tableland, nearly all over 3,000 feet above sea level, stretching from the extreme South, right up to Abyssinia. This elevation hinders communications, but it reduces the average temperature to a level easily bearable by white people.

The most advanced part of Africa, in the sense of Capitalist development, is the Union of South Africa, comprising the four provinces of Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State. A fifth province, the former German colony of South-West Africa, may possibly soon become an integral part of the Union.

The population of the Union is about 10½ million, of whom about 2 million are white. Of the whites, somewhat more than half are Afrikanders, descendents of the original Dutch settlers. About three-quarters of a million are of British descent, and the remainder come from all parts of Europe. The non-European population consists of the varieties already mentioned, plus about 800,000 "Coloreds," who are the result of intercourse between white and black.

In other parts of the world the distinction between the Capitalist Class and the Working Class can easily be noted, but in Africa, and in the Union in particular, there are many complications. The white Capitalist Class alone is sharply defined. But there are wealthy men amongst the Chinese and Indians, who, in spite of their wealth, have few political rights, and do not hobnob with their white counterparts.

The working class can be subdivided into Europeans, Asiatics, Coloreds, and Natives. These are official classifications, and determine the political and economic status of the four groups.

Those of the European Working Class who are married do not find life quite so easy, as for single workers. Rents are high, if one can rent accommodation at all, and there are no "family allowances" or "free medical attention." There is no rationing, but there are periodic scarcities of meat, bread and butter, which means that the housewife has to do a considerable amount of shopping to get what she needs. Prices of foodstuffs generally are about the same as in England, though fruit is cheaper and more plentiful, and butter is more expensive. Margarine is reserved for non-Europeans.

The next group of workers to be considered is the Asiatics — the Malays and Indians, the Chinese, and the various Moslems who have drifted to the extreme South. Apart from Natal, where there has been restrictive legislation against them, they have the vote, and the right to own property in the Union. They are employed to a minor degree by European firms, but are usually employed by other Asiatics.

The Coloreds, the next group, have the vote in the Cape Province, but not elsewhere. Usually they have to take the lower-paid jobs, but in certain trades, such as plastering, they get the full European rate of pay.

The last, and largest group, is the Natives, who exist at a level *generally* below that of the other three groups. They do all the dirty work in the Union, for ridiculously small wages. They have no vote, but have three M. P.s, who are supposed to look after their interests. They have certain Reservations where, theoretically, they can all live under the old tribal conditions. But these Reservations do not comprise large or fertile pieces of ground, and cannot support the 40% who do live in them.

As any Socialist can see, this division of the working-class is an ideal set-up for the capitalist class, who have little to fear while it can be maintained.

There is still some antagonism between the two sections of the white population — those of Dutch origin, and those of British and other origins, though perhaps it is more correct to say that the antagonism is between town and country.

The country-dweller is much more isolated from the towns than he is in Britain, and is usually more reactionary in his outlook. His vote returned the present Nationalist Government to Parliament, with a narrow majority, but he is finding that the interests of the South African Capitalist Class are receiving first consideration, as they always will while Capitalism continues. Thus the elaborate schemes for "Apartheid", or complete separation of the four groups in the community, are not likely to work out, since the Capitalists prefer the present arrangement. In minor matters, such as the release of political prisoners, they may have their way.

There is a Labor Party in South Africa, but it is small, compared with that in Britain. It has four members in the present Parliament, and its influence is negligible. It favors the maintenance of the barriers between the four sections of the Working Class. The Communist Party is the only Party favoring racial equality at present, but its influence is small, and in other ways it is no more to be trusted than Communist Parties elsewhere.

There are a number of other small groups advocating either Afrikander or English supremacy, but the only choice of Government at present, lies between the United Party, under General Smuts, and the Nationalist Party, under Dr. Malan. By British standards, the United Party can be described as Conservative, and the Nationalist Party as ultra Conservative. Malan and his Party favor a stoppage of industrial expansion. The Nationalists are described as Fascists by their opponents.

Anyone who glances through the S. P. G. B. "Declaration of Principles" will realize that the building of a party on the same lines in Africa is no easy task. But it is something that must be done, sooner or later, if world-wide Socialism is to be achieved. Africa is a "Dark Continent" in more ways than one, but, scattered throughout its thousands of square miles, are a few known Socialists. Some are already in communication with one another, and favor the formation of a Socialist organization. They are too scattered at present to be able to form branches, or even to meet one another. But they hope that, with help from the established Parties, progress can be made, and that the Continent will become a little less dark.

Any reader, resident in Africa, of the *Socialist Standard*, and of *The Western Socialist*, who is interested in the project, should get in touch with the Overseas Secretary of the S. P. G. B.

J. O. B.

THE LABOR PARTY

IRISH VARIETY

The working class of this country (Eire) like the working class of America and elsewhere, finds itself from day to day beset with certain problems. On examination, these problems can be traced to one common cause, poverty. To poverty can be attributed the vast majority of our criminal cases, suicides, broken marriages and unhappy homes, with all their direful consequences. It is this same poverty which forces the majority of the people to eke out a bare existence, herded together like cattle in disease-ridden slums — eating adulterated food — wearing shoddy clothes.

From whence does this poverty arise — and can it be arrested? It is with the hope of doing this, of realizing for themselves a life of security and well-being, that the workers of this and other countries vote certain political parties into power every few years. In Eire one party which claims to have the solution to these social evils is the Irish Labor Party. It seeks the support of the Irish working class on the grounds that it can abolish unemployment and tuberculosis and provide proper housing accomodation for the workers, and — to paraphrase some of its election literature — "raise the disgracefully low standard of living to which our aged people. widows and orphans, and other unfortunate members of our community, are subjected."