Comrade Losovsky's Concluding Speech

At the Vladivostok Conference of the P.P.T.U.S.

COMRADES!

The full unanimity shown by all the delegates concerning the fundamental questions of our reports does not require a long concluding speech; if nevertheless I am going to take the word, I do it firstly to summarize and secondly to deal with several questions that have been touched upon by the delegates in the discussion on my report.

We do not feel any doubt whatever that the struggle in the Pacific Ocean forms at present the central problem of the world politics. Many years ago one of the most important leaders of American imperialism, the former President of the United States of America, Theodore Roosevelt, said that the Atlantic era of history had come to an end, and that a new one—the Pacific era of history was beginning. This was said expressly to mark the fact that the centre of world politics and world economy was being shifted from Europe on to the most important country in the Pacific — to the United States of America. If this sentences seemed to be grossly exaggerated before the war, it is without doubt to be considered as very real at present when the United States, by using the extreme weakness of the capitalist countries after the war, attained the position of the financial, industrial and economic lead of the world, at present when we experience a whole number of post-war conflicts, of post-war crisis of capitalism, and the extremely strained competition between England and the United States, and the United States and Japan.

England and America

I have said already that the struggle in the Pacific Ocean and for the Pacific Ocean is the struggle for world supremacy; he who is watching attentively present-day politics of England and the United States of America, he who is watching the different actions of McDonald that are intended as flattery to the United States, while England is at the same time making every effort to get ready for the decisive struggle with her competitor, he who is aware of the ever-changing conflicts among all the big imperialist powers —will have to acknowledge that the struggle for world supremacy between the former world power—England— and the present leading power of the world — the United States of America— is finding its clearest expression here in the Far East, in the particular and specific conditions reigning in the Pacific Ocean.

Our conference must come to a decision on a question that was only perfunctorily dealt with here; we must decide which will be the relations of colonial working masses to imperialism, how they will fight imperialism that is oppressing the respective colonial country; in other words, we must decide which will be the relations of the Philippine workers and peasants to Japanese imperialism and those of the workers and peasants to American imperialism, etc. I am asking this question because we find in the imperialist press many articles on the conditions of the working class and the peasantry of those colonies that the respective imperialist power should like to wrench from the grasp of the competing imperialist powers. Preparatory work is doubtlessly being carried out in order to draw the sympathy of the working classes and peasants to the side of the imperialist power, that is posing as a competitor of the present oppressor. Is not the Japanese imperialism, making propaganda for the liberation of the Philippines from American imperialism? Is not the imperialism of the United States of America ready at any moment to free Korea from Japanese imperialism, is not to put it shortly, anyone of the competitors giving expression to this wish of liberating the slaves of the others? This is one of the machinations that was used widely during the imperialist war when the

former allies were shedding tears and using very much ink and paper to describe the terrible lot of the nations oppressed by Austria; at the same time the allies were entirely forgetting the lot of their own colonies: in Africa, in India, etc.

All Imperialisms are "Worse"

