

Tasks of Organization Facing Pacific Trade Unions

Resolution Adopted by P.P.T.U.S. on Comrade Johnston's Report at the Vladivostok Conference

1. It devolves upon the revolutionary trade union movement both of the East and West to do away with the great gulf between its ideological influence over the working masses and the extent to which it has consolidated that influence through organization. In the Orient this work is made considerably more complicated because of the youngness of the movement and the exceptionally onerous conditions created by the white terrorism raging in practically every part of the East. In the result, the importance of the question of organization in the Eastern Trade Union movement arises in its full stature. The organizational structure of the unions should be sufficiently broad to admit of roping in as large a number of the masses as possible. It must be democratic in order to enable self-criticism to develop and promote the initiative of the rank and file members. At the same time it must be sufficiently centralized to render it possible to provide the best possible guidance to the masses in their class struggle. It follows, then, that the fundamental principle of organization lies in democratic centralism, and the most suitable form of organization in keeping with the present stage of capitalist development and the intensivity of the class struggle is the industrial union built up on the principle of One Union for Each Industry.

2. The practical application of the principle of democratic centralism for the Trade Union movement of the different countries depends on the specific setting in each given country. It will be found, for instance, that the Left Trade Union movement in Japan, in India, and on the Philippines ought to adhere to the principle that all Trade

Union executive bodies, officials, and so on be elected, while in China, where white terrorism is raging today and the revolutionary trade unions are illegal and driven underground, it becomes inevitably necessary to combine the principle of indirect elections with the vestment of powers from above. None the less, it is desirable that the All-China Federation of Trade Unions should as far as possible also apply in practice this principle of election and gradually give up the system of appointment from above. It must be borne in mind that the systematic application of such appointments hampers the establishment of close connections between the directing bodies of the Trade Union organizations and the mass of the rank and file, undermines confidence in the leading organs, and handicaps the growth of the independent activities of the masses, the development of self-criticism and the more intensive activity of the rank and file membership, as well as the growth of militant mass trade unions.

The work of the Left Trade Unions and their relations both with the rank and file mass of the membership and the superior centers must be built up on democratic foundations. Simultaneously, the Left Trade Unions must strictly adhere to the principle of centralization in their activities. As will be understood, it is essential to have centralized leadership based on the activity of the rank and file of the masses. This in turn renders it necessary to maintain firm proletarian discipline in relations between local organizations and the national directing center.

In those reformist trade unions where the trade union bureaucrats have created a cen-

tralized machinery from above over the mass of the rank and file membership (e. g. the Kuomintang trade unions in China, the Rodo-Sodomei and other reformist trade unions in Japan, and elsewhere), it is up to the P. P. T. U. S. supporters in these organizations to fight for working class democracy, for decentralization. The Left Wing inside the reformist unions must take steps to mobilize the rank and file masses for the struggle on behalf of freedom of criticism, for the direct election of all officials, organizers, delegates, committee members, etc., and also endeavor to establish actual and effective control by the rank and file of the membership over elections into the trade unions. The Trade Union Left Wing must steadily work to get the leadership of the trade unions to pass more and more to rank and file members. The activity of the rank and file masses must find expression in their participation in thoroughly representative strike committees elected from their own midst by the workers, and also in factory and works committees, and by this means building up a counter-weight against the reformist Jacks-in-office.

3. From the viewpoint of reorganization the weakest aspect of the Left Trade Union movement in the East consists in that: (a) in most cases the revolutionary trade unions are small, scattered organizations functioning mainly in small factories or workshops (as is the case in Japan and China), while the majority of the large-scale plants remain unorganized and where there are organizations in these plants they are under yellow influence (Japan); (b) the revolutionary trade unions have poor contact between themselves and are *not lined up in really representative industrial unions*; (c) the Left Wing wields very little influence and does not possess its own organizations in the key industries (Japan, China); (d) the work of organizing the unorganized is being neglected, this especially applying to the case of the women, the youth, the land laborers and to the plantation workers; (e) the campaign to recruit new members for the revolutionary trade unions is not being conducted with sufficient energy which

in the upshot leads to a crass disproportion between the ideological influence wielded by the Left Wing and its organizational strength; (f) there is no close contact between the leading bodies of the Left trade unions and the masses (in this respect the Girni Kamgar Union in Bombay is a rare exception); (g) the work of organizing the revolutionary elements inside the reformist unions is not being done as well as it should be (Japan, China, Indonesia); (h) preparations for and the co-ordination of strikes are inadequate and not intensive enough; (i) the directing "cadres" of the Left Trade Union movement are not nearly strong enough numerically and the scope of the mass activities of the Left Trade Unions is not satisfactory; (k) there is no regular contact with the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat (barring China and the Philippines), and between the different countries affiliated.

