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# THE PAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE IN HAVANA

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**T**HE Second Consultative Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, held under the aegis of the Pan-American Union in Havana, Cuba, July 21-30, was a battleground of imperialist powers—the United States, Great Britain, Germany—for control of Latin America. The prize at stake is a rich one. The twenty Latin American Republics stretch over a territory almost three times as large as the United States and have a population of about 123,000,000. They are enormously rich in raw materials and agricultural products. Central and South America constitute the largest and richest stretch of country in the world not dominated by any one great power. They are a tempting morsel indeed for rapacious imperialists.

In Havana, American imperialism carried the day, not completely but substantially, against its German and British imperialist rivals and against considerable resistance from the Latin American peoples. It made progress in chaining Latin America to its war chariot. Its victory did

not advance the cause, however, of world peace and democracy. But the energetic fight of Yankee imperialism to dominate Latin America is by no means won. The decisive struggles still lie ahead, and they will not be slow in developing.

## I.

### *The Forces in Struggle at Havana*

#### (a) *American Imperialism*

The United States Government organized the Havana Conference in order to further its intensified offensive to subjugate Latin America and to link up this great territory with its war program. During the economic crisis and the early Roosevelt period the American Government had been less active, after the militant imperialism of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover days. Its present offensive got under way immediately after the war began between the Allies and Germany. President Roosevelt, patching up his quarrel with Wall Street, scrapped the New Deal and its equivalent in Latin America, the Good Neighbor policy, and became the war leader of

American imperialism. A central point in this program was to strengthen the position of American imperialism in Latin America while the two main enemies, British and German imperialism, were locked together in a death struggle.

An intense trade drive was launched in Latin America, which increased American exports to those countries 50 per cent in the first four months of this year. Besides this, at the Pan-American Conference held in Panama in September, 1939, American pressure was instrumental in lining up all the Latin American republics, at least formally, behind Roosevelt's so-called neutrality, and in establishing the famous three-hundred-mile "chastity belt" around this continent. Meanwhile, the American press and radio, suddenly grown acutely Latin American conscious, seethed with plans for American control of Central and South America. In Congress the clamor grew to make Great Britain and France turn over their island colonies in the Western Hemisphere to the United States in payment of their defaulted war debts, or to provide the basis for new war credits. Colonel Lindbergh boldly demanded United States hegemony over all the Americas, and Colonel Knox restated Roosevelt's assertion that the Caribbean Sea is an American lake.

The great Nazi offensive on the Western Front, culminating in the downfall of France, enormously stimulated the already intense drive of American imperialism in Latin America. Painting horrendous pictures of an impending Nazi in-

vasion of the Americas, the warmongers of both capitalist parties demanded armed "defense" of this hemisphere. Some powerful financial groups, however, because of appeasement tendencies and alleging military unpreparedness, wanted the United States to confine its efforts to the territory north of the "bulge" of South America. They pointed out the greater economic and military difficulties for the United States the farther one goes south. But the Administration and the main Wall Street forces are obviously aiming at controlling both continents completely. Willkie is no less an imperialist than Roosevelt. Germany is trying to seize all Europe, and Japan seeks to occupy entire Eastern Asia, why then, they reason, should not the United States grab the whole Western Hemisphere during the war while the grabbing is good? The imperialist slogans "for an American League of Nations," "for a greater America," actually signify, as *Pravda* recently said, "America for the United States."

The Roosevelt Administration is basing its gigantic militarization program upon this grandiose imperialist scheme of conquering all of Latin America. Conscription in the United States; 50,000 airplanes; the two-ocean navy; M-Day regimentation of the American people; fifteen billion dollars in military appropriations by the present Congress; the famous continental economic cartel; the projected air and naval bases in the Caribbean, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Greenland and Canada; the Pan-American highway; the \$500,-

000,000 in additional funds for the Export-Import Bank; the formation of the Inter-American Bank; the making of loans to Brazil, Argentina and Chile—are all phases of the great plan to reduce Latin America to a system of colonies of the United States. It was in the spirit of this reactionary program, of its big drive to subjugate Latin America, that the United States entered the Havana Conference.

