

The Negro Proletariat of Latin America and the International Conference of Negro Workers.

The racial problem exists in all Latin-American countries. The bourgeoisie deny the existence of any such problem or simply try to get around it, but it is looming larger and larger as time passes. No matter how they may try to belie the fact, the racial problem does exist in Latin America. The time has come to show to the ideologues of the bourgeoisie that the workers have achieved consciousness of themselves as a class and are not going to draw back from the problems they are called upon to solve but will approach them from the class standpoint and endeavor to solve them in accordance with the principles that will bring about their freedom from the yoke of capitalism. From the very outset the task appears complex because the bourgeoisie, especially in our countries, have always tried to create that frame of mind in the workers that best suits bourgeois interests. Even those of the toilers who are subjected both to class and racial exploitation are to be found clinging tightly to the bourgeoisie and flinch from solving the problems by which they are confronted. But we are bound by no ties to the bourgeois class. As revolutionaries we do not carry this deadweight of prejudice created by the ruling class the better to exploit us as a class and to preserve their overlordship for all time. We will strain every nerve in working to get all American-Negro workers to recognize the double exploitation to which they are subjected both as representatives of a given class and of a given race. We will put forth every effort too, to get them to line themselves up with the movement for liberation which is developing in all countries where the criminal actions of the imperialists and the treacherous tub-thumping of the national bourgeoisie transform the Negro worker into the lowest of the low because he does not yet understand that it is his duty not to repudiate the class struggle, but by waging that struggle also to attain to racial equality.

All are aware of how fictitious the democracy of the Latin-American countries actually is. Everybody is aware, further, of the fact that our working class lacks the most elementary rights. This absence of elementary rights, makes thousands and tens of thousands of men and women of all races to throw themselves into the struggle against the common enemy. Yet the humiliation, contempt and vilification to which the Negroes are exposed is becoming a daily feature of life in these countries---so much so that it no longer awakens resentment. By putting up with such a state of things the Negro proletarian will in the long run sink lower and lower until he will become a mere beast of burden serving as an object of exploitation and will be made to live in such conditions as obtain for the majority of the US Negro population, conditions fittet more for dogs than for human beings.

If we make a careful examination of the position of the black population throughout Latin-America, we will come to the conclusion that the position of the Negroes has not changed one iota since the days when these countries threw off the Spanish yoke in order to pass into the hands of either the United States or Great Britain, and are becoming more similar to the conditions which existed in the days of slavery. Today, you find the employer of labour locking down on the wage workers in the same contemptuous attitude and with same loathing with which the "masters" of the old days regarded their slaves. The only right in the field of politics that the national bourgeoisie allowed the Negroes is that of the voting cattle at the polling booths. As for the imperialists who jointly

with the national bourgeoisie exploit the working class of our countries, they recognise the Negro's right only to work and starve.

Now, what are we Negro workers doing in face of this hellish problem? The majority of us accept the bonds of slavery and exploitation at the hands of the imperialists; others are promoting the interests of the national bourgeoisie. Yet every one of us who does not understand the class view point that demands struggle against the national bourgeoisie and the imperialists, further the future exploitation of the working class. Meanwhile, the Negro peoples in our countries continue to sink lower and lower in status as the result of the activities of those who pretend to be their defenders and who betray them for the privilege of gathering the crumbs that fall from the table of the national bourgeoisie and the robber-imperialists.

These were the conditions of the Negro workers of Latin America, when the Second Congress of the League Against Imperialism, (Frankfort, July, 1929) decided to call the First International Conference of Negro Workers in London. What were the aims and objects of this conference? Let us try here to give an answer.

The world has long been witnessing the most unbridled exploitation of the colonial countries by the imperialist powers, especially countries with a Negro population. The sharp crisis the imperialist countries are passing through is being made to bear with much of its weight on the shoulders of the working class and peasantry of the colonies. The United States has enslaved in economic chains all the countries of Central America, the Antilles, and the Caribbean Sea. The Yankees have got a regular slave trade going which takes the Negroes of Haiti, Jamaica and other countries away from hearth and home to bring them to Central America where they are made to sustain most brutal exploitation by the national bourgeoisie and the US imperialists. The plantations of Cane-sugar, coffee, bananas and other tropical produce are cultivated almost entirely by Negroes brought from the Islands of Haiti and Jamaica. At the instance of imperialist concerns the different governments of the Central-American Republics regulate the importation of black workers, which policy brings down the price of labour. Wages go down as low as ten cents a day, the working day is never less than 12 hours. When the strength of the slaves begins to flag, the whip of the overseer is used to instil new "guts" into them. These Negro workers are made to live in the filthiest of huts while armed guards in the pay of the imperialist plantation companies and the troops of the particular bourgeois state concerned are always ready to apply the "law of flight" (which means murder for supposed attempts to escape), in all those cases when the workers make any demand for improved working conditions or rise in revolt against the hunger wages they are paid and the bestial treatment meted out to them.

