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/PROTEST BY THE WFTU

PROTEST BY THE WFTU CONCERNING THE RENEWAL OF COLONIAL POLICY AND THE
VIOLATION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN AFRICA

The World Federation of Trade Unions has the honour to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council and of the United Nations as a whole to the intensification of the colonial system of repression in Africa at the present time. As always, the workers are the first to suffer from this repression.

The events which occurred in 1949 at Grand Bassam (Ivory Coast, French West Africa) and Abidjan have already demonstrated that colonial methods have once more become as bad as, if not worse than, those in force before the last World War. The incidents at Dimbrotro (Ivory Coast) on 30 January 1950 provide evidence that the colonial elements and the French imperialistic administration intend to crush in the blood of the people the democratic rights and aspirations of the African population. The WFTU points out that the French Government's decision to prohibit all meetings organized by the Rassemblement démocratique africain is also aimed at rendering impossible any public activity or propaganda by the African trade union organizations.

A number of active democrats who were arrested on 6 February 1949 are being kept in prison without having been brought to trial, despite the absence of any serious charge against them. In December 1949, these eight prisoners carried out a seventeen-day hunger strike in protest against the refusal to release them on bail and against the irregular nature of their imprisonment. Large crowds, consisting chiefly of women, demonstrated in front of the Governor's Palace. The police spared neither insults nor blows and made further arrests.

These incidents should be linked up with the bloody events which occurred on 5 January in the District of Potinville (Tunisia), when for no reason the police fired on a number of strikers, killing one, seriously injuring three and slightly injuring several others.

In Kenya (British East Africa), Chege KIBACHIA, the President of the Federation of East African Workers (Mombasa), has been deported since 1947, in spite of petitions demanding his release.

In Accra (Gold Coast), Anthony WOODS and Pobe BINEY, Secretary and Vice-President respectively of the Gold Coast TUC, were arrested in January 1950 on the pretext of having "incited others to take part in a strike held to be illegal",

/a charge which

a charge which renders them liable to one year's imprisonment and a heavy fine.

The disturbance caused in Nigeria by the shooting at Enugu, when the police fired on the striking miners, killing 60 and wounding 80, has not yet died down. It should be recalled that the official report alleges that the police acted in legitimate self-defence, but the official argument is invalidated by the fact that not one policeman was killed or wounded.

These revolting facts constitute a characteristic violation of the promises made to the colonial peoples after victory was won over Fascism and Nazism, of the United Nations Charter, of the decisions adopted in the international field in regard to trade union rights, and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The World Federation of Trade Unions accordingly has the honour to protest strongly against this policy and requests the United Nations to take steps to prevent any repetition of the above-mentioned incidents. In addition, the WFTU suggests that the President of the Economic and Social Council should arrange for a meeting with the representatives of France and Great Britain to consider, in the presence of a WFTU representative, practical measures likely to assist in the implementation of our proposal.