We shall, doubtlessly, notice among certain individuals of the bourgeoisie, and even among the leaders of the working masses, the intention to ally themselves with foreign imperialism against their own in the approaching struggle. During the last war, for example, the so-called Czecho-slovak "socialists" allied themselves with French imperialism in their fight against the oppression of Austria. The Polish socialists, with Pilsudsky as leader, were aided by French imperialism in their fight against the Germans, etc. It is one of the most important moves in the game the imperialists are playing to make use of the workers of the given oppressed colonial country and to incite them to the struggle against their oppressors. But, at the end of the war, one imperialism will be substituted by another one, the place of the old boss will be taken by a new one: thus the workers will be only a plaything in the hands of the imperialists; every worker, especially those of the Far East, must fully recognize this. The American bourgeoisie is, at the present time, endeavouring to "liberate" China from the yoke of Japanese and British imperialism, etc. But this is done in order to veil the intention of getting a still firmer grip in China. This game will acquire grand dimensions as soon as war breaks out. Then the French will be afire to liberate the countries that are oppressed, say by the British, if the war will be between the French and the British. The Japanese will make efforts to liberate those oppressed by the Americans. This game will have to be unveiled before the war. Workers will have to answer: "Both are worse," if asked "which imperialism is better?" This reminds me of a witticism told by Heinrich Heine, the well-known German poet. When asked which he would prefer, to have his arm cut off or his leg—he answered, that he would prefer to get some milk-soup: he wanted to say that he would prefer to keep both arms and legs. We, the workers, will have to give the following answer when asked which imperialism is better, which we should support: "All of them are worse than anything." Every proletarian will have to stick to the line of conduct, every worker who is siding with the principles of class-struggle will give this answer. We might be asked: "Does there not exist some difference between American and Japanese imperialism?" We might be asked: "Is the slogan 'America to the Americans', not a better one than 'Asia to the Asiatics?'" And we shall answer that both these slogans are dictated by one and the same kind of imperialist appetite. "America for the Americans" means really that North and South America should belong to the ruling classes of the U.S.A.; "Asia to the Asiatics" means really that the whole of Asia should belong to the ruling classes of Japan. This must be clear to everybody. We must never permit ourselves to be led astray into the wrong path of external conflicts that are taking place among the imperialist powers, that are very often veiled by many beautiful and liberty-loving slogans and phrases.

Japan and America

I want to remind you of certain facts: You know that the origin of the conflict between America and Japan lies as far back as before the war, and that after the war it was continued by the controversy on the right of Japanese to emigrate to America, and on their right of taking their nationalization papers in America and buying land, etc. Much ink and many tears were spilled by the Japanese press on this question. There is no doubt that this aggressive act of the Americans against the Japanese is purely imperialistic, that it is the act of racial oppression. But if the Japanese bourgeoisie is making so much noise about it, one might ask them: "And what about the Koreans whom the Japanese are oppressing; what about the right of the Chinese, whom the Japanese are ruthlessly exploiting?" All this pathos, that is highly paid for, is really worth

nothing and we must not permit ourselves to be deceived. Two powerful enemies are struggling for supremacy, and either of them is taking a number of preparatory measures for the struggle against the other. We are against imperialism, and therefore, we must unveil the inhuman racial policy of Japan as well as that of America. We cannot make any distinction, they are principally the same.

It is interesting to see, how this question, besides other questions, is being treated by the leaders of the American workers movement. The leaders of the American Federation of Labor instituted a special organization that they call the Pan American Federation of Labor. This federation is also based upon the so-called workers' Monroe doctrine. This is to say that there exist two Monroe doctrines—one for the workers and another one not for the workers. One of the leaders of the American Trade Union movement defined the Workers' Monroe doctrine by saying that no European workers' organization, and no workers' organization from any of the other continents should have any influence on the territory of whole America. This is almost the meaning of the non-workers' Monroe doctrine. While the shameless leaders of the American labor movement are putting up the idea of a Pan-American Union, their Japanese counterpart are putting up the Pan-Asiatic Workers' Union. It is hard to say which of them is the better—the Pan American or the Pan Asiatic Union. We, the revolutionary workers, must judge them as we are judging imperialism itself. If we are asked which of these organizations is the better one, we shall answer both of them are worse than anything. We have already answered this question in our way. While the Americans were creating the Pan American Federation of Labor, we assisted the workers' movement of Latin America in creating the Latin American Federation of Labor. Thus the Pan American Federation lost the whole of Latin America. The Pan American Federation, moreover, has lost all its significance, as the Canadian Trade Union movement is only partly linked with it.

We, on the other hand, did not wait for the creation of the Pan Asiatic Federation, by the reformists, but brought into life the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, thus tearing from the reformists' grip the Korean, Philippine and a part of the Japanese Trade Unions and killing the Pan Asiatic Federation before it was born.

