

**THE VOICE OF
COLOURED LABOUR**



*SPEECHES and REPORTS of COLONIAL
DELEGATES to the WORLD TRADE UNION
CONFERENCE—1943*

Edited by **GEORGE PADMORE**

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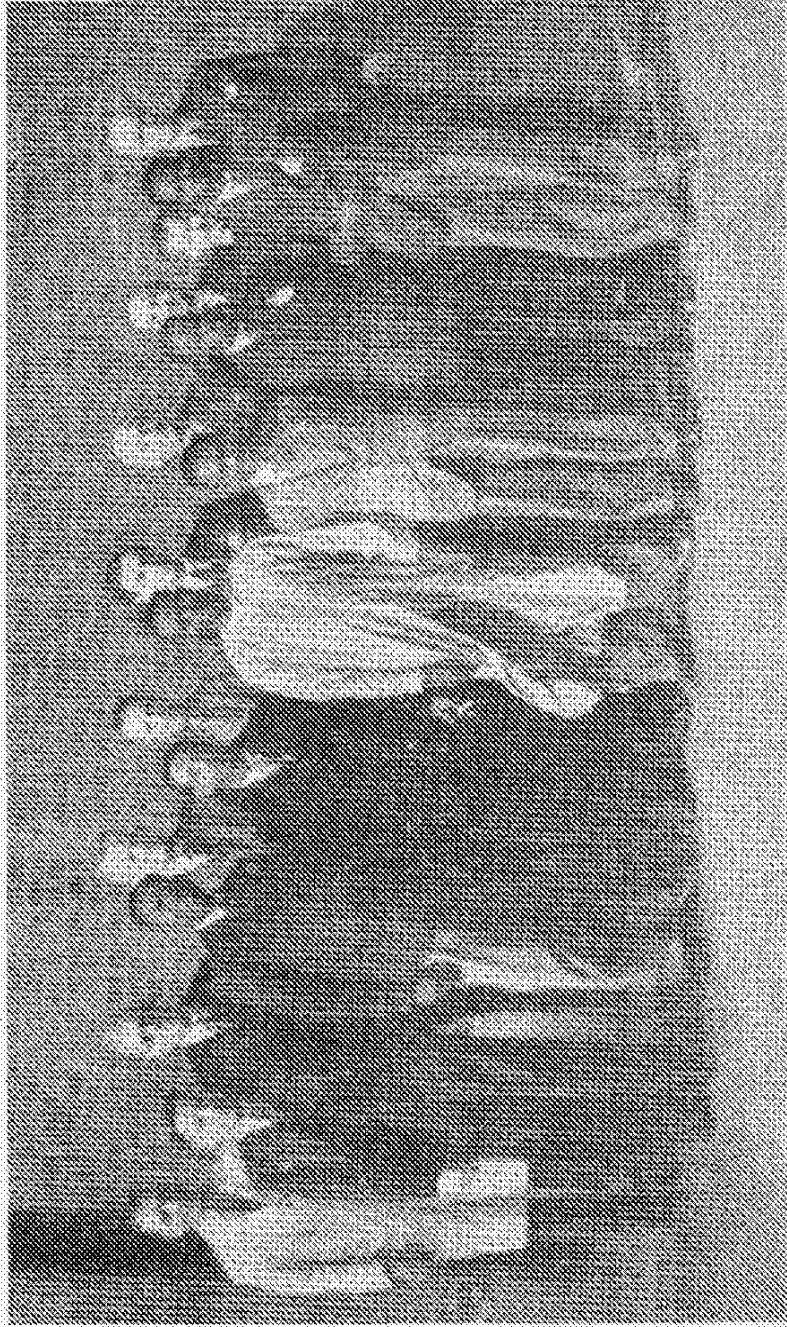
*"Labour in a white skin cannot free itself
while labour in a dark skin is branded"*

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Group of European and Colonial Delegates WORLD TRADE UNION CONFERENCE — LONDON, 1945



(1) Wallace Johnson (St. Lucia, Leeward Islands)
(2) J. S. Amun (Gold Coast)

(3) K. A. Hill (Guatemala)
(4) Hubert Critchlow (British Guiana)

(5) T. A. Bankole (Nigeria)
(6) T. A. Bankole (Nigeria)

FOREWORD

By GEORGE PADMORE

THE WIDE AND REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER of the Colonial delegation to the World Trade Union Conference in February was significant and encouraging. It was significant for the fact that for the first time in the history of international labour, coloured Colonial workers—the most oppressed and exploited section of the world proletariat—were given the opportunity of voicing their grievances and of expressing their hopes and aspirations through their trusted leaders. It was encouraging because in discussing the question of a new international trade union organisation, the white working class trade union movements of Europe and America, which have hitherto ignored the coloured workers, are apparently beginning to recognise that “Labour in the white skin cannot emancipate itself while Labour in the black skin is enslaved.” This awareness was manifested in drawing the long-neglected and forgotten millions of Colonial workers into the world fraternity of labour.

In this sense the World Trade Union Conference achieved a degree of solidarity which should go a long way towards laying the foundations of the new international federation whose formation has been endorsed.

Colonial delegates came from Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia in West Africa; from Jamaica in the West Indies; British Guiana in South America; from Palestine, Cyprus, and elsewhere. It is noteworthy that the Northern Rhodesian Mineworkers' Union was represented by a white man, for the Colour Bar in that colony excludes African miners from entering the union.

While most of the Colonial unions represented by the coloured delegates are young, they have nevertheless been able to build up substantial memberships since 1940, when trade unionism was recognised in principle for the first time by the British Colonial administrations.

The Nigerian Trade Union Congress, which came into being only three years ago, now boasts a membership of 500,000 and 56 affiliated unions, covering transport, mining, dock-labour, seamen, public works, government employees, etc. On the other hand, the British Guiana Trade Union Council, with a membership of 10,000, is one of the oldest working-class organisations in the Colonial Empire. It recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and was represented at the Conference by its president, Mr. Hubert Critchlow, who founded and led the movement through its quarter of a century of existence. Mr. Critchlow is the representative of the Negro, Indian and other coloured workers of British Guiana on the Governor's Executive Council.

Although most of the coloured delegates have served long terms of imprisonment for their working class and trade union activities, their speeches to the Conference did not reflect any of the personal bitterness and rancour that one might have expected from individuals who have been the victims of relentless persecution. For example, T. A. Bankole, President of the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, addressing the closing session of the Conference on the subject of the new international federation, stressed the need for an all-embracing organisation. “At this juncture in world affairs, when labour has adorned its history with glorious achievements in the struggle to overthrow Fascism and to establish a

lasting peace, the workers of the world cannot but come together in order to be in a position to contribute collectively to the establishment and maintenance of that peace," Mr. Bankole declared, and went on to say that he thought this was "why the formation of an international trade union organisation is a prime necessity." Such an organisation, he emphasised, "must be founded on the principle of equal treatment for all affiliated bodies and their representatives, regardless of the countries from which they derive, and must be nurtured in an atmosphere of mutual regard, discipline and candour. It must keep an open door for all approved labour organisations functioning in all lands"—allied, neutral and ex-enemy.

There was nothing of narrow nationalism, racial or chauvinistic, in the speeches of these black men. Every one of them reflected a high level of class solidarity and socialist conviction.

The specific claims of the Colonial working classes were voiced by Wallace Johnson, President of the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress, who a few weeks before his arrival in London had been released by the British Government after five and a half years' imprisonment and exile to Sherbro Island, off the coast of West Africa.

Mr. Johnson called upon the Conference not merely to confine its condemnation to Fascism, which is not the only enemy of the working class. "Imperialism," he asserted, "is for the Colonial workers as great a menace as Fascism is to the workers of the metropolitan countries of Europe." He therefore appealed to the Conference to endorse and support the following immediate demands, unanimously approved and adopted by all the Colonial delegates as a Charter of Labour for the Colonies:—

1. The abolition of the Colour-Bar and all racial discrimination in public and private employment.
2. The abolition of forced labour, child labour, and all forms of slavery, open or disguised, abolition of flogging and other forms of punishment for breach of labour contract as well as penal sanctions for breach of labour contract.
3. Abolition of all pass law legislation and the establishment of the right of free assembly, free speech, free press, free movement.
4. Equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race, colour, creed, or sex.
5. Abolition of racial restrictions against the admittance of African and other coloured workers into existing white trade unions (South Africa, Rhodesia, etc.). Wherever such restrictions continue to operate, Africans and other coloured workers should have the right to create separate and free trade unions.
6. Trade union and social legislation existing in the Colonies should be brought into line with that existing in the metropolis, or conversely, the same trade union and social legislative principles operating in the metropolitan countries should be made applicable to the Colonial territories.

Concluding his speech, Wallace Johnson reminded the Conference that "Justice, like Peace, is indivisible, and the world to-day cannot remain half free and half slave."

In an eloquent speech, Ken Hill, representing the Jamaica Trade Union Council, the most progressive section of the organised workers' movement of that Caribbean Colony, called for the extension of the principle of self-determination enunciated under Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter to the Colonial peoples. There is no doubt that he brought to the deliberations of the Conference a comprehensive vision and international outlook as refreshing as it is rare at such gatherings. Hill suggested that "it would be unthinkable if this Conference through its committees did not put forward declarations expressing progressive views on the Colonial question. To do less," he asserted, "would be to leave the world to be betrayed into another war within the present generation."

While recognising that the indomitable purpose of the free and democratic trade union movements of the world is to crush Fascism wherever it raises its ugly head, Ken Hill declared: "But we must go further. We must take care that in our preoccupation with this historic task, we do not fail to take steps and use the influence of the international working-class movement to discontinue the system of Imperialism and Capitalist domination, whatever shape or form they take."

Mr. Hill based his appeal on the contention that one of the main causes of modern wars is the rivalry among the Great Powers for Colonies as markets, sources of raw materials, spheres of economic influence, and strategic bases for aerial, naval and military operations. Consequently, there can be no lasting peace until this conflict over Colonies is liquidated, and with it the whole system of Fascism, Nazism and Imperialism—all of which derive from capitalism.

He maintained further that the world working class should act so that those countries which are represented at such Conferences should "be judged not merely by the size of our contributions to arms and supplies of war, but by the moral values which our unity and association can engender for lasting peace and prosperity in the best interests of the working men and women of the world."

Inspired by what may promise to be the rebirth of the united labour movement, these black men from the far-flung parts of the British Empire have returned to their respective countries and are continuing with undiminished zeal the struggle not only for national liberation from the fetters of Imperialism, but also for the economic and social emancipation of the downtrodden workers and peasants for whom they speak.

Imbued by the spirit of unity, the West African delegates have already issued a statement declaring that the time is fully ripe for the formation of a West African trade union federation, and that this should be an immediate objective aiming at co-ordinating the advance of the territory of West Africa as a whole. As a preliminary step they propose the formation of a West African trade union advisory council, on the approval of the respective West African trade union congresses, or their equivalents, which shall consist of the present heads of congresses or their accredited representatives, and which shall meet at an early date in one of the British West African Colonies for the purpose of formulating the basis of the proposed federation.

Without a doubt the labour movement in the Colonies is on the move and conscious of its aims. A similar move is taking place in the West

Indies, where efforts are being made to bring about an All-West Indian Federation of the trade union organisations in the various islands, as part of the general trend towards West Indian political, economic and social federation.

But while these trade union organisations are officially tolerated, they are meeting with immense opposition from the European employers, especially the mining and agricultural monopolists. Workers who identify themselves with trade unionism are considered Bolsheviks and their leaders are hunted from pillar to post. Not only is it the employers who engage in intimidating the workers, the Colonial administrations themselves are often guilty. For example, in Nigeria, Michael A. O. Imoudu, President of the Railway Workers' Union, because of his trade union activities, was arrested and deported from Lagos for a number of years by the Governor of Nigeria. Mr. Wallace Johnson, Secretary of the Sierra Leone Trades Union Congress, has suffered similar exile. In the West Indies, almost all of the prominent labour leaders have at some time or another been imprisoned, Alexander Bustamante and Ken Hill in Jamaica, Uriah Butler in Trinidad, Clem Payne in Barbados, and many others. Unlike labour leaders in Britain, champions of the working class in the Colonies are not regarded by the authorities as respectable citizens. They are always subject to molestation.

In the same way newspapers which are not necessarily trade union organs, but which support the struggles of the workers, are often suppressed. *The Nigeria Worker*, the organ of the territory's Trades Union Congress, has suffered a long period of suppression. And during the general strike which broke out on June 21st, 1945, and is still in progress at this writing (July 20th, 1945), two of the most progressive African newspapers, *The West African Pilot* and *Daily Comet*, have been suppressed. Colonial officials hostile to trade unionism invoke defence regulations to muzzle the press. Under these regulations any editor in Nigeria can be fined £300 or sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment or both without trial. All kinds of charges, from sedition to conspiracy, are levelled against militant Colonial labour leaders who make a courageous stand in demanding elementary rights for the working class. The most usual charge is one of incitement to disaffection, for under Colonial conditions of a plural society, it is very easy to make out grounds for such a charge. In these territories, where the exploiters of labour are white and the exploited black, a demand for higher wages or better conditions of service is immediately interpreted as racial incitement—the black workers against the white capitalists.

The barriers to the building up of trade unions are multiplied manifold in territories like South Africa, the Rhodesias, Kenya, and other East African Colonies, where official restrictions against assembly and freedom of movement and association of the indigenous peoples operate. Nevertheless considerable achievements can be registered, despite all the handicaps.

It is estimated that throughout the whole Colonial Empire there are about 350 registered trade unions, varying in their membership from a few hundred to several thousand. For example, in Nigeria alone, there are over 100 trade unions affiliated to the Nigeria Trades Union Congress.

The Colonies in which the trade union movement is most backward are precisely those where restrictions upon the right of public assembly and movement are most rigidly imposed. Pass laws, vagrancy regulations, penal sanctions, riotous assembly acts, all conspire to make it difficult, if not impossible, for workers to exercise their democratic right of association and collective bargaining. It is therefore not surprising that up to 1945 there were not more than two registered unions in Kenya, one in Uganda and two in Tanganyika.

In view of all the difficulties it is the duty of the more advanced trade unions, especially those in Britain, to render every fraternal support to these coloured workers, who are to-day passing through their Tolpuddle period. Moreover, the British working class have the great responsibility of making every effort to retrieve their country's honour, for the ruling class of their nation have done everything by their ruthless exploitation and oppression of the defenceless coloured workers of the Colonial Empire to engender hostility between the subject peoples and those of the metropolis. This hostility can only be overcome if the British workers demonstrate in deeds and not merely in words their sympathy with the Colonial workers. It is in their enlightened self-interest to do so, for, as one of the speakers reminded the Conference, "Labour in the white skin cannot free itself while Labour in the black skin is enslaved." Once this truism is accepted, then the desired bond between workers everywhere, regardless of colour or creed, will find expression in unity of action and purpose.

In this pamphlet we have attempted to bring together the speeches and special reports presented by the Colonial delegates to the World Trade Union Conference. We feel certain that this form of presentation will help the British working class better to appreciate some of the problems which confront the Colonial workers, and which they are making steadfast efforts to surmount. For we believe that the most effective way of arousing interest, sympathy and understanding for the coloured workers is by placing at the disposal of the white workers documented material which they themselves have not the time or opportunity to delve out.

This small contribution to public enlightenment has been made possible through the generosity of the Pan-African Federation, an organisation of Africans and peoples of African descent in Great Britain which supports the endeavours of the Colonial peoples to create strong and virile trade union and co-operative movements as the most effective means of advancing their economic and social well-being.

July 20th, 1945.

CHAPTER I

DISCUSSION ON PEACE SETTLEMENT

The Conference opened at County Hall, London, at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 5th, 1945, and was presided over by Mr. George Isaacs, Chairman of the British Trade Union Congress, who welcomed the delegates in the name of the British Labour Movement. Greetings were also brought to the Conference by Mr. Somerville Hastings, Chairman of the London County Council, and Mr. C. R. Attlee, deputising for the Prime Minister. The first subject on the agenda was the Furtherance of the Allied War Effort, but it was not until the Declaration on the Attitude to the Peace Settlement came before the Conference that the voice of the Colonial delegates was heard.

After a number of delegates from the great States had spoken on this latter subject, Mr. A. Haywood of the American C.I.O. delegation brought forward the following motion:—

“That the general discussion be considered closed and that Conference proceed immediately to the appointment of a Committee.”

It was at this point that the Colonials, feeling that the delegates from the great countries—American, Britain, Russia and France—were attempting to close the discussion on the question of the Peace Settlement, which vitally affected the future of their countries, without their being heard, demanded an opportunity to address the Conference.

Mr. John Asfour (Arab Workers' Society, Palestine): May I point out that you have heard speeches from several delegates dealing with different matters, especially with Nazi Germany, but you have not yet heard the opinion of subject nations? I feel that this Conference would be interested to hear from them how in their view world peace could be made and maintained. It was my desire to ask this Conference to hear me on this point, and I do pray that I may be given the opportunity. It is the first time you will have heard an Arab.

Mr. Ken Hill (Jamaica Trades Union Council): I wish to support the Arab delegation from Palestine. Much has been heard at this Conference from those who come from the major nations, but I have yet to learn that the major nations have a monopoly of wisdom with regard to the resettlement of the world. I strongly insist that an opportunity should be given to others, and particularly to representatives of the British Crown Colonies. It is unthinkable that this Conference should go on record as setting out its views on the Peace Settlement without taking into consideration colonial questions, which, we submit, are the root cause of war.

Mr. A. Haywood (Congress of Industrial Organisations, America): We have no desire to sway anybody to our way of judgment. We felt only that the matter had been discussed in a way which would afford enlightenment to the Committee. But if there is objection I am prepared to withdraw the motion I have made. We do not claim to possess all the brains, even though we do come from the United States!

At this stage the Conference adjourned. When the next session took place, Mr. A. Ziartides, delegate of the Pan-Cyprian Trade Union Committee, was called upon to address the Conference.

