THE INTERNATIONAL

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Can the Mineworkers' Union Develop into an Industrial Union?

This week advertisements appear in the daily press announcing to Mineworkers from their Union the holding of a ballot on the Chamber of Mines offer.

A noticeable feature of Rand Trade Unionism is its abject dependency on the capitalist press to get into touch with members. Whenever there is a Federation ballot, or an Engineers' ballot, or a Mineworkers' ballot, these Unions are thrown back on the enemy press to notify their members. Is there not something undignified and indicative of a looseness, of organisation in this method? Should not the industrial movement of the workers be sufficient unto itself? In the hour of battle with the employing class, what are the Unions going to do without other means of communication than the official organs of the enemy? Witness all the strikes on the Rand to prove how spoon-fed we are by the capitalist press.

The chief trouble with the Mineworkers' and other Unions is that sufficient attention has not been given to propaganda. Organisers are appointed, not for their ability to speak on the principle of Industrial Solidarity, but for their ability to collect five bobs. 'An ideal medium for propaganda among the Mineworkers would be the issue of a monthly journal, subscription to which would be inclusive in the membership. Let everyone who joins the Union be the recipient of a copy of his Union's journal every month, at his RESIDENTIAL address. That would be a good step towards tightening up the membership into one class-conscious organisation and making the members on Randfontein aware of the ideas of the members on Van Ryn.

But what would the Mineworkers' Journal propagate? Surely not the petty craft interests of a few underground white men? There are signs which give one to hope that the Mineworkers' Union is emerging from that stage. The old stagers, Mat Trewwicks, the Carbises and the Mikie Dunne's, do not sweep the board as they used to with their aristocrats of labour appeals. In their days the miners went on deputations to Ministers kid gloves and immaculate patent They were leathers. little lower than the angels of the Corner House. Their grievance was not against the wage system, but that they were not getting their fair whack out of the sweat of the "bloody nigger" who did the graft. There are signs that those days are gone.

The Mineworkers' Union wake up to its great opportunities. With the Railwaymen it can be the most powerful factor in South Africa's economic life. What is wrong in its composition? It is the narrow craft outlook of its members. They still persist in thinking of their Union in terms of underground work, instead of taking the whole mine into their purview. And in their underground work they have no conception, generally speaking, of the claims of the man who actually. mines, the native miner. Although it. has to be admitted that one can get a more sympathetic response from white miners to the claims of Jim Sixpence to be regarded as a fellow worker than from most white wage-earners.

The Mineworkers' Rule Book admits all white men into the Union. What is needed is vigorous agitation and propaganda to GET all white workers into the one Union. There is no reason why the reduction men, the surface men, the mechanics above and below, and the miners, should not all be linked up into one solid Union. That is where a Union journal would come in.

Abreast of that agitation should be conducted the other, the touchstone of solidarity—an agitation to admit the native miner into the Union. How Quixotic! Yes, but it is a case of organising with them or having them organising against you. They are learning.

It is one thing to enter in a rule book that all white mineworkers may come in. It is quite another to get them in. At present the structure of the Union does not admit of embracing the reduction, surface and mechanics sections in the Union. A great advance has been made in improving the structure of the Union. In the old days it was nothing better than an army, or a mob, with one General and all the rest privatest. Chaos reigned in time of strike. Nowadays, however, a lot of the central work has been devoluted to District Committees, with local autonomy, much to the chagrin of the Chamber of Mines.

But the local control of local affairs is still not local enough to admit the mechanics and reduction sections. And the control is far from local enough to safeguard against chaos in time of strike.

What is needed is for every mine or group of shafts to have a branch of its own, with separate Mine Conveners for the underground, surface, reduction and mechanics' sections. And, if it

must be for a start, have separate conveners for the native workers on the mine. But all the conveners-black, white, mechanics, underground, surface and reduction—must sit together to form the mine executive, and be accountable to the district and central offices. There you would have all departments given due consideration for their special work, and the workers would organise along the line of that which is of most interest to them, not the affairs of the district, nor the affairs of other mines, so much as the affairs of the mine on which they carry on their daily toil.