(b) *British Imperialism*

Great Britain was on the defensive at Havana. With some six billion dollars of investments and a big trade in Latin America to guard, it had for several years been slowly slipping under the growing pressure of American and German imperialism. The outbreak of the war increased its difficulties. Although the British imperialists greeted the Havana Conference with formal words of friendliness, these words did not disguise the fear and hostility with which they regarded it. They realized quite well that their "friend," the United States, was cold-bloodedly trying to oust them from Latin America.

(c) *German Imperialism*

Germany and its fascist collaborators, the Italian, Spanish and Japanese imperialists, notwithstanding their own conflicting interests, viewed the Havana Conference with open hostility and did all they could to disrupt it. On its eve they showered the Latin American countries with threats and promises, in order to stiffen their resistance

against advancing American imperialism. Although German imperialism had no outspoken defenders in the Conference, its influence was potent in slowing down the militant Americans. For the moment the interests of German imperialism dovetailed with those of British imperialism in opposing the United States at the Conference.

Prior to the war the Nazis had begun an aggressive campaign to dominate Latin America economically and politically. This resulted in greatly increasing German trade with the countries below the South American "bulge," mostly at England's expense. On the basis of this, the German imperialists had developed strong alliances with local reactionaries. Besides, through its strong, strategically situated business and diplomatic agents, in these lands, German imperialism had also strengthened its political position. In Brazil, the Nazis attempted in 1938 to overthrow the Vargas Government. In Argentina they plotted to seize Patagonia. In Peru they sought to upset the Benevides regime. In Bolivia their stooges actually secured power. The Italians, also strong in several countries, supported this general line of the Nazis. So did the newly-fledged Franco-Spanish imperialists, who are dreaming of the reconquest of the lost Spanish colonies and whose Falangist organizations have expanded in many of the republics. Hitler announced that he was going to establish a New Germany in South America, and Mussolini declared that the frontiers of the Axis were at the Panama Canal.

The outbreak of the war checked somewhat these ambitious fascist imperialist schemings. With England dominating the sea lanes, German trade with Latin America collapsed and Nazi political influence also waned considerably. To offset militant American imperialism, however, Germany recently concluded many trade deals in Latin America, promising deliveries this fall. As the Havana Conference loomed Hitler tried to counteract it by making glowing promises to the Latin Americas to the effect that Nazi-dominated Europe would buy up all their economic surpluses, especially meat, hides, coffee and oil, for which there is no market in the United States. Then, as a further measure to prevent the various republics from becoming tied up with American monopolist trade agreements, Hitler, through his Minister of Economics Funk, made the sinister threat that Germany would trade either "with twenty-one sovereign South American states or not at all." These mingled Nazi promises and threats were not without effect in slowing down American imperialism in the Havana Conference.

#### (d) *The Latin American Republics*

Faced by powerful American imperialism, the Latin American peoples were at a big disadvantage in Havana and they yielded much ground. For one thing, as heavy exporters of raw materials to Europe, they had largely lost their markets because of the war. Great surpluses of export commodities were piling up in the various countries, especially south of the "bulge," and they

hoped at the Conference to find some release for them in American markets. As for the Caribbean countries, which normally ship from 60 per cent to 80 per cent of their exports to the United States, they were also in a weak position economically to fight the Colossus of the North.

The Latin American countries were between two great pressures. First, there was the growing fear (which the Americans did all possible to stimulate) of a Nazi invasion of Latin America supported by fascist insurrections within. Then there was the more immediate fear of American imperialism which, through press and radio, was brazenly telling the Latin Americas that they must either accept Hull's proposals or take the consequences. The sending of an American cruiser to Uruguay and Brazil gave point to the many current threats that the United States was determined to enforce its will in Latin America by arms if necessary.

