

DAILY HERALD

# DON'T BLAME THE BLACKS



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## FOREWORD

This pamphlet is designed to present the facts as to why the coloured worker seeks his livelihood in our midst; not an easy task to undertake and yet its author has accomplished much more! It is no apology for his coming; set out in this brief compass, in a readable and commonsense way, is the story of a section of the world's workers that all trade unionists are recommended to study.

It is not to be expected that every reader will be in complete agreement with all its contents but insofar as it provokes thought amongst workers to counter, what is, unfortunately, too often a blind and unreasoned prejudice against our coloured friends, it will have served its purpose.

The sponsors, the Afro-West Indian Union, are to be congratulated on their effort to unite workers in defence of, and in the furtherance of, industrial conditions.

**JACK CHARLESWORTH**

Secretary

Nottingham and District Trades Council

## DON'T BLAME THE BLACKS

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### INTRODUCTION

Every day we read reports in the newspapers of redundancy and short-time working being introduced in industry all over Britain.

At the same time another development is taking place in Birmingham, London and other towns. The letters K.B.W. (Keep Britain White) appeared white-washed on walls, and a well-known M.P. has had swastikas and similar slogans painted on his house as a punishment for introducing a Bill in the House of Commons to make colour discrimination illegal in public places. There are also reports of a set of crackpots trying to form a Ku Klux Klan organisation in Britain.

Articles have appeared in the sensational press with such titles as 'Stop them now; the coloured invasion has gone too far,' 'Do we owe them a living?' Some responsible officials are crying out that something must be done to control the influx of immigrants without even uttering a word what should be done to cure THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ILLS WHICH DRIVE THE COLOURED IMMIGRANTS TO EMIGRATE.

Without clarity these reports could be the elements of a very explosive situation which could develop overnight. The colour problem in Britain may not appear to be important now, but very rapidly it could develop into a burning issue, into a situation fraught with dangers for both coloured and white workers.



In this pamphlet we aim to show the English worker why this question is so important to him and that it is not just a coloured workers' affair. We write this pamphlet particularly for active trade unionists, co-operators and socialists because they are the ones who will have to face these problems in their most naked form, as unemployment increases. Furthermore, we know that the only way we, the coloured workers, can achieve any measure of real economic and social stability, is if the English workers understand the real reason why we have to leave our homeland. We hope that this pamphlet will help to develop a set of arguments which may foil any reactionary propaganda that will try to divide the working class amongst themselves.

We believe that this is in keeping with the best traditions of the working class movement and its slogan 'united we stand, divided we fall.' Most of our arguments in this pamphlet could apply to all immigrants whether they are Irish, Polish, Hungarian or even Scottish or Welsh. But there is one difference in the coloured worker. He is so conspicuous because of his colour that it is far easier to use him as a scapegoat than the white immigrant, because the white immigrants usually do not reveal themselves until they speak. That is why we give this pamphlet the title 'Don't Blame the Blacks.'

### WHY WE COME

No man likes to leave his country of origin and in particular no man likes to leave a tropical climate for a land of snow, fog and rain. We leave our homeland not from choice but because we are forced to do so by economic and social circumstances. All the sunshine in the world is of no use if you are hungry, cannot find employment and do not enjoy any social amenities.

To give some examples of the economic and social conditions which exist among the coloured workers in their own country we will deal specifically with the colony of Jamaica, which provides the largest proportion of coloured immigrants to Britain. Another point of interest about Jamaica is that the conditions there are far better than many other colonial territories.

Out of a population of approximately 1,600,000 there are not less than 180,000 unemployed in Jamaica. For every 100 persons gainfully employed there are 33 persons

(over fifteen years of age) who want work but cannot find any. (From 'Freedom Now,' published by the People's Freedom Movement.)

If there was a similar proportion in Britain there would be over 5½ million unemployed. Trade Unionists will visualize how difficult this would make the Trade Union fight for better conditions and higher wages.

For those lucky enough to have a job in Jamaica all is not milk and honey. Consider the following table of wages and average hours and compare it with the cost of living which will be explained below.

