

# Rally to the Support of the Indian Trade Union Movement!

## Appeal of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.

Fellow workers: For over a century and a half Indians have fought against the exploiting and oppressive British rule. To continue their rule foreign British tyrants for generations kept Indians divided, by engendering strife between castes and communities. Whenever they failed, British armed forces have always mercilessly massacred the protesting Indians:

The wholesale slaughter of 1,500 innocent workers and peasants at Amritsar is fresh in our memory, the shooting of the textile workers by Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Government in 1924, the killing of Lala Laipat Rai, the Indian Nationalist leader, and other workers who dared to protest against the insolence of the British Simon Commission, and many other recent murders committed by the cruel assassins of British imperialism, only indicate the bloody path of the struggling Indian workers and peasants.

In recent years the centre of the struggle against British rule has correctly shifted towards the **working class**. The intolerable lives of the workers in the factories, mines, mills, etc., owned by such savage British exploiters of the Far East as the Sassoons, have forced them to resist. They formed their trade unions, which have recently developed at an unprecedented pace. New leaders have sprung up and the workers have, under their guidance, fought against inflicted brutalities, which they have endured far too long.

The British imperialists know that once the workers of India are organised into mighty trade unions, further develop their own conscious leadership and fight against starvation wages, intolerably long hours, insanitary workshop conditions, brutalities of British foremen and administrators, child labour and underground work for women, for better housing accommodation, illiteracy, etc., nothing can stop them from fighting for absolute independence.

Whatever reforms have been reluctantly given have all been rendered ineffective and counteracted by other iniquitous measures. No franchise exists for the workers and peasants. Indian representation in the Legislative Council is limited, and legislation opposed to British interests, which should happen to obtain a majority vote, can be vetoed by appointees of the Indian Office in London: therefore Indian representation is a mockery and a farce. The masses of workers and peasants have no other alternative than to organise into powerful trade and peasant unions, as a preliminary step in the fight against economic, political and social impositions that are resulting in pauperism, disease and death to many millions.

Because the workers and peasants have begun to fight against these conditions, British imperialists have launched a new attack. Once more the struggling Indian workers and peasants are confronted with a reign of terror. The new offensive of the British Government is nation-wide. In Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Poona, Allahabad, etc., etc., homes of officials of the labour movement have been raided, labour papers suppressed, offices of the trade unions and working class political parties have been ransacked and records stolen, by British detectives and their hirelings. Over 120 warrants are issued for arrests in Bombay alone, and already 31 of the best leaders of the Indian trade unions have been flung into filthy British jails in India.

Besides alleged members of the Communist Party, among those already arrested are S. N. Jhabwalla, General Secretary of the Bombay Trades Council and the Railwaymen's Union (Jhabwalla also holds posts in many other smaller trade unions); S. A. Dange, General Secretary of the Bombay Textile Workers' Union and an official of the Indian Trade Union Congress, Dharamvir Singh, vice-President of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, and a member of the Legislative Council as a representative of the independence movement, J. C. Joshi, Secretary of the Youth movement for the United Provinces, and Philipp Spratt, a young Englishman who has acted in an advisory capacity to the Indian labour movement for the last

three years. The latter is also editor of the official paper of the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

In answer to questions in the British House of Commons, Earl Winterton, the Secretary of State for India, replied that this new offensive was taken "with the full assent (instructions of the Secretary of State for India", and that these workers are charged with a "conspiracy" to deprive the King of Sovereignty over India".

The offensive has been carefully planned, for all raids took place simultaneously. The warrants were issued by the District Magistrate of Meerut, which means the victims will be tried where hardly any trade union movement exists. This is an attempt, in the first place, to deprive the masses of any first-hand knowledge of the Star Chamber proceedings which are obviously being prepared for the forthcoming trial. If the trials took place in Bombay or Calcutta, these British despots fear that direct action would be used by the masses in protest against this capitalist conspiracy to rush their leaders to prison for long terms. But the workers will answer them, for already 20,000 textile workers have struck in protest at Bombay, and it is reported that many other workers have called protest strikes throughout India.

The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat hails this courageous action of the Indian workers as the correct reply to this terrible offensive. This is a sure sign of ultimate victory for the Indian workers and peasants. All trade unionists in every country must assist organised labour in India to beat back the enemy. This is a struggle for the right to organise. It is a fight for freedom of speech and assembly, not only in India but in every colonial and semi-colonial country. We must have no democratic illusions, for victory will be won by the strong determination of the Indian workers and peasants in a fight to a finish, assisted by the international working class.

We warn the Indian workers against the vacillating compromisers such as N. M. Joshi of the Executive Indian T. U. C., for it was he who attempted to barter away victory and to split the striking textile workers in the last big dispute. With Comrade Dange in prison, N. M. Joshi will try to regain his lost prestige, and destroy the fighting forces of the Girni Kamgar Union (Textile Workers' Union) which has now the largest membership of any union in India.

Remember also that those arrested were actively opposing the formation of Albert Thomas' I. L. O. — Amsterdam Asiatic "Labour" Conference. The P. P. T. U. S. has already warned the organised Indian and other workers against this organised attempt to isolate internationally the Asiatic workers. This manoeuvre is also a fight against the P. P. T. U. S. This proposed conference has the endorsement of the British imperialists and all their lackeys, the Labour imperialists of the British General Council and the Labour Party. The Secretary of State for India who ordered these arrests will not prevent delegates arriving in India for such a hybrid conference. With most of the best trade union and labour leaders in prison their I. L. O.-Amsterdam Conference is but another way to get a stranglehold upon Indian workers and peasants. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Rally to the oppressed trade unionists of India! Help them to win this fight! Every affiliated organisation and every member of the P. P. T. U. S. must regard this fight as our fight. The Indian workers can win with our united assistance. Hold protest meetings. Collect money for the defence of our imprisoned fellow-workers. Dock-workers and seamen, prepare to use united action against the British imperialists. Prepare to boycott British shipping. Rally to the P. P. T. U. S. call for international action. Down with British despotism! Free the imprisoned trade union and labour leaders! Long live the Indian trade union movement!

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For the **Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat**,  
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