4. With a view to getting rid of the defects mentioned in the previous paragraph the Left Trade Union movement of the Far East countries must, first and foremost, put forth every effort to consolidate its influence in the key industries and in the transport services, as well as to extend the membership of the Left Wing unions and transform them into mass industrial unions. In the first place, it is essential that experienced organizers should set to work in large-scale plants and in transport, on the plantations, and so on, for the purpose of establishing direct contact with the masses. On establishing contact with the progressive elements of the given plant, these organizers should form trade union groups, each such group to include all advanced and revolutionary-minded workers irrespective of whether they are members of the reformist trade unions or not organized at all. The group shall formulate and popularize the immediate demands of the workers, and in the event of a favorable response coming from the broad working masses, it shall declare strikes, steps being taken to arrange elections of thoroughly representative strike committees. No wavering elements or representatives of the yellow trade union democracy (?) bureaucracy ought to be

admitted to these strike committees. Strike committees ought to be elected irrespective of whether there are trade union organizations or factory committees in the given plant or not.

5. For the purpose of building up and consolidating the revolutionary trade unions, mainly in the key industries and large-scale plants, it is essential to devote particular attention to the work of setting up factory and shop committees as permanently functioning organs for carrying on the day-to-day struggle for the vital immediate interests of the workers. As rallying points in the daily struggle of the workers for their immediate needs, the factory committees are to promote the induction of the workers into the class struggle. At the same time they represent the best primary schools for educating the unorganized masses and are the most suitable means for building up the united front from below. Concurrently, they serve as a broad foundation for the revolutionary trade unions and clear the ground for the development of industrial unionism. With revolutionary leadership the factory committees form a most effectual weapon in fighting reformism and class collaboration. Again, in the event of a revolutionary situation arising, they are bound to be transferred into an important factor in the work of realizing workers' control.

The strike movement now developing in India, Japan and other countries opens up splendid possibilities for the creation of factory committees. Upon the conclusion of strikes the strike committees should be made use of as a base for building up factory committees. In their activities the strike and factory committees should look for backing and support to really representative delegate meetings convened from individual plants or groups of plants. Such delegate meetings ought to be a broad avenue of representation for the workers and serve as one of the best forms of enabling the strike and factory committees to keep in touch with the masses, especially when it comes to settling questions of vital interest to the workers. As an institution the delegate meetings constitute a means

for training new "cadres" and drawing forth the initiative and activity of the masses.

In China, where white terrorism is raging, it would be more advisable at the outset to convene delegate conferences in the different plants. The delegates in these plants must fight for the open existence of the factory committees and open up the way for their formation. The factory committees should include all workers in the given plant, both unorganized and organized.

The factory committees must not be looked upon as bodies capable of replacing the trade unions, nor can the factory committees take the place of the strike committees. The latter must be elected by all workers in the given plant during the dispute concerned and must be regarded as temporary bodies. Interrelations between the strike and factory committees must lie along the line of mutual support, mainly in carrying on the fight for the seven-hour working day, against wage cuts, rationalization and the dismissal of workers blacklisted by the police, and in favor of better conditions all round for the working class, for unemployment benefit being given those out of work, and to endorse the struggle for the right to strike, etc.

In Japan the revolutionary trade unions must carry on a real fight against the sham factory committees usually set up on a joint basis out of workers, nominated by the police, and representatives of the employers. The Kyogikai must continue to put every effort into developing the network of genuine proletarian factory committees and linking up the existing factory committees under centralized leadership.

It is essential to utilize every political and organizational possibility, however slight, to build up workers' representation at the point of production, any name being adopted for such representation—vigilance committees, wage defense committees, commissions to promote the improvement of working conditions, etc. The title is not important, the main thing being that whatever body is set up should be elected by all the men and women workers and be genuinely representative of all those employed in the given plant.

6. The organization of the unorganized is the primary and immediate task of all trade unions affiliated to the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. It is therefore necessary to make every possible effort towards this goal. The drive to organize the unorganized must be carried on systematically and with a real punch behind it. The central objective in this campaign must be to recruit new members for the existing revolutionary trade unions and set up revolutionary unions where the working masses are concentrated—in industrial enterprises, transport, plantations and on the farms. At the same time the revolutionary unions must set up special commissions of their own to recruit and organize the women and the youth.

In those countries where the Trade Union movement is divided the unorganized workers must be recruited direct into the revolutionary unions. In these countries the Left Wing must not conduct any campaigns whatever to recruit members for the reformist and yellow unions. All organizational campaigns must be closely linked up with the everyday struggle of the workers. At times of mass action (strikes, demonstrations, etc.), organizational activities must be carried on with particular energy.

