

THE I.C.U. AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM

by

Sylvia Neame

The attitudes of the I.C.U. leaders to British Imperialism changed during the period 1919 (when the I.C.U. was formed in Cape Town) to 1930. To understand, and perhaps to suggest some of the reasons why this was the case, it is necessary, I think, to fill in some of the background against which these changing views were formed.

The I.C.U. was formed by Kadalie in Cape Town in 1919. The Workers' Herald, the official organ of the I.C.U. and the source on which I shall base most of my conclusions, was started during 1923. There is, as far as I have been able to discover, very little material on the period 1919-1923. Thus I have no clear picture of what attitudes I.C.U. leaders had to British imperialism at this stage, or whether they had any clear attitudes at all. However, we do know that the I.C.U. was formed in Cape Town in 1919, with the help and encouragement of A.F. Batty, who stood for Parliament in the Harbour constituency in Cape Town, and was thus keen to organize the Coloured and African voters who worked at the Cape Town docks. These were, of course, mainly coloured. It is significant that Kadalie linked up with the Labour Party, and not the Unionist Party (which later merged into the S.A.P.), the traditionally British party. The close association of Dr. Abdurahman, the well known Cape Coloured leader, with the S.A.P. is well known. Thus it is interesting to note that there was a division amongst the Coloured people in the Cape on the electoral front at this stage. It is significant that Kadalie makes it clear that he did not agree with Abdurahman politically. (1)

The I.C.U. organized a strike at the Cape Town docks in December 1919, with some encouragement and help from the Cape Federation of Labour Unions. A Strike Committee was formed of white and non-white labour leaders. The strike was successful in achieving one of its main objects, the cessation of the export of foodstuffs to Europe, but failed to get a rise in wages for the non-white dockers. The I.C.U. failed to achieve the latter because the white dockers withdrew their support after the Government had declared the cessation of the export foodstuffs. (2) In August 1920, the I.C.U. resolved to initiate another attempt for a minimum wage at the Cape Town docks. The Government Railway and Harbours department refused to meet the I.C.U., but the stevedoring companies, who had learnt a lesson from the strike, Kadalie says (3), granted an increase. On 24 November 1920, Kadalie was handed a deportation order from South Africa, under the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913, on the basis that he was from Nyasaland. (4) This was, of course, a Unionist move to get rid of Kadalie. Kadalie then pulled various strings to have the deportation order removed. In this connection, it is significant that an election was coming off in 1921. Unfortunately, Kadalie has not given us the full story of how he succeeded in having it withdrawn. He says, in his autobiography:

"If the story of the contemplated deportation could be written in full it would rank as one of the most interesting episodes in the annals of South African history ... In these pages it is impossible and inappropriate to disclose the secret drama that was responsible for the cancellation of the deportation order...." However, it appears from what Kadalie says that it was a mixture of pressure on the Unionist Party, including some pressure from Abdurahman, as well as some pressure from the Scottish Church. Early in January 1921 the order was lifted. One assumes that Kadalie would have had to make some undertaking, in spite of his stress on his "unconditional freedom". I have still further research to do on this problem, and even then it may not be possible to answer it, but it does seem to me that it may have had something to do with the coming election.