This alone can make a powerful Mineworkers' Union, that would not only provide a sure shield of protection, but also a weapon of emancipation at the same time. From this the control of the indstry would be an easy matter. Meet on the mine itself, and you not only get a bigger grip on the master class, but you get to learn to control the industry.

Mineworkers! Be ambitious! Be audacious! Above all, be conscious of your class, even in a black skin.

D

THE RIGHT AND THE MIGHT.

The ballot is a weapon of civilisation; the ballot is a weapon that no revolutionary movement of our times may ignore, except at its own peril; the Socialist ballot is the emblem of RIGHT. For that very reason the Socialist ballot is

Weaker than a woman's tears, tamer than sleep, forder than ignorance, less valiant than a virgin in the night, and skilless as unpractised infancy,

unless it is backed by the MIGHT to enforce it. That requisite Might is summed up in the industrial organisation of the working class.

DE LEON.

CRAFT SCABBERY.

It is a fact, deep with significance, though it seems to escape the observation of superficial observers, that it is not the UNORGANISED SCAB who breaks the strikes, but the organised craft that really does the dirty work.

DE LEON.

Pass this on to a friend when you have read it. Tell him he can get it for a year post free for 5s.

Mutual Interests?

· By J. M. G.

I believe it was Victor Hugo who said "Think of a smile in chains," which is an apt simile of the working man who is content to wear the shackles of wage slavery and is perfectly satisfied to have a master to whom he can cringe and go cap in hand to beg for favours.

The old craft unions to a very large extent have been responsible for the mental kinks of many of the members of these unions. They have always contended and were at great pains to point out the mutual interests of capital and labour, a contention that never had the least smattering of truth, as is evidenced by the antagonisms and want of harmony in the industrial field, leading to those conflicts that are the rule in their everyday relations. They show no identity of interests, but that those interests are diametrically opposed, and never will be harmonised in any society based on private ownership of the tools of production.

Peace, perfect peace, has ever been the aim of these craft unions. Their time and energy have been devoted to bringing about an impossible peace, trying to conciliate antagonistic classes. Wasted energy! The result of ignorance of the economics of labour, the basis of society.

But a new light is breaking on the industrial horizon. The workers are getting a glimmer of the fallacy of craft unions, with their narrow outlook and selfish interests, and are getting conscious of the fetters by which they are bound. They are beginning to shake off these fetters, and are looking towards class organisation along the lines of industries. They are beginning to think for themselves and are discarding those hirelings who have misled them in the past. They are making an invoice of their mental stock. This war has revealed to them how essential they are to society as a whole. The light is gradually becoming moreintense to their mental vision, revealing in increasing brightness that they have a mentality to develop and a manhood to maintain.

This growing aspiration is leading them to a clearer perception of the part they play as workers in society. It is dawning upon them that everything necessary to the life of society is produced by them. Their labour' power has removed mountains or tunnelled beneath them, has built railroads that have circled the globe, has spanned rivers, hewn down forests, dug canals. made the machinery that propels the palatial steamships they have built; in fact, has done everything necessary to the carrying on of the complex form of present-day society, which would fall to pieces if they were to withhold their labour.

And in return for all these achievements, what return have they got? A bare subsistence in the mass, with the option of starvation if they do not bow the knee of servility to the master class which, as society is formed to-day, has the power to compel them to accept

conditions that are recognised to be degrading and humiliating by those workers who have freed themselves from the idea of mutual interests between employer and employe, master and slave.

This unrest amongst the workers and dissatisfaction with present-day conditions of labour is recognised by the employing class, who in their own interests are trying to still continue the befogging of the mental vision of the workers by all sorts of fantastic schemes for perpetuating the present system of exploitation under a show of mutual interests and a new-born humanitarian spirit of brotherly love. They have taken the craft unions to their bosoms and are advocating conciliation boards, round table conferences, joint boards and other misleading schemes to beguile the workers and make them docile slaves for future exploitation. Even the "Star," that? well-known and persistent enemy of labour, has begun to administer the dope. In last Saturday's issue the editorial was one long plea to recognise the humanity of the workers, too long had they been looked upon as cogs in the wheels of industry and denied the rights of human beings.

