

World Socialism

SOCIALISM IN INDIA

By HERBERT ZAM

THE second Conference of the Socialist Party of India, which opened at Meerut on January 18th, adopted decisions as to its attitude towards the Indian Congress Movement and suggested amendments to the Congress Constitution. A resolution was also adopted on the new Constitution for India which has been approved by the British Parliament, and another on the question of the "United Front."

With regard to the Congress Movement the Socialist Conference demanded that in order to make the Congress a truly anti-imperialist body its constitution should be amended to provide for adequate representation of workers, peasants and other exploited classes through their class organizations. Its objectives should include complete independence in the sense of separation from the British Empire; all power to the producing masses (including brain workers); nationalization of key and large industries, mines and banks; abolition of landlordism; land to the tillers of the soil; cancellation of debts owing by peasants and workers; abolition of the Indian States. Its program of work should include as its chief items the organization of the workers, peasants and other exploited classes on the basis of their economic demands in their respective class organizations and the development of their struggle for freedom from all exploitation.

On the question of the new Constitution for India the Conference expressed its emphatic opinion that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people to frame their own Constitution. The new Constitution as embodied in the Government of India Act, is thoroughly reactionary and retrograde and seeks to intensify the exploitation of the masses and strengthen the fetters of Imperialism by granting concessions to the upper classes at the cost of the overwhelming majority of the population and using them to thwart the working of the popular will. The only course open for the Congress is to adopt such measures as will make the working of the Constitution impossible. Details of the policy to be pursued to this end were also set out in the resolution, and an appeal made to the delegates attending the forthcoming Lucknow session of the Congress to secure the adoption of this policy by the Congress.

Regarding the "United Front" the Conference expressed its opinion that there is urgent need for the co-operation of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country in order to achieve complete freedom from imperialism, and reaffirmed its decision to continue its efforts in this direction. Another resolution denounced the Italian dictatorship's war against Ethiopia and declared that Ethiopia's fight was part of the fight of all exploited peoples. The Indian Socialist Party is as yet not a member of either International. It works closely with the British ILP.

With trade union unity in France almost completed, a meeting of the new National Council was held at the end of January. It was attended by one delegate from each of the amalgamated national unions and trades councils, the members of the CGT (Socialist-led) and the CGT (Communist-led) and from the still un-united unions.

The first question discussed was the composition of the provisional Executive. It was agreed that the CGT was to have 33 members

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but there was a dispute as to the represented for the CGTU. By a vote of 97 to 32 the CGTU was granted two members. The members for the CGT are: Jouhaux, Buisson, Dupont, Bellin, Bothereau, Bourjer. For the CGTU: Racamond and Frachon. The dues report showed the membership before amalgamation as follows: CGT: 775,000, CGTU: 231,222.

There was considerable discussion over the question of trade union independence. Jouhaux insisted that a rule be adopted that no person could hold a trade union and political office at the same time, without being limited as to membership in a political party. He chided the Communists with agreeing to this proposal in the negotiations, but not carrying it out in practice. (Racamond and Frachon were both elected members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party just prior to this meeting.) Racamond declared that they had understood by the above rule the exclusion of members of parliament only, but not members of leading bodies of other groups. This matter was finally left to the Unity Congress to decide. The decision will undoubtedly be in line with Jouhaux's proposals.

The question of the program of the united organization was also discussed. It was finally decided that "as no unanimity can be reached on the respective plans of the CGTU and CGT, on which there are serious differences of opinion, the program of the People's Front, which has been approved by the CGT and CGTU and on which there is unity should serve as a basis for future action."

The Unity Congress was scheduled for Toulouse, March 2-5, 1936.

A meeting of the Trade Union Joint National Center of Czechoslovakia, held in Prague January 22 had before it a request from the Communist trade unions for the setting up of a united front. This request was not accepted. Instead a resolution in favor of 'organic unity' was adopted, stating that "joint action cannot replace a united organization, and it should above all not provoke further disintegration and splitting in the Trade Union movement. Organic unity, however, must not be merely of principle and tactics in the Trade Union movement."

Unity negotiations have actually begun in the building trades, one of the strongholds of the trade unionists. Three unions exist the "free" trade union (Socialist led), an "industrial" union (Communist led), and a union led by Benes' "Czech Socialists." On the initiative of the free union, a joint meeting was held, to which the free union made the following proposal: "The basis for the united union to be formed is the union with the greatest membership and the strongest branches. The other two unions should be dissolved. The united union is a member of the National Center to which the strongest union now belongs." No agreement could be reached, however. The Czech Socialists (Benes) were particularly vehement in their opposition, insisting that "a united organization must be preceded by unity in the conception of Socialism in Czechoslovakia."

An attempt by the free union to hold a second meeting has so far been unsuccessful, and thus the negotiations have ended for the present at least

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