Mr. A. Ziartides: Mr. President and Comrades, I bring greetings to the Conference from the Cyprus Trade Unions and the Cypriot working class. The Cyprus delegation is in general agreement with what Sir Walter Citrine said on the punishment of aggressor nations and particularly Nazi Germany and Imperialist Japan. Fascism must be utterly destroyed from the face of the

earth. The forces capable of accomplishing this task are the united formations of the millions of organised workers. The Conference is the Brains Trust and the General Staff of the International Trade Union Movement. As such we bear a heavy responsibility. Our deliberations must lay the foundations of the new world, but a world in which the working class, all over the globe, will have the right to work and live in freedom and social justice. To fulfil this task, international trade union unity is absolutely essential. It must be a unity built on solid foundations, on the recognition of the right of all workers, whatever their nationality, to enjoy the fruits of their labour in a world of real freedom. This new world must have no room for oppressors and colonial subjugation, for as long as there are oppressors and oppressed there can be no peace, no social justice, and no freedom. You, the representatives of the working people of independent nations, must feel it your sacred duty to see to it that we Colonial peoples break our chains and join you as free nations. We desire that the principles of the Atlantic and the Teheran Declarations be applied, and that Cyprus be nationally rehabilitated and united with our Motherland, Greece. This is the wish of the entire Greek population of Cyprus which means five-sixths of the people. We also demand that elementary civil liberties—freedom of speech, of the press, of organisation and of assembly—be restored to Cyprus immediately.

It may surprise you to hear that Cyprus, a small island of 400,000 people, has 20,000 soldiers serving in the armies of world democracy; and yet in Cyprus to-day no more than five persons are allowed to congregate without permission from the Authorities. Such permission is refused when the Government knows that criticism may be levelled against it. The Cyprus press cannot publish news received from the Soviet, American, French, and other radios; we are limited to news from the B.B.C. and the Cairo Broadcasting System. Is this deserving of a people who have given of their best in this anti-Fascist war? To many of you Cyprus may seem unimportant, but when Rommel was knocking at the doors of Alexandria, Cyprus was turned into a fortress and a bastion, barring the Nazi drive to the Middle East. We are a small country, but our contribution to the anti-Nazi cause is proportionately as great as that of any of the United Nations. We fought well and deserve well.

Being Greek, I consider it my duty to say a few words on Greece. I would have preferred that the accredited representatives of the Greek Trade Union Movement had been here to speak to you. Time will tell who has been right in Greece. The ordinary men and women in Greece, the people who resisted the invaders for three and a half years, are right. E.L.A.S.—those four letters have been forged in the blood and sacrifice of the Greek people in their epic struggle for freedom. Under this slogan, “Liberty or Death,” they fought three invaders and finally conquered. I declare it is a crime against all we have been fighting for in this war when the first people to be tried and sentenced to death in Athens to-day are not the collaborationists and Quislings but the heroic anti-Nazi fighters of the E.L.A.S., the National People's Army. Ten minutes' walk from this hall Greek seamen, trade unionists, that body of men who have braved the U-boat war all these years, are being tried by the Greek Maritime Court at this moment. For what? For organising Trade Union committees on their ships. Is that democracy and freedom?

In conclusion, let me say this. To build a sound and permanent peace, Fascism and reaction, under whatever guise, must be completely destroyed. The root causes of war, vested interests and imperialism, must be crushed by the united forces of the international working-class. The trade unions are the heavy artillery of the Labour Movement. Let them speak up.

The President: Comrades, I shall next call Mr. Asfour of the Palestine Arab Workers' Society, and immediately after him Mr. Ken Hill of Jamaica.

Mr. John Asfour (Arab Workers' Society, Palestine): Mr. President.

Comrades and Trade Unionists : Before I address you on the subject now under discussion, let me bring to you the unanimous and heartfelt greetings of all the Arab workers and peasants in Palestine. Let me convey to you also their sincere and earnest wish for the success of this World Conference now assembled. I am sure you will all be interested, to a small extent at least, to know how our Trade Union Movement has developed, and although we have been under dual major difficulties in Palestine we have, thanks to the efforts of the Arab Trade Unions—the Arab workers alone—succeeded. We began our Movement, like every other in its infancy, with twenty or thirty members only, but now we have on our registrations some 50,000 organised labourers. I spoke of our difficulties and said they were dual. One of them is that we have been for the last 27 years, as you know, governed as a mandated territory, and you know what that means. We have also the difficulty, the immense difficulty, created by the anti-labour movement of Zionism in Palestine. Notwithstanding that, we have, as I said, established ourselves and improved the condition of labour, and have come, not with little toil, to be represented at this World Conference for the first time.

We have always put it as our aim, in addition to the improvement of working conditions, that we will not be under the influence of any political leader in our country. We have it as our aim to organise and develop our Movement and to bring the workers up to that standard which they deserve and which they have earned rightly, honestly, and with the toil and the sweat of their brows. Now, comrades, the rival imperial interests have always been a cause of trouble to the whole world ; they have been the cause of unrest and bloodshed all over the world and not least in the Arab countries in the Middle East. When the first war was imposed upon the freedom-loving peoples the Arabs took up the challenge. They fought, and fought to a successful conclusion, for their freedom, and they have in fact succeeded, but only for a short while—yes, for a very short while. Again those imperialist rival interests came in, and instead of the Arab country being liberated, being compensated for the blood it had shed and for the toil it had endured, it was—and this is no news to you, I am sure, but it is a matter of remarkable interest—the Arab state was mutilated ; it was divided into five different areas, states, counties, call them what you like, and the two principal Allied Powers at that time had them.

In addition to this, there was imposed on Palestine the establishment of a Jewish National Home. The repercussions following this were naturally enormous and continuous, and the Arabs remained in the forefront, fighting for their freedom. Notwithstanding the great difference which existed between Great Britain and the Arabs in Palestine, however, the Arabs sank all those differences because they realised that freedom, not only their freedom but the freedom of the whole world, was threatened by Nazism and Fascism and by all the aims they had in the world. So they rallied to the call for freedom again. The sovereign States of the Arabs declared war on Germany, and we in Palestine placed all our resources and all our land at the disposal of the Allies for furthering the war effort. Are the Arabs, now that this war against tyranny and despotism is coming to an end, going to be treated in the same way as after the last war, and is the Arab working-class going to be deserted by their comrades, and the fight that they themselves abandoned, in the interests of the whole world, reimposed upon them ? Are the Arabs in Palestine going to be left under the serious threat of being ousted from their land, merely to satisfy the Zionist reactionary movement, based on fantastic ideas and false claims? Now, comrades, leaders of the liberation movements and liberators of the oppressed nations, let us think as free people, as people of goodwill, as people who have set themselves the task of relieving all the nations of the world from oppression and despotism, as people struggling to remove all class, racial and colour discrimination—let us think and examine whether or not this movement threatening us in not only reactionary

but also destructive of the fundamental ideas and principles for which we are struggling and which we are hoping to realise and secure for all mankind. The persecution of Jews in Europe the Arabs have always deplored. The working classes of the Arabs have always condemned any discrimination between the different races. Indeed, even Arab politicians in their Alexandria Manifesto, which was proclaimed to the whole world only a few months ago, expressed deep sympathy with the families who have suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

Mr. Ken Hill (Jamaica, Trades Union Council) : Mr. President, comrades and fellow Trade Unionists : I bring you fraternal greetings from Jamaica in the British West Indies, and wish our Conference every possible success. Jamaica is a small island tucked away in the Caribbean Sea. We are not numerous—there are only 1,500,000 of us—but we colonial peoples know the value of freedom and democracy, and we are in the working-class movement to such an extent and have been fighting, working, hoping and praying so hard for the extension of the Atlantic Charter to all colonial peoples, that I believe I am entitled to make some suggestion on colonial questions for the consideration of this Conference.

I would propose that any peace settlement ought to take into account the question of self-determination for all colonial and subject peoples. Not one but all imperial powers ought to give a definite pledge, an acceptance as a matter of policy, that the peoples in the territories they administer are as rapidly advanced to self-government as it is possible. It would be useful, too, to consider whether time limits ought not to be fixed, by agreement of course, in order that this purpose might be achieved within a reasonable time and not be unduly delayed.

There should be no transfer of colonial peoples without their consent, consultation or a plebiscite, and through the proposed world organisation for the maintenance of peace there ought to be the right of investigation and intervention and some form of control by all the powers who are concerned in the maintenance of the peace of the world.

The colonial requirements in social legislation ought to be met, in my view, in this way. All social legislation in the ruling powers ought to be introduced in the colonies within a specified time, and this movement should go on simultaneously. All existing social legislation in various colonies ought, immediately hostilities cease, to be brought up to date and made uniform throughout all the colonies. Lastly, Trade Unions in the colonies ought to have the same rights and to be given the same privileges, in practice as well as in theory, as Unions enjoy in the ruling countries.

Now, comrade delegates, I am not concerned at this stage to enter into a detailed discussion of these suggestions, but I do wish to suggest and to emphasise most strongly that it would be unthinkable if this Conference, through its committees, did not put forward some declaration expressing progressive views on the colonial question. To do less would be to leave the world to be betrayed into another war within the next or the present generation. To crush Fascism everywhere it may raise its ugly, evil head, is the indomitable purpose of the free democratic Trade Union Movements of the world. But we must go further than that. We must take care that, in our preoccupation with this historic task, we do not fail to take steps and to use the influence of the international working-class movement to put an end to and see discontinued the system of imperialist domination, whatever shape or form it may take, so that in our generation, perhaps, all the countries of all sizes and races that are represented at international conferences like this, may sit as equals in truth and in fact, and that we may all be judged, not only by the size or the measure of our contributions to arms and supplies for a war, but by the moral values which our unity and association can engender for lasting peace and prosperity in the best interests of the working men and women of the world.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION ON WORLD TRADE UNION FEDERATION

The discussion on this most important question was opened by Mr. Sydney Hillman, leader of the C.I.O. delegation. The views of the colonial delegates were expressed by Mr. J. S. Annan, of the Gold Coast Railway Civil Servants and Technical Workers' Union.

Mr. J. S. Annan: Mr. Chairman and fellow delegates: I bring to you fraternal greetings from the workers on the Gold Coast, who send you all the very best wishes for a successful Conference. The subject "Basis for a World Trade Union Federation," is to my mind the core of the deliberations of this Conference. All the workers of the world are anxiously waiting to hear this Conference pronounce on the subject. It is a test case, and upon it depends the justification of the hope and confidence which our fellow workers repose in us. There is a common agreement on the need of a strong international Labour organisation, and I share the views expressed by the leaders of this discussion. It is our considered view that this international body should first of all appreciate and recognise the lasting values in the Trade Union Movements in our countries, and respect the qualities and experience in each national organisation, however small the country may be. Also it would be necessary for the organisation to consider this: that the moment some of us begin to consider that the Colonies, such as the Gold Coast, are small and unimportant, I am afraid it is the very moment that international unity suffers and the strength of the Movement becomes impaired. The International Movement should preach and practice amongst its doctrines the principle of equality and the freedoms embodied in the Atlantic Charter. Secondly, it must build a strong fortification around its members, with a strong and capable body of leaders as sentinels to prevent the spread of Fascism and Imperialism. Fascism is not the only deadly political theory; Imperialism, which exists to exploit the Colonies, is as bad and must at all costs be rigorously extirpated. It is an enemy of Trade Union ideals, and we must determine to check its attempt to encroach upon the rights of the International Labour Movement. This Movement should be in a position to expose to the whole world the subtle evils of Imperialism cunningly couched in popular political propaganda activity. The workers of the Union that I represent are of the view that an international organisation of Labour should be formed immediately and there should be no more delays, for delays are dangerous. There should be an active part played by all members of the working-classes and I appeal to the Conference to do all in its power to set up the necessary machinery for this all-important International Movement before the Conference dissolves on Friday.

Mr. A. Rabinovitz (General Federation of Jewish Labour, Palestine): Mr. President, Comrades: The General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine has instructed its delegates to this Conference to give every support to the re-establishment of full Labour unity in the world. The people to which we belong have had the sad privilege of being the first, and probably the foremost, victim of Nazism. We know only too well that the internal strife between workers in the years between the two wars was the most important single factor in helping Hitler to power. This is why we are emphatically and whole-heartedly in favour of Labour unity, unity within each nation and each country, and unity on a world-wide scale. The development of the world Trade Union Movement in the last few decades makes this unity more important than ever before. Practically in every country where Trade Unions exist in some strength, they play their part in the general political life, in one form or another. The unity of the Labour Movement is not only a vital instrument in the struggle of the working class for better standards of wages and labour conditions, which is in itself of enormous value for the workers; unity is also a necessary condition for

the fullest possible expression of the political strength of the working class. This is why our Federation, which has always been a loyal member of the organised international Trade Union Movement, and has worked hard for the international solidarity of the workers in its own country, attaches so much importance to this item on the agenda. We sincerely hope that this Conference will discover the greatest possible amount of goodwill and determination to achieve real and lasting unity, the case for which was so eloquently put by Mr. Sidney Hillman in his opening speech.

Now I should like to refer to a matter which seems to me to be of great importance to the proper functioning of a world Labour organisation. It is a vital necessity that the international Trade Union Movement should become an active source of help and advice for the working classes of the so-called backward countries. The process of industrialisation, which began there some years ago, has gained in strength and tempo during the war. Many colonial countries, as well as some independent States with patriarchal or feudal systems of society, are now facing all the complex questions of the modern industrial age. As far as the Middle East is concerned, there was nothing to prepare their people for this change and for the burdens which it involves. There is no Liberal middle-class; there is no Radical professional class, and the general level of the working masses themselves cannot be compared with the level, for example, of the British workers at the time of the industrial revolution. The feudal classes have adjusted themselves fairly quickly to the new circumstances, and in most cases they are the leaders of the various new industries. At the same time, they are doing their best to preserve their traditional hold over the body and soul of their countrymen, some of whom are developing into industrial workers.

My own country, Palestine, has some peculiar features, due to Jewish immigration. We have, as some of you know, a well developed Jewish Trade Union and Co-operative Movement, which has not only succeeded in introducing a high standard of labour conditions without parallel in that part of the world, but also maintains a wide system of mutual-aid institutions, and has established a co-operative agriculture and industry of its own. About 20 per cent. of our male membership have volunteered for the armed forces. There are in Palestine also beginnings of an Arab Trade Unionism, inspired by the example of, and aided by, their Jewish fellow workers. These beginnings are still small. The Palestine Government estimates the total number of Arab workers belonging to all the various organisations as 12,000, but we believe it will grow. One of these organisations, the Palestine Labour League, closely co-operates with our Federation. Their representative is attending this Conference. This special feature does not radically change the general picture of the Middle East. There is really little chance of a gradual evolutionary development of workers' organisations in each of these countries out of their own means and resources. A slow process of this kind would, incidentally, spell danger for the achievements of workers in other, more developed countries. Moreover, the concentration of great numbers of industrial workers in certain areas offers a strong temptation for various factions of the ruling classes to exploit these masses for political ends. It is for this reason that some Governments in these countries are taking good care to assure themselves of the control over the Trade Unions. It is for this reason that you often find in control of workers' organisations such people as wealthy lawyers and landowners, or offsprings of wealthy landowners, and even princes who are not suffering from a surplus of social conscience.

And you must not forget, comrades, that the countries to which I am referring are far from real democracy, even though their Constitutions provide for elections and parliaments. Some of them were under strong Nazi influence until the turn given to the war by El Alamein and Stalingrad. Since then there has been a change of front, but no change took place in the social background or in internal politics. In one of these countries which I had occasion to visit,

I was deprived, on crossing the border, of a truly dangerous book ; it was "One World," by Wendell Willkie. I visited another country which is, at least theoretically, at war with Germany, but victims of Nazi Germany are not allowed to cross that country if they happen to be Jews. So you can well imagine what Government control over Trade Unions in such countries may mean.

But even in colonial countries there is, it seems, a good case against Government control or sponsorship in relation to Trade Unions. We all know how strongly British trade unionists are opposed to any Government interference with their internal affairs. How much stronger must the case against such interference be in the Colonies, where Governments are in all social matters lagging at least 50 years behind the mother country.

We very much appreciate the creation of Labour Departments in the administrations of most of the British Colonies. This was done, I believe, in response to the demands of the British Trade Unions, which also provided some of their men to staff these departments, and they are doing useful work. But, comrades, the presence of a trade unionist in the service of a Colonial Administration cannot really change the general character of this administration. I could see in my own country that it did not prevent the Government from lending its support to organisations which are passionately opposed to every form of co-operation between Arab and Jewish workers, and sometimes even take the side of the employers against their fellow workers. As for conclusions, it seems to me that a world Trade Union organisation could not rest content and confine its activities in this respect to careful examination of the bona fides of Trade Union organisations which apply for affiliation. I feel quite certain that we shall have a great many mock Trade Unions in the new industrial countries, unless the International Trade Union Movement will shoulder the burden of guiding and advising the awakening working people. This is a task of tremendous importance, and I would strongly urge this Conference to adopt it as part of the policy to be pursued by the World Trade Union organisation. We must all work for the day when new millions of fellow workers will join us as equals in the world family of organised workers.

CHAPTER III

COLONIALS CHALLENGE MESSAGE TO BIG THREE

On the afternoon of February 13th, while the discussion on the formation of the New International was in progress, Mr. Reid Robinson, on behalf of the Committee on Standing Orders presented to the Conference the text of a telegram of greetings addressed to President Roosevelt, Marshal Stalin and Prime Minister Churchill, at that time in conference at Yalta. The text of the telegram presented for the approval of the Conference reads :—

"The delegates from thirty-five countries attending the World Trade Union Conference in London and representing over sixty million workers of the freedom-loving countries have learned with deep satisfaction the results of the Crimea Conference. We hail the announcement that the leaders of the British, United States and Soviet nations, together with their general staffs, have agreed on measures for even further accelerating the war against Hitlerite Germany and bringing it to a speedy and victorious conclusion. We fully support your declaration that every vestige of the hateful Fascist regime must be eradicated and the practical measures which you have adopted to bring about this result and to guarantee that it shall be uprooted and completely destroyed.

