

"The Revolutionary Posture."

By S. P. B.

International Socialism in South Africa has concentrated on two current matters of burning interest here and now, the war and the native worker; or, as the I.S.L. constitution has it, "Anti-militarism and Industrial Unionism." To the opponent, whether conservative or reformist, these two seem each an isolated fad, disconnected with each other, or with any comprehensive system. Even the academic Socialist from his cold eminence is apt to consider them mere passing issues. That only shows that such critics do not discern the reason for both, namely, the essential revolutionary working-class posture of Socialism, which indeed gives its special local significance to Industrial Unionism. It is because Socialism means revolution that it places the economic class struggle pre-eminent, and suffers no denial of that fight, no faltering in it, no truce, still less any truck with national or other struggles competing with it or militating against it, particularly struggles dictated by the capitalist class, and indeed expressing, like the present world slaughter, the fine flower and last world of capitalism itself.

For exactly the same revolutionary reason, Socialism insists on such union of Labour as may be competent to see the class struggle through by supplanting the capitalist class and capitalist system; that is why "Industrial Unionism" is essential as contrasted with Trades Unionism, all the workers combined instead of just each skilled trade as such, and why therefore the inclusion of the nethermost dog of industry, the native worker, becomes a matter of front rank policy.

Based on anything less than the basis of the revolutionary Labour movement, the burning questions of the War and the Native Worker degenerate into mere pacifism, which, as we see on every hand, cannot stand on its own bottom; and mere negrophilism, which even the Capitalist Church can endorse.

So little in common has International Socialism with mere pacifism, and Industrial Unionism with mere negrophilism, that we get significant praise for the "International" from friends of the aborigines who regret our anti-militarism, or from opponents of "patriotism" who, however, cannot abide what they call our "Kaffir" policy. We want the applause of neither; neither that which boos "you're a War-on-warite," nor of that which can sneer "You're friends of the niggers." But once realise that the fundamental tyranny of the modern world is not Prussianism nor racial dominance, but economic slavery, and the rest follows. You must become a "War-on-warite" and "friend of niggers," and a good deal more too, all together; and if you are a pacifist, it is not for the sake of peace at any price; if a negrophile, it is not for slobbering over Jim Sixpence—you are both, because your gospel in each case is "Workers of the World unite!"