On the Guadeloupe Islands of the Lesser Antilles, a French possession a wide-sweeping strike movement broke out which was directed against the appalling conditions of labour imposed by the exploiters on the sugar plantation and sugar factory workers. The movement was of such intensity that there were hopes of speedily freeing the Negro workers from the yoke of French imperialism. The entire movement, however, was crushed and drown^{ed} in blood with the aid of the colonial troops maintained by France, the land which is glorified by many among us as the "cradle of democracy and constitutional liberties". And we get a Negro servant of French imperialism like Candas who rose in the French Chamber of Deputies to demand the smashing of this heroic movement for liberation into which the Negro Proletariat had thrown itself. This is the line always taken by all those who fly the flag of defenders of the Negro race in order to get soft jobs for themselves created in the interests of the exploiting class. These traitors serve the interests of their masters by soiling out those who have had the simplicity to vote for them at election time in the conviction that it is possible to win a free and human existence within

the framework of the capitalist order.

To-day, the black republic of Haiti---sick to death of US imperialist rule as exercised through that hired bandit Borno---is fighting the system of heavy taxation and galling laws, laws which deprive the population of the country of the most elementary civil rights. If the liberation movement in Haiti does not move out on to the road of open revolutionary class struggle, no matter who comes to power it will be one who will serve the interests of imperialism and find the means once more to hoodwink and betray the workers and peasants of the country. But if the Haiti movement will come out determinedly against Yankee imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, the masses, who have already given such striking proofs of their ability to fight, will drive forward their final emancipation. Throughout the Antilles and the West Indies generally the Movement against US imperialism is spreading and strengthening. This is due, of course, to the intensive exploitation of the natives and their determination to fight to the end against the Wall Street plutocrats.

Our Conference will have to solve the very important problem of coordinating and organising the movement for liberation of the Negro proletariat of the colonial lands so as to assist the international working class in its fight to overthrow the capitalist system. The revolutionary proletariat is supporting our Conference because it knows that its delegates are going to discuss all problems of vital interest to its class comrades of the Negro proletariat, these problems that affect the latter both as Negroes and as workers. The Conference will be the gathering point for the accumulation of a wealth of experience that can be used in the struggle against capitalist oppression.

One of the fundamental problems confronting the Conference is that of the war the imperialist powers are making such feverish preparations for, a war that will be launched against the Soviet Union, the fatherland of the toilers and down-trodden the world over. It is common knowledge to all that the imperialists made use of black troops during the last war and now we find them already preparing the formation of huge Negro bataillions to furnish the cannon fodder to be used in attacking the country of the workers and peasants, the only country that has been able to overthrow capitalism, a country which despite all the obstacles created by the capitalist powers has held intact, for 13 years already, within the bonds of unity a hundreds and eighty million workers and peasants, country pushing ahead with the work of building socialism.

Suffering as it does under the restrictions we have described above, deprived by racial hatred of any chance of even earning enough for the elementary necessities compelled, too, to perform the dirtiest and heaviest labour, the Negro proletarians of Latin America ought to line up with their brothers in the United States in Africa, in the colonies exploited by imperialism, and with the class movement of the world for the common struggle of liberation and against the capitalist system.

The Conference of Negro Workers of the whole world that is to open on July 1, will be the most outstanding event in the history of the Negro movement and its struggle to destroy slavery. The Conference will mark the beginning of a ruthless struggle to win recognition for the Negro's claim to human rights, the beginning of a struggle which will have to be linked up with the struggle to win freedom and well-being for all the toilers.

By organising together and linking up with their white fellow-workers in all countries, the Negro toilers will be able to do away forever with the treachery of false "apostles" of the Garvey type, they will be able to wage successfully the battle against imperialist exploitation and to struggle against the preparations for war upon the USSR.

The International Conference will broach the most important problem the Negro workers have ever had to tackle. It is therefore the bounden duty of both the Negro and white workers to give all the help to the conference and to insure that it will be a bumper success.

In the hands of the proletariat the creation of an international Negro Workers' organisation will be a new weapon in the struggle against the Capitalist order.

Time and again the Negro proletariat of Latin America has proved its class-consciousness although the great problems confronting the Negro workers throughout the world had long been outside its ken, and it is for the Negroes of the Latin-speaking countries of the New World to prove now once more that they realise where their duty lies, that they must join up in the struggle their fellow-toilers are waging both in the colonies of Africa and in the West Indies nearer home.

The participation of the Negro proletariat of Latin America in our International Conference will be no less valuable than the representation of the Negroes of the other countries that will appear at the Conference. And when there later takes final shape that organisation to be created at the Conference, when the Negro working class of the world is organised and is fighting for its rights both as a class and race, the capitalist world will be afforded the opportunity to convince itself of the fact that unity of action between the white, and black toilers who are equally exploited and ground down by the ruling class will be sufficient to bring the capitalist order to an end and to usher in the rule of the workers and peasants which alone is capable of guaranteeing them their class rights and to ensure racial and national independence and equality.

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