"We welcome your determination to proceed at once to perfect an international organisation, along the lines of the Dumbarton Oaks proposal, to prevent aggression and maintain peace.

"We are in full accord with your declaration on liberated Europe to assure to the people of the liberated lands fullest democracy and self-determination.

"The great achievements of the Crimea Conference and the unanimity of its historic decisions fully confirm the faith of all freedom-loving people that the problems of winning speedy victory in the war and establishing a just and enduring peace can and will be solved, and all difficulties overcome.

"Meeting here in London, to perfect the unity and close collaboration of the working people of the freedom-loving nations, we pledge our full support to you in carrying out the decisions which you have reached.

"We pledge ourselves to guard and protect the unity of the United Nations in war and in peace, and to work together unceasingly to secure our great common objectives—speedy victory and an enduring peace."

The Vice-President asked if the Conference agreed, upon which Mr. Asfour, voicing the sentiments of the colonial peoples, asked for the following passage to be included :—

Mr. John Asfour : "The Conference also notes with deep satisfaction the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live." In this telegram there is nothing mentioned about this, it only refers to Europe. May such an amendment be added to the telegram ?

Mr. I. A. T. Wallace Johnson (Sierra Leone T.U.C.) : I rise to support the addition made by the Arab delegate. It is essential that this Conference should register its support of the demand of the colonial peoples for their right to choose the form of Government under which they will live as was enunciated in Clause 3 of the Atlantic Charter.

The Vice-President : I suggest that the telegram be referred back to the Committee and that the delegates who wish to make the alteration should go to the Committee. Do you agree to that ?

Mr. Asfour : I make this move in open Conference and I have stated nothing more than has been determined by the Big Three. I submit to the Conference that there is no necessity for this to go back to the Committee. I plead that this amendment be inserted.

Mr. George Isaacs (British Trades Union Congress) : I would draw your attention to the fact that two groups of delegates have approved the document as presented, but if you send it back to the Committee, with the proviso that those who have made their observations should have the right to go before the Committee, and give the Committee power to send it off, it will save the time of this Conference and enable it to be sent to-day.

Mr. Wallace Johnson : I support the appeal made by our Arab Comrade. There is no point in referring it to the Committee. We can approve it and the Committee can insert it.

Mr. R. A. Khedgikar (All-India T.U.C.) : Is there any objection to this amendment ?

Mr. L. Saillant (General Confederation of Labour, France) (Translation) : I do not think there can be any opposition to the amendment that has been presented because we are all inspired here by the most democratic ideals possible. There is an old French Proverb which says "You should not be more Royalist than the King," and I would change that to say that we should not be more democratic here than the great representatives of the nations who have met together and taken the most historic decision in the history of democratic peoples. I would ask our comrades from Palestine and Nigeria to trust the Committee which has presented this draft resolution, a resolution which should be applauded and regarded with delight by all the delegates at this Conference because it is the expression of the confidence of the World Trade Union Conference in the great democratic nations which have taken the decision.

Mr. Robinson (Reporter of the Committee) : Mr. Chairman and delegates : We are in the second day of the second week of this Conference and time is

short. I feel that as we have some very important subjects to discuss I should suggest as Chairman of the Committee that this be referred back to the Committee, asking it to bear in mind that there has been world-wide recognition of the principles contained in the Atlantic Charter and that this specific section of the telegram shall conform to the principles enunciated in the Atlantic Charter. With that understanding the Committee will redraft this section of the telegram. If the Conference approve that section, they will then send the wire with those principles contained therein.

The Vice-President : It is recommended that it goes back to the Committee with the instructions of the speakers. Will those in agreement with this recommendation please say "Aye." (Aye.)

The decision is adopted.

Mr. Robinson later reported to the Conference that the Committee reconsidered the telegram which was to be despatched to Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt and Marshal Stalin, and took into consideration the objections which were made, and in order to satisfy those objections lifted from the document the fact that was agreed upon which answered the objections of the delegate and inserted the provision of the Atlantic Charter wherein all peoples may have the right to choose their own Governments. We felt that because of the universal acceptance of the principles of the Atlantic Charter that that would satisfy everyone, so we have despatched the wire to these three honourable gentlemen in order that it will reach them at the most timely hour.

The Vice-President : All those who agree with the amendment say "Aye." (Aye.)

CHAPTER IV

CITRINE'S TEN-POINT PROGRAMME

After the protracted discussion on the text of the telegram to the Big Three, Sir Walter Citrine, Secretary of the Trades Union Congress and leader of the British Delegation, addressed the Conference on the question of the New International. He submitted a Ten-Point Programme as the basis of the new federation :—

1. That a Provisional Committee, fully representative of the National Centres and the International bodies represented at this Conference should be immediately established.
2. The Committee shall commence its work immediately on the conclusion of this Conference. Its functions shall be to co-ordinate the recommendations of the Conference and submit them to the constituent bodies for ratification.
3. The Provisional Committee shall act as the interim authority for the World Trade Union Conference.
4. It shall be empowered to make such collective representations to the Governments of Great Powers, for example, U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Great Britain, France and China, as circumstances may necessitate.
5. It shall be the body to implement such of the Conference recommendations as are adopted by the constituent bodies.
6. It shall prepare a draft constitution for the proposed World Trade Union Federation.
7. It shall circulate this draft constitution for approval to the constituent bodies, giving opportunity to these to submit amendments if they so desire.
8. The Committee shall be empowered to appoint such sub-committees as it may deem necessary.

9. It shall be empowered to call a Conference for consideration of any amendments and for the adoption of the final Constitution.

10. It shall be empowered to convene an emergency Conference should, in the opinion of the Provisional Committee, world developments necessitate such a course.

I have suggested that the Committee should be composed of eighteen members : United States of America, 2 ; Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 2 ; Great Britain, 2 ; France, 2 ; Rest of Europe, 1 ; China, 1 ; British Commonwealth, 2 ; Latin American Federation of Labour, 2 ; International Federation of Trade Unions, 2 ; International Trade Secretariats, 2.

The Committee would have power to co-opt on the principle already adopted by this Conference such other interests as circumstances may require who are represented in the Conference.

I present these proposals on behalf of the British T.U.C. delegation, and I believe that they will effectively bridge the intervening period that must necessarily ensue before an all inclusive Trade Union International can be established.

I suggest that these points be remitted to the Commission for consideration.

Mr. T. A. Bankole (Nigerian Trades Union Congress): Fully conscious of my duty as a representative of the working-class movement of Nigeria I come forward to place on record the viewpoint of the workers of that country on the important question of the formation of an international Trade Union organisation in which all the Trade Unions or Trade Union groups of the world will eventually take a place, no matter whence they derive. At this juncture in world affairs, when labour has adorned its own history with glorious achievements in the struggle to overthrow Fascism and to establish enduring peace, the workers of the world cannot but come together in order to be in a position to contribute collectively to the establishment and maintenance of that peace. That is why I think the formation of an international Trade Union organisation is at this moment a prime necessity and I have no doubt this Conference is unanimous on that point. The essential thing, then, is the basis on which such an organisation should be formed if it must be expected to supply the collective needs of the world's working-classes and at once foster universal peace and concord. This is the supreme task at the moment, and we must grapple with it in a spirit befitting sincere planners of the future destiny of common peoples. Our international Trade Union organisation must be founded on the basis of equal treatment for all affiliated bodies and their representatives regardless of the countries from which they derive, and must be nurtured in an atmosphere of mutual regard, discipline and candour. It must keep an open door for all approved Labour organisations functioning in all lands.

It will be the task of our international Trade Union organisation (a) to encourage the growth of the Trade Union Movement in all lands by preventing such discrimination against associations of indigenous workers as has hitherto been the case in such countries as South Africa, Northern Rhodesia and the United States of America with particular reference to the A.F.L. ; (b) to ensure that all workers, particularly those of dependent areas, are employed under conditions favouring general prosperity ; (c) to devise means of harmonising the workers, the employers and their respective Governments with a view to fostering labour efficiency and collective bargaining, and (d) to give reasonable backing to the aspirations of colonial workers to internal self-government in their respective countries. It is also important that our international Trade Union organisation should declare itself solidly in favour of the declarations of Philadelphia and the Atlantic Charter and should urge their progressive and steady application to conditions in Colonial areas as its surety that it will be able, as an international body, to advertise itself as sincerely motivated and determined to usher in a new world order devoid of

unemployment, intolerance, poverty and want, ignorance and economic and political insolvency. Our international Trade Union organisation must boldly face the great task of demanding that all the territories that have been called upon so unswervingly to combat Fascism (these including the colonies) shall enjoy to the full the approaching peace and such advantages as are likely to follow in its wake. But our international Trade Union organisation should see the wisdom not of despising any existing International, but of appreciating its work and drawing upon its wealth of valuable experience so as to ensure rapid progress and success.

Finally, I am fully convinced that our international Trade Union organisation, founded on the basis of equality, justice and equity, will be able to contribute substantially to the establishment and maintenance of that lasting peace of which the world has hitherto stood in need and to ensure for every working person an acceptable living standard. Comrades, let us address ourselves to this great task with equally great determination.

CHAPTER V

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The last item of general discussion was the question of post-war reconstruction and immediate trade union demands. Several Colonial delegates took part in this discussion.

Mr. I. A. T. Wallace-Johnson (Sierra Leone T.U.C.): I stand here to register the good wishes and fraternal greetings of the workers and peasant population of West Africa and of Sierra Leone in particular, one of the most suppressed and repressed sections of the British Colonial Empire. I have observed that in this Conference the colonial peoples have been referred to as small nations. I do submit that we are far from being small, numerically speaking we are very great, and industrially speaking we are greater still. Sierra Leone, which I represent, and the Gold Coast, are the greatest iron-ore producing countries of the world. If, therefore, the Allied nations are looking to victory in this present European conflict, I maintain that the Colonial Empire and West Africa in particular has contributed a great deal to the impending victory. It is, therefore, necessary that this Conference should give special consideration to the position of the colonial peoples and especially the colonial workers. It is unnecessary for me to reiterate the difficulties which we experience in the colonies as regards the establishment of Trade Unions. Only a few weeks ago I myself was liberated after a period of five years in internment, imprisonment and exile, all because I have been a Trade Union leader. This Conference, therefore, has now to consider the subject of post-war reconstruction and the immediate demands of the working-class. I am submitting on behalf of myself and my own colony and the other colonial delegates who have been appointed to take part in this Conference, the following proposition. I am doing this because we realise that labour in the white skin cannot be emancipated while labour in the black skin is enslaved. We, the colonial delegates, appeal to this World Conference to assist you in the British Colonial Empire and in all the Colonial territories in the world in building up a strong and independent Trade Union Movement which will provide the only guarantee that the social and economic well-being of the colonial-workers will be safeguarded and advanced.

As an elementary gesture of solidarity with the oppressed and exploited millions of industrial and agricultural workers in the colonies in Asia, Africa, the Carribean, the Pacific Islands, British Guiana, Mauritius, and Ceylon, we appeal to this Conference to endorse and support the following immediate demands: (1) the abolition of the colour bar and racial discrimination in

public and private employment; (2) the abolition of forced labour, child labour peonage and all forms of slavery open and disguised; (3) the abolition of flogging and other forms of punishment for breach of labour contracts as well as penal sanctions for such breaches. We ask also that you should support and endorse the necessity for the abolition of laws directed against the right of free assembly, free speech, free press and free movement, and that those freedoms should be established. These are some of the difficulties which we colonial peoples have to face. We are demanding also equal pay for equal work, irrespective of race, creed, colour or sex. We ask for the abolition of restrictions against the admission of Africans and coloured workers into existing Trade Unions, such as those operating in South Africa. Wherever such restrictions continue, we ask that Africans and coloured workers should have the right accorded to them to join and support Trade Unions.

Last but not least, we ask that Trade Union and social legislation existing in colonial areas should be brought into line with that existing in metropolitan areas, or conversely that the same Trade Union and social legislation obtaining in metropolitan countries should be applied to the colonial territories. To guarantee the implementation of these demands we delegates from the colonies—I am speaking for every delegate here—ask that this Conference endorse the principle of self-determination for the colonial peoples as enunciated in Clause 3 of the Atlantic Charter, namely, that they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live and that they will see sovereign rights of self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them. We further ask that this Conference shall call upon the signatories of the Atlantic Charter who are in possession of colonial territories to declare a time limit when the principle shall be translated into practice. Justice, like peace, is indivisible and the world to-day cannot remain half free and half slave. We urge this claim because we firmly believe that one of the main causes of modern war is the conflict over colonies—a conflict which can be resolved most judicially by applying the principle of self-determination to the inhabitants of such areas. In this way we feel that the future world peace will not only be maintained but permanently secured.

Mr. T. A. Bankole Mr. President and comrades: The approach of the end of this long-drawn and hard-fought war has filled the hearts of all lovers of peace and freedom with bright hopes of a new world in which aggression, race persecution, and oppression of the weak are to have no place whatsoever. We all expect to be relieved; for none but the most heartless of human beings would relish the horrors of war and the humiliation of foreign domination and fugitive life. Post-war Europe in her earliest period will undoubtedly be completely absorbed in the great work of restoring her battered cities, readjusting her economy, re-distributing her conscripted labour force, reshaping the basis of her social and political life, re-educating her youths, and re-stating her cultural philosophy. She will be called upon to face the difficult problem of resettling her brave fighting men called up from their various pre-war jobs. Obviously, post-war Europe, overwhelmed with the difficulties of early post-war years, will call for immense physical and mental effort and a great pool of material resources in order to stabilise her national life. One cannot get away from the fact that the workers and the armed forces of European countries that have borne the brunt of Nazi militarism have every right to hope for a stable post-war Europe, capable of assuring them of a really happy life for which they have very diligently laboured and gravely suffered. Undoubtedly, these remarks respecting Europe apply equally to Asia, America, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, whose peoples have made and are still making immense contributions towards the winning of the peace. All of these continents, excepting Africa, are in every way privileged, nationally and internationally, to solve their post-war problems as will best serve their social, economic and

political interests, by virtue of their enjoying truly democratic Governments. It is my unshirkable duty, equally as it is that of my fellow delegates from the colonies, to ensure that the peoples of the colonies are not neglected, nor have their interests abandoned into the hands of profit-intoxicated monopolies in the post-war years. The question most likely to be raised is, "What contributions have the Colonies made in prosecuting the war, and have these contributions been as tangible as to entitle them to the attention of the Great Powers." I shall answer this question very briefly in the light of known facts.

The colonial Governments, loyally supporting the metropolitan countries, promptly, properly and spontaneously associated themselves with the declaration of war on Germany, Italy, Japan and all their satellite States, and pledged themselves to support the war effort to the utmost of their ability. Accordingly, they have been, and still are, contributing to the utmost of their strength in manpower, raw materials and foodstuffs, labour for war-work and armament factories, and money out of their poor financial resources. Colonial workers have been made to submit to some obnoxious regulations restricting certain of their Trade Union rights. Colonial youths, in their numerous thousands, have enlisted and are still enlisting in the armed forces, laying down their lives in the interest of approved democratic ideals. History is recording the great deeds of these men and stalwart youths. And what else can bear a more eloquent testimony to the tangible contributions being made by the colonial countries, and justify their claims to a place in the post-war scheme of things?

Those contributions present a powerful challenge to the moral conscience of the Great Powers, who should be requested by this Conference to revise, rather drastically, the very fundamentals of their colonial policy. The Conference will thus be answering the forceful call made by Comrade Reid Robinson (Vice-President of the C.I.O.) in these pregnant words: "We must fight for political and economic democracy throughout the world." The post-war demands to be made by this Conference on the ruling nations in all parts of the world must be comprehensive and must stress certain of the main problems relating to the colonies, namely: (a) strict prohibition of the Colour Bar at present operating in various forms and in varying degrees against the indigenous populations, and removal of every vestige of forced and child labour and all other forms of objectionable labour conditions; (b) establishment of the principles of "Equal pay for equal work, without discrimination because of nationality, race or sex"; (c) encouragement of the establishment and growth of the Trade Union Movement as a defensive machinery against labour exploitation; (d) introduction of adult suffrage and removal of income qualification as a means of entitling all workers and taxpayers to participate in the administration of their countries, and recognition of their right to choose the Government under which they shall live democratically.

To hasten general progress in the colonies, comprehensive educational schemes should be requested from the colonial powers. It is incumbent on this gathering of the representatives of the world's working-classes solidly to support these straightforward, simple demands, since they by no means violate recognised democratic principles in defence of which so much labour has been spent and so much innocent blood spilled. The cause of freedom in the colonies is as important as it is in liberated countries. Let it therefore never be recorded in history that this Conference, from sheer lack of moral stamina, has funkled and failed to plead the righteous cause of the colonial peoples.

Mr. S. K. Pramanik (All-India Trades Union Congress): Mr. President, fellow delegates and comrades: My hearty greetings to you. It is needless to emphasise that the immense destruction of men and materials in this war surely needs planned reconstruction on a scale hitherto unknown in our history. In the Soviet Union, where the entire social and economic life of the people is organised on the solid basis of socialisation of the means of production, dis-

tribution and exchange, and on the complete elimination of imperialism, the issue is simple and straight. All peoples can confidently rely on its support of any planned endeavours for post-war reconstruction on the basis of equal opportunity for all countries, big or small. The entire resources and surplus contribution of its labour power can be also utilised to speed up the process to its utmost in the best interests of the entire community and other peoples. But in the democratic countries where monopoly capitalism, cartels and trusts dominate very greatly the economic and social life of the community, and greed for private profit and not social good remains the only incentive to any productive and constructive drive, the issue becomes complicated indeed. We must realise that soldiers and workers who are making the greatest contributions and tremendous sacrifices can never willingly agree to return to the old order of things and carry on a hand-to-mouth existence on dole and relief on the brink of perpetual insecurity. It would be too much to expect that. Fundamental changes in the structure and policy of economy would be required to maintain even productive employment, not to speak of solving the problem of distribution and utilisation of labour power to its utmost. Workers surely need immediate fulfilment of their economic needs. But sooner or later they would realise in every country that it is impossible to satisfy even their minimum needs adequately without radically changing the present order of things and having their decisive say in the control of socio-political life and in the shaping of their present and future. But so long as it is not possible to do so, we will have necessarily to agree to press for the fullest possible short-time application of the principles agreed upon by the United Nations, and to work out any plan this Conference may adopt as an immediate measure.