That old proverb of not looking a gift horse in the mouth does not apply to any scheme originating with these people. The workers should not only look in the mouth but very carefully examine it in every part of its anatomy when it shall be found wanting and of no use to them.

The only remedy for the workers is to discard the old craft unions. Let them pass into the oblivion they deserve, their day is gone. They are now of no service as a weapon to combat modern organised capital. Let them also beware of these ameliorating schemes of the capitalist class. They are side-tracking attempts on the part of these people to conserve to themselves the surplus values of which they have in the past consistently robbed the workers.

The workers' only hope is to organise as a class; irrespective of race or colour, skilled or unskilled, coming together with the recognition of the fundamental truth that there can be no identity of interests between robber and robbed, that peace and harmony cannot prevail in any form of society that compels many to go hungry and denies to them the right to live as human beings whilst the few enjoy all the luxuries. Let them organise to take control of the tools of production. It is the only hope for humanity; half-measures are futile and not worth estruggling for. By taking control of the tools of production and using them in the interests of the community as a Co-operative Commonwealth they will eliminate the present degrading society and usher in a system with mutual interests for every unit of society.

Notice that the Trade Union Congress endorses the principle, not of an International Labour Congress, but an International Socialist Congress, to dictate terms of peace. Although few of the delegates would call themselves Socialists, they instinctively grip the idea that once they take the international leap they take the leap of social revolution too.

Industrial Conference.

The Industrial Conference of Working-men was held in the Trades Hall last Sunday. There were 45 wage-earners present from practically every industry. Lively discussions were the order of the day on the part of our industrial unionists, who spoke on the various aspects of organising by industry instead of by craft. A notable feature of the gathering was the presence of three native workers, and one of them, Fellow Worker, Tsitsi, was elected to the Manifesto Committee. The following resolution was carried:

"That the Conference endorses the creation of a general industrial union embracing all industries. That a General Convention be called for the purpose of organising the movement on revolutionary industrial lines; and that a Manifesto Committee be appointed to draft a manifesto to be submitted to the Convention at its next meeting. Sunday, September 16."

The fellow workers who had foregathered went about the job in a business-like spirit. Fellow workers J. Forrester Brown and Andrew Watson were chairman and secretary respectively.

As per resolution, the Convention (that is the name adopted) will meet again next Sunday week, the 16th, to discuss the draft manifesto prepared by the committee. All lovers of their class are welcome to this second meeting, Trades Hall, Rissik Street, 10 o'clock in the morning. The idea is to circulate the manifesto far and wide in industrial circles, getting the endorsement of Trade Union branches and others. For it is realised that the big majority of the workers are not organised at all. The result will be a General Convention of all those who endorse the manifesto. This, of course, will require much agitation and propaganda to bring about.

WAGE-EARNER:

STOCKHOLM DELEGATE FUND.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—P. O'F., 10s.; E. J. G., 2s. 6d.; I. K., £1 15s. 6d.; (List); W. G. (List 13), £1 7s. 6d.; W. B. (Pretoria), 10s.; J. S., 2s. 6d.; J. B., 2s. 6d.; L. S., 2s.; J. V., 2s. 6d.; J. G., 5s.; Mrs. H., 5s.; L. T. J. (Capetown), 2s. 6d.; C. B. T., 2s. 6d.; Mrs. H. (List 25), £2 9s. 6d.; B. C., 5s.; I. A. (Benoni, List 2), £1 0s. 6d.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; S. W. (List 41), £1 12s.; S. G. R. (Natal), 2s. 6d.

Keep up the contributions. Stock-holm is not off. Wait for Comrade Andrews' report.