The next indication I have of Kadalie's position with regard both to the problem of the S.A.P. and the attitude to Britain is the resolution put to and passed by an I.C.U. meeting in Cape Town during the 1922 strike. It condemned "the murderous onslaught on defenceless, peaceful non-Europeans" and urged the Government to protect their lives. It declared that the colour bar was responsible for the trouble on the Rand and should be abolished, and concluded by calling on every Native and Coloured man to assist the authorities while giving unswerving loyalty to Government, King and country. A resolution moved by communists in the crowd, urging support of the strike "because defeat would mean defeat for all classes, both black and white", was rejected. (5) Here was the I.C.U. (at this stage centred in Cape Town; it was to spread to Johannesburg only in 1924) calling on the African and Coloured people to back the S.A.P. government against the white workers of the Rand and those nationalist farming interests who, in one way or another, gave the strike some support. Here was Kadalie on the same side as Abdurahman who, evidently, was the main organizer of the opposition to the strike, amongst the non-white workers in the Cape. One wonders why Kadalie did this: Was it the influence of Bishop Vernon of the A.M.E., who had just arrived in South Africa from America and who, Kadalie says, drew up the resolution? (6) Or had Kadalie given some undertaking to the S.A.P. in order to have his deportation order withdrawn? Or did he just go along with the feeling of the majority of the Coloured people, who, at that time, were the majority in the I.C.U.? Or did it reflect the increasing unease among the non-white people at the racialism of the white workers, and an understanding that the strike was as much directed against the black workers as against the Chamber of Mines? Reports of assaults by white workers on black workers during the strike were rife in the Cape. If it were for the latter reason, one wonders why, then, did Kadalie support the Nationalist-Labour Pact in the elections of 1924 - a Pact formed, above all, to achieve politically what the strike had failed to achieve by industrial action. Or was Kadalie just playing for the highest stakes in 1924? An attitude which was probably partly responsible for the I.C.U. 1922 strike resolution was, possibly, a rejection of the Boers of the old Republic, who would have no equality between black and white in Church or State. And, here again, why does this attitude not determine Kadalie's position in the election of 1924?

I get the impression from what little I have available that

the decision to support the Pact in the 1924 Election was taken for some of the following reasons: A great deal had to do with the growing anti-Smuts feeling in the country amongst both black and white, because of Smuts' various brutalities at Bulhoek, in South West Africa, and during the 1922 strike; the use of force during the dock strike organized by the I.C.U. in 1919, and the Port Elizabeth Massacre of 1920 during a demonstration in support of the I.C.U. leader there. Another obvious influence is the link with Labour men in the Cape, established at the formation of the I.C.U. There were also several Cape communists in close touch with the I.C.U. Another reason, possibly, was that the English capitalist appeared to many non-white workers in the towns to be their immediate enemy; it was often an English boss who was determined to resist their attempts to obtain higher wages and better working conditions. The increasing influence of the mining industry on the whole of South Africa was probably another reason. Possibly, disillusionment with the method of sending deputations to Britain influenced the attitude to what was regarded as the local British party. Of course, all these reasons did not act independently, although I have set them out separately. Another reason was the Nationalists' attempt to win Kadalie. These go back, as far as I know, to 1921.

In July 1921, Hertzog wrote to Kadalie, enclosing a donation. Eddie Roux says it was for the I.C.U. funds (7), while Kadalie, in his autobiography, says it was for the Bulhoek fund, evidently formed by the I.C.U. Hertzog wrote: "My only regret is that I could not contribute more liberally. The feelings expressed by you on behalf of your union I much appreciate in connection with my endeavours in Parliament; and I sincerely hope that these may contribute to a proper and true realisation of the intimate connection in which those stand who are represented by your union and myself in relation to the common good of South Africa. It is for us by our common endeavours to make this country, that we both love so much, great and good..." (8) In 1921, Dr. D.F. Malan, leader of the Nationalists in the Cape, sent a telegram to what Roux refers to as "an assembly of Natives at Queenstown", saying: "No race has shown greater love for South Africa than the Natives. Therein, he, the Native, assuredly is a pattern of true patriotism and is entitled to take his place side by side with the Nationalists in the common political arena." (9)

Both these messages are significant, for they both refer to South African Nationalism as against those people who put Britain first. In fact, they suggest a common front between black and white nationalists against British imperialism.

In 1923 the first issue of the Workers' Herald appeared, one suspects backed by funds from Nationalist-Labour. Kadalie says, in his autobiography, that 10,000 copies of the General Election issue of the paper were printed free by the Nationalist press. The Nationalists also paid train fares to strategic areas. Kadalie had got the A.N.C. Congress at Bloemfontein in 1924, he says, to adopt a resolution "That a change of government was necessary and would be in the best interest of South Africa". Amongst the arguments he used to back up this resolution were the shootings at Port Elizabeth in 1920, the Bulhoek massacre, the calling of troops to the Cape Town docks in 1919. (10)

The Pact came in in 1924. With Pact legislation, first came shock and even almost disbelief, which suggests that Kadalie, at least, did not really understand the nature of the Pact, and then complete disillusionment. During 1925-26 I.C.U. leaders came to see that the Pact was "anti-Native". Nonetheless, it was during this period, too, that many articles in the Workers' Herald came out clearly against British imperialism. The disillusionment with the Pact created a situation in which all the white South African parties were rejected. Smuts's party was still rejected, but so were the Nationalist and Labour parties. Inevitably, as part of this same complex of attitudes, there is a growth in African nationalist feeling.

