labour organizations? If they really wished to help the Negro proletarians they would have come out resolutely against oppression and for the independence of the colonies, but this they are not doing. And the fact that they do not do it shows that they do not want it and that they desire to perpetuate the power of their bourgeoisie over the black slaves. What then are they aiming at in connecting themselves with the labour organizations in the Negro colonies? **Their object is to keep back the workers from revolutionary struggle and to direct them on the path of verbal protest, absurd hopes for the good will of the bourgeoisie, in a word, to disrupt the struggle of the working class.** The fundamental rule which every Negro prole-

tarian must follow is the complete independence of the workers' organizations from the national bourgeoisie, imperialism and reformism. Without this the trade union may be transformed into an instrument of a hostile class, into an instrument directed against the interests of the Negro working masses.

How to Organize

The A. B. C. of the trade union movement has for its task to show how the trade union movement must be built up on the basis of the class struggle. In such places where trade unions already exist, where Negro workers have already gained some experience, they will see for themselves which part of this A. B. C. must be applied to the given country. But in so far as in the overwhelming majority of the Negro colonies the trade unions are still in an incipient state, in so far as in a number of Negro colonies the trade unions are still even mixed in their composition, not purely class organizations, but including in their number peasants, small masters etc., the A. B. C. of the Trade Union Movement can give an impulse to the more conscious elements in the direction of the class crystallisation of the trade union movement.

Whatever the level of industry, the size of the proletariat, the degree of its backwardness, one thing is clear: the trade union movement must be built up for the struggle against the employers and he who desires to fight successfully against the employers, must also fight against those people who, within the working class and within its organizations support the employers, i. e., against the reformist, the national-reformist and others.

Sixth Part of World Won By Working Class

The Negro proletarian feels on his own back the whole weight of capitalist exploitation, but he must understand that he does not stand alone and that the International Revolutionary labour movement is on his side. He must understand that since every revolutionary proletarian knows that it is impossible to be emancipated from the yoke of capital, without emancipating at the same time the most exploited portion of the international proletariat, the Negro workers. However difficult the struggle of the Negro workers, however great the preponderance of the power of imperialists at the present moment, everyone of them must know that the whole capitalist system is breaking up at all points, that a sixth part of the globe, the U. S. S. R., has already been won by the working class and that the crash of imperialism, the crash of the system of the oppression of man by man is inexorably drawing near. Let then the black proletarians join in the fight of the international proletariat, let them build up their organizations and in united front with the revolutionary proletarians of other countries march forward to the attack on capitalism which has made hundreds of millions of people its slaves. But to wage a successful fight against mighty capitalism it is necessary to organize, organize, and once more to organize. And this pamphlet tells you how to do it.