7. The policy of the united front and the struggle for trade union unity must be carried on entirely from below, at the point of production, in strict accordance with a clear-cut working class programme, a whole-hearted fight being simultaneously put up against reformism and class collaboration. Proposals regarding the united front and trade union unity must always be submitted to the masses, to the rank and file members of the reformist unions, in order thus to realize the united front and trade union unity below. At the same time it is always essential to explain to the masses that the reformist leaders (the Rights and the Centrists so-called), and the trade union bureaucrats are paid agents of the bourgeoisie, and that they sabotage the workers' struggle and ought to have no place in the ranks of the trade unions.

8. The existence of Left Wing unions must on no account involve as a consequence

any repudiation on the part of the revolutionary elements of activities inside the reformist and yellow unions. On the contrary, the revolutionary elements must intensify their activities inside these bodies, steps being taken to mobilize the rank and file to fight the office holders and their treacherous and opportunist policies. Activities in the existing reformist unions should be continued and intensified, especially wherever these organizations are mass bodies (as, e. g., in the case of the Seven Big Unions of Shanghai and the reformist unions in India and Japan).

It is essential to state here that in this respect the work being done in China is still very poor. While carrying on active work to consolidate and develop Red trade unions, it is essential to pay particular attention to those yellow and Kuomintang trade unions containing any workers at all, however few. Activities in these unions are of outstanding importance and most essential. Actually, though, there is no clear-cut line on this point in China and the work there is not moving out of the rut. A drastic change requires to be made in this regard, and the step taken from words to work. Our goal must be at all costs to win the workers in these unions and to direct the whole of their day-to-day struggle by mobilizing the workers against the treacherous yellow Kuomintang venal bureaucracy. Only whole-hearted activities carried on wherever the masses are to be found will make it possible for the Red trade unions to enlarge the orbit of their influence and transform them into a decisive factor in the class struggle of the Chinese proletariat.

9. The revolutionary trade unions must also intensify their activities to fuse all small and dual unions into industrial unions standing on the platform of the class struggle. It is up to them to provide the rank and file of the working masses with a thorough and convincing explanation of the necessity of reorganizing the craft and territorial unions into industrial unions. Any tendencies making for mechanical reorganization must be got rid of. Certain positive results have accrued from the practice of the "committees to advocate industrial fusion" set up by the Kyogikai in China as preliminary bodies to

effect such fusion. It is essential also to work for the merging of different trade union organizations in any given branch of industry which at the present time are cut up along national lines, this applying to Japan, Singapore and the Philippines.

10. It is perfectly plain that without suitable educational activities and the organizational training of new bodies of active men, women and young workers, the revolutionary trade unions will never be able to cope with the tasks by which they are faced. For this reason it is most essential immediately to train and educate the more advanced workers for the purpose of promoting them to directing activities in the workers' class organizations. The best means of training such an active rank and file is to get the workers drawn directly into the daily activities of the trade unions. Yet it is also necessary to take steps to provide for a deeper and more systematic education of active trade unionists, and for this purpose a suitable network of trade union schools and study circles must be created. In addition, it is essential to arrange for regular reports, lectures and talks on current and outstanding issues of the trade union movement. The curriculums and syllabuses of these schools and study circles must be adopted to the different groups of workers and take into due consideration the general conditions governing the state of the trade union movement in the given country. |

11. Particularly at the present time, the financial question in the work of the unions acquires outstanding importance, especially in view of the fact that we are concentrating on the intensification of their organizational activities. Yet, as matters are, not nearly enough attention has been given so far to this work by our unions in the East.

In the first place, the unions must arrange for the regular collection of members' dues (monthly, fortnightly, weekly, or on what-

ever day the members are paid) special bodies of elected dues collectors being set up for this purpose. The funds coming to the union treasury must not go entirely on the upkeep of machinery and other organizational requirements, since every union—legal and illegal—must aim at accumulating certain funds. The strike or militant fund of the union coming first. In addition to the regular allocation of part of the receipts obtained in the form of members' dues, extra monies may be obtained for these funds by arranging levies, issuing special stamps, etc. Wherever police conditions permit, members' books must be introduced for those joining our unions. These membership books should cover a period of several years, as their annual withdrawal and re-issue renders it difficult to keep regular track of the membership.

12. The revolutionary trade unions must devote serious attention to the matter of establishing and intensifying international connections between themselves as well as with the center of the revolutionary trade union movement in the Far East—the P. P. T. U. S. To this end they should keep the P. P. T. U. S. regularly informed on the current situation in their respective countries, besides arranging that the workers in their own countries have current information concerning the battles of the workers elsewhere in the Pacific and throughout the world in their struggle against the bourgeoisie. International education for the working masses is one of the most important tasks lying upon all P. P. T. U. S. affiliated organizations. In this regard it is essential to carry on extensive and systematic propaganda against any and all attempts whatsoever on the part of the representatives of imperialism (the International Labor Office, the Pan-Asiatic Labor Conference, and like bodies), to get an organizational foothold in the countries bordering on the Pacific.