During the same period I.C.U. leaders begin to turn to the outside world for help against the local whites. For instance, an application for affiliation was made to the British T.U.C. during 1926.

A further complication is added by the fact that, with disillusionment with the Pact and the rejection by the S.A.P. of various "anti-Native" legislation, such as the Colour Bar Bill, the ground is laid for a gradual turning to the S.A.P. This tendency is increased after the expulsion of the Communists from the I.C.U. in December 1926, and with the influence of the Independent Labour Party (of Britain), the British T.U.C., and the Amsterdam International. With the arrival in South Africa of Ballinger in July 1928, the link with the S.A.P. is strengthened. In the 1929 Election (the Black Menace Election), which takes place, in fact, after the break between Kadalie and Ballinger, the Independent I.C.U. (Kadalie's section) comes out in a qualified manner for Smuts, and clearly against the Nationalists: "...We would ... advise every sensible voter - particularly the Native and Coloured voters of the Cape - to steer clear of the Nationalist Party because it consists mostly of men who are totally against the advancement and freedom of the Natives of this country ... General Smuts has his faults, but he is at least honestly disposed towards the fair treatment of the black man ..." (11) However, after it becomes clear that the S.A.P. is backing Ballinger, the Independent I.C.U. comes out more clearly against Smuts, though, of course, it does not return to support for Hertzog.

Having very roughly sketched in this background, to enable you to put what follows into its historical context, I wish to indicate some of the attitudes involved in the I.C.U.'s approach to British imperialism.

An attitude which comes back, time and again, in the Workers' Herald is that Britain has failed in her responsibility to the subject peoples of South Africa. It is felt that she failed in 1910, and again in 1926 at the Imperial Conference when Hertzog came back with "higher status" for South Africa in spite of the obviously "anti-native" legislation which he had already initiated. Particularly, with the legislation of the Pact, it is felt that Britain has denied her responsibilities. The Black Manifesto of 1929, and the Durban Poll Tax Raid of 1929 increases the feeling that the African people have been left at the mercy of the "Dutch" people of South Africa. For instance, in an Editorial in the issue of the Workers' Herald of November 1929, is the following: "... By the Act of the Union and the

declaration of the Imperial Conference of 1926, Great Britain sold over seven million subject people to a despotic white population of this country."

At times, the South African whites are seen as distinct from Britain, and the King or the British Government is then turned to and asked to intervene on the side of the subject people of South Africa. (12) At other times, the South African government is seen to be the local representative of the King or the British Government. As an example of the latter, H.D. Tyamzashe, one of the I.C.U. leaders, says in the Workers' Herald of June 1925, in connection with the visit of the Prince of Wales to South Africa and referring to the decision of the A.N.C. and the I.C.U. to boycott the visit: "... That the Heir to the Throne should be 'approached' by the route of 'boycott' is perfect proof of how desperate - yet loyal - the Natives are as a result of the mis-government of King George's representatives in the country." It is significant that it is not only the S.A.P. which is seen as a local representative of the King, though it is true that the S.A.P. is seen as "English" and more close to Britain than the Nationalist Party.

The utter contempt with which the Workers' Herald treats the visit of the Prince of Wales is striking: "The Prince of Wales spent forty-eight hours in Johannesburg. During that time he spent fifteen minutes with the builders of the Rand - the Natives. He will be able to tell his father, the King, all about us now!" (13)

During 1926 the Flag controversy was at its height. J.J.M., in the Workers' Herald of August 1926, treats those "good boys" (usually African "intellectuals") who take an interest in the controversy with similar contempt. His attitudes reflect the growing feeling in the Workers' Herald 1925-26 that concern with the white politics of South Africa is irrelevant: He says of the "good boys": "I fail to see any necessity of these people to partake in this big European dispute of the flag ... Nay! the Africans have known no flag as a nation. Their flag is their CHIEFS. What we want is SOCIAL, economical and POLITICAL freedom in the land of our fathers. Time compels us to divulge futile secrets and expose the hypocrites. If the Union Jack stood for liberty and justice, why is the 'BLACK LION OF AFRICA', our National Secretary (14), denied the right to tour the country: the Union Jack is there now. Our life is miserable and very much oppressed under the Union Jack. Nay, gentlemen of the African race, waste no time about this thing, but fight for liberty in our land ..."

