

Labor in Far East (Indonesia)

By Semaoen

The rising of a distinct proletarian class in the countries of the Far East is of the first importance to the working class movement of the West. The accounts told in this, the third article of the series by Comrade Semaoen of Java, of recent strike movements led by Communists and Red Trade Unions of Indonesia tell a story far more significant than a similar number of strikes with a similar number of workers in any occidental country. For Holland lives upon her colonies, as do various other imperialist powers, and once the colonial peoples are imbued with the message of Communism, imperialism is doomed. The fourth and last series of these articles, furnished by the Trade Union Educational League, will appear tomorrow.

ARTICLE III

THAT the trade union movement in Indonesia is only active under the leadership of the Communists is proven by the events which took place in earlier days. The small strikes which have occurred from the beginning of this year prove that our working class is willing to undertake an offensive movement for increased wages, guarantees for more certain work, etc. From last May till the end of August the following strikes led by the Red Trade Unions above mentioned were registered by the Communist organ Apy. All the strikes were of an offensive character:

1. May 5, general strike of coachmen (800 strikers) at the town of Solo.

2. May 7, strike of 150 workers of the sugar factory Pétjanga-an. Police persecutions: strike could not be extended into a general strike.

3. May 9, strike of 50 porters at the railway depot at Tikampek. Police compelled the strikers to work but the latter refused. People of the district sympathized with the strikers. Railway management unable to get scabs. Porters were recruited from other districts but refused to work when they knew they were to break the strike. Strike ended with victory for the workers.

4. May 11, strike of 61 women in the Djombang rubber factory at Batavia. Ended in a compromise.

5. May 12, strike of 32 workers in the lime-kiln at Batavia. Victory for the workers.

6. May 13, strike in the H. Bunning printery at Djokdja and in the Indonesische Drukkery (prints the unofficial propaganda organ of the government in Malayan, Hindia Baroe, editor Hadji Salin, leader of the Sarekat Islam (opposed to Communists) in Batavia). Strikebreakers recruited refused to work. All told 300 printers involved.

7. May 16, strike of 50 printers in the De Echo printing office at Djember and 40 artists in the Tjalja Semarang theater in the town of Semarang.

8. May 28, partial strike in the Pakis sugar factory at Paty. Strong oppression by police. On June 7 the strike was extended and then in-

involved 250 workers. Continual police oppression.

9. May 20, strike of 50 workers in the hospital of Sawah-lunt (Sumatra), police persecutions.

10. June 2, strike of 50 workers in the Angtjiwie Hien rice factory at Babat. The strike ended in victory for the workers.

11. June 4, strike of 30 workers in the military engineers' service at Kupang on Timor Island, where many deported revolutionaries are living. In spite of persecutions strike continues.

12. June 10, partial strike of 25 porters in the Atjeh tramway service at Langsa. Police persecutions unsuccessful. Strikers won.

13. June 1, strike of 50 printers in a small printing office at Djokdja.

14. June 15, strike of 100 coolies at the public works in Banjoemas. Strikers won.

15. July 3, strike of 40 workers in the Weltevreden steam laundry.

IT may be added that I have no copies of Apy later than July 3, but from other papers I read of the following:

From the Algemeen Handelsblad, Amsterdam, Aug. 26: Armed police dispersed a demonstration of 100 workers employed at the central hospital at Batavia on July 27. Twenty of the demonstrators have been discharged. Thirty-six workers then went on strike, 7 arrested.

Twelve of the 86 strikers employed at the Semarang hospital, discharged. One of the strike leaders is Darsono. A later telegram tells of this comrade's arrest. He is one of the cle-

rest leaders of the Communist Party has. Attended the 1920 R. I. L. U. congress. I think he will be deported to a small island somewhere in the archipelago.

THE harbor strike at Semarang (where Comrade Darsono is working) is general, 1,200 men involved; 400 more join in later. Harbor service completely stopped. Strikebreakers from other places refused to work. A law forbidding the holding of meetings in Semarang province is being enforced. A general strike of 1,000 printers then broke out. The printing firms forthwith consented to the economic demands of the strikers so that here again a victory for the workers has to be recorded. At the same time there was a strike of printers at Makkasar in the Celebes.

The harbor strike has gone down, but the port fleet is at a complete standstill on account of the sabotage that is taking place. The Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij has therefore established a new service with its own fleet and better working conditions. The new staffs include some of the strikers.

THE law prohibiting meetings will be a stumbling block to the railway union congress due to be held at Semarang. Of late there has been a great deal of talk about a fresh railway strike. Regarding the congress I have as yet no news. Perhaps it has been postponed or held up for some other reason.

(Continued tomorrow.)