Eight men have been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for being members of the Industrial Workers of the World. This is what citizenship of the British Empire means. In the early days of the Trade Union movement, Trade Unionists were transported to Botany Bay. Well, their sould are marching on. Truly, as George Mason says, our liberties, what they are, are not gifts from the upper classes. They have been won for us by men outside the pale of the law.

National Wars Thinly Veilthe Class War.

The mail papers to hand discuss the ecstacy or indignation, according to conviction, of the various parties in Russia over the recent Russian offensive. Even "Isvestia," the organ of the Council of Workmen, claimed that the military revival lent prestige to their delegates at Stockholm. But "Pravda" (Maximalist), after completely ignoring the offensive for some days, broke out with a declaration that the Maximalists and the Social Revolutionary Party had betrayed the revolution by subjecting it to Imperialist aims.

In pursuance of the theory that the way to strengthen the Revolution at home and abroad was to make a vigorous military attack on Germany, large numbers of the Finnish troops, who had distinguished themselves in the cause of the Revolution, hurled themselves to death on the German front.

That offensive now seems to have collapsed. The democratic army have found that stern realities give the hall-mark to the warnings of Lenin.

The capitalist parties want Imperial expansion. But the armed workers fail to see the use of spilling blood on a foreign soil.

The capitalists wish to turn the heads of the new democracy with military exploits. But the conquests of the working class movement can never be carried abroad by fire and sword.

The capitalists wish to provide military sky-rockets to attract the gaze of the people so that meanwhile they can pick their pockets; but the armed workers are finding that they have nothing in common with the gew-gaws of the bourgeoisie.

Every military conquest is a defeat for the working class. This the Russian Capitalist and the German Junkers know quite well. So does our own Johannesburg "Star." Not long ago it almost prayed for a vigorous German offensive on the Eastern front in order to restore "national solidarity" in Russia. "National solidarity" means the capitalist on top.

The Russian offensive having been voted down by the democratic army, the German Command got the wink from Korniloff at Moscow the other day. It is now preparing an offensive against Riga and Petrograd. Surely now the "Star" will rub its hands with glee!

Military considerations should induce the German Command to let sleeping dogs lie on the Eastern front. But political considerations are everything in this war. Whereas SECTIONS of the capitalist class may quarrel, the INTERESTS of capital are everywhere identical.

German capital cannot afford to have a social revolution brewing at its very doors. Although she has a tiff with Cousin Capital in Russia, she can sympathise with her (and her German investors) in the hour of danger. 'The hour of danger' for Russian canital is no longer the national 'enemy' at the gates, but the working class enemy within.

What's to be done? The Russian workers have refused to march; the next best thing is to get their German comrades to give them a clout.

Thus, if the German soldier can be depended upon not to fraternise, British and German capital can sit at The Hague to discuss prisoners, and "positively" nothing else. If the German will fraternise, then they will have to peg a new claim for Japan and bring a Japanese army. All this has been hinted at.

Let us remember this. Long before the capitulation of Paris to the Prussians in 1871 the capitalist politicians of Versailles had arranged to cede the city. But for many weeks later the National Guard, the armed workingmen who must be disarmed by any ruse or treachery—for weeks these were hurled in forlorn hopes and futile sallies for the sole purpose of getting them decimated by the enemy guns.

Likewise to-day on a more gigantic scale. In the hour when no man knoweth the national war may have turned into the international class war of Capital versus Labour.

League Notes.

CINDERELLA.—Don't forget the Cinderella next Wednesday, September 12, at West's Academy, and the League Social as advertised this coming Saturday. Bumper rallies are expected at both functions.

JOHANNESBURG.—Comrade Geo. Mason gave the usual lecture in the Trades Hall last Sunday, and his remarks led to lively discussion. Comrade C. B. Tyler held the soap-box outside, also with an attentive crowd.