The allegation of hypocrisy is one fairly often levelled at "the English" and at imperialism. For example, in a block at the top of the front page of issues of the Workers' Herald from the beginning of 1925(?) is the following: "THE HERALD exposes the 'good boys' as tools of imperialistic hypocrisy - BUY THE HERALD." (15) The editorial of January 1926 states: "... The intelligentsia of the race were divided into two camps - the 'Good-Boys', who supped and dined with the Ambassador of British Imperialism who visited South Africa last year (16) in the interest of further exploitation and subjection of the proletariat; while the 'Agitators' group denounced the hypocrisy of British Imperialism and refrained from participating in the

welcome of the Ambassador of Peace (?) ..." This charge of hypocrisy is levelled at Smuts, too: "When General Smuts went to England he declared that the Natives of South Africa were endeavouring to overthrow the whites. He said so in his speech at that famous Savoy Hotel in London because he had not the pluck of a fowl to face his iniquity. Hertzog, however, though a political maniac, had the courage to disclose his policy - wicked as it is." (17) In the Workers' Herald of September 1923, Kadalie refers to "the English people who pretend to be the friends of the natives". The Workers' Herald of January 1925 refers to "the English capitalists, who, for 200 years under camouflage and hypocrisy, have sucked the blood of the African workers, to prevent our onward march for emancipation". In his autobiography, Kadalie refers to a speech he made at the Waaihoek Location in Bloemfontein in January 1925: "... I declared that 'I would not trust an Englishman even if he and I were found in Hell together. I should watch him for fear he left me there while he found a way out for himself...'"

The identification of Britain with the concepts of "freedom" and "justice" is noteworthy. It is interesting to notice that the courts of law are often seen as dispensing "British" justice, even when the country is ruled by the Pact. The following comment was made on the arrest and fining of an I.C.U. official in the Free State: "Is British justice blotted with the dirty stigma of colour prejudice that it cannot even investigate into these troublesome cases of the workers?" (18) And later in the same article, after describing how men are evicted from farms after they have ploughed, the writer says: "Whether British justice is blind we are yet to be told." (19) Writers in the I.C.U. newspaper often quote what they consider typically British slogans, such as "British freedom", "British justice", "the British concept of democracy", "western civilisation", "Christianity", and then indicate the hypocrisy of such concepts.

These concepts are assumed to refer especially to Natal, which is still often seen as a British colony. The reactionary nature of the English in this area is often referred to with some amazement: the especially low wages here, and the reactionary S.A.P. MPs. Champion, the I.C.U. leader in Natal, is reported as saying at the Seventh annual I.C.U. conference: "The news that Kadalie had been arrested in this very town, only a few hundred yards away from where I am now standing, came to the Zulus like a stroke of thunder or a flash of lightning. Natives in all parts of the country asked themselves what had become of the British laws of freedom or free speech..." (20)

British policy is seen as being not only relevant to South Africa but it is also looked at in the rest of Africa. In an editorial of April 1925, reference is made to "The economic and political slavery now existing in all the British possessions in Africa". And in the issue of July 1925 Kadalie says: "... Let [the] British Labour Movement give up worshipping at the shrine of Monarchy; it should realise that British Imperialism as represented by national trust(s), monopolies, and corporations who have succeeded to rob the Africans of their rightful possession - the land - is resorting to dastardly means in legislating against the

aboriginals of the Continent..." In the Workers' Herald of March 1926 is contained the promise that the newspaper "will continue to expose to the outside world the inhuman treatment of the subject races of South Africa and far beyond its borders. British Imperialism in Africa must be exposed and attacked vigorously ..."

