

Strike Struggles in India

THE revolutionary tide in India, forced on by mass strike movements in Calcutta, Bombay, Jamshedpur, etc., daily gains momentum, expressing the sharpening class struggle as well as a general maturing of the labor movement.

Strikes are occurring in rapid succession in the most important industrial centers of the country, with the general strike of the 150,000 Bombay textile workers still going on—a struggle in which the basic demands put up are not of an economic nature, but a struggle for the re-employment of 6,000 dismissed workers fired during the strike of last year and for the retention of the revolutionary organizations, factory committees, etc. This heroic fight continues in spite of the betrayals by the reformist misleaders like N. M. Joshi, indicating the growing influence of the left-revolutionary wing under whose leadership most of the economic and political struggles of today are being fought.

Also in Madras and Cawnpore, strikes have broken out in the textile industry, further reflecting the serious crisis in the India textile industry, the unbridgeable chasm between imperialism and colonial India, and the contradictions between the growth of the textile industry and the shrinkage of the domestic market.

The revolutionary crisis in India, however, is not confined to the textile industry. The strike of the 3,000 tinplate workers against the Tinsplate Company of Galmuri, Jamshepur, owned by the powerful Burmah Oil Company, has entered its sixth month. Here again, the rank and file of a reformist trade union are conducting a militant fight in direct opposition to the bureaucrats.

But of outstanding significance is the militant strike of the 200,000 jute workers in Calcutta in answer to the attempts of the Indian Jute Mills Association to lengthen the working week from 54 to 60 hours without an increase in pay.

The strike which started in a few jute mills in the beginning of August was extended to unheard of proportions. In spite of the mass shooting of strikers, wholesale arrests of mill workers and leaders of the left-wing trade

union, the sabotage and treachery of the national-reformist trade union leaders, who from the start attempted to throttle the strike, and the series of repressive measures, such as the "Public Safety Bill" and the "Trades Disputes Act", the mill workers brought the cotton mills in Calcutta to a complete standstill.

So effective were the militant tactics of the workers that on August 17, the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association was forced to agree to an increase of wages commensurate with the longer working hours, resumption of the old individual output quotas, provisions for maternity benefits, and to take on again all the workers who had been discharged or on strike.

Attempts of the employers to victimize the leaders of the workers after the liquidation of the strike were countered by a fresh mass strike on the part of 45,000 workers in the Hoogly District and Hawrah, 30,000 in the Budge-Budge mills, with the strike rapidly spreading.

A characteristic feature of this and other strikes of today is the exceptional class solidarity within the ranks of the Indian working class. Practically the whole of the working class in Calcutta rose to defend the jute workers. Ten thousand workers of the Burmah-Shell Oil Company went out on a sympathetic strike, as did workers on the city railway. In the jute industry itself the pressure brought to bear by the capitalists in certain given sections was and is met by solidarity strikes of all the workers in the industry.

At the same time, the peasantry, struggling under revolting conditions of labor, suffering mass unemployment, starvation, etc., forced upon them by the merciless oppression of Anglo-Indian exploitation, and roused by the heroic action of the working class of India, are slowly but surely awakening. The reprisals, mass trials and mass arrests taking place against the revolutionary peasant organizations in the peasant province of Punjab bear witness to the fact that the revolutionary movement is spreading to the countless masses of peasants. So intensified has become the class struggle in India that nothing can stay

the growth of the revolutionary movement among the Indian workers and peasants.

These events in India, mark a new stage in the Indian Labor movement—an era in which the working class is the dominant force in the national liberation movement, in which strike struggles are growing to unheard of dimensions, taking the form of a determined and resolute proletarian offensive directed against foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie. They cannot but force onward preparations for an **All-India general strike**, a strike for which the Left Wing must further consolidate its ranks, purging itself of all reformists and, in general, adhering to and fol-

lowing the line of class struggle as laid down by the P.P.T.U.S.

The powerful class struggle in India today makes it more urgent than ever for establishing a united revolutionary front between the workers and peasants of India and the workers of all countries of the Pacific, for the purpose of waging an effective fight against imperialism and the native bourgeoisie everywhere and putting an end to the oppression of one and the exploitation of the other. The affiliation of the entire trade union movement of India to the P.P.T.U.S. will constitute a great step forward in this direction.