If that be the position in the democratic and highly industrial countries, one can only imagine what can be the lot of the vast submerged, toiling multitude of the colonies and dependencies who are denied even the most elementary rights of human existence. The problems there are much more difficult and wider than elsewhere. Indian workers surely need rapid industrialisation and raising of their standard of living from their own point of view. But there can not be even more moderate capitalist-democratic planning, not to speak of Socialist planning, without immediate elimination of imperialism in any shape or form, and unqualified application of the right of self-determination to all oppressed and exploited peoples. On behalf of the Indian working-class, we must say so plainly and demand a democratic national Government of the people as the most indispensable condition precedent to any effective planning for social security and reconstruction.

You, comrades, can well understand what kind of social security Indian workers can possibly have in the existing conditions of slavery in a country where per capita annual national income, including millionaires and paupers, can hardly go above £4 17s. In the case of 83.2 millions of workers engaged in agriculture, it comes down to £2 18s. only. Thirty millions of landless agriculture workers have to live on still less income, on the verge of starvation. Textile workers get only 13s. per week, jute workers 7s. 6d., and miners 3s. 9d. per week. You can therefore well realise the miserable lot of industrial workers who have no insurance against unemployment, sickness and old age, no allowance for family and children, not even elementary security of service and living wage minimum, no right of collective bargaining and recognition of Unions. An overwhelming majority of workers suffer from malnutrition. No wonder famine took such a heavy toll and demonstrated, as if under a flash light, the rottenness of the imperialist system upheld by Whitehall, and the tragic mal-administration of an alien Government, not responsible to the people of India. The lack of foresight and planning to meet the needs of the people can still be read in every line of its past and present food policy and its attitude towards the outstanding labour problems, even in the sixth year of the war.

Due to the phenomenal rise in the cost of living by 150 per cent. to 200 per cent., the workers have suffered heavily in terms of real wages in their already low standard of living. Destitutes are still dying in Calcutta and in the countryside. The cost of living is still too high and beyond the means of millions of agricultural workers and low-paid industrial workers and their like. Malnutrition and preventable diseases are still taking a heavy toll. Therefore there cannot conceivably be any social security worth the name in the near future without a drastic change in the outlook of the British Government.

This Conference will be failing in its one important task if it fails to take special note of the conditions in colonies and dependencies and to take appropriate measures to secure for these numerous exploited peoples of Asia and Africa and other parts the most elementary rights of civilised democratic existence, social justice and free-government of their own. Any attempt to by-pass this all-important issue cannot but eventually defeat the very purpose of an abiding peace and social security for which the Conference has been convened at this most critical period of world history. Let us realise that "Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere," in the words of the Philadelphia declaration. A free world cannot live side by side with a slave world without coming into clash, sooner or later. Let us be therefore fully alive to the great responsibilities that rest on the shoulders of responsible representatives of the world working-class movement at this juncture, and address ourselves seriously to the task of facing the clear issues staring at our face, and solve them courageously by all means at our disposal. Let us remember that if we fail to do that, we will undoubtedly be held responsible before history and the next generation for our failure to arrest timely the process of another war, for the third time in our life. I trust the world working-class will rise equal to the occasion the necessity so urgently demands and, under the leadership of the valiant Soviet Union and other progressive forces within the United Nations, defeat any attempt to inflict on the long-suffering peoples a pro-imperialist peace. We demand immediate National Government and release of political prisoners, the recognition of Trade Unions and right of collective bargaining, a minimum living wage, an eight-hour day and social security, and freedom of the press, speech and association. Workers of the world unite! Down with Fascism and imperialism! Onward to democracy, social justice and an abiding peace.

Mr. J. S. Annan (Gold Coast Railway Civil Servants and Technical Workers' Union): We come now to a pressing domestic problem, the immediate demands of the world's organised Labour and the plans for post-war reconstruction. This Conference has gathered at a time when victory over Nazi tyranny is looking forth into the horizon, and it is only natural that the various organised bodies of the world should proclaim their needs and plans. The church, political parties, social organisations, etc., are all planning. Organised Labour must raise its voice in this matter. This Conference must give social security to the working-class of the world by progressive plans for raising the standard of living, expanding medical facilities to industry, increasing the social services so that men and women can live and educationally develop their personalities for the common good. One immediate demand will be the resurrection of those Trade Unions which have fallen under the yoke of the Axis. It should be our moral and social duty to give every help to the liberated countries to rebuild their Labour Movement once more, backed by their own traditions and customs, run on democratic principles and thus making their individual national contributions to the heritage of the Trade Union International.

The second and most obvious demand is the immediate establishment of preliminary machinery to set up World Trade Union international solidarity among the workers of the world. So far I have spoken in general terms, but now I must be more specific. I must present the point of view of the colonies.

Among the pressing needs of the organisation which I represent I wish to make the following representations:

First, on the Gold Coast we immediately require the setting up of a Wages Board with powers to examine and fix adequate minimum wage standards to cope with the enormous rise in the standard of living. Every worker should earn enough to provide himself with at least the bare necessities of life. On the Gold Coast, and I believe in other parts of British West Africa, the average labourer (and labourers form a great part of the working-class organisations) earns 9d. to 1s. a day and thus is denied even the bare necessities of life. The argument that the standard of living of workers on the Coast is low, and, therefore, that they should be paid such inhuman wages is mischievous and pernicious. How can a person live with wife and children on a shilling a day even in the most interior part of Africa? It is impossible and it is an argument manufactured by political propagandists. The principle of equal pay for equal work must be enforced. The existing enormous disparity between the salaries of the European and African, the African who in many respects is better qualified than the European as far as academic qualifications are concerned, should be discontinued at once if perfect harmony and goodwill is to exist between the two.

Secondly, we require at once a Labour representative on the Legislative Council of the Government; that is vitally important. The native members on the Legislative Council are too busy with other things to be bothered with labour problems. The Labour seat on the Council must be filled by a candidate elected by the workers themselves. A progressive plan for social insurance must be worked out by the Government for the workers.

Thirdly, we desire to stabilise our internal economy. For this we consider it necessary that a heavier form of taxation should be imposed on the incomes of the mines, the commercial houses and all others engaged in private enterprise on the Coast. This increased taxation must be used to expand the social services of the country. There must be genuine encouragement of such native enterprise as production of cocoa. This can be most effectively done by the setting-up of a marketing agency which will be under the control of the African producers.

We must also attempt to do away with all vested interests in the Colonies; exploitation has reached its climax and it is time that a serious war was waged against it.

When we come to consider our post-war reconstruction we have a lot of things in common with the previous speakers. Our first aim is an efficient organisation of Labour to work out unity among working-class people and to form a regional association of the four countries of West Africa. We must form a bloc in West Africa whereby we can raise one voice against whatever odds. This will necessitate the training of the necessary personnel in the Labour Movement and we shall require the assistance of the bigger national bodies. Technical schools must be expanded to train individuals to take up higher positions in the higher grades of industry. Educational facilities should be expanded to provide free and compulsory education for all classes of people irrespective of creed, colour, or class. Medical facilities should be multiplied to combat disease and relieve suffering. A progressive scheme for the clearance of slums, squalor, and debt must be set up, as well as an extensive housing scheme to accommodate the various classes of workers.

These are the broad details of our plans, but the implementation of them will require the co-operation and goodwill of all organised Labour everywhere in the world. It is absolutely necessary for us to remember that in the great family of the World Trade Union Organisation we must all fully share in the needs and bounty of one another. There can be no greater responsibility for this Conference.

CHAPTER VI

DECLARATION ON THE ATTITUDE TO THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

Mr. A. Gazier (Reporter, Peace Settlement Committee) (Translation): The Committee on the question of the Trade Union Attitude to the Peace Settlement was set up by this Conference. At its opening meeting the Committee unanimously elected Mr. Carey as Chairman and myself as Reporter. The Committee decided, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Conference, to admit an additional co-opted member, namely, Mr. Hill as representing British West Africa, the West Indies and British Guiana. The Committee held five meetings. The text which is now submitted to you was adopted unanimously by the Committee with the exception of one sentence in paragraph 26.

The Committee wishes me to say that its work was greatly facilitated by the fact that three great Statesmen were holding a meeting in the Crimea at the same time and that their Declaration from the Yalta Conference dealt with many of the points with which the Committee were closely concerned. We have endeavoured in our report to deal with those points in which we consider that Trade Union organisations are particularly interested.

The Committee discussed one question in particular, namely, whether Japan should be dealt with in the same report as Germany, or whether there should be a separate resolution placed before the Conference on the subject of Japan. The solution adopted was that a single text should be placed before the Conference. You will see, however, from the careful wording of paragraph 33—the last paragraph in the report—that the paragraph commits only the representatives of those members of the United Nations which are at war with Japan.

The text of the declaration reads:

1. The millions of working people represented at this Conference by accredited delegations from 40 national Trade Union organisations in the United Nations, and 15 international Trade Union bodies, have maintained a steadfast purpose through the long struggle now drawing to its close.

2. In furtherance of that unfaltering purpose, this World Conference has considered the tasks still waiting to be done by the armed forces and the working people of the United Nations to accomplish the complete destruction of German militarism and Fascist tyranny, and also the measures to be taken for the establishment of a just and lasting peace.

3. This World Conference, having given consideration to the social and economic problems of the peace, deems it essential that responsible and qualified representatives of the Trade Union Movement shall be associated with the peace settlement in all its phases.

4. By a continuation of the close collaboration and decisive action of Governments and peoples which have brought the United Nations in sight of victory, this World Conference believes that the aims which the working people have held steadily in view will be achieved.

5. The people of the United Nations will not relax their efforts in this final stage of the fight against aggression. They will shrink from no sacrifice that is necessary to bring about the unconditional surrender and capitulation of the common enemy, realising that any form of appeasement or compromise will be injurious to the cause of the freedom-loving nations by lulling them into a sense of false security and lessening their vigilance against the danger that aggression will be renewed.

6. In the confident hope that victory will bring permanent peace, this World Conference pays homage to all who have fought and suffered in the fight for freedom. The Trade Union Movement will hold in everlasting honour those who have fallen in battle, by land and sea and in the air, and those who have suffered martyrdom at the hands of a cruel enemy. The Conference pays its heartfelt tribute also to all who have served in the armed forces of the

United Nations, in the Mercantile Marine, in the Resistance Movements in occupied countries, in the Civil Defence organisation, in productive industry, and in the transport and distributive services. By their valour and endurance, on the battlefields and in every form of war service, and by their heroic sacrifices, men and women alike have won the right to demand that the victory of the United Nations shall lead to the creation of a world organisation capable of ensuring a stable and enduring peace. The war has been fought by the working people, and peace cannot be organised without their co-operation and effective participation in the counsels of the peace-making Governments.

7. This World Conference therefore welcomes the historic Declaration made by the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the President of the United States, and the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, following their Conference in the Crimea. In that Declaration this World Conference finds the assurance that the sacrifices and sufferings of the working people will not have been made in vain.

8. In full agreement with the inflexible determination expressed by the heads of the three Allied Powers at the Crimea Conference to destroy German militarism and Nazism, we do not doubt that the Occupying Authorities will take all necessary measures to disarm Germany and disband all her armed forces; break up for all time the German General Staff; remove or destroy all German military equipment; and eliminate or bring under Allied control all German industry that can be used for war purposes. But vital Trade Union interests are involved in the process of disarming and demilitarising Germany.

9. We direct attention specifically to the fact that measures must be taken—

- (i) to bring to justice all war criminals;
- (ii) to liquidate the whole Nazi system and to dissolve all Nazi organisations with the complete confiscation of their funds and property;
- (iii) to place under the control of the United Nations not only German heavy industry but the German transport system, the banking system, and land and property owned by German trusts and cartels, and by financial magnates and Junkers;
- (iv) for the utilisation within the limits imposed by effective demilitarisation of German industrial and all other resources for the rehabilitation of all countries the Germans have devastated and plundered; and
- (v) for the setting up of machinery to secure the full compensation from Germany for the damage it has caused to the Allied countries, with priority to those that have suffered most.

In the Allied occupation and control of Germany, the countries that have been directly injured by German invasion and occupation, and have effectively opposed the occupation should have representation.

10. On all these matters we consider it essential that the voice of the Trade Unions shall be heard and heeded by the Occupying Authorities.

11. Further, we consider that the Trade Union Movement should be consulted about the arrangements to be made to secure, by the use of German materials and German manpower, the restoration by Germany of all that has been destroyed in countries against which she has waged war. In the view of this World Conference the employment of German labour if used in restoration work must be placed under international supervision, with Trade Union participation in the determination of labour standards in a way that will not reduce the standards of other workers. Such labour must not be allowed to degenerate into slave labour.

12. Connected with such necessary organisation of the German workers is the task of liquidating completely and irrevocably the German "Labour Front" and establishing under international Trade Union supervision a demo-

cratic Trade Union Movement in Germany as speedily as possible during the period of occupation.

13. This World Conference insists that Trade Union funds and property taken from the workers by the Nazis must be recovered and placed at the disposal of the international Trade Union Movement as custodians, to be used in rebuilding free and democratic Trade Union organisations.

14. Concerned with the stern punishment of all war criminals, high and low, this World Conference believes that Trade Union help and counsel will be necessary to ensure, without the spirit of vengeance, that none of the guilty shall escape due punishment. No right of asylum shall be invoked for the protection of war criminals.

15. Moreover, this World Conference is convinced that the Trade Union Movement can render indispensable assistance in the reconstruction of the whole system of education in Germany, whereby the young generation of Germans will be purged of the infection of militarism and Nazism, and a radically different educational programme, with revised text books, can be brought into operation, and all teachers and lecturers who have supported Nazism shall be expelled from German schools and universities.

16. The Trade Union Movement likewise seeks the opportunity to assist in the organisation and conduct of anti-Fascist propaganda, in the cleansing of Fascism from German literature, and the arts, and in the use of German theatres, cinemas, radio and press, for the inculcation of democratic ideals and of racial and religious equality which have been derided and set at naught in the Fascist ideology.

17. From the Crimea Conference have come binding guarantees that the Allied Governments will forthwith enter upon the task of establishing a general international organisation to maintain peace and security.

18. This World Conference rejoices in the declared purpose of the Allied Governments to give effect to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, by recognising and defending the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live. The resolve of the Allied Governments to secure the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to the peoples who have seen their democratic institutions ruthlessly uprooted, and jointly to assist the people in every liberated country to create the conditions in which stable and representative Governments, resting upon the free consent of the people, can come into existence, will have the support of the Trade Union Movement.

19. This World Conference unanimously acclaim the decision of the three Allied Governments to summon a Conference of United Nations at San Francisco to prepare the Charter of an international organisation in accordance with the general principles formulated at Dumbarton Oaks. We fully endorse their decision to bring the Government of China and the Provisional Government of France into association with them in this great enterprise.

20. The Trade Union Movement will look to the San Francisco Conference to seal the seal of final agreement upon the policy which the leaders of the three Great Powers have consistently pursued since they framed the Atlantic Charter, and reaffirmed and amplified at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences, in which their unity of purpose was strengthened. In those historic meetings, the desire of the peoples of all countries, great or small, for collaboration and active participation on the part of their Governments in the sacred task of ridding the world of tyranny, slavery, oppression, and racial and religious intolerance, found expression; and this World Conference is profoundly convinced that with the coming of Peace the freedom-loving peoples over all the earth will give their support and countenance only to those Governments that will co-operate in framing and maintaining the Charter.

21. This World Conference, indeed, considers it to be the duty of the

Governments of the United Nations to deny recognition to States whose political and economic systems are opposed to the principles embodied in the Declarations made at the Atlantic meeting and the Conferences of Moscow and Teheran. The struggle for the uprooting of militarism and Fascism, which has involved the working people in uncountable sacrifices, is an integral part of their struggle for a stable and lasting peace, and of their fight to remove the last vestiges of militarism and Fascism, and to exterminate all covert and overt "fifth column" influences in all countries.

22. This World Conference urges most strongly the speedy establishment of the Dumbarton Oaks plan for the constitution of a general Assembly of all peace-loving nations, with equal rights. Only when such an Assembly is in being can such questions as general disarmament, regulation of armaments, and other essentials of security be adequately dealt with.

23. Among these essentials this World Conference attaches supreme importance to removal of the economic causes of war. The Trade Union Movement cannot forget that one of the basic causes of war is the scramble for markets by monopolising interests.

24. This World Conference, therefore, considers it to be one of the earliest obligations of the Assembly presently to be established to investigate and put a term to the activities of international cartels and monopolies which militate against the public interest under whatever guise they may function.

25. In the view of this World Conference, it is likewise necessary to bring to an end the system of colonies, dependencies and subject countries as spheres of economic exploitation, and to facilitate immediately the development of free Trade Unions in those countries. In the coming Peace, the foundations must be laid with all possible speed, and in accordance with Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter, of a world order in which non-self-governing communities and nations can attain the status of free nations that will enable them to govern themselves and to develop their own institutions of free citizenship.

26. This World Conference is of opinion too that after the war, thorough-going remedies must be found, through international action, for the wrongs inflicted on the Jewish people. Their protection against oppression, discrimination and spoliation in any country must be the responsibility of the new International Authority. The Jewish people must be enabled to continue the rebuilding of Palestine as their National Home, so successfully begun by immigration, agricultural resettlement and industrial development.

27. This World Conference has taken note of the fact that the plan of world organisation outlined at Dumbarton Oaks includes the setting up of a Security Council vested with power to maintain peace; that it is proposed to appoint permanent representatives of ministerial status and experience at the headquarters of the International Organisation; and that a Military Staff Committee is also to be established composed of the Chiefs of Staff of the States with permanent members, to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to its military requirements and for the strategic direction of armed forces placed at its disposal. This World Conference welcomes this as evidence of the determination of the three Allied Governments to enforce peace and maintain security.