Contained in some of the statements about British Imperialism is the idea that it is an alien force which has robbed the African continent. For instance, the following is said about Dr. Donald Fraser, the missionary: "... he grossly forgets that a man cannot go to a Church and worship his God while he or she is starving or forced to starve by this foreign system imposed upon Africa by the white man ..." (21) And in the issue of October 1925: "... money made in this country should be spent here for the development of the country itself and its people. We know it has been the custom of certain aliens - Black and White - to strip the country and its riches and to carry them away to their alien homes. This is what makes genuine South Africans indignant to the extent that their wrath, in many cases, is turned upon innocent people like the Natives ..." Note the allusion in the last statement to Afrikaner nationalism's resentment of British Imperialism. The Workers' Herald of October 1925, refers to a statement by a certain South African writer and journalist that 98 per cent of the diamond output and 60 per cent of the gold supply of the world comes out of South Africa. "Good!" states the Workers' Herald, "But he does not state that this output is due to sweated labour which pours hundreds of pounds into the pockets of a handful of sharks who ultimately spend their money in England or Hong Kong ... if not in Monte Carlo." In the same issue, John Gomas, Communist and I.C.U. leader, writes: "... With our collective toiling we produce all that goes to make life comfortable and possible. But when these things are distributed we receive but a very small portion of it, for the major portion is appropriated by the owning and governing classes, to be squandered in countries other than South Africa, while we live in misery and are faced with starvation." The Workers' Herald of March 1926 reacts strongly to the allegation by Umteteli wa Bantu (organ of the Chamber of Mines) that Kadalie is an alien: "The National Secretary's birthplace is a few miles away from the Chamber of Mines building as in comparison with a distance of thousands of miles between South Africa and the home of these foreign adventurers who are sucking the blood of the people of this continent..."

[This is a reference to Kadalie's birthplace in Nyasaland.]

Southern Africa is often seen as one integral area in which British imperialism operates. In this regard it is important to bear in mind that the I.C.U. spread its network to South West Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, both the Rhodesias, Portuguese East Africa, and Nyasaland, though a look through the Workers' Herald makes it quite clear that the I.C.U. saw itself primarily as an organization for South Africa. Southern Africa is, to some extent, seen as one field of operation of British Imperialism, not only because it is seen as under the political

domination of Britain but also because of the activities of the Chamber of Mines in this area. For example, the Workers' Herald states: "... In our modern civilisation, we know of no other Nation in the World that secures labour by fraud or force as British Imperialism and capitalism, through its agencies in South Africa, the Chamber of Mines and other big business. In all British possessions in Africa, Natives are recruited and forced to labour as slaves and paid them as miserable pittance of wages as from 6d. per day..." (22) In the Workers' Herald of May 1926 is an article entitled "How British Imperialism Rules in Africa". The writer says, inter alia: "In many Colonies, Native labour is procured by contract system and in many cases policemen are poured into Native villages, getting the unfortunate men by force ..."

It is noteworthy that the Chamber of Mines, and the recruiting system in particular, come in for a great deal of criticism in the columns of the Workers' Herald during 1925 and 1926. (23) Demands for abolition of the recruiting system were made regularly at I.C.U. national conferences, and in articles. After the expulsion of the communists in December 1926 from the I.C.U., and under the influence of the I.L.P. of Britain, the British T.U.C. and the Amsterdam International, the Chamber of Mines does not come in for the same vociferous criticism.

The Joint Councils, who were seen as an arm of the Chamber of Mines, also came in for constant and virulent criticism during the period 1925-6, and contempt was poured on those African "good boys", such as Selope Thema and Selby Msimang, who had taken jobs with the "Chamber of Mines". They were especially criticised for not being true to their race. For instance, the Workers' Herald of January 1925: "The year 1924 has been a remarkable one in the history of the African Labour movement in defiance of the enemies' strength, Durban, Natal and the notorious city of Johannesburg came under bombardment, and they were both captured. We refer to Johannesburg as being notorious because it is there where the English capitalists have succeeded to capture men of the African race - men with intellectual ability - to preach the gospel of co-operation between exploiters and the exploited blacks. We may just as well make ourselves understood that we would welcome co-operation between white wage-earners and black wage-earners, but not to be used as tools to encourage the English capitalists, who, for 200 years under camouflage and hypocrisy, have sucked the blood of the African workers, to prevent our onward march for emancipation. Let the African workers be not deceived, nothing tangible could come out from the "Joint Councils of Europeans and Natives". An exploited race has not to look to the exploiter for emancipation from the shackles of slavery ..."