JEWISH SPEAKING BRANCH.— Jewish speaking branch of the League has been formed in Johannesburg with a promising roll of membership. The first advertised meeting was held last Sunday week in the Trades Hall, when Comrade Israelstein presided over a gathering of 50 or 60 comrades. It was decided to form the meeting into a Jewish speaking branch of the I.S.L., and numbers of hitherto unattached Socialists joined up. Discussion gathered round the Industrial Union plank in the Constitution, and the revolutionary basis of the League was driven home by several comrad-9 It has been decided to hold a concert and dance under the auspices of the branch on the 26th inst. The branch is also considering a scheme of a 10,000 shilling fund to acquire a printing plant for the League. The enthusiasm of the comrades bids fair to make the branch an acquisition to the cause. Comrade W. Halberstadt is the hon. secretary.

Have you subscribed to "The International," only 5s. per annum, post free. Pay up and help to keep alive the only paper of the working class in South Africa.

Our Second Year!

One Hundred, Not Out;

With this number we attain our century, not out! This number 100 completes our second year of existence as a League and as a journal. It is not well for a fighting organisation to look back and collect its own relics, but we may be pardoned, when the international unity of the workers of the world is actually dawning, to repeat the confession of faith with which we started our first number, and feel with modest pride how we have been vindicated. This is what we said then, when parting company with the Labour Party. We wonder if that disgruntled ruin can with equal pleasure bring out its declarations of two years ago!

"In the conception of the Working-class International, however, there emerges to unawakened earth the trumpet of a prophesy. Even in the hour of its numerical supremacy we see the national sentiment fading before our eyes and slowly re-forming into the vaster constellation of International Working-class unity. This is now the only way of advance for Labour. The other way presents a vista of interminable despair, with bayonets and crossbones stacked on either side."

This two years' uninterrupted run we venture to think, is the longest attained by any Labour paper in South Africa. The old "Worker" suffered frequent spells of "out-of-work."

On this second anniversary, then, let us redouble our efforts to keep the paper going. The place of the League is now unquestioned. It is stronger than ever it was. It has established itself as the political party of the revolutionary working class in South Africa. But with the enterprise of the members starting other schemes, sanding a delegate to Stockholm, etc., there is a danger of the financial needs of their official organ being overlooked. It should always be borne in mind that the actual subscriptions, welcome though they are, are only sufficient to cover half the printing bill. The balance must come from the pockets of willing comrades. Then come, comrades come, rally to the financial support of your paper.

Our little paper has to-day a circulation of which few South African weeklies can boast. Every copy goes out among the workers, and every copy is read by two or three. It is seeping through into the workshops of the Rand and the industrial towns of South Africa. We are proud to think that it has a special appeal to the actual wage-earner, bringing him a message of Good Hope and Fight. And we feel prouder to think that it is the wage-earner, black as well as white, who reads its pages with the greatest avidity. And so we enter our third year with a vastly increased confidence that the principle which our little sheet has proclaimed, the international unity of the workers of the world, is raising its broad sunshine over the edge of the world to-day.

Another "Neutrality" Resolution.

From later cables it is apparent that the huge vote in the Trades Union. Congress was not against the principle of going to Stockholm, but for the postponement of the Congress; the principle of an International Socialist Congress to decide peace being endorsed in the same resolution, which was moved by Smillie and seconded by Thorne. This is a great advance certainly. But it has been adopted because the leaders feared to split the movement; in fact, it was the case of the East London Conference again. May it not be that the results. will be the same, that sooner or later the revolutionaries will fail to keep in double harness with the reformists!

We are told that the hopelessly divergent views at the Allied Socialist Conference on the terms of peace made the leaders despair of going to Stockholm. Were they not told to go to Stockholm, to confer internationally, by 1,234,000 British workmen, and what right had they to interpret that mandate in terms of diplomatic quibbles The event fully vindicates the action of our Special Conference in refusing to endorse equivocal conditions of "no annexations and no indemnities" and placing the revolutionary slogan, "A peace on the lines of the complete destruction of the capitalist system," as the terms of unconditional cessation of the slaughter. This we know, that every postponement of the Stockholm Congress makes a peace on capitalist lines more and more impossible, and a peace on the lines of our declaration more and more inevitable.