28. This World Conference is especially hopeful that the proposal in the Dumbarton Oaks plan to set up an Economic and Social Council to make recommendations on international economic, social and other humanitarian problems, will be implemented as speedily as possible. The Trade Union Movement has a particular obligation to assist the development of this organ of the new international body, and demands representation in all its stages.

29. This World Conference urges the use of this instrument for the initiation of great schemes of international economic reconstruction, embodying the principles of public control and administration, and applying them par-

ticularly to the great river systems in which the interests of many nations are inextricably involved.

30. Finally, this World Conference, having regard to the constitution, aims and functions of the new World Organisation, considers it to be of vital importance that the Trade Union Movement shall be closely and continuously connected with its activities, and especially with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. On behalf of the Trade Union Movement, this World Conference therefore urges that provision shall be made for adequate Trade Union representation in the Assembly of the International Organisation, and that qualified and responsible representatives of the Trade Union Movement shall be associated with both the Security Council and the Social and Economic Council.

31. This World Conference, in furtherance of this objective, resolves to seek from the three Allied Governments an undertaking that accredited representatives of the Trade Union Movement will be received into their councils at the forthcoming San Francisco Conference, in an advisory and consultative capacity.

32. This World Conference recalls the Declaration made by the Deputy Prime Minister of Great Britain, in his address to the delegations here assembled, that the great machinery of consultation built up by the Trade Unions through many years has been a factor of vital importance in the winning of the war. This World Conference feels that such recognition of the assistance and advice made available by the Trade Union Movement in every phase of war activity, confirmed by similar statements from other Allied statesmen, warrants the expectation that this collaboration will continue as the United Nations turn to the task of carrying through the great change-over from war to peace, and set their hands to the rebuilding of a world in ruins, and the renovation and renewal of the life of all mankind in freedom and security.

33. It is the view of the Trade Union Movements of those members of the United Nations which are at war with Japan that the principles outlined above, as applying to the peace settlement to be imposed on Germany, are equally applicable to Japan, and, in particular, that the Mikado shall not be allowed to escape his responsibility for the acts of Japanese militarism, that the Japanese Empire shall be replaced by a democratic republic, and that the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be rigidly applied in regard to those territories which Japan has seized in the course of her campaigns of aggression.

The text is now before the Conference for discussion and, we trust, for its approval.

Discussion on Declaration

The President: The Conference has now before it the report of the Committee. Are there any questions on the report?

Mr. John Asfour (Arab Workers' Society, Palestine): As the Conference is aware, the paragraph in the report which is the reason for my intervention is number 26. Before I come to that paragraph I want you to read with me certain previous paragraphs and to see how much or how little a compromise is possible between these paragraphs which occur in the same report. Everyone knows that Palestine is an Arab country, and as such, paragraphs 18, 20 and 25 refer to it just as fully and forcibly as to any other country. Paragraph 18 reads: "This World Conference rejoices in the declared purpose of the Allied Governments to give effect to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, by recognising and defending the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live." Again, towards the middle of paragraph 20 we have the following: "In those historic meetings (the meetings of the leaders of the three great powers) the desire of the people of all countries, great or small, for collaboration and active participation on the part of their Governments in the sacred task of ridding the world of tyranny, slavery, oppression and racial

and religious intolerance found expression; and this World Conference is profoundly convinced that with the coming of Peace, the freedom-loving peoples over all the earth will give their support and countenance only to those Governments that will co-operate in framing and maintaining the Charter."

Again in paragraph 25 the following will be found: "In the coming Peace, the foundations must be laid with all possible speed, and in accordance with Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter, of a world order in which non-self-governing communities and nations can attain the status of free nations that will enable them to govern themselves and to develop their own institutions of free citizenship." I have read these passages to the Conference in order that they may see to what extent we can make any compromise at all between them and more particularly the last part of paragraph 26 which reads: "The Jewish people must be enabled to continue the rebuilding of Palestine as their National Home, so successfully begun by immigration, agricultural resettlement and industrial development."

It was not our intention to involve in controversy this very important and historic Conference, dealing with the major topic before it, concerning the suffering of the whole world, but I must ask you to think for a moment about Palestine and its problem. It is in my view absolutely unfair, to say the least of it, that a decision of such far-reaching effect should be taken by a Conference convened for the one single purpose of combating Fascism and all that it stands for. What is the effect of this? In my address earlier to the Conference I said that the Arabs were not the last in giving expression concerning the persecution of the Jews in Europe, but I also asked the Conference quite sincerely to resolve that we should not at this stage try to kindle fires which were not extinguished, but dormant.

We are out as workers to see that peace is established in Europe and is maintained; we are out not only to speak about it, but to establish peace in all the world. I will not say that the first part of paragraph 26 is unnecessary or redundant. If we are going to get rid of tyranny, despotism, and Fascism which has created this racial discrimination and persecution, and Europe is to be freed—and freed it will be—from all such persecution, then the Conference can adopt only the first part of paragraph 26. There is here something very important, something that taxes the conscience of every one of us. But it will be very dangerous for you to involve yourselves in decisions on matters of which you have heard nothing, of which you have not been given full and accurate details. If we are going to adopt the first part of this paragraph, which reads: "This World Conference is of opinion too that after the war thorough-going remedies must be found, through international action, for the wrongs inflicted on the Jewish people"—all well and good. There is nothing wrong with that. It is the expression of the Committee concerning a certain state of affairs that has obtained. But what is their remedy? "Their protection against oppression, discrimination and spoliation in any country must be the responsibility of the new International Authority." They ask this Conference to declare that there has been oppression, discrimination and spoliation of Jewish people in Europe, that very thorough means must be adopted to remove such wrongs, and that this must be the responsibility of the new International Authority. In my submission to you I would say this, that the question of the oppression of the Jews in Europe and the question of establishing a Zionist State in Palestine are two different subjects, two points embodying a different and controversial idea. The Jews who have been persecuted in Europe must be helped, and the first aid that should be given them is the suppression of tyranny and despotism and the creation of a new world order, with an international authority to decide on that.

I ask the Conference to remove from this report paragraph 26, which is

incompatible with the ideas of the whole of the working-class and also irreconcilable with several previous paragraphs in the report.

Mr. A. Carrillo (Latin American Confederation of Labour): Mr. President and comrades: I wish to refer to paragraph 26 of the Report. In the last sentence it reads as follows: "The Jewish people must be enabled to continue the rebuilding of Palestine as their National Home so successfully begun by immigration, agricultural resettlement and industrial development." First of all, I believe that it is just that the delegations here should rejoice in the fact that an absolute majority of the members of the Committee passed this report in the affirmative sense in which it is now presented to us. The Jewish problem is undoubtedly not a local problem dealing with a specific territory or even a regional problem—I am speaking of Europe where this is very well known—it has become a world problem of the most dramatic nature. As a result of that, we in Latin America, far away from Europe, far away from the suffering and the sacrifices of the Jewish people, at our last Latin American Congress of Labour, passed a unanimous resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish Home in Palestine, without interfering, of course, with the national rights of other groups. For that reason we come here to support this decision which has been taken also by most of the important Labour organisations of the whole world.

Anti-semitism is a problem that does not concern only the Arabs and the Jews, or any other single nationality. Anti-semitism is a problem that concerns all the freedom-loving peoples of the world because it breeds Fascism, and by the breeding of Fascism not only the Arabs, not only the Jews and not only certain specific national groups are menaced, but, to a great extent, the whole world is menaced. Consequently we have come here to suggest that this proposition should be accepted because it offers a very fine way in which we can help to solve the Jewish problem and thereby avoid the possibility of racial doctrine and anti-semitism becoming a breeder of Fascism in the future. The Jewish people are a people without a state, and we cannot possibly see why the Atlantic Charter should make an exception about them. The Atlantic Charter calls for all peoples to organise themselves politically as they think fit, and in their own interest. Are we not going to let the Jewish people organise themselves politically and have their own State? Will they be the only people in the world who will not be given the opportunity to organise themselves politically? I say that no Labour Movement anywhere in the world would be willing to answer this question in a negative sense. Our comrades representing the Arab Labour Movement cannot tell us that this is a problem in which we cannot very well take a decision. They have several States already organised. If the Arab world had no political rights and had no States which were organised, we from Latin America would come here to fight for the political rights and for the possibility of Arab States existing in the world. But there are Iraq, Syria, Lybia, Lebanon, and many other States in which the Arab world has had a chance of organising itself politically.

We are in favour of this resolution, but if there are any doubts about the good faith of the Labour Movement of the world represented here as to what we wish, I would suggest that we add to this report the following words. Where it says "National Home so successfully begun by immigration, agricultural, resettlement and industrial development" we should add, "respecting the legitimate interests of other national groups and giving equality of rights and opportunities to all its inhabitants." In that way we would be undoubtedly safeguarding the genuine and legitimate rights of all the peoples who live in Palestine. Now the nations in Europe that have suffered material losses in this way have been asking for reparations. I have not heard a single voice in this Conference raised against the legitimate desire of the European peoples to make the Nazis and their satellites pay for their war crimes. The Jewish

people in Europe were 6,000,000 in number before the World War II. There are now only 2,000,000 people of that race in Europe. They have been undoubtedly the race, as a race, that has suffered most. If we are not going to ask for reparations for the Jewish people—and they certainly have the right to them—then let us at least ask for justice, and one of the ways in which we can do justice to the Jewish people is by letting them have a National Home in Palestine so as to avoid anti-semitism and to free the world from the Fascist danger of to-morrow.

The President: We must keep ourselves on straight lines. We do not want to wander all over the document, so from now onwards, until we settle this question, we shall deal only with paragraph number 26—the Palestine question. Let us deal with that first, clear that out of the way, and then deal with the other sections afterwards.

Mr. Reid Robinson (Congress of Industrial Organisations, America): Mr. President and comrades: I wish to state that the Congress of Industrial Organisations of the United States of America cannot agree to the amendment that was called for by the delegation representing the Arabs in regard to this Palestine question on paragraph 26. The C.I.O. is on record unequivocally in support of a National Home in Palestine for the Jewish people. We support that for many reasons. We have learned that anti-semitism is the incubator of Fascism and that there has to be positive treatment given to the Jewish people throughout the world, or else anti-semitism will be used again to create the basis for a Fascist Movement in any section of the world where a demagogue may again raise it, as Hitler raised it in Germany and as it has spread throughout the earth at the present time. Certainly we are not going to have this World Conference go on record as denying any relief or any refuge to a people who have suffered as the Jewish people have suffered. Certainly one of the worst things that this Conference could do would be to delete from this very adequate report dealing with this specific subject one of the most important clauses, stating very emphatically that we, the Labour Movement of the world, are going to give relief to a people who have suffered perhaps more than any other people as the result of the spread of Fascism throughout the world. Therefore we must include that clause. We of the C.I.O.—and I am sure that I speak for everyone here—do not want to create in the minds of any people that because we are going to come to the aid and assistance of one group of people, in so doing we are going to discriminate against another people. We want to have free and equal treatment for all the people throughout the world, because only in that way can we have a real democracy, a democracy that will carry with it the fundamentals for an enduring peace. Therefore we of the United States agree with the amendment that has been suggested by Mr. Carrillo of the Latin-American C.O.L. wherein we maintain within this report all of paragraph 26 and especially the last sentence, with the amendment that it means discrimination towards none. We therefore urge the support of the amendment by Mr. Carrillo.

Mr. J. McGuire (Canadian Congress of Labour): Mr. President and fellow delegates: I speak in support of the Committee's report and of the amendment suggested by Mr. Carrillo to paragraph 26. I do so because it is the policy of the organisation I represent. At its last Convention, held in the City of Quebec, our Congress went on record as supporting the movement for the establishment and maintenance of a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. We in the Dominion of Canada have two races; we have English and we have French. There are 3,500,000 French Canadian people residing in the Dominion of Canada. The English and the French have resided side by side in the Dominion of Canada for nearly 200 years without any friction of this kind. We feel that there is plenty of room for the Jewish people and for the Arab people in the Middle East. The small section of the Middle East which has been set aside and is now known as Palestine can very readily accommodate about

5,000,000 or 6,000,000 people. What did we find at the time when it was decided to establish a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine? We found that Palestine itself had been allowed virtually to become desert again, and we have watched the development of that country since the Jewish people have been allowed to return to it. We have found cities established, industries brought into the country, orange groves and other fruit groves planted. We have found the Jewish people engaging in agriculture, and we have found a remarkable cultural development in Palestine, all of which was conspicuous largely by its absence up to that time. If there is a return of the Jewish people to Palestine—and I do not say that they are all going to return by any means, but I do say that a large number of them will undoubtedly return—they should be permitted to return to Palestine as a homeland, and not be a nation without a country.

Since 1920 the Jewish population of Palestine has increased from 65,000 until to-day it numbers a little over 500,000. It is returning to a land which, as I said before, could accommodate between 5,000,000 and 6,000,000 people. You will readily see that approximately only 10 per cent. have been accommodated so far. During the same period, the General Federation of Jewish Labour in Palestine has increased from 4,433 to 140,500. That is a remarkable development in the Labour Movement in that country in the short space of twenty-five years, and it has taken place notwithstanding all the obstacles that were placed in their way. We feel, in supporting the amendment offered by Brother Carrillo, that, like ourselves, these two races of people can live side by side in peace and harmony and can develop that part of the Middle East if they have the will to do so. In that connection I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the representatives from the Jewish Federation here for their remarkable achievements, established during the past fifteen years, in organising the workers in Palestine and improving their conditions of employment to a far greater extent than had ever been the case in Palestine previous to that development, and also for the remarkable amount of work which they did during the years of business depression when Labour was adversely affected all over the world, during which time they not only looked after the members of their Movement who were out of employment but saw to it that they received proper medical care and hospitalisation. Therefore, Mr. President, I have pleasure in supporting the amendment proposed by Brother Carrillo, and I do that in all due deference to the interests of the members of the Labour Movement who are represented by our Arab confreres at this Conference.

The President: There is only one other speaker on the list for paragraph 26, and I suggest we close the debate on that. The one speaker is Mr. Pillai of India.

Mr. A. K. Pillai (Indian Federation of Labour): Mr. President and fellow delegates: The Jews are a most ancient people with a rich heritage of civilisation. They have also been the most unhappy victims of tremendous oppression, and that aspect of their history has been accentuated in recent years. Therefore all our sympathy is with them. I have among them several personal friends, but that would not prevent my taking a view on this issue, influenced entirely by the merits of the case. The comrades from Canada, Latin-America and the U.S.A. have had the advantage of discussing this question in their own national organisations. I come from an organisation in India, and we have had no opportunity of discussing the merits of this question. All our sympathy in this matter should not be allowed to stampede us into taking a decision when the facts have not been investigated by us as a body and when we have not sufficient data on which to decide, one way or the other. Therefore it is my submission that the last clause, which definitely commits this Conference to the advocacy of Palestine as a National Home for the Jews, must be deleted. By

so doing we are not opposing a National Home being so established but we are not supporting it; we are only saying we have not sufficient data before us.

Yesterday, when Mr. Dange from India suggested an amendment in respect of India, it was quite rightly pointed out that it was not within the terms of reference, although the Chairman of the Committee concerned sympathised with the view. We may leave the matter in the hands of those who are concerned with this question. There have been a series of declarations from the Balfour Declaration onwards. It is said that this Committee has come to a decision by a majority and therefore we must pass it. But after all, we are the Conference; we are here to adopt or not to adopt the report, and the fact that the Committee came to a decision by a majority, or even unanimously, would not preclude us from taking a different view. Even a majority on a Committee can go wrong. In this matter it is not a question of going wrong or going right, but of taking a decision without facts. They have had no facts before them and they have not heard the populations concerned. If it were merely a matter of colonising vacant land it would be different, but it is not so. Palestine is already inhabited, and the Arabs claim that they represent two-thirds of the population and that the Jews, with all the immigrants, are only one-third. If Palestine is to become the National Home of the Jews, what about the other population? Are they going to be transplanted or exterminated? We do not know. Let us not be stampeded into a decision for which we have not sufficient facts; and in our anxiety to show sympathy with the Jewish people let us not do something which, after all, will not turn out to be a Peace Settlement but perhaps may be the beginning of a new war. This war was not started on the Palestine issue, although in the war the Jews have been largely the sufferers and the victims of Hitlerite Germany. But Palestine is in British hands and they can deal with it. So far as British statesmen are concerned, they have always shown a great deal of sympathy towards this question and, therefore, there is no reason why we should think they would not do justice. By deleting this sentence we are not deciding against a National Home for the Jews in Palestine but suspending our judgment, not because we have not sympathy with the Jews but because we have not the data before us on which to decide this particular question.

The President: As there is no other speaker, I will now proceed to take a vote on the matter.

Mr. John Asfour (Arab Workers' Society, Palestine): On a point of order, I opened this debate on the amendment. The Conference has heard several speakers, and I think under the Standing Orders I am entitled to reply.

The President: The Standing Orders say that a delegate shall speak only once upon any one subject except with the express permission of the Conference.

Mr. Asfour: I am appealing to you and all the Conference that I should be given an opportunity to reply.

The President: You have no right to a reply. You are moving an amendment. However, if this Conference agrees to give you permission to speak a second time you may do so, but you cannot claim a reply.

Mr. Asfour: That is my point.

The President: Then leave it at that. The delegate is asking special permission to speak a second time on this issue. I would like to obtain the view of the Conference, and to know if there is an agreement to our colleague speaking a second time. (Agreed.) Very good. Now Mr. Asfour you have the opportunity.