After the vituperation poured out on the Joint Councils at this period, and the clear understanding of their role, it is significant to see the change in attitude, slow after the expulsion of the Communists in December 1926 and then accelerating after Ballinger's arrival in July 1928, until, it appeared, the I.C.U. was being run by the Joint Councils. After Kadalie broke with Ballinger towards the beginning of 1929, the Rand Daily Mail of 4th February, 1929, reported that at a meeting of the I.C.U. in Bloemfontein, "Kadalie, who was asked by the local branch of the I.C.U. to explain his reasons for resigning his secretaryship, said that he resigned because the present policy of the I.C.U. was dictated to them by the Joint Council and not by the Native Council of the I.C.U." The resentment felt by many Africans towards the Joint

Councils is reflected in a letter to the Editor of Umteteli wa Bantu of 9th July, 1932: "The spirit of the Joint Council movement has all the elements of anti-Native principles. It is a movement definitely designed to perpetuate the traditional 'South African spirit' of subjecting the African race to perpetual race inferiority in the interests of the superior race. Its chief aims have been to absorb the Bantu leadership, and to render the Bantu organisations ineffectual... There can be no doubt that Bantu leadership has virtually passed into the hands of the Joint Council authorities ... Our leaders who are associated in one way or another with the Joint Council movement find glory and honour in flouting and breaking up their own national organisations..."

With the loss of confidence in all the South African white parties, following the disillusionment with the Nationalist-Labour Pact during 1925-6, the I.C.U. leaders felt compelled to turn outside South Africa for help. They turned to the British labour and trade union movement. This move indicates that they now differentiated between different sections in Britain. In July 1925 Kadalie called on the British Labour Party and the British Trade Union Congress to make representation re the Colour Bar Bill. He said, inter alia: "I am cognisant of the fact that in 1909 the British Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress were not strong enough to influence the House of Commons to reject the Act of the Union providing the Colour Bar which was brought before it for ratification. It shall be exonerated from the crime committed upon the six million souls by the capitalists class through the Act of the Union ..." It is interesting to see that, at this stage, he was still not sure of the response of the British L.P. and T.U.C. He appealed to them to "give up worshipping at the shrine of Monarchy". (24) The Tories were seen as the main reactionary force in Britain. In the Workers' Herald of June 1926 is the following: "... there is no hope for the seven million souls from the Imperial Government under the old regime of Toryism or Liberalism." The writer ends his article: "As it is, the faith of the blacks in Parliamentary institutions is shaken. And where to now?Will the successors of the late Keir Hardie not come to the rescue?"

At the I.C.U. national conference in 1926 a resolution to seek affiliation to the British T.U.C. was unanimously adopted. (25) The British T.U.C. eventually advised the I.C.U. to seek affiliation to the I.F.T.U. (Amsterdam International), and this was done. During the same period, the I.C.U. built up links with the I.L.P. in Britain. Ethelreda Lewis and Mabel Palmer in South Africa kept up close links with the I.C.U. and passed on information, amongst others to the I.L.P. and Creech-Jones of the Transport and General Workers' Union. Within this whole network were included the I.L.O., the I.F.T.U. and the British T.U.C. Thus was begun the process which led to the expulsion of the Communists from the I.C.U. in December 1926, and the withdrawal of the I.C.U. leadership from militant action. Thus was also begun the link up with the Joint Council movement. It is ironical that communists in the I.C.U. were in the first moves to link up with the British trade union movement. (26) The Communists, however later realized what had happened. Bunting submitted to the Comintern Congress in 1928: "... the Bourgeoisie has managed jointly with the Amsterdam International and the British Independent Labour Party to corrupt the leaders of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union..."