Reformist Advocates of Imperialism

This is the proper proletarian answer to the diverse imperialist attempts at forming the workers' movement according to race distinctions and the rules of imperialist practise. All imperialist plans of this kind shall be answered by us by practical measures taken according to the principles of class struggle, and we must act in the same way in the future. This means that we must unite the workers' movements all along the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, irrespective of racial distinctions, territorial differences, etc., into one, undivided movement. We have, in the course of our work, very often met with attempts of the imperialists and their ideologic hirelings to make use of the chauvinist position of the leaders of the workers' movements of countries that are their enemies. I shall cite a striking and exotic example. There lives in Japan a Japanese doctor, Yoshitomi, who wrote a very thick book in French, with the title "Japanese-American conflicts and the problem on the Pacific Ocean." This doctor is writing many, many pages about the harm the Americans did to the Japanese, and especially underlines the chauvinist position of the American Federation of Labor. This defendant of the interests of Japanese imperialism, writing about the action of the Council of the Californian Trade Unions against Japanese immigration intends apparently to touch some special chord in the breast of his readers and writes concerning the American Federation of Labor the following: "The American Federation of Labor, which is refraining from aiding the common cause of social justice, which is setting itself apart from the workers of other nationalities by making race distinctions, has, according to the point of view of social interests and peace among nations, no right to exist. If it takes up a position opposite to that of the Japanese by not wanting to have

anything to do with a colored race, it stamps itself as an enemy to internationalism, the ideal of the wrokers' movements and the peasants if it denies the principle that concerns all races, the Japanese included, then we must call its policy imperialistic and militarist. If the Federation opposes Japanese immigration, we cannot find any distinction between the Federation and capitalism that is oppressing the weak and exploiting the toiling masses." The dear doctor writes like a socialist writer, and not like the advocate of Japanese capitalism. He is talking of social justice. He, of course, drew the peasantry into the dispute; he is talking about everything and at the same time accusing his associates of acting against the interests of the proletariat. In this respect he is essentially right, of course.

It is very interesting to note that a bourgeois writer, in order to touch some sentimental chord in the breast of his readers, quite correctly characterized the shameless agents of capital that are the leaders of the Trade Unions of the United States of America. But the point is that in quite correctly characterizing the official leaders of the American Trade Union Movement, he entirely forgot their Japanese colleagues, who have the same convictions as regards Japanese imperialism.

The point is that Bunji Suzuki and any leader of the American Federation of Labor are as alike as twin brothers; they are politically speaking in the same camp. This accusation, signed by the enemy of American chauvinism, would be of value to us, if it would accuse the Japanese reformists together with the American ones. All these tirades lose their value, because it is onesidedly directed against the American enemies of Japanese imperialism, and can, of course, have no influence at all on the judgment of class conscious proletarians. Thus we see that sometimes a very just and correct characterization, owing to its partiality, acquires a specific imperialistic shade. This is the reason why we, who are working on the coasts of the Pacific Ocean, must be very attentive in our discrimination of the methods employed by one imperialist power in its struggle against another one; this is the reason why every one of us must make it his task to kick the servants of imperialism and their bosses, who are taking part in the workers' movements out of the movement altogether, irrespective of their race or nationality. Only if we do this we shall be acting in the interests of the working class.

Various Stages of Trade Unionism

The workers' movements on the coasts of the Pacific Ocean differ widely from each other. The countries on the Pacific Coast are not in an equal degree related with capitalism, and their industrial development is different. Many colonies and semi-colonies are intended by the capitalists as sources of raw materials and therefore the capitalists themselves do not suffer them to develop industrially.

These differences of the level of the various movements, the different grades of political consciousness of the various working classes, the difference of their experiences and the hardiness in fighting against the capitalists—all these facts must be taken into consideration by our organization. We must pay the most attention to those countries the working class of which is the least developed, the workers of which are living in worst conditions.