Mr. Asfour: Mr. President and Comrades: I thought I told you at the outset that this subject, which has not been discussed in full Conference and taken as a special subject on the agenda, was going to involve you in endless debate. I thought that would be the result, and here we are. First of all, I want to make it very clear to all the comrades here that when you speak

about anti-semitism you mean persecution of the Jews and Arabs alike, because we are Semites just as much. Therefore, if you want to relieve the world from anti-semitism which has grown up and flourished, not in Arab countries if you please, but in Europe, you are not really going to solve the problem or to change the attitude by bringing Jews who have been persecuted because of anti-semitism to Palestine. It is most astounding, if I may say so—and I say it with the utmost respect—that you should have bodies so internationally known and with such responsibilities upon their shoulders as the C.I.O. and the Canadian Congress of Labour, adopting a resolution, if you please, and urging that it should be carried at this Conference, without previous notice, and saying that they are in favour and support with their utmost vigour, the establishment of a National Home in Palestine for the Jews. Now I ask those gentlemen, really and honestly, had you heard the Arab side before you adopted that resolution? Have you set yourselves in judgment merely upon representations made by one party, without either hearing or bothering yourselves to inquire about the story from the other side? Can we, as real Socialists, as people who are trying with this progressive movement of ours to establish order and peace, forget this most elementary principle of passing resolutions and making judgment? Can you, from the point of view of world order, give any decision against anyone without first, not only hearing the other side, but demanding evidence of such fantastic claims as that Palestine would contain 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 more people? Have you got the evidence and have you heard the other side? Why, in the name of everybody on earth, do you put yourselves in judgment? I do not appreciate it; I am sorry, but I cannot understand why some other national group should constitute themselves in judgment and power over another national group. It is something which is entirely unknown in any movement in the world.

Now I wish to deal with the flowery words with which Comrade Carrillo tried to influence support for his amendment by getting certain things inserted respecting the preservation of the legitimate and national claims of other groups. This might be a new thing to you, but we have been suffering from exactly identical terms to those contained in the amendment to my amendment. It was contained in the Balfour Declaration itself. By the way, the Balfour Declaration does not say "the people of Palestine and their National Home," the Balfour Declaration said: "to establish in Palestine a National Home for the Jews"—not making of Palestine their National Home. But that is only a side-show. In that Declaration itself, however, there was this identical, what is termed in political language, reservation. We have suffered from that reservation. I will give you just one or two instances, because they will enlighten you as to how much effect reservations have on the minds of the people. First of all, the Arabs who have lived in the country do not require any such reservation. They live there as a matter of right and are going to continue to live there. But in Haifa, which is the Port of Palestine, there was always an Arab Mayor—always. After the Jewish immigration into Palestine the Jews demanded and succeeded in getting a Jewish Mayor in Haifa—and I must tell you that the Mayor is appointed by the Government. There is no question of a difference between the Arab and the Jew, but I want to tell you what the idea of reservation of the rights of other groups meant. The same trouble is going on now in Jerusalem and it has not yet been solved. There can be no doubt at all that by your committing yourselves to such a resolution as this, which has never been put before Conference, and on which you have had no evidence or data, neither as to the area of the land nor as to the reports previously made by commissions appointed, not by the Arabs but by the British Imperial Government, nor as to the capacity of the land, nor as to the troubles which have obtained ever since the inception of the Balfour Declaration up to 1939—you are without all those—that you should come and

commit yourselves to such a resolution would be a cause of serious criticism not only by other groups of Labour but by the whole world. You would be giving yourselves exactly the same power as the C.I.O. and the Canadian Congress of Labour have done, namely, of giving judgment on a certain case without ever hearing the other side in evidence.

As regards the matter of accommodation for 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 people, I can quote to you one point which will interest you very much. In the years 1931 and 1932, this claim that Palestine has a capacity to take many millions of the persecuted Jews was made, and the British Government sent someone to Palestine to inquire into the matter of land and land settlement. He has it in his report—it is a public report here, that of Sir John Hope Simpson—that in 1931 the land which was then left to the Arabs was not sufficient for the existing population, without having regard to any natural increase in that population. Gentlemen, I appeal to you not to commit yourselves on this amendment at all, and by so doing I am not afraid of facing an international organisation which you yourselves have recommended. You have recommended that this matter be solved by an international authority in order to settle what appears to be a very important question. Finally, I repeat that the last sentence of paragraph 26 should be *in toto* repealed, without the amendment suggested by Mr. Carrillo.

The President: Now we have to get a decision on this matter, and in view of the time and the other work we have before us I hope we can proceed without having to go through the long and wearisome method of a roll call vote. This is a proposal to reject a part of the report, and the Standing Orders provide that no proposition shall be rejected unless the dissentients represent at least one-third of the national delegations and comprise at least one-third of the total membership of the national organisations represented. Therefore I ask those national delegations who support the rejection of this part of the report to indicate to that effect. I hope that is clear. Those national delegations who support the proposal to delete that sentence of the report will please show. One vote for each national delegation. There are Palestine Arab, the Indian Federation of Labour, the All-India Trade Union Congress, South Africa, Nigeria, and Gambia—six national delegations support the rejection of the paragraph. There is no need to take a vote against the rejection because the movers have not secured the one-third vote which is required. Therefore that sentence remains in. Mr. Carrillo has moved to add the words "respecting the legitimate interest of other national groups and giving equality of rights and opportunities to all its inhabitants."

Mr. B. Farah (Arab Federation of Trade Unions, Palestine): We can preserve ourselves without the rights suggested by Mr. Carrillo.

Mr. Bankole: Mr. Chairman, I wish to move an amendment to paragraph 31: That the word "representatives" in the third line be altered to "delegates," and after the word "movement," in the same line, the words "with full powers" be added.

The President: That is the same motion as the one Conference has just decided against but put in a different place. It is out of order. No other amendments have been handed in, but Mr. Bankole has sent up a note to say that he wishes to speak on paragraph 25. We have passed that paragraph, but I suggest that he should be given the opportunity to address us on it. Does the Conference agree? (Agreed.)

Mr. Bankole: Mr. President, I am going to be very brief. Paragraph 25 has largely to do with the question of the Colonies, and in order to make that clearer I want to refer to paragraph 23, which says: "Among these essentials, this World Conference attaches supreme importance to the removal of the economic causes of war." I think those causes will be found to be implied mainly in the question of the Colonies. That is why I feel that paragraph 25

should be amended, and I have used paragraph 23 to explain my point. I am actually concerned with paragraph 25, and I am asking that an addition should be made to it. At the end of the last line, after the word "citizenship," I am suggesting that we add the following words: "With this end in view, this World Conference advocates the setting by Colonial Powers of a definite time limit within which the Colonies will attain nationhood." My reason is quite clear. Unless we dispose of the question of the Colonies, I am sure another war will come.

The query which primarily may be raised is whether the people of the Colonies are ripe to govern themselves. I wish to answer that question by explaining that the form of Government that at present obtains in the Colonies is such as to prove that the people are ripe to govern themselves. We have in Nigeria, for instance, the form of Government known as "Indirect rule," in which case natives have the power to control administration and to rule their territories, only subject to advice by British officers. That system has been working well and has proved that natives have been doing good work in that respect. That being so, I do not see the reason for raising objection to the Colonial peoples taking their proper place in the Commonwealth of Nations and that is the background of my amendment.

The President: Is the amendment clear to delegations, and is there any discussion upon it? To be quite clear, it means setting up a time limit in which each Colonial nation is to attain nationhood. I will take the vote. Those in favour of that addition to the Report? Five. There not being a majority, the motion is not carried.

CHAPTER VII

GREETINGS FROM BRITISH GUIANA

By HUBERT CRITCHLOW*

(*President, British Guiana Labour Council*)

Comrade Chairman, comrades and fellow delegates: As the accredited representative of the British Guiana Trades Union Council, it is my pleasant duty to bring you fraternal greetings and expressions of international solidarity from the working class of British Guiana, which includes workers of all races: that is, people of African descent, East Indians, Chinese, Europeans, Portuguese, and others of mixed race.

I want to emphasise this point, because in British Guiana, one of the most cosmopolitan of British territories, the Labour Movement, whatever its limitations, has from its very beginning stressed the solidarity between workers of all races. The Unions affiliated to my Council have always welcomed into their ranks members of the working class, regardless of their race, their colour, or their creed. In this connection we feel that while we are still young and weak as compared with the great Trade Union Movements in many other countries, we have much to teach, especially at this historical period when humanity is torn not only by international wars and social conflicts but also by racial strife. It is this latter note that I want to stress at this Conference. For white workers will never

* Hubert Critchlow was unfortunately attending a session of the Post-war Reconstruction Committee when the Chairman of the Conference called upon him to speak, and the Conference closed before another opportunity occurred for him to address the delegates. For the benefit of this record, we give the text of the speech which Comrade Critchlow had intended to deliver.—*Editor.*

be able to free themselves until they join hands with the coloured workers throughout the world for the common emancipation of all those workers who toil by hand and brain.

Let me first of all say how proud I am to be able to take part in the deliberations of this Conference, at which vital questions affecting the future of the International Working Class and all humanity are being discussed. I am no stranger to international gatherings, having participated in several international conferences of labour in Britain and Europe before the present war. But this is the first time that we have been able to gather under one roof such a large and representative body, and I am particularly happy to note the presence of so many coloured delegates from Asia, Africa, and the West Indies. I may make a criticism in passing, I would like to suggest that in the past the International Labour Movement was too much a European Movement—a White Movement. And if the war has done nothing else it has taught us the lesson of the inter-dependence of our common struggle. The European workers will only be able to go forward by extending the hand of aid, support and friendly co-operation to the young working class and trade union movements in the Colonies, who, by the presence of their representatives at this Conference, have demonstrated their capacity and readiness to take part in the common struggle.

I have been mandated to bring before this Conference a number of questions on which the working class of my country feel very strongly. When we received your invitation, Comrade Chairman, our Trades Union Council convened a special meeting at which the agenda of this Conference was discussed, and resolutions were adopted on the four main points which have been the subjects of our deliberations at this Conference. As I am a great believer in democracy and the right of the common people to express their views on matters which vitally affect them, I want to take this opportunity of bringing before the Conference the decisions made by the British Guiana Trades Union Council.

I shall deal first with Point 1—Furtherance of the Allied war effort. The workers of my country feel that "all soldiers and camp followers under the banners of the Allied nations should be given equal treatment in all respects." We feel very strongly about this, for too often even among comrades-in-arms coloured men and women called upon to make the supreme sacrifice are discriminated against in the matter of pay, opportunities for promotion, and other respects.

So strongly do the workers of my country resent racial chauvinism and colour discrimination that they feel that Governments of all countries in which racial discrimination is legalised—I shall not name these countries, for you know them, and I don't mean Nazi Germany—shall be debarred from taking part in the World Peace Conference, unless they take steps to annul such legislation before victory. Furthermore, my Council feels that the influence of the Trade Union Movement should be used in their respective countries to combat and discourage the practice as being inconsistent with the principles of Socialism and Democracy, which are predicated upon the philosophy of the brotherhood of man.

I now turn to the second point—the Peace Settlement. I have been instructed by my Council to say that we endorse the idea that official

representation of the International Trade Union Movement be accorded at the Peace Conference. For Labour, which has borne the brunt of this struggle, has the right to be heard in the shaping of the new order. We therefore hope that those who speak for our great World Movement will not forget at that Conference the hopes and aspirations of the coloured workers of the world who have too long been forgotten.

On the question of Post-War Reconstruction, it is our feeling and our just claim that the Colonial and subject peoples should be included within the terms of the Atlantic Charter, which should apply to them as much as to the white-skinned nations of the world. We strongly resent any attempt to discriminate against us. For if we are good enough to fight for the freedom of others, we are good enough to enjoy it ourselves. In this connection, my Council has recorded, and it appeals to this Conference to endorse its stand, that all Imperial Powers with Colonies should be called upon to declare a time limit wherein self-government will be extended to their Colonies, and that during this interim period the necessary machinery should be set up to train the peoples of these territories in the administration of their own affairs. And in relation to this question of self-government, we feel that this Conference should urge upon the British Imperial Government to publish the full report of the West Indian Royal Commission, so that the workers of these Colonies may acquaint themselves with the difficulties under which they exist and the remedies which should be applied.

This question of Post-War Reconstruction is of vital importance to the workers of my country. The prevailing low standard of living of the inhabitants, not only of British Guiana but of the whole Caribbean area, calls for the immediate creation of a large-scale industrial programme to supplement our agriculture, which also cries out for fundamental re-organisation. This applies particularly to the growing of food crops for local consumption. It will surprise and shock the delegates of this Conference to know that the bulk of the food consumed by the working class in these potentially rich tropical lands is imported from foreign countries. There is tremendous scope for large-scale development in British Guiana, with its abundant forests, water power and mineral resources. Such a programme of industrialisation should be carried out through a central planning body, on which the working class should have full representation. Hand in hand with such an economic programme must march the educational and cultural advancement of the masses, based on the principles formulated in the educational policy of the British Labour Party.

I feel confident that if the decisions of this Conference are carried out in the spirit of international brotherhood by which our deliberations should always be guided, our Movement can look forward to a great future.

Long live the international solidarity of the working class ! Down with Fascism and Nazism, United we stand, Divided we suffer.

CHAPTER VIII

CONFERENCE DECISIONS

The Conference, before it broke up, issued Resolutions on the subjects which had been discussed at its sessions. Its Resolutions on the Peace Settlement contained 33 paragraphs, three of which have particular bearing

on the Colonies and are of specific importance to the subject peoples. These read as follows :—

18. This World Conference rejoices in the declared purpose of the Allied Governments to give effect to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, by recognising and defending the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which they will live. The resolve of the Allied Governments to secure the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to the peoples who have seen their democratic institutions ruthlessly uprooted, and jointly to assist the people in every liberated country to create the conditions in which stable and representative Governments, resting upon the free consent of the people, can come into existence, will have the support of the Trade Union Movement.

20. The Trade Union Movement will look to the San Francisco Conference to set the seal of final agreement upon the policy which the leaders of the three Great Powers have consistently pursued since they framed the Atlantic Charter, and reaffirmed and amplified at the Moscow and Teheran Conferences, in which their unity of purpose was strengthened. In those historic meetings, the desire of the peoples of all countries, great or small, for collaboration and active participation on the part of their Governments in the sacred task of ridding the world of tyranny, slavery, oppression, and racial and religious intolerance, found expression ; and this World Conference is profoundly convinced that with the coming of peace the freedom-loving peoples over all the earth will give their support and countenance only to those Governments that will co-operate in framing and maintaining the Charter.

25. In the view of this World Conference, it is likewise necessary to bring to an end the system of colonies, dependencies and subject countries as spheres of economic exploitation, and to facilitate immediately the development of free Trade Unions in those countries. In the coming peace, the foundations must be laid with all possible speed, and in accordance with Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter, of a world order in which non-self-governing communities and nations can attain the status of free nations that will enable them to govern themselves and to develop their own institutions of free citizenship.

Post-war reconstruction and immediate trade union demands included in the resolution on this subject have wide implications, and there is no doubt that they can be applied to Colonial territories with resultant great advantages. They are more or less summed up in the final paragraph :—

19. In conclusion this World Trade Union Conference which demonstrates so effectively the unity of organised Labour throughout the world proclaims the following charter of basic Trade Union and workers' rights, the recognition of which it is determined to secure in all countries and their dependencies.

- (a) Workpeople shall be free to organise themselves in Trade Unions and to engage freely in all normal Trade Union activities, including that of collective bargaining.
- (b) Workpeople shall be free to establish co-operatives and any other mutual aid organisations.
- (c) There shall be freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion and political association.
- (d) Every form of political, economic or social discrimination based on race, creed, colour or sex shall be eliminated, and in this sense equal pay for equal work shall be established. In cases where young people are doing adult work they shall receive the adult rate of pay.
- (e) There shall be equality of educational and vocational opportunities for all people.
- (f) There shall be suitable employment available at adequate rates of pay for all requiring work.

- (g) There shall be adequate protection in all the circumstances of life where this is required to guarantee social and economic security to every citizen.

CHAPTER IX NIGERIAN LABOUR ON THE MOVE

By T. A. BANKOLE*
(President, Trade Unions Congress of Nigeria)

Nigeria, with an area of approximately 372,000 square miles and a population probably not far short of 30,000,000, ranks next to India in the British Commonwealth, and possesses immense economic resources. Every Nigerian tribe has a form of culture all its own (founded on its traditional code of morals), which the impact of European civilisation has to be prevented from injudiciously upsetting.

In spite of her 84 years of British rule, Nigeria still suffers from grave social, political and economic disabilities. There are clear evidences of overcrowding and bad housing, malnutrition, underpayment, disease, and restricted citizenship—a rather unhappy condition.

The great bulk of the peasantry, comprising some 80 per cent of the entire population, still depends generally on subsistence farming. The working population is employed in the civil service, in the mercantile houses (which are, in the main, establishments owned and controlled by foreign monopolies), and in the coal, tin and gold mines, generally earning a pittance. Among the educated class are to be found professionals and graduates of British and American universities.

A few trade unions had existed for the protection of workers of certain categories (e.g., the Nigeria Civil Service Union) before trade unionism became legalised in 1938. Since then no less than 85 trade unions have been registered, with an aggregate active membership of about 30,000, besides occasional members placed at about fifteen times that figure. These unions are, most of them, organised vertically and are protective of the collective interests of all the workers connected with the respective establishments in which they are employed.

The Government proposal—about October, 1942—to enact the Essential Works Order served as a signal for concerting trade union activities; and steps primarily intended to counteract that proposal, on the ground that only employers of labour stood to benefit thereby, resulted a month later in the formation of the Federated Trades Union of Nigeria (renamed the Trades Union Congress about nine months later). This organisation is waxing strong and is capable of great achievements for the workers.