Not only did the I.C.U. make an appeal for help to the British and international labour and trade union movements during 1926; it also identified itself with the struggle of the workers in Britain. During the Miners' strike of 1926, resolutions of solidarity were passed at I.C.U. meetings, and money collected. The struggle of the British workers was seen as an important part of the anti-imperialist struggle. An Editorial in the Workers' Herald states: "... The centre of modern capitalism is Great Britain ... Should the workers of Britain crush the bosses and the Conservative Government in the present struggle, the chances of the African workers are good indeed to throw off automatically the yoke of British Imperialism in Africa ..." (27)

Alongside the strong reaction against British imperialism with the realization of the nature of the Pact Government (28) began, also, a turning to Britain for help against the Pact. As I have described above, this occurred on the level of the British labour and trade union movement, but there begins also a tendency to appeal to Britain, as a whole, against South Africa, i.e. sometimes no differentiation is made between labour and the Conservative Government. Hertzog's Smithfield Declaration (November 1925) came as an enormous shock to the I.C.U. leaders, and already in December 1925 we begin to see the results. In the Workers' Herald of that month, various opinions of "proletariat leaders" gathered in the Transvaal are quoted, including one that, should there be political and territorial segregation, it should be an independent "Native State" "under the direction of the Imperial Government" and that "the Natives of the Union will assist in every possible way those of the territories of Basutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland to oppose the incorporation of these territories into the Union". Hertzog's proposal for the removal of the Cape African franchise was seen as a repudiation of the Act of Union "which was ratified by the Parliament of Great Britain". (29)

The different and sometimes contradictory attitudes involved are indicated in Keable Mote's (I.C.U. leader in the Free State) statement: "... The Smithfield declaration has aroused the dormant aspirations of the peoples of Africa who have decidedly declared that the year 1926 must bring about their liberation from British Imperialistic domination ..." The feeling is there, too, that Hertzog is not fighting British imperialism and the Chamber of Mines, as was expected of him, but is fighting their battles for them. For instance, the I.C.U. carried a banner on May Day 1926, reading "Smuts is gone but the Chamber of Mines still Rules".

The appeal to Britain, though, is maintained, as in the Workers' Herald of June 1926, in an article entitled "The Colour Bar Bill": "... In the past Britain has stood as trustee for small nations of the world, and if she cannot now protect her own subject races in South Africa, then she obviously fails in her duty as our guardian. The white people of this country - especially the Dutch element (one must be frank at such times) - have shown beyond doubt that they are not only unfit to rule this country in a just and civilised manner, but they have also not a grain of sympathy for the Native and Indian races ..." At a meeting of the Free State Native Congress and the I.C.U. in Bloemfontein in the middle of 1926, one of the resolutions read: "That this meeting expresses its heartiest gratitude and congratulations to the leaders of the Opposition and the missionaries for the life and opposition they showed to this Bill (30), and that they alone are the true servants of God and the fathers of the Natives - our guardians of South Africa."

And the following resolution read: "That this meeting therefore humbly prays and earnestly appeals to our true father, our beloved King, through the Governor-General of South Africa, the supreme chief of the Native population, not to give his assent to this fearful Bill." I think that both movers of the resolutions were ANC men, but it is significant that such resolutions could have been passed at a meeting in which the I.C.U. took part, and that such resolutions should then appear in the Workers' Herald without comment.

Of course, there must always have been differences in attitude, particularly in emphasis, within the I.C.U. leadership about British Imperialism. It is clear that the Communists in the I.C.U. had a strong influence on I.C.U. attitudes to imperialism, but, as I have suggested earlier, this was not the only reason why the I.C.U. should have taken up a particularly anti-imperialist stance during 1925-26. Obviously, one of the important reasons was that it was at this period that the I.C.U. really got going on the Rand, and the Head Office was, in fact, moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Johannesburg thinking really dominated the I.C.U. at this time. There was an immense change in the quality of the political analysis in the columns of the Workers' Herald, and at conferences, etc., during this period. Here the I.C.U. leaders faced directly the Chamber of Mines, and they saw as one of their main tasks, during this period, the organisation of the mineworkers. I have already mentioned earlier resolutions at I.C.U. conferences during this period, and statements in the Workers' Herald calling for the abolition of the recruiting system.

Even after the expulsion of the Communists, and the link up with the I.L.P. and the Amsterdam International, Kadalie still mentions British Imperialism as an enemy. At one point on his trip overseas (31) Kadalie says: "We have, as Africans, a two fold battle to fight in South Africa. We are not only struggling against British Imperialism but we have also a tremendous fight against the prejudice of the South African Labour Party ..." (32). Under the influence of the I.L.P., the Amsterdam International, and the Joint Councils, this rejection of British Imperialism gradually fades out. I have already pointed out how, after the arrival of Ballinger in South Africa, the section about imperialist hypocrisy which had appeared on so many previous issues of the Workers' Herald was removed.