What was said by comrade Sidin concerning the workers movement in Indonesia, and by comrade Herclet concerning Indi-China, was quite correct. It is true that these two countries are not to be compared with each other, because the workers' movement of Indonesia is much older than the other one, the word "old" means that the movement began at least ten years ago. This workers' movement has its origin in the tremendous development of the plantations, in the use of capitalist methods of developing the sugar and rubber plantations; at the same time we have no well-formed workers' movement in Indo-China because the organizations there were often annihilated by the capitalists immediately after they had come into life. Taking into consideration that Indo-China will, without doubt, play a very important part in the struggle in the Pacific Ocean, and that

it has been the base of the French imperialism for many years. We must consider the question of how to create our own base in Indo-China, how to penetrate there; we must agree upon the forms our assistance to the workers' masses of Indo-China will take and the lines along which the workers' movement of this country will be developed. The capitalist development of this country is making great progress because it is becoming one of the richest regions as far as rubber plantations are concerned. Indo-China is, shortly, the most important base of French imperialism in the Pacific Ocean.

A Common Program

Is it possible to ally the working masses of the countries on the Pacific coast under one slogan and common tasks, if there exist such variety of social-economic conditions among the different countries united by the Pan-Pacific Secretariat, if social relations are different, if up-to-date capitalist methods are existing side by side with feudal and medieval forms not only in different countries, but even in one country, as for instance, in China? I believe that it is possible, and that we must do it. It is the common task of the workers all along the coasts of the Pacific Ocean to stubbornly and persistently struggle against the oppression of the colonies, *i.e.*, to struggle against imperialism, for the liberty of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, irrespective of their cultural level and the development of their workers' movements. This struggle unites all the workers of these countries and will be made much easier for every one of us, if we succeed in linking up the activities of the backward workers' movement with the vanguard of the workers' movements, *i.e.*, the movements in the old imperialist countries.

It is not by chance that we find among the members of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat not only workers from the countries oppressed by imperialism, but also representatives of the workers' movement in the freest country of the world—the U.S.S.R.—and representatives of the workers' movements in the imperialist countries, as the United States of America, England, France and Japan. Thus, the struggle against imperialism and for the emancipation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries constitutes the most important problem and elementary condition, that the workers' movements on the Pacific, the vanguards of the workers' movements in the imperialist countries and the working class of the U.S.S.R. must fulfil. This task unites the vanguard of the workers of the world, it unites all honest and class-conscious revolutionaries. Only the most corrupted and shameless among the leaders of the workers' movements in the imperialist countries will be able to behave as the General Council of the British Trade Unions behaved concerning the strikers in Bombay, as the Japanese reformists are treating the workers of Canton, or the American reformists are treating the workers movement for the emancipation of Latin America, from the yoke of American imperialism.

Comrades, this is not all yet. We are obliged to fulfil one more, extremely important task that will unify the workers' movements irrespective of their level and their political and organizational development: the problem that will unite the workers' movements of the colonial and semi-colonial countries—is the problem of the standard of life of the working class. If a Shanghai docker is earning from 15 to 20 times less than one in San Francisco, or if a textile worker or textile woman worker is earning ten times less than the same class of worker in, say, Manchester, the problem of wages for both the worker in the colonies and the worker in the home country is growing much more serious by the following reason. The ruling classes in their hunt for biggest possible profits are always trying to use cheapest labor they can get held of. The mad competition in the world markets forces them to use labor of almost slavish cheapness in order to defeat their competitors. But slave-labor in Shanghai and cheap labor in Manchester means the lowering of the standard of life in Manchester. Only the shameless leaders of reformism, who are closely connected with the interests of capital, who think that capitalism will last forever, do not and will not understand the connection between conditions

of labor in the colonies and semi-colonies that are almost bordering on slavery, and the great offensive conducted in the capitalist countries against the living standards of the workers.

Unity with Colonial Workers

There are only two ways open to us: either we shall succeed in raising the standard of life in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, or their low standards will inevitably drag down the standard of life of the workers in the old capitalist countries. This is the problem. Every class conscious worker in the colonies and the semi-colonies as well as every class-conscious worker in the capitalist countries will have to understand these internal dynamics of class relations very well in the same way as he understands why water rises to the same level in two vessels that are connected with each other.