WORKERS' NEEDS

The needs of the workers of Nigeria, thoroughly examined by the T.U.C. at its Conference held in Lagos in August, 1944, and duly represented to the Nigerian Government in a number of resolutions, call for

* Shortly after the outbreak of the general strike in Nigeria, which started on June 21, 1945, Mr. Bankole was released from the office of President of the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria.

urgent attention. In that connection the following important points are to be noted:—

- (a) The problem of resettlement and rehabilitation of demobilised soldiers and war workers is of immediate importance. It is imperative that those of our men who return from the war front still able-bodied shall be resettled in their pre-war jobs and paid decent wages, or else assisted to work on their own under an "Assisted Industrial Development Scheme." Those of them who return disabled ought to be fully compensated and granted reasonable pension. It still has to be driven home to our Government that our soldiers and war workers who have been making great sacrifices in defence of democratic principles deserve to be restored to a really happy life at the end of the war.
- (b) Nigeria, with her vast potential wealth, is at present under-developed. There is great need for industrial scholarships (side by side with the existing social science scholarships) for the training of candidates to act as the spearhead of the country's industrial drive. Candidature should not, as hitherto, be confined to Government servants. Methods of selection need to be revised; and the necessary qualifications need include natural aptitude and public spirit. The establishment on a large scale of such industries as fishing, fish and meat curing, building, cement, glazed pottery and tile-making, spinning, textile and shoe-making, to mention only a few, should benefit Nigeria greatly, provided they are developed for the economic well-being of the indigenous population by effectively checking monopolistic influences now so firmly established all over the country. The agricultural and mineral possibilities of the soil have also to be further explored and the use of appropriate modern machinery duly taught with a view to improving productivity and introducing processing to supply part of our local needs.
- (c) It is believed that the time has arrived for a comprehensive social security scheme to be made to cover such adverse circumstances of life as unemployment, sickness, accident, old age, etc. This important matter has recently been brought to the notice of the Government, which has not yet declared its attitude.
- (d) A point of great import to the Nigerian T.U.C. is the securing of trade union representation on Government Labour Committees against wanton interference on the part of influential employers. It is necessary to ensure that there shall be no recurrence of a recent episode in which the T.U.C. found itself up against the head of a Government department, who rigidly objected to a trade unionist (incidentally an official in his own department) being nominated to the Labour Advisory Board for Lagos and Colony.
- (e) The existing policy of low wages for labour in Nigeria must be reversed. The minimum wage of a mine-worker on the Plateau is 9d. a day; the average minimum wage for unskilled labour is 1s. a day; and that for clerical or technical labour, 3s. a day. It is definitely humanly impossible for most wage-earners to maintain a decent living standard with such a wage level. In consideration of this fact, the T.U.C. has been advocating a thorough investigation by the Government of the wages question, and the nationalisation of such industries as mining, transport, timber, etc., to check labour exploitation. There is now a minimum wage-fixing machinery; but it operates rather slowly and, to all appearance, favours the existing order. It could here be mentioned that the Nigerian worker draws no family allowance, nor are his children educated by the State; he therefore labours continually under a great financial strain.

- (f) The housing problem is grave. Urgent attention must be given to :
- (i) provision of adequate dwelling houses for workers (preferably near their work-places) ;
 - (ii) slum clearing, and
 - (iii) effective rent control. It is most insanitary for six or more people (in many cases including married couples) to live in a room containing 100 square feet of floor space. Most of the tenements occupied by workers are hovels for which high rents are demanded. The bearing of these conditions on health and mortality are too obvious to be stressed here.
- (g) The attention of the Government has recently been invited to the need for revising the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance—
- (i) to provide improved rates of compensation for industrial and occupational accidents, and
 - (ii) to cover cases of industrial and occupational diseases at present outside its scope. It is shocking that under section 6 (a) of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1941, the dependants of a fatally wounded worker should receive only thirty months' earnings of the deceased worker (working out at £90 with an income of £36 p.a.), and that such compensation should in no case exceed £600. These are progressively reduced under sub-sections (b) and (c). In case of permanent total incapacity from injury, section 7 stipulates that compensation should equal the wounded worker's wages for forty-two months (i.e., £126 with an income of £36 per annum), but in no case exceed £750. In both cases, the amounts of compensation are meagre and absolutely inadequate. The Government must ameliorate this indefensible position.

DEMAND FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

The continued restriction of the personal liberty of Mr. M. A. O. Imoudu,* President of the Railway Workers' Union, is regarded by the entire labour force of Nigeria as a specimen of the exercise of arbitrary power by the Government. No tangible reason has been given to justify the rather uncompromising attitude being maintained by the Government in this matter. One thing is clear: Mr. Imoudu is a British-protected person whose only desire is to free his fellow-workers from exploitation, poverty and want. Should trade union leadership be thus menaced?

Another specimen of arbitrary use of governmental power is the placing of the *Nigerian Worker* (the organ of the Congress) under censorship by an order of the Governor dated the 1st July, 1944. This order, served as it was on the Congress without any previous warning, is regarded by the workers as constituting an unwarranted attack on the freedom of the press—acknowledged throughout the free world as a precious heritage of democracy. The *Nigerian Worker* is avowedly anti-capitalist in outlook, being unreservedly dedicated to the cause of the workers of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the Department of Labour serves as the only venue for examining all labour matters, and undertakes preliminary enquiries and conciliation in respect of reported or apprehended trade disputes. It was in connection with its latter function that it was sharply criticised by the Congress-in-Session recently for suspected bias towards employers of labour, and on account of the victimisation of principal trade union

* Mr. Imoudu was released on June 2, 1945, and on the outbreak of the general strike was elected to the presidency of the Nigeria T.U.C. in the place of Mr. Bankole.

spokesmen which had often resulted from its conciliation methods. There have occasionally been cases of mass dismissals of trade unionists as reprisals for daring to lead agitations for improved working conditions. The workers are therefore demanding the introduction of the Industrial Courts system as a much more satisfactory machinery for settling trade disputes.

NIGERIANS WANT POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

Politically, the workers of Nigeria are at the moment sadly at a disadvantage. The limited franchise granted to Nigeria over twenty years ago, by its income qualification of £100 p.a., has deprived most of them of one of their elementary civil rights by excluding them from the electorate. The indigenous population of Nigeria, by having four elected members on the Legislative Council (roughly one-eleventh of its membership), maintains minority representation of a privileged minority. The Executive Council admits of no indigenous elective representation whatsoever. It is clear, then, that in the absence of adult suffrage the workers of Nigeria who are giving their services in developing the country can hardly have any voice in its administration. This untenable position must be reversed, and the workers must be enfranchised and endowed as full citizens of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The workers feel strongly that the existing Constitution of Nigeria—almost a quarter of a century old—has already served its time and must be replaced, without delay, with a new one based entirely on sound democratic ideals and reducing that much-proclaimed doctrine of PARTNERSHIP into practical terms. British workers should deplore and protest against all platitudes designed to insult the intelligence of Nigerians and to traduce the good name of their great, beloved, but much-neglected, country. British administrators in Nigeria would be doing a great national service to Great Britain if they stopped stultifying the reasonable and legitimate aspirations of the people and, by pointing in less disparaging terms to the now visible signs of growth and progress, help to place Nigeria on her feet in the democratic world. They must acknowledge her great advance in recent years.

The Nigerian workers are fully convinced that their immediate task is to ensure that their working conditions are improved; that their living and social standards are elevated; that their civil rights are conceded; and that their country—Nigeria—is, for the time being, granted Internal Self-Government. Peace will abound in the long-contested plums of war for all the world to share! And Nigeria *shall not* be forgotten!!

CHAPTER X

GENERAL STRIKE IN NIGERIA

On June 21st, 1945, after the failure of protracted representations to the Government for salary increases to meet the very much increased cost of living, 150,000 clerical and non-clerical workers in the Nigeria civil service, came out in a general strike of all Government departments. The non-clerical unskilled workers were claiming a minimum wage of 2s. 6d. a day.

Since 1941, the cost of living in Nigeria has risen by over 200 per centum as a direct consequence of the war. The Government acknowledge this fact, and has granted several kinds of allowances which effectually benefited rather a few European officials than the Africans. Examples of these allowances are the Separation Allowance, the Cost of Living Allowance, and the Local Allowance. The African workers, especially those in the non-clerical services, who have been most seriously hit by the rise in prices, received little increase in wage.

THE HISTORIC RESOLUTION

At a mass meeting held on Saturday, the 19th day of May, 1945, at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos, a resolution was passed unanimously by 17 Unions declaring, among other things :

- (i) "THAT we strongly deplore the callous attitude of Government to the sufferings of the masses of African workers, mostly men with large families, as set out in a previous memorandum issued by the African Civil Servants Technical Workers' Union (Nigeria).
- (ii) "AND FURTHER THAT failing a grant in full (repeat : in full) with effect from the 1st April, 1944, of the extremely modest demand contained in the letter of 22nd March, 1945, to wit :

"Labour: Minimum daily wage to be 2s. 6d. per day ;

"Subordinate grades between Labour and Standard Scale: 50 per cent. increase on the existing Cost of Living Allowance ; within one calendar month hence, i.e., not later than Thursday, the 21st June, 1945, the Workers of Nigeria shall proceed to seek their own remedy, with due regard to law and order on the one hand and starvation on the other."

"That a minimum daily wage of 2s. 6d. be established for all unskilled labour."

In a reply to the letter referred to above, dated 31st August, 1944, the Government wrote : "A general review of emoluments and other conditions of service of all Government servants will, it is proposed, be undertaken as soon as possible after the war."

In another letter, dated 11th June, 1945, the Government wrote that : "An increase in money wages will not secure any betterment in the conditions of living unless plentiful supplies of foods and goods are available . . . agricultural production cannot be expected to show immediate improvement and existing conditions are likely to continue for some time." This reply, naturally, did not satisfy the members in the non-clerical branch of the service owing to the indefiniteness of the time at which the points raised on their behalf are likely to be considered.

It is clear from this summary that the workers of Nigeria have exercised all patience and exhausted all constitutional means to come to a reasonable settlement, but the Government was not willing to co-operate.

In order to render support to the strikers, a meeting was convened at Conway Hall, London, on Sunday, July 15th, 1945, under the auspices of the West African Students' Union, The International African Service Bureau, The African Progressive Association, the Pan-African Federation, The Colonial Peoples' United Council, The Brotherhood of African Peoples, and African workers domiciled in Great Britain. The meeting was also attended by members of the Indian community in London and British sympathisers. Similar meetings were held in Manchester and

Liverpool. The following Resolution was proposed and adopted by the London meeting :—

- (I) It condemns with all the emphasis at its command the uncompromising attitude of the Nigerian Government in connection with the events leading up to and the consequences of the said strike, to wit :—
 - (a) The refusal on the part of the said Government to arrive at a reasonable compromise with or concede to the legitimate demand of the technical workers, who have been on strike since June 21st, 1945, for increased cost of living award and the moderate minimum wage of 2s. 6d. per diem, in spite of the phenomenal rise in the cost of living as the direct consequences of the present war, for the successful prosecution of which West Africans have made enormous contributions both in men and materials.
 - (b) The fascist method adopted by the said Government in stifling public opinion by suppressing the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Comet*, and the alleged threatening of the Editor, Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, with deportation from Nigeria for supporting the strikers, and reimposing Defence Regulations which had been repealed in May, 1945.
 - (c) The studied policy of discrimination pursued by the Nigerian Government as between the different sections of its employees in the award of cost of living relief, as such policy completely negatives its uninformed assertion that an increase in money wages to the poorly-paid strikers would not secure for them any betterment in their conditions of living.
- (II) (a) The meeting therefore calls upon the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Nigerian Government to abandon the use of military force and the reimposed Defence Regulations in intimidating the strikers and distinguished citizens of Nigeria ; to display real statesmanship in this unprecedented crisis by bringing the strike to an end, releasing the Trade Union leaders under arrest, reinstating the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Comet*, guaranteeing the personal safety of Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria ; and to grant the demands of the Union and refrain from any act of victimisation against the strikers in the exercise of their legal and constitutional rights.
- (b) Calls upon the Trade Union Congress of Great Britain to intervene immediately in the present dispute so as to ensure a fair settlement and to use its good offices, in co-operation with the workers throughout the British Commonwealth and Empire to secure for the strikers such wages and conditions of service consistent with the lofty ideals enunciated in the San Francisco Charter.
- (III) The meeting meanwhile extends its sympathy to the workers of the African Civil Servants Technical Workers' Union of Nigeria in their struggle to secure their legitimate demands, and authorises the net proceeds of the contributions made at this historic meeting to be remitted as soon as possible to Nigeria to relieve the hardship caused by the strike to the wives and children of the strikers.*

Issued by: Pan-African Federation
West African Students' Union

* Eighty-five pounds were collected at the London meeting ; £100 at Manchester and £40 at Liverpool.

CHAPTER XI TRADE UNION MOVEMENT ON THE GOLD COAST

By JOE S. ANNAN

The Labour Movement on the Gold Coast is comparatively young. Before 1939, the workers in the mines, the railways, and the mercantile field made several attempts at organising themselves into some form of Workers' Union for the purpose of bargaining for increases in wages and better working conditions. After the 1939 and 1941 railway strikes, in which several other workers (notably the Municipal and the Public Works Dept.) joined, it was strongly felt that the organisation of the working classes into properly constituted Unions was necessary and by the kind co-operation between the British Trade Union Movement and the Colonial Office an experienced Trade Union official, Mr. Jones of the Welsh Miners' Union, was entrusted with this all-important work. In less than 18 months he had helped the Western Province Motor Drivers' Association and the Gold Coast Railway African Employees' Union to be organised into registered unions with legal recognition. The Railway Movement has in 2 years raised 3,500 members, which represent more than 60 per cent of the total number of Africans employed on the railways. The Mines Union will soon be registered and it will certainly be an uphill task to bring into its membership most of the 45,000 employees. The Mercantile Union, which has a membership of over 2,000, also awaits registration. A Union of Domestic Servants has also been formed. Besides these there are the craft unions, such as the Goldsmiths' Union, Leatherworkers' Union, and Tailors' Union. In each of these Unions membership is entirely voluntary. The figures given above may not be very impressive, but if one considers that four years ago labour on the Gold Coast was unorganised, he will surely observe a progressive growth of Trade Union activity in the Colony.

It should be clearly pointed out that the position of the Labour Officer is purely advisory and consultative: his position does not in any way prejudice the decisions and actions of the union; in fact, once established and registered, the union can often carry on without his help, except in special circumstances. The Labour Officer is out on the coast to help and co-operate with the working classes to build up a Labour Movement on generally accepted democratic trade union principles, allowance being given to local conditions, labour traditions and customs. The whole organisation is in the hands of the Africans—its officers are elected by popular votes; conferences are held annually and the problems discussed are no different in the main from those discussed at a typical British conference, for the needs and problems of the working class are the same everywhere.

THE RAILWAY UNION

In the Gold Coast Railway African Employees' Union as in the other unions, each member pays 1s. a month, which represents about 3 per cent of the labourer's monthly pay. We have a rather unorthodox method of collecting our dues—a method which may perhaps sound strange to the average Trade Unionist in Britain. By an arrangement made by the union's executive and the labour officer on the one hand and the railway

management on the other, the chief accountant of the railway, with the approval of the Government, has agreed to deduct the monthly dues from the wages and salaries of the members, 1 per cent of the money collected being deducted by the management for secretarial and other expenses. This method of collecting dues is adopted because it is convenient and expedient under existing local circumstances. The railway on the Gold Coast is a Government concern and all pensionable and non-pensionable staff are eligible for membership of the union. Another striking difference between our organisation and the British Railway Union is that the clerks and all the manual workers are in one and the same organisation, unlike the British practice, where it is split into the National Union of Railwaymen (manual workers) and the Railway Clerks Association.

The problem of increase of wages is a pressing one. The average labourer earns 1s. 6d. a day which is 9s. a week as compared with 65s. a week for his British labourer comrade. It is true that we are comparing two classes of workmen in different categories, but it is also true that disparity in the wages of the two is enormous and unkind. The popular formula that the standard of living of the African is low and must therefore be paid such ridiculously low wages can no longer be applied. Most of the working classes live in the big industrial towns where house rents and cost of food are very high. An average living room measuring 10 ft. by 10 ft. costs at least 15s. a month to rent. Into this the worker, his wife and children pack themselves: the room is used as bedroom, dining room, lounge and for many other purposes. This leads to overcrowding with consequent bad health and inefficiency at work. Food costs at least 2s. a day; this figure represents the absolute minimum level: it does not take into account extras which are sometimes needed for a change! With medical expenses, children's school fees and clothing, the minimum wage that any labourer should earn in order to have a fairly comfortable living is 3s. a day, which works out at 18s. a week; anything below this is inhuman and a denial of the bare minimum standard of living for the worker.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF LABOUR MOVEMENT

I have been asked by several pressmen and others to indicate what the immediate needs and plans of the Labour Movement on the Gold Coast are, and I wish briefly to describe these:—

1. I believe that our direct and foremost need is the immediate setting up of a Wages Board which must have one of the workers among its members. This Board will examine and fix minimum standard wages for all classes of workers; it must also have the power to enforce its decisions; before this Board all matters affecting the wages of the workers must be thrashed out, as well as social insurance, health and old-age pension schemes.

2. It is necessary for all unions on the Gold Coast to be united into the Gold Coast Trade Union Congress. The supreme importance of this Congress cannot be over-emphasised. Unless the various unions are united it is difficult, if not impossible, to have efficient labour organisation

and to present a common front in the struggle for social security. This must lead to the idea of the formation of the West African Federation of Labour, which will consist of the national Labour Movements of Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. The formation of this block is essential to the idea of the Trade Union International which has been discussed at the World Trade Union Conference in London.

3. Organised labour must be represented on the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast. This labour seat must be filled by a person to be elected by the workers themselves. I believe this will make for practical co-operation and better understanding between the Government and labour.

4. I should like to see a comprehensive building scheme to accommodate the working classes; the country owes a lot to these workers and she should be in a position now to provide decent and spacious buildings for them. It ought to be possible for the workers to buy these houses on the hire-purchase system.

5. I am of the opinion that the union should select two full-time officials who, after a preliminary training on the Coast by the Labour Officers, should spend at least six months in Britain, where they will see British labour organisations at work. This experience, I contend, will be extremely valuable. Already by the courtesy of the British T.U.C., Ruskin College, Oxford, gives a correspondence course in Trade Union subjects to two members of the Gold Coast Railway Union, and I know how very useful these lessons have been to the members concerned.