Occupation	Wages	Average Hours	
<b>Postmen</b>			
Grade A	127/6d.	54 hrs.	} per week
" B	105/-	54 hrs.	
" C	82/6d.	54 hrs.	
<b>Police</b>			
Grade 1	£380 p.a.	70 hrs.	} per week
" 2	£340 p.a.	70 hrs.	
<b>Agricultural Workers</b>			
A1 Male	9/6 per day	8 hrs. per day	
Female	7/6 "	8 " "	
A Male	8/6 "	8 " "	
Female	6/3 "	8 " "	
<b>Bus Operators</b>			
Skilled	60/-	48 hrs.	} per week
Unskilled	30/-	48 hrs.	
<b>Telephone Workers</b>			
Skilled	172/9d.	45 hrs.	} per week
Unskilled	65/11d.	51 hrs.	
<b>Cigar and Cigarette Workers</b>			
Skilled	63/10d.	42.8 hrs.	} per week
Unskilled	51/6d.	53.5 hrs.	

The above list of wages and hours were extracted from the 1956 report on Jamaica (Published by H.M. Stationery Office).



The cost of living in Jamaica is one of the highest in the world. Numerous Jamaicans who have emigrated to the U.S.A. and Britain confirm that it is cheaper to live there than in Jamaica. In 1955 it cost  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times what it cost to live in 1939. Adjusting the figures for comparison with wages, the cost of living in 1955 was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times what it was in 1942. What you could buy for £1 in 1942 now costs £2  $2\frac{1}{10}$ s. according to the Government Cost of Living index. But the real increase in the cost of living is much greater than this, as every Jamaican housewife knows.

In Jamaica there are no old age pensions, no unemployment pay, no family allowances. With the lack of such social amenities it is no wonder that the unemployed find it impossible to exist. Therefore, as soon as they can raise the money, they emigrate to a land which, they are told by constant propaganda, may solve their problems.

These deplorable conditions are not caused by accident, but are deliberately created by the ruling class, in order that they may maintain their system of exploitation.

### DO WE CAUSE UNEMPLOYMENT ?

The propaganda that coloured people cause unemployment is completely dishonest and is without any foundation. It wouldn't merit a reply but for the fact that the reactionary organisations who churn it out are quite conscious of what they hope to attain.

The ruling class has never failed to utilise any situation that they think will cause confusion amongst the working class in an attempt to divorce their thinking from the true cause of unemployment. One thing they tend to forget is the fact that in the 1929-31 slump in Britain there were over three million unemployed, and at that time the coloured population in Britain was negligible.

If we examine the situation thoroughly from a very simple economic point of view, we will realise that instead of the coloured worker causing unemployment, he has helped to create jobs. We must, after all, wear clothes, eat and live somewhere. Someone has to produce the things to satisfy his needs, thereby providing employment for the producers.

The true reason for unemployment is the Capitalist system of production and distribution. A study of history has shown that there was always unemployment under capitalism, which arises basically through the inability of the working class to buy back the goods that they produce.

The increasing trend toward mass unemployment is caused by the economic policy of the present Tory Government.

That is the true meaning of the credit squeeze, the Cohen Report and the cuts in government expenditure.

The capitalist class is helpless in the grip of the coming slump. There are already some six million unemployed in the United States, and by the winter of 1958-9 there will probably be anything up to two million jobless in Britain.

In such time of crisis, the workers naturally look for a way out of their difficulties. They become more readily responsive to a socialist explanation and a socialist solution to the problems presented by the slump.

At such times, the bosses do all in their power to sow the seeds of conflict among the workers. For they know that, united in the struggle and conscious of their own strength the workers could put paid to the rule of capital once and for all.

### THREAT TO THE WORKING CLASS

It is always the policy of the ruling class to divide and conquer. The easiest way to achieve this is to have a scapegoat upon whom they can throw the blame for all the social ills, e.g., the Jews under Hitler.

The British ruling class is very skilful in this method, that is why we should not be surprised if this method is intensified in Britain.

Already Oswald Mosley (Leader of the most reactionary fascists) and his gangs are re-organising themselves and the first type of propaganda they are using is that of colour discrimination. Again, if we look back on Germany before the war, we can see that the use of the Jews as scapegoats in Germany paved the way for Hitler. This is one of the methods used by the ruling class to maintain its hold.



If we examine the question of racial discrimination more thoroughly, we shall see that it not only drives a wedge between the coloured and white working classes but it also causes antagonism amongst the white workers themselves.

While the ruling class is preaching racial propaganda to white workers they are at the same time whispering into the coloured workers' ears that the cause of their difficulties is due to the fact that the white workers are against them, especially the more militant Trade Unionists. Of course, this type of propaganda can have a very nasty effect, for the simple reason that many of the trade unionists succumb to the reactionary propaganda, by showing a lack of tolerance and even at times show indifference when a coloured brother tries to become a member of their respective unions.

