

# **The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Congress and the Indian Trade Union Movement.**

By H. Eidus.

There is still a large gap in the work of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat (P. P. T. U. S.) which must be remedied at all cost. We refer to the fact that no P. P. T. U. S. Section has yet taken definite shape or form in the T. U. movement of India. The absence of organisational contact with the Indian T. U. Movement has been due, on the one hand, to the obstacles set up by the Anglo-Indian authorities, and on the other, to the reformist leaders of the Indian T. U. Congress, who have blocked every attempt at getting the Indian T. U. Movement to co-operate with the Revolutionary Centre of the T. U. Movement in the Pacific Countries.

Yet in 1927 the Indian Trade Union Congress decided to send two delegates representing the Left Wing of the Indian T. U. movement to the Pan-Pacific T. U. Conference in Hankow. But they were not permitted to leave India, and were therefore unable to attend. At the beginning of 1928 a P. P. T. U. S. representative went to India to set up connections with the Indian Trade Union Congress, but he was not allowed to land. Comrade Ryan, an Australian comrade, a P. P. T. U. S. representative, had better luck. He managed to attend the last Indian Trade Union Congress held in December 1928 in Jaria, where on behalf of the P. P. T. U. S. he greeted the Indian Trade Union Movement. This was the first time since the P. P. T. U. S. was founded that a representative got into direct touch with the Indian T. U. Movement and laid the aims and objects of the P. P. T. U. S. before a Congress of Indian Trade Unions. At this gathering, the Left Wing elements in the Indian Labour Movement urged the Indian Trade Union Congress to affiliate to the P. P. T. U. S. However, a decision was carried by an insignificant majority to postpone a discussion on this question until the next Congress.

Thus, the next Indian Trade Union Congress to be held at the end of this year is to decide the question of affiliating to the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. It would be of interest, therefore, to size up the strength of P. P. T. U. S. supporters in India at the present time and the forces of their opponents — the Indian reformists. A brief account of the present position of the Indian T. U. Movement will make the position clear.

Approximately down to 1927 the Indian labour movement is entirely in the hands of reformist leaders — all representatives of the bourgeois intelligentsia. They spared no effort to foster a spirit of class collaboration (with the Indian bourgeoisie) in the Indian labour movement, while half-heartedly pursuing a policy of compromise with British Imperialism.

But far-reaching changes have occurred during the last two years. The heavily-charged political atmosphere in connection with the work of the **Simon Commission** and the drive of the Anglo-Indian bourgeoisie against the proletariat, now more vivid than ever, gave rise to a widespread movement among Indian workers — a movement that has put an end to the lull served in the Indian labour world for several years past.

That the workers are now active as never they were before is seen, first of all, in a widespread desire to get organised in unions, especially in the Left wing organisations, and in the numerous strikes involving hundreds of thousands of Indian workers, resulting, in the loss of millions of working days. **Girni Kamgar**, the Left Wing Textile Workers' Union in Bombay, founded in the middle of 1928, increased its membership to 100,000 during the space of a few months. Thirty-one million working days were lost through strikes in 1928 alone, and the strikes are becoming more bitter and protracted than ever. The great Bombay textile workers' strike called at the end of last year was renewed within a few months involving 130,000 workers.

The workers of India are not only struggling heroically for their economic demands, but are taking active part in the national revolutionary movement — a movement in which the workers are becoming more and more independent of the bourgeoisie. No longer are the workers an auxiliary force (as was the case some years ago) to be used by the Indian bourgeoisie to further their plans against British imperialism. To-day, the Indian workers are making a stand as an independent political factor. Whereas the Indian bourgeoisie is in full retreat before British imperialism, the workers are carrying forward the struggle for complete independence, emblazoning on their banner the slogan **"All Power to the Soviets"**.

It is now abundantly clear that the working masses of India can have no use for a reformist leadership of the T.U. movement. In the process of the struggle new leaders are rising up able to give the workers a revolutionary lead. They are already to-day replacing the reformist leaders in guiding and leading the economic struggles of the workers. They are not only out to capture the leadership of the old reformist unions of the Indian Trade Union Congress, but are building up new revolutionary mass organisations (**Girni Kamgar** being a case in point).