After Kadalie's break with Ballinger and the Joint Councils in 1929, Kadalie made an attempt to link up with the League against Imperialism, which he had rejected "as a Bolshevik affair" in December 1926, at the meeting at which he called for the expulsion of the communists from the I.C.U. (33) But it appears that one cannot really take this move seriously, as he seemed at this period to be looking around, somewhat opportunistically, for allies. (34) I have referred earlier to the attitude of the Independent I.C.U. to Smuts in the 1929 Election. The Independent I.C.U. comes out against the Chamber of Mines in some articles in its organ, the New Africa, especially when pushing the Independent I.C.U. Land Scheme (35), and the relationship with Umteteli wa Bantu, the Chamber of Mines organ, is again not happy. (36)

From what I have seen of the issues of New Africa (37) there is to some extent a withdrawal from the British and international

scene. This appears to be partly pressure of circumstances - rejection of Kadalie by both the I.L.P. and its contacts and also by the League Against Imperialism (38) - and partly the attitudes of leaders of the I.C.U. themselves. There is a rejection of appeals to Britain and yet, at the same time, the firm ideological approach to British Imperialism, which one sees in the Workers' Herald in the period 1925-26, has gone. There appears to be a lack of clarity in the approach of the Independent I.C.U., which seems to be due partly to the fact that Smuts is seen as far from ideal, and yet - the approach is - where else is there to look? And partly because, although Kadalie seems to understand the role of the I.L.P. and the Amsterdam International, he refuses to come out clearly against them and to ally himself with the genuinely anti-imperialist sector on the international level. Kadalie, in the earlier issues of New Africa, anyway, is still looking around for allies. He is beginning to feel his isolation, and perhaps one can see the beginnings of the withdrawal which was to end, eventually, in Kadalie's East London period, when what remained of the I.C.U. was a small body which carried out some day-to-day trade union activities and which, on Sundays, met in a hall for a mixture of political and religious harangues from Kadalie, and where political attitudes seemed to merge and disappear into the religious. This was a period of disillusionment.

SYLVIA NEAME

February, 1970.

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Bibliography

I have used the University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, edition of Edward Roux's Time Longer Than Rope (TLR).

Notes

- (1) Kadalie, Autobiography.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Time Longer than Rope, p. 150, from Cape Times, March 13 1922.
- (6) Kadalie, Autobiography.
- (7) TLR, p. 183.
- (8) TLR, p. 183, from Star, Feb. 7, 1929.
- (9) TLR, p. 184.
- (10) Kadalie, Autobiography.
- (11) I also suspect that the S.A.P. may have made some contribution to financing this first issue of the New Africa. New Africa (official organ Ind. I.C.U.), May 25, 1929.
- (12) See below.
- (13) Workers' Herald, July 20, 1925.
- (14) Kadalie.
- (15) It is significant that this is changed on the first issue of the Workers' Herald after Ballinger's arrival, and becomes instead: "THE HERALD exposes Political and Industrial Hypocrisy. It constructively criticises - BUY THE HERALD." Workers' Herald of August 18, 1928.
- (16) The Prince of Wales.
- (17) Workers' Herald, April 28, 1926.
- (18) Ibid., April 1927.
- (19) Ibid.
- (20) Workers' Herald, May 1927.
- (21) Ibid., April 1925.
- (22) Workers' Herald, June 1925.
- (23) Bear in mind that the I.C.U. started on the Rand only during 1924.
- (24) Workers' Herald.
- (25) Ibid., April 1926.
- (26) Document from National Council Executive Bureau, October 1926.

- (27) May 1926.
- (28) Workers' Herald.
- (29) Workers' Herald.
- (30) Colour Bar Bill, I think.
- (31) 1927
- (32) Kadalie, Autobiography.
- (33) S.A. Worker, 24 Dec. 1926.
- (34) See TLR.
- (35) See, e.g., New Africa, May 1929.
- (36) See e.g., Ibid.
- (37) I have only been able to see a few issues.
- (38) See TLR.