

# Report of the Second Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference

Vladivostok, August 15-21, 1929

*Speech of Comrade Browder, in Opening the Second Pan-Pacific T.U. Conference*

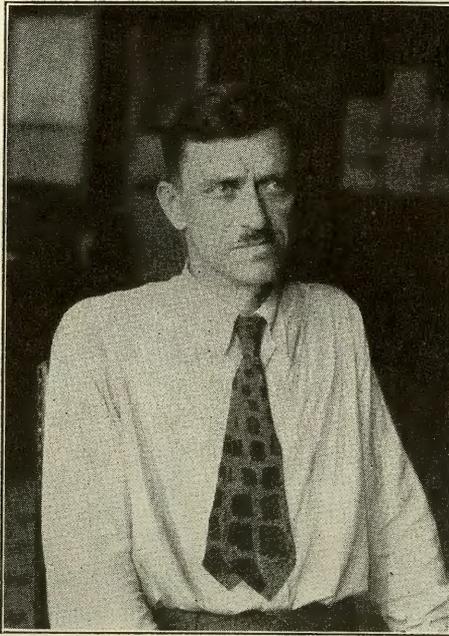
## COMRADES:

In opening the Second Conference of the Pacific Trade Unions, we should pause for a moment in memory of the many victims of the struggle against imperialism, who, since our First Conference two years ago have heroically given their lives for our common struggle. In Japan, in Korea, in India, in Indonesia, and especially in China — many tens of thousands of the best working - class fighters have been exterminated, murdered in cold blood by the imperialists and their native agents, and more thousands are in prison or are deported to desert islands which are worse than prisons.

Among our thousands of martyrs, we have especially to mention two of the Chinese delegates to our First Conference: Comrade Chen Fo-tah, who represented the Shanghai General Labor Union and the Seamen's Union, and Wong Ho Po, who represented the Chinese Railwaymen's Union, and was placed upon the PPTUS as one of the Chinese representatives; both these comrades were

murdered by Chiang Kai-shek, Comrade Chen Fo-tah being first arrested by the British in Shanghai and turned over by them to the militarists. Another whom we must mention is Comrade Watanabe, one of the founders of Japanese trade union movement,

who was coming to Shanghai to attend the Third Plenum of the PPTUS, when he was assassinated by the Japanese police. It is necessary to recall the vile murder of Comrade Yamamoto, who was representing the revolutionary Japanese workers in the Diet, and whose death is a symbol of that semi-fascist, semi-feudal regime by which Japanese imperialism maintains itself. And we must call to memory the brutal electrocution of Sacco and Vanzetti in the United States of America, which forever put an end to American pretensions that its bourgeois democracy is essentially any different from the rule of a Chinese militarist. And finally we have to record with deep sorrow the loss of the Chairman



EARL BROWDER

*General Secretary, Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat*

of the Pan-Pacific TU Secretariat, Comrade Sou-Chao-jen, whose services to the Chinese and international labor movement are well known to all of you, and whose untimely death was the result of the enormous strain imposed upon him by his tireless underground work establishing the illegal trade unions.

Pledging this Conference to continue the work, in the same spirit in which these martyrs gave their lives, let us stand for a moment in honor of their memory.

At the moment in which we are meeting, the danger of Imperialist War has assumed very definite, concrete form. The violent seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Chinese militarists, inspired by their masters, the imperialists of Britain, Japan, France, and the United States, can only be considered a direct provocation of war. Its purpose is clear—it is the beginning of the long-planned effort of international imperialism to crush the Soviet Union. At the same time the imperialist rivalries among themselves, especially between England and America, are reaching the point of an attempt at solution by war. The whole world stands on the brink of a new world slaughter, more destructive, than the late world war.

It is clear that we did not exaggerate the situation when we said, in our Call for this Conference, issued last October, that this will probably be the final opportunity for the Pacific trade unions to confer together and formulate their common programme before the outbreak of war. Indeed, the war moves in Manchuria, have anticipated our conference, and by closing the frontiers, have kept away from our gathering a large majority of the delegates who were elected. From Japan only 3 of the 10 elected have been able to reach Vladivostok! from China, only 5 out of 12; from the Philippines only 1 out of 6; the entire Australian delegation, after travelling for 5 weeks, reached Japan, only a few hundred miles away, only to be turned back by the Japanese police. The delegates from Korea, Formosa, Singapore, and Indonesia, with one exception, have all been prevented from reaching Vladivostok by

the war provocateurs and by the imperialist police. Only a fraction of our Congress has been able to come together, including delegates from eight countries.

