

World Socialism

THE INDIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

—By HERBERT ZAM—

The British New Leader carries an interesting report on the activities of the Indian Socialist Party, as related by its secretary, R. Masani, who attended the meeting of the International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity as an observer.

According to Masani, the idea of a Socialist Party was born in jail in 1932, when Jawaharlal Nehru, Masani and hundreds of others were imprisoned for fighting against British imperialism, but it was not until 1934 that the Party could be formed. It has made rapid progress, and now has organizations in 17 out of 20 provinces. In contrast to the Communist Party, whose nihilist attitude on the national question led it to attack the Indian National Congress, the Socialist Party works with the congress. It controls three provincial organizations of the congress and has about one-third of the members of the national committee.

Asks Strike Against War

A resolution for a general strike against war, introduced by the ISP in the working committee of the congress was defeated, 23-19, but the comrades expect to carry this resolution at the next regular congress.

The Socialist Party is very active in the trade unions, and has dominating influence in the All-India Trade Union Congress, which has some 80,000 membership. (The Trade Union Federation has some 120,000 members.) The communists recently liquidated their unions and joined the TUC. A united-front between the ISP and the CP is now in operation.

Different Problems

Masani pointed out that the Indian Socialists have different problems than those facing Socialists in industrial countries. In a population of more than 300 millions, there are only four million industrial workers. The achievement of Socialism therefore requires the support of the peasants and of the lower middle class. These masses are anti-imperialistic but not yet Socialist.

The Indian Socialist Party has no international affiliation. It stands for revolutionary unity and its program may be described as that of revolutionary Socialism.

Referring to the new "constitution" for India, Masani declared:

"The Indian Socialist Party has rejected the new "constitution" for India passed by the British Parliament, and has decided to do all in its power to resist its operation."

Changes In India

The report is very interesting as showing the changes which have taken place in India. For many years, the Communist Party was the only Socialist organization in existence, but with the "third period," the communist movement went to pieces. It lost its influence in the TUC and split, setting up its own "center". M. M. Roy, the founder of Indian communism and outstanding leader, was expelled because he refused to subscribe to the senseless policies of the Comintern. He thereupon organized the Communist Party (Opposition).

The CPO movement gained considerable influence, but the arrest and imprisonment of Roy dealt it a severe blow. Its meager material support further militated against its expansion. It is not

unlikely that the bulk of the CPO followers are now in the Indian Socialist Party. Already the ISP has won first place in the labor movement, and if it continues along the program outlined by Masani, it is bound to make great headway.

THE AUSTRIAN UNITED FRONT

The illegal monthly organ of the Austrian Socialists, "Revolution," carries a lengthy report on the decisions of the Revolutionary Socialists with regard to further united front activities. According to this report, the following will be the line of the Socialists on the united front::

1. The permanent "united committees" which were seemingly super-party bodies are to be liquidated since they tended to become a third political center. All united front activities are to be conducted directly by the two parties, the trade unions, and the Schutzbund and are to be organized as occasion require, not on a "calendar" basis.

Carry On Discussion

2. The Socialists are willing to carry on joint friendly discussions in order to clarify all questions before the working class. They repudiate the mud-slinging which has marked communist campaign until recently in their criticism of the Socialist Party.

3. The Socialists consider the establishment of a united revolutionary party in Austria of paramount importance, and recognize united front activities as but a limited step in that direction. The creation of such a party is a more basic need in the struggle against fascism than this or that individual action. The Revolutionary Socialists, however, no matter what differences they may have on internal party matters, are in agreement that they cannot work inside the Communist International.

The "People's" Front

4. The Socialists will discuss the communist proposal to set up a "People's Front" in Austria. In view, however, of the fact that such a people's front can have no other objective than the re-establishment of democracy, the Revolutionary Socialists will be very cautious about agreeing to it. They have no illusions about the possibilities of such a tactic, and will not be influenced by such considerations as Soviet foreign policy which affect the communists' proposals.

The "Revolution" further describes the consolidation and strengthening of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. It points out that in the first period after the February days, the communists had expected the entire party to fall apart and spoke continually about "Socialist remnants". Their tactic was directed toward absorbign these "remnants". It is now seen, however, that the Socialist Party, having adapted itself to new conditions of work and profiting from the defeat, is truly the party of the Austrian proletariat.