Then also we must call for educational facilities to be made available to all children, and technical schools to be established to train African personnel to take their rightful places in the higher grades of labour. Evening classes for adults must be provided, and I am happy in the knowledge that the Railway Union has formulated its own plans to implement this scheme; a beginning has already been made at Sekondi, the headquarters of the union.

Lastly, adequate facilities should be provided to safeguard the health of the workers, and I believe it is time that Factory Ordinances were introduced into the Gold Coast. The union must be steadfast and persistent in securing for its members such reasonable amenities as workers' canteens, break-times for meals, shortening of working hours, higher wages, etc., all of which are so vital. I know we are not alone in the struggle for social security; we have the sympathy and at least the moral support of organised labour throughout the world, more especially of the British movement which, with its vast experience, must rally to the aid of a fellow union in a just and fair cause.

CHAPTER XII HISTORY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN BRITISH GUIANA

By HUBERT CRITCHLOW

The background of the trade union in British Guiana commences as far back as 1905. Our workings hours were 10½, the system of a quarter-day existed, and no overtime for night work. We asked the employers to change these conditions and the reply was that we must take them or go. I organised a strike on the water-front in December, 1905. Our claims were for a decrease of working hours, an increase of pay, which was very low (truckers—called boys although adult men—two shillings a day, and could scarcely get a whole day's work, taking cargo from the ship to the barn). Dockers loaded on to the ship. In those days we had a stevedore in charge of storing the ships. He stored by the ton and paid by the day, and up to eleven o'clock the same night the men could not get paid. In 1905 when we pitched, we demanded the abolition of the stevedore. The firm mostly paid when the ship was stored. The reason for the quarter-day was that the firm need not hire a man for a whole day, and just paid him for the quarter-day. Stevedores got 80 cents a day.

There was no trade union, and the employers refused. So I got the working men and boys together, and they agreed that when there were six boats in the harbour they must strike. They struck. A great thing, and at that time I did not know that all the estates in the country followed us and struck on account of low wages. At a particular estate, the Ruimveldt estate, they shot at the people as they came down to the town.

Now, how did I come to have any influence with the workers and be able to get them together? Well, as a boy I was an athlete, and so I was known to the people, and when I left school I wanted to get a job where I would be able to get time to keep on with my athletics. I went to a foundry to learn engineering. But I left there and went to my uncle, who was manager of a cigar factory, which was worse. Seeing me on the wharf, Mr. Mackey, who was the manager, got me an all-round job. But the hours were long and I began to want to know why we, who worked hardest, could not knock off at four o'clock, like the Europeans. Because I wanted to get to my cricket and running. The Europeans knew me and liked me, because I was a popular figure, and the people began to listen to me.

But to get back to the strike. They were shooting the people coming down from the estate. At the news of the shooting, the women started a riot. The magistrate ordered the women's hair to be cut off. They "catted" the men and sent them to prison. I, too, was arrested, but there was disagreement between the European people, because I played cricket and they thought I was too quiet and decent and would not interfere with this thing. Some said I should not be charged, and some said I should. However, I was not.

In December, 1906, a year to a day, they were saying that because of the "catting" and imprisonment we would not strike again, but there was another break-out. To quiet this break-out quickly and to frighten

the people, the police brought wharf rats and ex-convicts to break the strike. I heard that if the people remained on strike for three hours they would get the increase. It showed that shooting and imprisonment could not settle the disturbance. The new strike happened because the old grievances were not settled. I was just about 20 then. I was arrested and charged before Magistrate Hasting, but the case was dismissed. We got nothing, conditions were not changed.

In 1914 the war broke out. In 1916 prices increased. I said to the fellows, "We can't bear this thing any more. It is impossible to feed anybody on two shillings a day. We must strike again; we can only bring pressure to bear." But I had more sense then. "Don't fight," I said. "Let me negotiate." I went to a lawyer to get an application made out for certain conditions and sent this application to the Chamber of Commerce. The lawyer had said that I should get a sixpenny levy from all the people who signed the petition. When I approached them they declared it was foolish and they would only get shot up again. But I told them we must try once more.

A good Governor, Sir Wilfred Collet, arrived between 1916 and 1917. I managed to see him and told him about conditions. He asked if I had sent our demands to the Chamber of Commerce. I told him we had and that they had done nothing about them. The Governor told the Chamber of Commerce to meet us to negotiate. And in December, 1917, they decided to give us an increase commencing from January 1st, 1918. The quarter-day was abolished; we secured a minimum of not less than half a day's pay for even only one hour's work in the morning. The wage increase was 10 per cent, but prices went up and three months later, in March, 1918, we went on strike again. The people saw the usefulness of getting together.

In December 1918, we asked for the eight-hour day. The manager of my firm then, was Mr. Sherlock, who was president of the Chamber of Commerce. The firm was Booker Bros., McConnell and Co., the biggest shipping agents, part of Tate and Lyle. There was no union, but we workers met in the barn where I worked, and Mr. Sherlock came down to the barn door. He declared that it was only a few months before that we had got an increase and now we were asking for another, and an eight-hour day. He gave us a day either to withdraw our application or to knock off. We withdrew. I myself was blacklisted. I tried to get another job, but nobody would give me work. Strike-breakers from Barbados and Trinidad were brought in to unload the ships. They were told that there was an epidemic and that the stevedores could not work the ships. There had been an epidemic, but it was over.

I called these people together and told them what had happened, and asked them not to blackleg. Our people began to get vexed with me as though I were to blame for their not getting work, and were beginning to turn against me. I then planned a demonstration. A deputation of two or three of us went to see the Governor. He told us to start a trade union, charge an entrance fee and get the help of the unions in England. It was a very good idea. Masses of people were waiting outside to hear the results, and when I told them, hundreds of people paid an entrance fee on the spot, and the British Guiana Trade Union was started. It had

taken 14 years. Men on the waterfront, the carpenters, shop assistants and others, seeing that they could gain by it, began to join the union.

On April 5th, 1919, I called a mass meeting for the eight-hour day. I was arrested because I gave out a handbill with a verse from the *Marseillaise*, and was charged with sedition. The prosecutor said it would have been all right if I had quoted the whole thing, but I had chosen two lines which were a call to arms. However, the Governor intervened and the charge was dropped. Then I asked for a further increase to two dollars.

Between then and January 1st, 1920, we gathered 13,000 members and \$9,700 in the bank. About this time rumours began to spread. People said that I was an uneducated man and that this thing was too big for me. It was suggested that I should bring in some of the professional men, lawyers, doctors, clergy, and form a wider committee, with district organisers who would get \$35 a month, travelling expenses, etc. They came in and started to educate. They said that no black man could carry on anything in British Guiana for more than six months. But between 1919 and 1930 I roped in nearly the whole country, every estate, and I had to travel night and day to keep touch.

In June, 1919, I became a full-time organiser at \$20 a month. The union wanted me to get into the court, but to become a member of our Combined Court (1920) you had to have property to the amount of \$5,000 or an income qualification of \$1,440 a year (\$120 a month). In order to get me into this category they increased my salary to the required amount, to enable me to stand.

In 1920 we wanted to raise \$3,000 to start a co-operative company, but before we could get the shares the people insisted we should start the business. We began by getting credit with a Portuguese, and things looked to be going well. A peasant farmer from one of the districts came to me and offered 500 bags of rice at \$8 a bag, saying that in three weeks' time we would get \$13 for it. The directors agreed. We bought the rice and kept it. But shortly after, the Governor fixed the retail price of rice at \$7 a bag and we lost one dollar on every bag. But it left me with the idea that in the interest of the workers we must get controls.

After 1921 the slump came, and they started to reduce wages and employ strike-breakers. After a certain amount of correspondence and enquiry, our union was registered in 1922, the first in the Colonial world! But wages continued to fall, and it broke the backs of some of the workers.

They were reduced again in 1924. Work was scarce. The union had \$5 and 42 financial members. The result was that a little later the people formed the Negro Progress Convention, the Marcus Garvey Association. That same year we asked the Government to find work for the people, demanding work or maintenance. When we wrote to the Governor, Sir Graham Thompson, asking him to open up unemployed work, he said we must go to the estates; but the estates couldn't find sufficient work for the labour they already had. I threatened a general strike. The merchants threatened a reduction in our wages. They had reduced in 1920, 1921, 1922, and now in 1924 they threatened a reduction to sixty cents a day!

I planned a demonstration, as a result of which the whole Colony

went on strike. Things were so bad that the Governor called the Chamber of Commerce to meet him and see what could be done. There were riots and shootings. The Governor arranged for me to meet the Chamber of Commerce, and even while the conference was going on some of the country people who were coming into the town were being shot. The conference was adjourned and an advisory committee was appointed to enquire into the whole question.

The workers on the waterfront were getting only eighty cents a day, and they could only get two days' work a week. At the same time the ordinary expenses of a man without family or wife was \$15. They asked how they were supposed to live.

I came to England for the first British Commonwealth Conference in 1924, but it was postponed until 1925. However, they heard what I had to say and my demands were printed in the British Commonwealth Book. I also went to the 1930 Conference, and repeated my demands for reduction of hours, for insurance, old-age pensions, national health insurance, etc. I went on to Germany at the end of December, 1931, for the conference of the International Committee of Trade Union Workers, and visited Russia in 1932.

Returning to British Guiana, I started to carry on unemployment demonstrations. We put up a notice saying, "No work, no rent." I was now regarded as a serious agitator and one of the most wicked men in the country. They barred me from my own birthplace of Wismore.

About this time the different unions began to form the Workers' League, while the East Indians established the Citizens' Union. There were 28 other registered unions, and we got together to form our Trades Union Council. We pressed the Governor to introduce a rent restriction Act. Work was found for us, and they gave us rice, salt, fish, bread. The schoolchildren got free meal tickets. That was in 1933.

Because of suggestions I was constantly offering on the question of providing work for the unemployed, they put me on an Unemployment Committee, and since 1934 I have been a nominated member of the Legislative and Executive Council. I was the first labour member, one out of the five the Governor was entitled to nominate. Since the nominated members have been increased to 7, labour has been given another two representatives, making three altogether.

CHAPTER XIII

HISTORY OF THE JAMAICA LABOUR MOVEMENT

By an Observer

The Trade Union Movement in Jamaica is, unfortunately, divided. Apart from the unions affiliated to the Trades Union Council, there are a number of so-called unions officially registered as "Bustamante Industrial Trade Union." These latter are under the absolute domination of the greatest demagogue in the island, Alexander Bustamante, and have no democratic structure. They hold no annual conference, issue no financial statements, and all their officers are appointed and dismissed by Mr. Bustamante, who has made himself president for life of each of the unions he controls. Bustamante rewards himself for his labours by allotting him-

self an annual salary of £2,000 from the unions' funds. This is three times as much as Sir Walter Citrine's salary as Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, which has a membership of 5,000,000 workers, just about a hundred times that of Bustamante's own unions.

RECORD OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS' UNIONS

To counter Bustamante's anti-democratic policy and high-handed methods, two previous officials of Bustamante's union, Ken Hill and Arthur Henry, began to form unions of the Government workers early in 1942. They had left Bustamante in 1939 because he ignored individual complaints of members and because they were disgusted with the way in which he ran the union.

Hill and Henry were helped in their work by Richard Hart, F. A. Glasspole and Frank Hill, all of whom had been active workers for labour since 1937.

The task that these five young men took on was not an easy one. The Government workers had never been openly organised before, and when they started their unions, the Government took alarm and tried to break them up.

WORKERS STAND SOLID

This only made the workers more resolute, and the Government passed a law making the unions illegal. Ken Hill, Frank Hill, Arthur Henry and Richard Hart were arrested and put in the detention camp, as the Government thought this would break the spirit of the workers and that they would give up the unions.

This was not what happened, however. What in fact did happen was just the opposite. The workers came together more solidly than ever. They strove to remain faithful to their leaders who were in prison. When Government saw this, it was forced to alter the law against the unions, and so the workers won back their freedom to organise. After four and a half months, the Government was also forced to release the workers' leaders.

What caused the Government to change its tune? First, it was the fact that the Government workers showed that they were willing to fight for their rights; and second, it was the great help which the workers got from the People's National Party. The two great leaders of this party, N. W. Manley and N. N. Nethersole, worked voluntarily and without payment night and day for the unions, proving beyond doubt their sincere attachment to the working class of Jamaica.

£420,000 INCREASE IN WAGES PER YEAR

As soon as the leaders of the Government workers were released from detention in April, 1943, the big fight for the improvement of the workers' conditions began. The Government set up a Re-grading Committee early in 1943. By December of the same year, £420,000 was paid in wage increases to the workers.

This was a great victory for the unions. To understand the real size of the victory, it must be borne in mind that the Committee which re-graded civil servants took four years to do the job, while the Re-grading Com-

mittee for Government workers got through its task in less than nine months.

How did this happen? It happened because the Government workers were solidly united in their own trade unions and were all joined together in their Federation of Government Employees' Organisations, which was formed in October, 1943. The workers got their increases so quickly because they were brave enough to stage a three-day strike in November, 1943.

BUSTAMANTE, STRIKE-BREAKER

It was during this November strike that Bustamante showed how much he really cared for the working people of Jamaica. On the second day of the strike he tried to get strike-breakers to go in and take the men's jobs. Bustamante was only defeated by the quick action which the unions took to upset his scheme.

The strike was staged to get the Government's promise that the wage increases would be paid before Christmas, and it was successful. The week before Christmas, £420,000 was paid out to Government workers. Relief workers were left out, and their union, supported by the Federation, began at once to demand increases for these 11,000 workers. The Government set up a committee to investigate their conditions. At the end of March, 1944, it agreed to give relief workers a small increase of 8½ per cent.

STANDARD RATES FOR RELIEF WORKERS

This was not satisfactory, either to the workers or the union; but at least it was a small advance, and the workers accepted it as such while the union continued to fight for standard rates for all relief workers. The fight is still going on and is being led by Ken Hill, who has taken the matter to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London.

Government workers also benefited from a new committee which the Government set up to correct the mistakes which had been made by the Re-grading Committee, whose work had been improperly done. Last September, after correction of errors, the Legislative Council passed a further £24,805 for Government workers, which included a war bonus.

OTHER SUCCESSES

Meantime the Government Workers' Union have been putting up a strong fight for other improvements. They have demanded an 8-hour working day for all workers in Government service. This demand has been dealt with by a committee set up by the Government, whose report Mr. F. A. Glasspole moved in the House should be immediately adopted. This proposal was refused by Alexander Bustamante unless the word "immediate" was deleted. So far no action has been taken on the report.

The Postal and Telegraph Workers' Union gained a great victory in 1944 when it secured an 8-hour working day for district post office staffs.

In November, 1943, the Public Works Department Union secured big increases of pay for asphalt workers in one district (Halfway Tree), who had received no increases since 1939. Lorry sidemen in another district (St. Andrews) received increases and back pay from April 1, 1944. Female

labourers and plumbers' assistants also got 14 per cent increases in their pay.

The Unions of Government employees which are affiliated to the Jamaica Trade Union Council (formed 1939) are:—

Public Works Employees' Union: Represents all P.W.D. workers on roads and at P.W.D. stations in the Island. President: Frank Hill.

Jamaica Government Railway Employees' Union: Represents all railway workers. President: Richard Hart.

Relief Workers' Union: Represents 11,000 relief workers in Kingston and the parishes and negotiates with Government on their behalf. President: H. O. A. Dayes.

Postal and Telegraph Workers' Union: Represents all postmistresses, telegraph clerks, postmen, and other Post Office workers. President: N. N. Nethersole.

Government Printing Office Employees' Union: Represents every worker at the Printing Office. President: N. N. Nethersole.

Government Auxiliary Workers' Union: Represents revenue runners, customs guards, harbour master's staff, messengers, couriers, etc., whose numbers are too small for separate unions. President: Ken Hill.

Legal Adviser to all the Unions: N. W. Manley, B.A., B.C.L., LL.B., K.C., Leader of the People's National Party.

DISTRIBUTION OF EARNINGS

Following are figures of the distribution of earnings in Jamaica given in a recently issued Census Office Press Bulletin:—

There are 283,439 wage earners in Jamaica. 194,458 are permanently employed. The rest, 88,981, are only casually employed.

54,947 of the permanently employed earn under 6s. per week. Most of these are women (domestic servants) who total 34,145.

46,583 of the permanently employed earn between 6s. and 10s. per week; 49,952 earn between 10s. and 20s. per week; 24,028 earn between 20s. and 40s. per week; 9,110 earn between 40s. and 60s. per week; 4,063 earn between £3 and £4 per week; 1,980 earn from £4 to £5 per week; 2,158 earn from £5 to £7 10s. per week; 755 earn from £7 10s. to £10 per week; 579 earn from £10 to £15 per week; 174 earn from £15 to £20 per week; 129 earn £20 per week and over.

WHAT IS THE PAN-AFRICAN FEDERATION

It is a federation of organisations of African Peoples and Peoples of African descent throughout the world. Each constituent body retains its autonomy, but adheres strictly to these basic objects which are the condition for membership :

- I To demand the self-determination and independence of African peoples and other subject races from the domination of Powers claiming sovereignty and trusteeship over them.
- II To secure equality of civil rights for African peoples and the total abolition of all forms of racial discrimination.
- III To promote the well-being and unity of African peoples and peoples of African descent throughout the world.
- IV To strive for co-operation between African peoples and other peoples who share their aspirations.

The Federation plans the establishment of Pan-African Institutes for the study and propagation of African peoples' languages, history, arts, crafts and culture ; the publication of books by and about Africans ; the publication of a monthly or quarterly journal ; the encouragement among African peoples of Consumers' and Producers'—Trade Unions and other progressive organisations ; co-operatives ; *the convening of national and international conferences in order to further its aims and objects.*

Membership is open to all African peoples' organisations adhering to its basic objects. Associate membership is open to all other organisations in sympathy with those objects. N.B.—*The Federation supplies speakers to interested bodies.*

For further information write to the General Secretary,

• PAN-AFRICAN FEDERATION,
58, Oxford Road, Manchester, England