Of course, neither the British Imperialists nor the Anglo-Indian bourgeoisie can remain indifferent to the present remarkable movement among the workers at large. A series of repressive measures have been directed against the revolutionary T.U. movement, and although obviously reactionary and anti-working class laws have been enacted, the authorities are still unsatisfied. Mass arrests of revolutionary leaders have now been instituted in an effort to sap the strength of the Left Wing T.U. Movement. But this will prove of no avail, for new leaders are now being put forward by the workers themselves to lead the struggle to take the place of their arrested comrades. The present general strike of the textile workers of Bombay commenced after many of the revolutionary leaders had been arrested. We see that the movement has not been crippled, since new militant leaders were put forward by the masses to take their place).

Seeing that their agents — the social-reformists, headed by **Prabhu** — are losing their hold on the labour movement, the Indian bourgeoisie are now endeavouring to make use of other agents, somewhat different from the former. Efforts are now being made to get a footing in the labour movement through the "Left" nationalists, who are simply misleading the masses with their "Left" phraseology. Having capitulated to British imperialism by renouncing the demand for political independence, the Indian bourgeoisie now seeks to get control of the labour movement by means of the "Independence League" organised by a small, but, it is alleged, radical group, of the Indian bourgeoisie with the permission and approval of big capital in India. This is merely a new move to dupe the workers and peasants who are utterly disgusted with the Indian bourgeoisie's capitulation to British Imperialism. While the National

Congress, the organ of the Indian bourgeoisie, headed by **Nehru Senior**, renounces independence for India, **Nehru junior** is busy organising an "Independence League" urging complete independence for India! These "Left" nationalists or National-Reformists have now been definitely instructed by the Indian bourgeoisie to get control of the labour movement — to take the place of the social-reformists who have lost out with the workers.

All the new developments in the Indian labour movement found due reflection in the last Indian Trade Union Congress held in December, 1928. The old reformist leaders, the agents of British Imperialism, who zealously urged affiliation to the Amsterdam International, were no longer the predominant factor at this Congress. Their proposal to affiliate to Amsterdam was rejected. However, although the Left Wing elements made a good showing, they were not yet strong enough to get all their resolutions carried. Supported by the Social-Reformists, the "Left" nationalists, led by the younger **Nehru**, utilised the situation and got control of the Congress proceedings. He was elected chairman of the Trade Union Congress for the term of the present year.

There is no doubt at all that the new national-reformist agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class will be exposed by the workers themselves just as thoroughly as the social-reformists were. So intensified has the class struggle become in India to-day, that nothing can stay the growth of the revolutionary movement among the Indian workers. The heroic struggle of the Bombay textile workers bears witness to the growth of the class-consciousness of Indian workers; it bears witness to their determination to fight to improve their conditions. The persecution and repressions directed against the revolutionary workers, seen especially of late, will only brace them for the struggle, will only strengthen their hands, for they are winning the sympathy of the working masses. The present marked Leftward drift on the part of the Indian Workers will only consolidate the position of the revolutionary wing in the T.U. movement of India. Thus we see that a basis is being prepared which will enable the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat to press forward its activities in India.

The P.P.T.U.S. must continue to urge the entire T.U. movement of India to affiliate. This must be its policy. But the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Congress, which will be attended by representatives from the revolutionary unions of India, must first of all help to form and strengthen the left wing in the Indian T.U. movement, for only a well-organised, strong Left Wing will compel the Indian Trade Union Congress to affiliate and become a section of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.

## THE BALKANS

### Against the Exceptional Law in Greece.

To the Workers and Peasants of the Balkans and of the Whole World!

Comrades,

The "democratic" dictator of Greece, **Venizelos**, the classical representative of the Greek bourgeoisie, who has always been the tool of British and French imperialism, has forged new chains for the toiling masses. By means of a docile parliament he has succeeded in **introducing an Exceptional Law** which aims at suppressing not only the Communist Party but all revolutionary organisations of the proletariat and of the peasantry in general.

After the bloody regime of a **Zankoff** and of a **Liaptcheff** in Bulgaria, after the setting up of a military-fascist dictatorship in Yugoslavia, after the dissolution of the revolutionary trade unions and of the workers' and peasants' bloc in Roumania, "democratic" Greece is now also definitely taking its place in the ranks of the reactionary and fascist countries.

The secret purpose of this fascist attack is easily discerned. Its purpose is to prepare for war against the Soviet Union. The Balkan bourgeoisie, having converted the Balkan countries into semi-colonies of Franco-British imperialism, is now proceeding under the leadership of the latter to prepare for war against the Soviet Union, the homeland of the international proletariat.