These events have enormously increased the difficulties of our work. At the same time, however, they serve to emphasize the importance of this Conference and the whole work of the PPTUS. The events which have reduced the size of our Congress, have increased the necessity of its work, and make it more than ever imperative that the whole Pan Pacific trade union movement increase its activities by tenfold. Our struggle against imperialist war preparations, organized at our First Conference, will soon have to enter the new stage of struggle against the imperialist war in progress, in transforming it into a civil war of the oppressed classes and peoples. The problems of this struggle against war and imperialism becomes the whole centre of our work at this gathering! And just as the main objective of the imperialists is the crushing of the Soviet Union, just so the central point of working class policy, recognizing the Soviet Union as the only fatherland of the oppressed of the world, must be the slogan "Defend the Soviet Union"; "Down with the warmakers".

When our first Conference met at Hankow, China, more than two years ago, the first great wave of the Chinese Revolution was at its height. Our Conference then was welcomed by a representative of the Wuhan "Left" Kuomintang Government, with the slogan "Long live the World Revolution." But within two months this treasonable "left" petty bourgeoisie has not only forgotten the world revolution, but had openly surrendered the Chinese revolution to the counter-revolution of Chiang Kai-shek. But the temporary defeat of the Chinese Revolution by the combined forces of feudal bourgeoisie imperialist reaction, has at the same time profoundly hastened the maturing of the colonial liberation movement in all lands, the separation of the revolutionary masses from bourgeois leadership, the consolidation of class trade unions and Communist Parties in the various countries. In India, Indonesia,

Philippines and the other colonial countries of the East, the masses are already mobilizing their forces independently of the national-reformist bourgeoisie, so that when the coming new revolutionary wave rises, it will no more have bourgeois traitors at its head, but true revolutionary workers and peasants, the only guarantee for the defeat of imperialism and the liberation of the oppressed.

The reign of reaction throughout the East, the offensive of Imperialism and its native tools against the labor movement of all lands, and against the national liberation movement, has made extremely difficult the maintenance and development of the work of the PPTUS. Never before in trade union history has a practical attempt been made to cope with such complications and difficult problems over such a tremendous territorial area, such as the task set itself by the PPTUS. With our principal fields of work separated from one another by one to five thousand miles, most of them under the rigid rule of imperialist police or native white terror, with the most extreme diversity of economic conditions, nationality and race, with trade unions in most countries young and inexperienced, without any established traditions of international connections and action, it can truly be said that our tasks are colossal.

But in beginning our work at this Congress, we must say that in the last two years a real foundation has been laid, which will be a permanent contribution to the history of the working class of the world. With all our shortcomings and weaknesses—to which we do not shut our eyes, and to which we must direct the most severe self-criticism—in spite of all the Pan Pacific Labor Movement has been forging ahead. Where a few short years ago there was complete isolation

of the labor movement of each country, and in most countries the silence of the yet-to-be-born, there is now a vigorous rising, fighting trade union movement, a gathering army of proletarians with class conscious leadership, national organization functioning as units of an internationally organized movement. This is an achievement of which we may justly be proud, and which should give us high courage for the next period of work and struggle into which we are now entering.

For the delegates from other countries who are here in the Soviet Union, and for the workers whom they represent, one of the most important functions of this Conference, is to hear the report on the work of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union, and their part in the tremendous achievements of socialist construction. Even with the meagre knowledge which the workers of the Pacific lands have been able to gain about the Soviet Union it stands out as a lighthouse of the working class movement, showing them the way and inspiring them for the struggle. There is the most intense thirst for more knowledge about the Soviet Union among these workers, for more details of the great new society which is being built here. The knowledge of these matters which will be gained by the delegates here, and taken back to their own countries, will strengthen the whole movement, increase its fighting spirit, and deepen and widen the forces consciously fighting for the Defense of the USSR, and for the international revolution.

Comrades, with these introductory remarks, I declare the Second Conference of the Trade Unions of the Pacific is now opened.