

TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The Results of the Second Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference.

By P. (Moscow).

The 2nd Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference was concluded on August 21st. Numerous delegates were prevented by the state of war in Manchuria, following on the seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Mukden Government, from arriving in Vladivostock in time. For this reason it was decided to call the meeting a Conference and not a Congress as originally intended.

One of the most important items on the agenda was the struggle against imperialism and the danger of war, which item assumed particularly great importance in view of the seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Chinese militarists at the instigation of the foreign imperialists. Numerous delegates, and before all the Chinese comrades, declared that this attack upon the Chinese Eastern Railway is directed **both against the workers of the Soviet Union and against the Chinese working class, as well as the whole emancipation movement of the oppressed peoples and classes in the East.** Here it is not a question of a national struggle between the Soviet Union and China, but of a common struggle of the toilers of the Soviet Union and of China against world imperialism and its agents: Chinese reaction. The conflict on the Chinese Eastern Railway will only serve to close more firmly the ranks of the workers of the Soviet Union and of China for the common struggle against imperialism, against the oppression of the peoples and classes in any form whatever.

The discussions and resolutions of the Pan-Pacific Conference, as well as the campaign of the delegates after their return home, will help the million masses of the Pacific Coast to discern the real aim of the impudent attack of Chinese reaction in the pay of the imperialists.

The Conference pointed out that only the revolutionary mass organisations of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletariat can be the bearers of the struggle against imperialism and the danger of war. The creation of mass trade unions presupposes, however, that the advance-guard of the working class puts forward the economic demands of the proletariat and helps the peasants in developing the agrarian revolution. From this there follows the great role of the revolutionary trade unions as the driving and leading force of the whole anti-imperialist movement. Of course those tasks confronting all Pacific countries, and in particular the task of developing revolutionary mass trade unions, must be solved in accordance with the economic, political and cultural conditions prevailing in the respective country. The level of development is different in China, India, in the Philippines, in Korea and Indo-China. The Conference stated that the labour movement in these countries is faced by the danger of white terror and the danger of reformism penetrating the labour movement.

The Conference came to the conclusion, however, that reformism possesses only a narrow base in the colonial labour movement. In spite of persecution and terrorist suppression of the revolutionary trade unions, which is accompanied by an all-round support of the reformist trade unions by the State apparatus as well as by international imperialism and reformism, the reformists have not gained a leading role in the labour movement of the Pacific countries. The "achievements" of reformism in the trade union movement of China, Indonesia and even Japan are far and away outweighed by their enormous weakening in India and in the Philippines, where, under the immediate influence of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat, the Left revolutionary trade union wing has been growing continually stronger during the last two years. The Chinese delegate reported, for instance, that in Shanghai, in the only industrial centre where reformism exerts a certain influence upon the labour movement, the Left wing, in spite of the terror, conducted most of the strikes (70 out of 137) in the second half year of 1928.

The weakness of reformism is further revealed in the fact that the Pan-Asiatic Conference has remained a mere project up to now, although international reformism (Geneva, Amsterdam) and its branch offices in the East have been busily engaged in the preparation of this Conference since 1926. The revolutionary trade union movement, on the other hand, which is co-ordinated in the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, is regularly holding Conferences and Plenums in spite of the fierce resistance of the imperialist governments and their agents, and in the face of white terror, persecutions, and victimisation, it is closing its rank, training the revolutionary advance-guard which is more and more taking over the lead not only of the workers but of the whole anti-imperialist movement in the colonial countries.

The Conference attached special attention to the organisation, development and strengthening of the persecuted and illegal red trade unions, as well as to work in the yellow trade unions. The conduct of economic struggles of the working class was considered to be the most important means for winning the workers for the revolutionary trade unions movement. This is also possible under the most difficult conditions, as is proved by the above mentioned Shanghai example.

The delegates of various countries recorded the fact that conditions have improved as a whole, without however cherishing illusions as to the difficulties facing the revolutionary trade union movement in the East in its struggle for overcoming the terror and illegality. The trade unions in the Pacific countries are no longer isolated. They have found an ally in the Soviet Union and in the revolutionary trade union movement of the imperialist countries. The labour movement in the East is on the upgrade. It is very significant that this upsurge synchronises with the upsurge and the radicalisation of the labour movement in the capitalist countries of Europe and America.

The Conference, which recorded indubitable successes of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat in the two years of its existence

(successful struggle against reformism, regular connection with numerous countries with illegal revolutionary trade union movements), also pointed to the weak points of the work of the Secretariat as well as of the whole revolutionary trade union movement on the Pacific coast (inadequate leadership of the economic struggles, insufficient connection, especially with the big factories, insufficient attention to the questions of women's and child labour). The Secretariat and the affiliated organisations must devote much more attention to all these questions in the future.

The last item of the agenda was the report on the role of the trade unions in the socialist construction of the Soviet Union, which was followed with the greatest attention by all the delegates. The Conference gave instructions that this report should be published in all the most important languages of the East and distributed in all the countries of the Pacific. The spirit of the Conference was well expressed by a delegates who declared:

"The delegates to this Conference will carry the tidings of the great socialist construction in the Soviet Union to their countries. This message will strengthen the labour movement, enhance its fighting spirit and increase tenfold the forces of all those who are fighting for the defence of the Soviet Union and for the world revolution."

The attempt of the imperialists to frustrate the Conference has been wrecked, just as it was two years ago. The Conference has taken place. It has drawn the balance of the two years' activity of the Pan Pacific Secretariat and indicated the further way to develop and strengthen the revolutionary trade union movement in the Pacific countries. The Conference made a serious step towards the unification of the proletarian struggle in the colonies and the international revolutionary trade union movement.