opponent. The Beaverbrook press plays the same rôle on the other side!

1. *Popular Front.* The advocates point to a community of interests between Liberals, "democratic Tories," Labour, Communists, on the issues of arms for Spain, the League of Nations, a "Peace *bloc*" of democratic nations against the Fascist nations, and opposition to Fascism in this country. If there be such a community of interests, surely (they say) there should be united action to fight for them.

2. *Workers' Front.* Advocates here maintain that there is no community of interests between the working class and other non-working-class sections of the community that could justify an alliance, but that there is such a community of interests between all sections of the working-class movement. They point out that, for example, the League of Nations is an Imperialist alliance, that the so-called Peace *bloc* is also an Imperialist alliance, and that the only way to defeat Fascism is to defeat Capitalism—to which Liberals, etc., could never agree.

The workers have to choose—and their choice will be fateful. With the lessons of Germany, Spain—and France?—one can only hope that they will choose knowing what they choose, and not in a state of confusion begotten by reiteration of one word.

WHITE WORKERS AND BLACK

GEORGE PADMORE

LENIN spoke of the "bourgeoisification" of the upper strata of the British workers as a heavy weapon in the hands of imperialists against the Social Revolution. He pointed out that the process of identifying the interests of this labour aristocracy with those of the ruling class is an element arising out of the development of capitalism during its imperialistic stage. And nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than in South Africa, where white labour has completely divorced its interests from those of the natives, to the detriment of the latter, upon whose exploitation it fattens. For "the European worker is haunted by fear of competition with the great masses of native labourers," is the declaration of a South African trade union memorandum. " . . . Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and so the policy hitherto adopted has been one of 'keeping the native in his place,' in order that certain of the higher-paid jobs might be retained as the special preserve of the European worker." This policy, which has the endorsement of the Labour Party of the Union, is implemented by legislation, and has accentuated the division between white and black labour.

"The industrial policy of the labour movement is the 'civilised' labour policy, which means in practice the substitution of European workers for native and coloured workers wherever and whenever possible," resolved the South African Trades Union Congress in 1925. Thus, at the instigation of white labour, the Government passed the Colour Bar Act in 1926. This law legalises racial discrimination in industry by making it a criminal offence for natives to be employed in skilled occupations. It works out, therefore, that every white occupies a supervisory position over the blacks. Moreover, the whites are guaranteed a *minimum* wage towering above that of the blacks. In the gold mines, for example, the white worker gets £1 a day minimum, as against the average of £2 10s. paid to the black for a month of thirty working days.

The European workers in South Africa constitute the most parasitic section of the international working class. Thanks to the Colour Bar, they live in a style granted only to the higher-placed workers and professionals in Britain. Obviously they are interested in aligning themselves with the capitalists in exploiting the blacks, and the division arbitrarily created is aggravated by the fact that the white workers form part of an alien racial minority which is determined to maintain its domination over the native majority. This chauvinist attitude was formulated by Sir Thomas Watts in a letter to *The Times* some years ago: "The white man, English as well as Dutch, is determined to do all he can to remain, and, what is more, to rule. He hopes to get the sympathy and support of the Mother Country. If this is withheld he will not be deterred. To those who say England cannot be a party to a great act of injustice, I would reply that this matter is to us in South Africa such a vital and fundamental matter that no ethical consideration, such as the rights of man, will be allowed to stand in the way."

To maintain this domination over the natives, no black worker is permitted to enter a white trade union. The European trade union movement in South Africa is represented by the Trades and Labour Council, composed of the Trade Congress and Cape Federation of Labour Unions and their affiliated craft unions and associations. They number about a hundred, and cover the engineering, metal, mining, building, printing, clothing and food industries. Not only does the movement refuse entry to the blacks, but it declines unity with native organisations. The Industrial and Commercial Union, founded in 1919 by a young Nyasaland native, Clemens Kadalie, was the first effort at organising a black labour union. Although conceived as a purely trade union organisation, the very character of South African conditions forced the I.C.U. to assume leadership of the political as well as the purely economic struggles of the negroes. Despite official persecution and hostility from organised white labour, it gained enormous strength economically and became a formidable political power in the hands of the blacks.

In 1928 the I.C.U. addressed an appeal to the Trade Union Co-ordinating Committee — the organisation combining the Trade Union Congress and the Cape Federation of Labour Unions—to be included with the white workers in a unified labour movement. In reply, the Committee issued a memorandum acknowledging "that sooner or later the national trade union movement must include all genuine labour and industrial organisations, irrespective of craft, colour or creed. The question is how and when," and the document went on to suggest that "a considerable amount of propaganda was needed among the union membership before affiliation can take place with benefit to all concerned." It was generally feared that the membership of the black union would outvote the European organisations and force them to abandon their discriminatory practices.

This fear of losing their privileged status is the bogey which haunts the white workers and drives them into alliance with the capitalists against the natives. This unity of race as against class accounts for the widespread racial chauvinism which permeates all strata of the European population, and makes the Union the world's classic Fascist State. For here a racial minority of 1,800,000 mercilessly suppresses 6½ million blacks in their own land, denying them the most elementary democratic and human rights.

The natives are hedged in on all sides by a system of pass laws which limit their liberty of movement and reduce them to serfdom. Rigid laws deny them freedom of speech, press and assembly, and forbid their appearance on the streets of Johannesburg and other towns after nine o'clock at night. Because they have no right of representation, their ills cannot be redressed through Parliamentary channels.

Taxed out of all endurance, bearing the economic burdens of the Union and debarred from the fruits, there is only one way out for the native. He must rely upon himself and seek ways and means of organising his forces and exploit every conflict within the camp of the ruling class to press forward to his goal of self-determination. In this drive for unity the natives must also draw in the Indian and coloured workers of South Africa, who are also victims of racial discrimination. This does not mean that they should not welcome whatever assistance and support individual politically advanced white workers or groups might extend to them from time to time, but it would be a delusion for the blacks to place any faith in the South African Labour Party or the trade union bureaucracy, which are becoming more and more identified with the State. Even the unemployed and poor whites who might be expected to draw closer to the black and coloured workers are being organised against the natives by the Fascists, who are represented by a number of associations, among them the New Guards, the Grey Shirts, the National Socialist Democratic Movement, and Dr. Malan's party, which is at present carrying on a campaign for the exclusion of Jews from South Africa and the banishment of all natives from the towns.

The future of South Africa is tied up with the future of Europe, and because of this the native workers must close their ranks and prepare themselves, so that when the opportunity arrives they will be able to strike a decisive blow against the brutal system of Afrikander Imperialism which has reduced them to a condition hardly better than chattel slavery.

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POSTSCRIPT

The National Council for Civil Liberties has published a threepenny pamphlet "The Strange Case of Major Vernon" (on sale at Socialist Bookshop). This is a real staggerer. The account of the proceedings in Court leaves one breathless. But don't say what you really feel after reading it, or you'll do time for "contempt," if not for "sedition."

C. A. SMITH.