

Unemployment in India.

By V. Chattopadhyaya.

The crisis of unemployment that has arisen in India and has become especially acute during the last year, is a direct result of the intensification of imperialist exploitation since the War. The problem has become particularly serious among the educated and half-educated middle-class, and wide public attention has been attracted to their position by the increasing cases of suicide among the unemployed during the last few months.

Before the War, when India was mainly a source of raw materials and foodstuffs and a market for British manufactured goods, the chief object of the imperialists in their educational policy was to create a sufficient number of educated men to occupy positions as minor employees in the Government service and in the commercial companies. The whole school and University system was based on this imperialist need, and the education given was of a more or less literary character, no attention being paid to industrial, technical or agricultural subjects. But even before the War there was an overproduction in men of this type, and there was not sufficient room for them in the imperialist administrative machinery. During and for a short time after the War, there was a sudden development of industries, primarily for the supply of Great Britain's war needs, and there was a temporary outlet for the products of the schools and colleges.

But the situation has changed during the last 8 years, and industrial and agricultural conditions have worsened. The already heavy pressure upon the soil is increasing owing to the influx of the unemployed and of industrial workers on strike from the towns; neither the quantity nor the methods of agricultural production have improved; industrial development has been only as rapid as was needed for British capitalist interests but has not been rapid enough to provide employment for the surplus population of the agricultural areas or for the educated middle class, and the depression in the existing industrial and trade situation has led to the dismissal of large numbers of commercial employees and to reductions in wages.

The economic and political situation is best reflected in the **textile industry** — the leading industry of India. The Indian textile millowners have made fortunes during the last three decades by the direct plunder of their workers, but they are now faced with a serious crisis in their industry. Their ignorance, the technical inefficiency of their factories, the disproportionately high salaries paid to their managers and agents, the absence of an efficient sales organisation and their inability to compete with Lancashire, Japan and America, in spite of the low wages paid to their workers, are forcing the millowners to seek ways and means of enhancing their profits. As these profits must naturally be squeezed out of the workers directly and the broad masses of the consumers indirectly, the millowners have been resorting to **rationalisation**, to attempted reduction in wages, to legislation against the trade union rights of workers, to attempted anti-Strike legislation and to the demand for increased protection against foreign competition.

The inevitable conflict between the workers and their employers has found expression during the last two years in the historic strikes of hundreds of thousands of textile workers under the leadership of the Girni Kamgar Union. In addition, thousands of employees have been thrown out of work. A further increase in unemployment is bound to result in the near future because of the fact that the U.S.A. capitalists, who suffered a very serious blow owing to the recent collapse of the New York stock market, are expected to go in for a wholesale dumping of their textile and other products.

The result is that hundreds of thousands of employees in the industrial concerns, in commercial companies, in government service, are being dismissed, while the employers are exploiting the unemployment situation to reduce still further the already miserable wages of their employees.

Unemployment is most intense among the educated middle-class in the provinces of **Madras, Malabar and Punjab**, but it has also become extremely acute in **Bengal**. The political consequences of the worsening condition of the middle-class are of considerable importance. The intelligentsia, which is either unemployed or extremely ill-paid, has become radicalised during the last few years and is taking an active part in the struggle against imperialism and for national independence. Whereas formerly they were more closely identified with the political programmes of the bourgeoisie, they are now being attracted increasingly to the organisations of workers and peasants, with whose interests they to some extent feel that their own are bound up. The rapid growth of Youth Leagues and Student Associations, the active part played by them in workers' strikes, in the trade union movement, in the Workers & Peasants Parties, in the co-operatives, in the Peasant Unions, etc., are results of this increasing radicalisation. The unemployed middle-class youths are beginning to form themselves in Unions. An appeal issued by the **B. U. Y. U. (Bengal Unemployed Youth Union)** tells them that they "should remember that they have not been born to creep and crawl, wallowing in the deep mire of penury, but to revolt against all tyrannies. It is a revolutionary age they are living in."

But the middle-class youths, notwithstanding their growing unemployment and their radicalisation, are still unclear in their aims. They are clamouring for industrial and agricultural development; they are appealing to the Indian capitalists to build more industries and pay more attention to the educated middle-class, they want technical and industrial schools established by the Government, they want the Government to establish a shipbuilding industry, to employ them in the Army and Navy, etc. etc. These appeals to the Govern-

ment, to the Indian capitalists and to the Nationalist leaders, are accompanied by the threat that "the problem, if it remains untackled for a further period of time, will compel the youths of the country to oscillate between poverty and revolution."

Another aspect of Indian unemployment is that large numbers of Indian educated and half-educated middle-class youths emigrate to Burma, Ceylon and the Malay States in search of employment, in the belief that the rubber and tea plantations, the tin-mines, etc. offer lucrative employment. But the unemployment problem in those countries is just as acute as in India, and the competition with Indians in their own countries is leading to a growing anti-Indian feeling finding expression in the slogans of "Burma for the Burmans", "Ceylon for the Ceylonese", "Malay for the Malaysans".

But the pressure of imperialist exploitation in all these countries will lead to a further worsening of the conditions of life not only of the workers and peasants but of the educated middle-class also, and the radicalised intelligentsia will learn in the course of the struggle that the only improvement in their lot is possible by the complete overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of a workers' and peasants' republic.

At a meeting of the Bengal Unemployed Youths Union recently held in Calcutta it was resolved to organise an "Unemployment Day" with demonstrations, public meetings, etc. throughout the country. Steps have been taken that that "Unemployment Day" shall be the sixth of March, so that the unemployed in India may demonstrate simultaneously with their comrades all over the world on the International Day set apart for that purpose.

THE WHITE TERROR

The Lives of Twenty-Five Turkish Communists in Danger!

By F.

In the spring of 1929 a trial of Turkish Communists took place in **Smyrna**. All the tortures had not succeeded in reducing to silence these heroic champions of the revolutionary movement of the working masses of Anatolia. The court, without any legal justification whatever, pronounced a shameful sentence by which about a hundred revolutionary workers were condemned to terms of imprisonment amounting in all to nearly a hundred years, for the sole "crime" of propagating Communism in Turkey.

Shortly after being sentenced, these victims were to have been sent to Smyrna. In defiance of all legal regulations, they were conveyed in chains like wild beasts to the dungeons of the remotest and most backward districts of Eastern Asia Minor. This measure means their physical annihilation.

After long enforced silence there is now heard from the dungeons of **Elasis** and **Diabekr** the cry for help of these prisoners to the outer world. Not only warders and gendarmes are taking part in the torture of prisoners, but also higher officials. The prolonged tortures have compelled the prisoners to go on hunger strike.

If the international proletariat does not at once intervene in order to snatch these victims from the hands of their tormentors, these champions of the proletarian revolution are doomed to certain death.

The conditions in the prisons of Anatolia are horrible. The prisoners are confined in damp dungeons between bare walls in the greatest dirt, often 20 and 25 prisoners being crowded together in a small cell.

The political prisoners are treated just like common criminals, and in addition are subjected to mediaeval tortures. Whilst, however, under the old regime tortures were only employed in order to extract "confessions", under the regime of **Kemal Pasha** they are employed against prisoners who have already been tried and sentenced. In **Elasis** sticks, rods and hot irons are used as instruments of torture.

In order to gain favour with the imperialist great Powers the Turkish government is increasing the persecution of revolutionary elements. A little while ago more than 20 Communists were arrested in **Adana, Trebizond and Constantinople**, and these are threatened with the same tortures.