There is another dangerous feature which will develop—reactionary bodies which pose as organisations looking after the welfare of coloured people. These organisations are trying to revive the old order of having a number of domestic servants. They have already taken the first step by encouraging coloured women to take up such employment with the excuse that it is far better to work as a domestic servant than being on the dole. It might be correct if their intention was true, but if we look back into history we can see that this method of having a whole chain of cheap domestic labour will only enhance the ruling class power. It will intensify the exploitation of the women of Britain, and will cause the white working class to look upon the coloured women as befitted for no other type of employment, as the propagandists hope may happen.

The reactionaries have gone so far as to try to use coloured workers as a means of damping down the struggle among the English working class by importing coloured labour to work in jobs where the wages are low, and a man's social life is disrupted by the awkward shift system. Luckily the coloured workers refuse to be used as tools, as the latest London bus strike has shown. There was not a single coloured blackleg.

This colour discrimination can lead to direct conflict among the workers which we have noticed has actually started in the dole queue at some of the Labour Exchanges.

## THE THREAT TO THE WHITE WORKER IS NOT THE COLOURED WORKER, BUT THE REACTIONARY POLICY OF THE BRITISH RULING CLASS.

### WHAT TO DO

The majority of coloured workers before coming to England trust the English worker, for in him lies the key to freedom for these coloured people. Of course, we realise that any struggle to gain such freedom can only be achieved by a joint struggle of the white workers and the coloured workers. Therefore the first thing we must try to put over to each other is the fact that our struggle is the same, providing we have to sell our labour for a living. Biological difference has nothing to do with what a man needs to maintain a decent standard of life.

The reactionary propagandists will try and prove from their point of view that the coloured worker can never integrate with the white workers, because of cultural differences, and so on. To accept such an argument is just playing into the hands of the British ruling class. We can show them that as workers of the world we can unite! The way to do this is to help the coloured workers fight in their own country for a better standard of living. The English workers should join in the struggle because the colonial struggle is part of the whole working class struggle. The first and most elementary step is to ensure the unionisation of all the workers, white and coloured. The same gang of useless profiteers live off the labour of white and coloured workers alike, in Britain and in the Colonies.

The lie that is put forward is, that if the coloured people achieve a better standard of living, the English workers standard will fall. If we, the workers, examine this carefully we shall realise that if the coloured people's standard of life in their own country were raised, it would not only provide employment for the English workers, but it would lessen coloured immigration.

The English workers should help us in our battle for equal rights. In doing so, they will help the coloured workers to realise that they must not fall for the reactionary propaganda which is constantly being whispered in their ears.



We must remember that colour prejudice, like anti-semitism, is a weapon of class rule, and as such must find no support in the ranks of those whose task it is to establish a world that is free from want. It should be clear that to end race prejudice and the colour bar, which the ruling class use as their main weapon to divide the working class, the coloured and white workers must join in the common struggle against capitalism.

Under Socialism production is for use and not for profit. Under Socialism there will therefore be work for all, whatever the colour of their skins.

We hope that this pamphlet will help to create the basis for complete unity among the coloured and English working classes.

#### AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE A.W.I.U.

1. The A.W.I.U. seeks to organise all coloured workers in Britain on a democratic basis.
2. The A.W.I.U. fights the colour bar in any form and defends the rights of coloured minorities in Britain.
3. The A.W.I.U. stands for complete unity with the Trade Union, Co-operative and Labour Movements.
4. The A.W.I.U. seeks to enlighten the public of this country about the political, social and economic causes of emigration.
5. The A.W.I.U. seeks to provide the closest possible social and educational contact between the members of the coloured community in this country.

If you want to know more about the Aims and Objects of the A.W.I.U. write to the Secretary, c/o, 4 Dane Street, Nottingham.

#### HOW YOU CAN HELP

To ensure the widest circulation of this pamphlet, persuade your organisation to order a bulk supply for distribution among their members. Bulk rates are as follows: 10% discount on orders between 6—12 and 20% discount on orders from 12 upwards.

Donations, however small, will be gratefully accepted. All funds collected will be used to print further copies and help to put us into contact with other coloured immigrants and English workers.

All donations should be sent to the Secretary, A.W.I.U., c/o. 4 Dane Street, off Alfred Street Central, Nottingham.

M.C.F. Secretary—

Mr. R. WHITE, 16 Lomas Street, Nottingham.

Read 'Prod,' the M.C.F. Monthly Journal.

'Prod' International Book Shop:—  
4 Dane Street, Nottingham.

This pamphlet can be ordered from the International Book Shop, 4 Dane Street, Nottingham.

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