

ORGANISATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL NEGRO TRADE UNION COMMITTEE BY

THE R.I.L.U.

Heretofore in raising the question of Negro workers, their organisation and connection with broad groups of toiling workers, the question has usually centered around isolated localities — U.S.A., etc., — with very little if any attention given to a broader aspect — a world outlook. Even the advent of the I.C.N. in South Africa which finally flopped to Amsterdam did not bring the question of the oppressed toiling Negroes of the world any closer to a real international affiliation and outlook. And how could affiliation of the most exploited Negro toilers be benefitted by any attachment whatever with the Amsterdam International which adheres to a policy of collaboration with the capitalists' exploitation of colonial and oppressed Negro toilers? The constant clamour of Negroes in America for the admittance of Negro workers into the ranks of international unions affiliated to the AF of L has meant even less, insofar as the deaf ears of the AF of L bureaucracy are concerned. What else is to be expected from the AF of L officialdom? So far as the Negro workers are concerned, the AF of L officialdom bluffs, hoodwinks, betrays and isolates the broad masses of Negro workers from the ranks of the unions. Witness the recent betrayal of 12,000 Negro workers of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by William Green and Company.

Imperialist Exploitation

But now, as a result of the constant and ever-increasing oppression and exploitation, by the imperialists and the international bourgeoisie, of the Negro toilers of the whole world — in South Africa, the Gold Coast, West and East Africa, the Congo, the West Indies, Central and South America, and finally in the USA, a young but virile labour movement which although not yet homogeneous, nevertheless is orienting towards common unity and international trade union outlook.

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World Unity of Negro Labour

The unity of white and black unions in South Africa, along with strikes against their common enemy --- British imperialism is pointing the way. Strike waves in the West Indies (the longshoremen's strike in Trinidad, the capture of 5 of the 6 labour seats in the colonial legislature by the workers and peasants of Trinidad); the recent strike move of Negro workers of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in America against one of the strongest and worst labour-hating capitalist organisations in America ; the unity of white and black miners of America at the April 1st Conference which took place at Pittsburg under the leadership of the left wing ; and at the recent conference for the organisation of a new miners' union (September 9, a Negro miner was elected vice-president of the new union). All this shows the unity on the one hand, of the Negro workers, and on the other hand, there is a growing consciousness on the part of the Negro workers towards their own common interests for unity on a world scale against their common imperialist oppressors.°)

It must be clearly understood that the movements of other toilers against the imperialist oppressors was initiated, developed, and organised by the workers themselves. The only thing that is respected, the only thing that CAN BRING LIBERATION IS ORGANISED FORCE AND POWER. UNTIL WE HAVE ORGANISED POWER AND FORCE WE SHALL REMAIN STEP-CHILDREN IN THE PROLETARIAN FAMILY. The only thing in the final analysis that will break down the white chauvinist doors of the reformist trade unions (AF of L, etc.) is ORGANISED FORCE.

RILU Organises International Negro TU Committee

The RILU is the organising centre for Negro workers on the international field, and through its sections, on local fields. It is the historic task of the RILU to lead the world proletariat against its

°) See article in this issue : "The Development of a Labour Movement among Negro Colonials --- and the USA."

common enemy. The RILU includes in its ranks workers of all races. It takes steps to combat all forms of reformism and all white chauvinism. The historic work of the Fourth World Congress of the RILU in regards to Negro workers has been pointed out before in these columns. Recently at a meeting of the Executive Bureau of the RILU which was participated in by Negro workers and representatives from all parts of the world, the following historic resolution was discussed and unanimously passed :

"Whereas, despite the decisions adopted by RILU Congress and the insistent directions of the Executive Bureau, the organisation of Negro workers is being effected at an extremely slow pace ;

"Whereas, the RILU affiliated organisations, and in the first place, the Trade Union Educational League, have not yet commenced the formation of independent Negro unions ;

"Whereas, further hesitation and delay in this matter puts millions of the most oppressed slaves of capitalism outside the field of action of the RILU ;

"Whereas, Negro workers, thanks to their economic, political, and racial oppression, comprise a huge potentially revolutionary power in the struggle against capitalism ; and

"Whereas, the Negro workers of the United States, Africa, the West Indies Islands, will achieve equality with the white workers only by means of the organised relentless struggle against the whole system of capitalist oppression, the Executive Bureau resolves :

"I. - To set up at the RILU an International Trade Union Committee of Negro workers, composed of two representatives from the Negro workers of the United States, and one representative each from South Africa Guadeloupe, Martinique and Cuba. In the future to draw into the Trade Union Committee representatives from the Negro workers of Haiti, East Africa, Portuguese Africa, the Belgian Congo, Liberia, French Equatorial Africa, and those countries of Latin America where there are considerable numbers of Negro workers (Brazil, Colombia,

Venezuela, etc.).

"2. - To charge the Trade Union Committee with the work of drawing Negro workers into the trade unions, the creation of new joint unions of White and Negro workers, and the creation of independent Negro unions where the white unions do not permit Negro members, and especially, the work of setting up connections with the Negro workers of the whole world and the unification of the wide masses of Negro workers on the basis of the class struggle.

"3. - To charge the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers to publish a special bulletin and to prepare and convene an International Conference of Negro Workers at the end of 1929."

A Negro worker, delegate to the IVth Congress of the R.I.L.U. from the T.U.I.L., U.S.A., member of the Executive Bureau of the R.I.L.U. was Chairman of this Bureau.

Tasks of Negro Workers

In the organisation of this Bureau the RILU has performed a task of world significance and importance. Never before in the history of the struggles of Negro toilers for emancipation, in the history of the trade union movement has such a far-reaching step been taken. The toiling Negro workers are no more the step-children in the proletarian family. In this unity the world proletariat has finally been unified. However, this raises some very important tasks for the Negro workers.

What are the tasks of the Negro workers? The Negro workers on a large and world scale must affiliate through their trade unions with this International organisation. Between the betrayal of the reformists and the bureaucrats of the reformist trade unions; the onslaught of the ruling class and finally the reformist and vacillating petty-bourgeois intellectual Negro leadership, the Negro workers must begin the organisation of their own organisations under workers' leadership. General suggestions for organisational steps:

I. - Special trade union Committees should be set up. These

committees should draw within its ranks the most conscious workers. It must establish itself among the workers.

2. - Local shop and factory committees should be set up in all industries. These local committees should cooperate with the national (special) committees and form the basis for the establishing of regular unions.

3. - Considering that the work of organising Negro workers is largely the question of organising the unorganised, great stress should be placed on the organisation of new unions, soliciting at all times, however, the assistance of existing unions in the industry where unions exist.

4. - The drawing in of sympathetic elements of white workers must not be overlooked. The first step towards breaking down race prejudice in unions and the building up of strong unified unions is thus started. Sympathetic elements also should be recruited from among Negro social (workers') clubs, fraternal organisations, etc., etc.

5. - District conferences should be organised in given (geographical) districts, following these national (general) conferences should be organised.

6. - These special committees should be a part of the RILU adherents where such exist (America, TUEL, etc.), and where none exist these committees themselves should become the direct organisation of the RILU.
