Workers of the World Unite.

(And "Charity begins at Home.")

BY S. P. BUNTING.

"The emancipation of the working class requires . . . . the lifting of the native wage worker to the political and industrial status of the white, meanwhile endeavouring to prevent the increase of the native wage workers etc."

So opined the I.S.L. Conference last month: and the Johannesburg Central Branch is making a feature of "native affairs" in its Lecture Syllabus. Already last year, J. F. Brown, M.P.C. Hon. Secy. of the S.A. Mine Workers' Union, advocated from its platform the inclusion of natives into Labour Unions such as his own. Last week the Rev. Francis Hill, C.R. called attention to one of the barefaced attempts to bring about "the increase of native wage workers," as evidenced in the Native Land Act of 1913. This unjust law, be it said, aroused such indignation among the natives of the Union that we were in danger of a South African, if not a Pan-African war between natives and whites, had not the European war intervened and been judiciously used by the Union and Home Governments to extort a temporary acquiescence. The native leaders' promise of silence was so stringent that Saul Msane, one of the delegates to London on the matter, whose presence with a number of other natives at the lecture was cordially welcomed, admitted that he must refrain from speaking his mind even in our "upper room" until after the war.

Who knows what will happen then? The Capitalist Class, whose hand is discerned so typically behind this Act, is deterred from oppression to gain it's end by one motive only, fear—fear of a native outbreak in this instance; and after the war it will probably not be deterred even by that, for once its soldiers (the survivors, that is) are released from the German entanglement, it will have no hesitation in imposing law and order on natives with machine guns and bayonets.

Subordinate differences there will be between the mining or industrial and the Agrarian sections. The former, British, cosmopolitan, more up-to-date at exploitation, will not long demur to the education and political enfranchisement of the Kaffir, experience having proved that neither schooling nor voting really impairs the usefulness of the wage-slave. So that, in effect, "the lifting of the native wage worker to the political and industrial status of the white" is, by a coincidence by no means infrequent in the development of the classes, required not only for the emancipation of the working class, but also for the exploiting purposes of their masters.

Nevertheless, in essentials, and especially in an appeal to military force, the two groups will, (again conformably to historical precedent) form the closest alliance, and will jingly-ally, as in January 1914, to the "state of siege," or proclaim, as in August 1914, a war on behalf of the Defenceless women and children thrown in whenever the native resentment reaches the stage of exasperation.

In the meantime, to prevent the nigger, or the bywoner, or the English worker for that matter, from owning or occupying land, as the Act tends to, is clearly to drive him cheap, helpless, and unorganised, into the labour market, without even the necessity of recruiting or bribing him to come there: thus ensuring to employers generally and particularly to industrial employers, that most coveted plum of modern Imperialism, plentiful cheap labour.

This is not the place to discuss how far Socialists should kick against the pricks of a capitalist development which is proceeding all over the world. Certainly, the "wait and see" game, or the ostrich policy of not seeing, or the Levite trick of passing on the other side, can be overdone; It is also dangerous, and is liable to be hypocritical, to use the "snakes in Ireland" paradox with which the lectured pilloried our lecturer—"there is no native question," as an excuse for ignoring facts because they are facts about people "we" don't dine or consort with.

The Corner House is not so blind! and George Mason, when he urged the natives as fellow workers to come out in July 1913, was equally up to date, so much so that when the other day some natives on the Far East Rand came out on strike, the white men no longer "had at" them but supported them, and the scab among the whites was he who scabbed on a nigger!

Shades of the old White Labour Policy! We are moving today, and shall move much faster this way after the war, and if "we" won't see the facts they will be facts all the same. Unless the white workers take the big view, they will have to manoeuvre for a position like that of the privileged Trade Unions which in the "Iron Heel" helped to break up the Labour movement—a position only "a little lower than the angels" of the capitalist class, and leading to—we all know what. That is what is involved in "leaving the native to work out his own salvation" (and for God's sake, don't ask us to lend him a hand—he stinks.)

The solidarity of Labour fails the moment it is divided on colour, race (as in Europe today) or creed (as, for instance, in Christian Workers Unions—and Catholic Socialist Societies are no better). And the Socialist philosopher fails if there are more races, colours or creeds in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in his philosophy.

That was Marx's genius: he studied eagerly and minutely everything that happened in his time, bourgeois revolutions, semi-proletarian mess-ups, middle-class enlightenment, Imperialist democracy, all sorts of abnormal things which did'nt obviously fit into his own abstract system: that is why, as well as because, his powers of abstraction and penetration were what they were. Perhaps, if he had lived today in Johannesburg, he would have founded his International Association of Working Men, not on the well paid Craft Unionists who themselves batten on native labour and form the "Federation," but rather on such class conscious elements as he could find among the black workers, who groan under a hundred special and serious disabilities of their own, in addition to those attaching to all workers, disabilities which naturally hinder them from joining up with the whites; and hinder the white from linking with them, who form the bulk of the South African proletariate.

Military Reprisals.

The man who shot the traitor who betrayed the nurse who was executed *because* she got involved in the war of revenge undertaken *because* of the atrocities on the Belgians *because* they resisted the "military necessity" which made the Prussians hack through their way *because* they said they must smash the Ententes *because* they were allied to the Cossack hordes who threatened their borders *because* the Russians resented that the Austrians demanded atonement *because* the Servians killed their Archduke *because* he was a military oppressor of Servia *because* it stood in the way of German trade expansion, and thus bust up the European powder magazine *because* the Germans would get the Bagdad Railway which must in be allowed *because* the Western Allies of the Eastern Cossack must keep their markets in the Persian Gulf and the Moroccan Coast *because* the natives there prefer to be robbed in British coin than in German Kultur, has been executed by order of a German Court Martial!

Once more we hear the old refrain: "Fatality of war, stronger than the will of man!" The old refrain of the troops, who make a god of their own weakness, and worship it. Men have invented this word "Destiny" in order that they may throw the blame of the troubles of the universe upon it, when in reality it is their duty to prevent them. There is no such thing as "Fate." Our fate is what we ourselves wish—and often what we do not wish for enough. At the present moment each one has his *mea culpa!* his share in the blame. These highly intellectual individuals, these churches, these Labour Parties, they did not wish for the war—certainly not! But what are they doing to stop it? What are they doing to try and shorten it? They simply poke the fire, and each one brings his faggot!

ROMAN ROLAND.