It will be a moot point how far even the most anarchistical will be able with justice to brand for good such men as Henderson or Barnes as traitors, as they will always claim, no matter what code of the class struggle they may have transgressed, that what they did was at the request of the workers. But when it comes to an issue such as this: "Who shall make peace, the capitalist class or the working class?" and men engineer on behalf of a capitalist peace in the heart of the working class movement, and strive to deny to the workers the right as it is their mission to usher in the era of goodwill, then such men can never but be branded as "Traitor" for alway.

But the situation is being forced on all sides. The alternative to an International Socialist Congress at an early date is a separate peace between Russia and Germany. For months the Russian comrades have frantically striven for the Stockholm Congress in order that the peace which they must have shall not be a separate one but an international peace. With the capture of Riga by the Germans, if the Congress does not meet soon, the Russians, much as they desire to act internationally, will refuse to carry on the military farce any longer. This is the dilemma in which the Capitalist Governments of Europe find themselves.

Uses of the Labour Politician.

Mr. J. A. Clark is entitled to the rich encomiums poured upon him by the Town Council from capitalist and labour benches alike last Tuesday. The main argument of the bourgeois section against his deposition from the chairmanship of the Tramway Committee was his "great influence with the men."

The capitalist element are everywhere discovering the wonderfully soothing effects of Labour men on public bodies upon the minds of employes. With a Labour Tramway Committee and a Labour chairman, the troubles with the men are lessened enormously. What matters it if a man is anti-war, so long as his "great influence with the men" is used in a manner that saves money and trouble for the capitalist?

One would have imagined that a Labour man's "influence with the men" would be inevitably used for the men's own good. But here we have it that a Labour politician's "influence with the men" is the greatest asset the capitalists can have—outweighs even his anti-war "faddism."

Let the workers realise that all Labour representation on public bodies is just wholesome soothing syrup in the of the capitalists hands workers the quiet, keep. capitalist dope unless they much straight by the halfkept nelson of industrial solidarity. We defy the chairman of the Tramway Committee to show the minutes of his committee to a representative delegation of tramwaymen.

The workers should refuse to be made the dupes of politicians of "great influence with the men." What does it amount to? These men of "great influence" borrow a bob from the workers in order that they may stand the workers a drink. And the workers marvel at their "great influence." What they have is nothing without the power the workers have through their industrial solidarity. That power they have as soon as they care to combine industrially and let politicians go hang. It therefore follows that the value of these men of "great influence" lies in their power to keep the workers contented with their miserable lov.

Even our "unfortunate Jaures declared only a few weeks before the war that the self-administration of Alsace-Lorraine within the frame work of the German Empire would abolish the question once for all," says "Vorwaerts." All this Alsace-Lorraine talk is only the capitalist handle to continue the remunerative game of slaughter.

The Carpenters and Joiners' Society in England contains some 'Mot stuff.' Among resolutions demanding the cessation of the war, the release of John MacLean, etc., in the July number of the 'Carpenters Journal,' is one demanding the 'Parliamentary Committee to urge upon the Government the necessity of hanging or penal servitude for life for exploiters of the necessaries of life at the present time.'

CAN IT BE TRUE?

That General Hertzog has called a council of Nationalist pundits, Backveld Jurists and Doctors of the Order of Ananias to decide if it be fitting for a Nationalist nigger-hating Christian to take money from a yellow Japanese merchant for wool grown in a black man's country on the backs of bastard Afrikander sheep herded by pagan Hottentots? Can it?

J. C.

Speaking to the Council of Workmen on May 1, Lenin unfolded a pretty story. "Why," he asked, "are not the secret diplomatic documents made public?"

"I may say that I know you will find in them plans for the division of China between France; England and Russia."

Perhaps the Russian Council is keeping these revelations for the Stockholm Congress!

Boys and Girls.

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Snobs and Jingoes!

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