

## On the Struggle of the Trade Unions Against Imperialism

*The following is the speech of the Chairman of the All-China Labor Federation at the "Second Session" (Shanghai) of the II Pan Pacific Trade Union Conference. This speech, the PAN-PACIFIC MONTHLY regards as one of the most valuable contributions to the line of struggle that must be followed by the trade unions of colonial and semi-colonial countries, and a guide to action, as well, of the revolutionary labor movement of the imperialist nations. It is especially worthy of study by the trade unions of India at the present moment.—Editor.*

THE biggest danger in our struggle for independence is a lack of understanding of our ultimate objective. If we think the national bourgeoisie will fight for independence it is well to draw lessons from the Chinese Revolution. The same elements and forces are at work in all other colonial countries, and already the betrayal of the independence movement is a fact in many countries.

The Indian, Indonesian and Philippine bourgeoisie have deserted the struggle for a miserable share in imperialist exploitation, and for petty administrative and governmental positions under imperialist dictatorship.

But these traitors will continue to speak of national interests in order to keep the workers and peasants from fighting for their class interests which is the objective in the struggle for national independence. Unless we realize this, then we shall never get national independence, and only the workers and peasants are capable of accomplishing this task, as we have learned from our experiences from 1925 to 1927.

### REFORMIST-FASCISM

We must realize the preparation for imperialist war is coupled with the suppression of militant trade unions and with greater exploitation of the colonial peoples. The life of imperialism depends upon this, and the national bourgeoisie become their running dogs, for they are not prepared to risk their

position in a struggle with imperialism. The suppression in China is greater than in other countries and we have lost more than 100,000 of our best fighters in the last two years. This is also connected with the preparations for war.

But the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie know they cannot completely crush our trade union movement, therefore they organize their own reformist and fascist unions. This has happened in China and is developing also in other countries. The Kuomintang utilize all the thieves they can mobilize to cheat the workers in their attempt to destroy our unions, and the Philippine reformists who refuse to agree with collective leadership are essentially the same elements who aim to destroy the solidarity of labor.

### ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL: ONE STRUGGLE

The attack made by Chaman Lal at the last Indian Trade Union Congress, stating that the P.P.T.U. Movement is a political organization, is also a means to split the workers.

No activity can be disconnected from the political tasks of the working class. Resistance to the capitalist offensive is highly political, involving a struggle with capitalism. Chaman Lal was trying to confuse the masses and stop the development of the mass movement.

In the colonies, where unions are illegal, it is easy to lead only economic struggles, but

this would lead to a narrowing down of the workers' movements and finally to the abandonment of the class struggle altogether. It leads to compulsory arbitration and finally to fascism. Only by fighting in political struggles can the workers defend their economic demands.

It is absolutely necessary to connect every political demand with the economic demands of the workers. The workers suffer terribly from imperialist exploitation and to develop the fight against imperialism we must develop the struggle for higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions, etc. The same applies to our fight against the attacks upon the U.S. S.R., against imperialist war danger, and for national independence.

In countries where the trade unions are made illegal, it is ridiculous to speak of being non-political. We must demand the right to organize, strike, picket, and hold meetings, etc. We must demand a free workers' press and a free expression of opinion. This is the elementary struggle for political rights, which we must have to assist in developing a struggle for economic demands. In fact Chaman Lal does the political propaganda

of the British imperialists while his ally, the Labor Government, shoots down the Indian workers.

There is a great need for consolidating our trade unions organizationally. We should centralize the movement from the bottom to the top, and only in our unions can the workers have a democratic expression of their opinions. To strengthen our trade unions we must adopt national programs of immediate demands. These must include higher wages, shorter hours, better treatment and conditions, abolition of child labor, abolition of night work for the youth and women, social and unemployed relief, holidays, etc.

We must build factory committees which must become the basis of industrial unions, amalgamate sectional unions into class unions, create united front struggles for immediate demands and against reformist traitors with the workers in centrist and right wing unions, organize the unorganized workers, as well as the unemployed, etc.

By this activity we shall win the masses to fight against the united front of the imperialists, reformists and their colonial watch-dogs.



*In a Shanghai silk factory. Note the child slaves.*