The third question that has to be answered and will unite the workers' movements in the Pacific countries is the question of how to annihilate the remnants of feudalism and the middle ages, in short, all the obstacles to the progress of these countries. Backwardness begins in economics and goes on into politics, finding its reflection in social relations. The annihilation of feudal and medieval remnants, and the successful agrarian revolution in all colonial countries are common tasks for the workers' movements in the colonies and semi-colonies, for the workers' movements along the Pacific coast.

It is evident, comrades, that we are in the possession of a very sound foundation for the unity of the workers' movements in the Pacific countries, if these workers' movements are confronted with the three important tasks: firstly, the common struggle against imperialism; secondly, the struggle for the raising of the standard of life of the working classes, which includes not only the struggle for higher wages, but also socialist legislation, the seven-hour working day, etc., and, thirdly, the struggle for the annihilation of feudalism.

Only these unions are strong and hardy and will survive that are based upon firm ground: doubtlessly, the above-cited three points are the solid ground upon which the workers' movements of the colonial and semi-colonial countries are standing.

Perspectives in the Colonial Countries

What are the prospects of the development of the workers' movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries? The colonial world shows many varying traits, but, it is no longer the same it was before the war. Even the most conservative, the most ancient country in the world—China—has begun to move, and has been moving in a way that made itself felt all over the world. It is one of the peculiarities of militarism that those numerous masses of humanity that for many, many years had been crushed by the tremendous power of imperialism, that had been crushed by the iron heel of imperialist exploitation, that those millions of humanity awoke. As soon as millions and millions of men begin to move in China, other millions are beginning to move in India; then we can say that a new era of human history has begun. The world war brought to the Allies defeat in spite of their fictitious victory. The world war undermined not only the power of the greatest power in the world, the financial and industrial ruler—England; it did much more: it woke up tremendous numbers of humanity, and what is going on at the present time in the colonies and semi-colonies is a terrible flood, the waves of which it will be impossible to confine within the former shores. This tremendous movement of the masses weakens imperialism, and weakens the powers that are trying to crush the workers' movements in the capitalist countries. Up till now our weakness consisted of the different workers' movements taking place at different times. While the workers were rising in England, Germany was quiet. While mass strikes were going on in France, stillness reigned in the other countries. While the colonies were going through their revolutions nothing happened in the capitalist countries.

This disharmony is the fundamental weakness of the international workers' movement. The present moment must be characterized by the fact that the revolutionary workers'

movements are rising in all the countries at the same time: it is finding its expression in the general strike in Poland, in the strike in the Ruhr, the mass strike in Bombay, then again it moves to Shanghai: the waves of the workers' movements are flooding one centre after the other. Another characteristic trait of the present day workers' movements is that they are taking place in shorter intervals of time; they are divided by great distances of space, but are almost simultaneous. The last demonstrations on the first of August for the defense of the U.S.S.R. and against war took place all over the world on one day; the bloody attacks that took place in a whole number of the capitalist countries, the executions that took place in China, all these events unite the forces of the workers' masses, they bring their different stages of development to a common level and all the springs are united into a big stream, and all these streams are united in the tremendous flood of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries, into the tremendous revolutionary flood in the colonial and semi-colonial lands.

It is the task of our organization that forms a part of the international workers' movement and strives for uniting the workers of the Pacific coast, to be at the head of this movement and to make this movement an international one; we must feel the pulse of the masses and not struggle behind, we must be at the head of these masses that are spread over a vast region, and unite them, we must link their movements with the movements in the foremost countries and with the Soviet Union. Only by setting before ourselves the task of uniting these movements, of internationalizing them, of raising them to a higher level, of linking the movement of the workers on the Pacific Ocean to the older movements in the capitalist countries, only by changing small conflicts into big ones, by changing economic strikes into political ones, by stepping from strike to revolt—from revolt to civil war, only then, I say, shall we elevate the working classes and the peasantry to a higher political level, make those historical tasks a reality, that are set before the union that hears the famous name: the Pan Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.