Together with these fears, there were also among the Latin American peoples many illusions to the effect that Roosevelt's policy was based on good intentions for Latin America. These illusions made it easier for the American delegation to carry the day at Havana, and did much to prevent the opposition from crystallizing in the Conference. The fact has not yet penetrated home in Latin America that Roosevelt, reconciled with Wall Street, has quite abandoned his erstwhile liberal Good Neighbor policy and is now applying a ruthlessly imperialist version of the Monroe Doctrine. It is a policy that looks toward the

economic, political and military domination of all Latin America by Wall Street.

Another profoundly undermining factor in the Latin American lineup at Havana was the lack of solidarity between the various Central and South American countries. They had no common economic and political program. This is largely caused by the unevenness of their economic development. It is true that Chile, Mexico and Cuba came forward with important progressive proposals (for the nationalization of basic resources, relief for Spanish refugees, and self-determination of European colonies in the Americas), and several of the other countries also submitted resolutions, which we shall discuss later, but only the United States had a comprehensive program.

The gravest weakness of the Latin American countries at Havana, however, was that, save for a few instances, they were represented by reactionaries unresponsive to the democratic needs and demands of their respective peoples. Spokesmen for the many semi-fascist dictatorships in Central and South America, euphoniously called democracies (*e.g.*, the Vargas regime in Brazil), these reactionaries played the game, openly or covertly, of American, British or German imperialism at the expense of their own peoples.

The only clear voice of the Latin American peoples in connection with the Havana Conference came from their Communist Parties and other Left-Wing groups. "The purpose of the Havana meeting," correctly said

Secretary Encina of the Communist Party of Mexico, "is to establish the economic as well as the political control of Yankee imperialism over the twenty Latin American nations" (*Sunday Worker*, July 28). Blas Roca, Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, declared (*Daily Worker*, July 17) that the Conference was "called by the imperialists to fasten the chains of slavery upon the Latin American peoples." The Left-wing daily, *Hoy*, of Havana, said (July 29): "We must state that the resolutions adopted at the Havana Conference by no means interpret the will of our peoples." Earl Browder, Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, warned of the imperialist designs behind the Conference. The Communist Parties of this hemisphere, in connection with the Conference, also proposed programs, based upon the democracy and unity of the Latin American peoples, which we shall later discuss.

## II.

### *The Main Decisions of the Conference*

Of the 56 proposals submitted to the Conference there were adopted 21 resolutions, one recommendation, one convention, and four declarations. Only one of these, the so-called Act of Havana, relating to the seizure of colonial possessions of non-American powers, requires ratification by three-fourths of the constituent states. In this article we can analyze only the more important of the propositions dealt with by the Conference.

(a) *The Question of European-held Colonies*

The most crucial question at the Conference was that relating to taking over colonial possessions held by European powers in the Americas. Prior to Havana, as we have seen, there had been developing a strong agitation in the United States to get Great Britain and France to cede their Caribbean Island colonies, either in payment of defaulted war debts or as the basis for new war credits. This imperialist proposition was endorsed with sugary "anti-imperialist" demagoguery by Norman Thomas (*The United States News*, July 24). But the collapse of Denmark, Holland, France and the threatening defeat of Great Britain by Germany, suddenly made this whole question much more urgent. There arose the possibility that many valuable and strategic colonies would pass under the control of a victorious Nazi Germany. These colonies included Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Windward and Leeward Islands, Barbados, Jamaica, Guiana, Honduras, Trinidad (British); and the colonies of the "be-headed" governments, already dominated by Germany—Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana (French), Curacao, Surinam (Dutch), and Greenland (Danish). All these colonies are highly strategic. Although not much was said about Canada in Havana, American imperialists are notoriously prepared to take that country under their "protection," should the British Empire be destroyed in the war. Roosevelt's proposed naval and air bases

in Canada and Newfoundland, and also the plan for American warships to patrol the Canadian coasts, are all aimed at reducing Canada to the sway of the United States.

To forestall the danger to American imperialism of Hitler seizing territory in this Hemisphere, the Roosevelt Government took action at Havana. Mr. Hull suavely proposed, as though the idea had been suggested by other governments, that the Conference go on record against the "transfer of American soil from one European power to another" and that in the event such was attempted one or more of the states of the Western Hemisphere should seize the territory in question and set up over it "a collective trusteeship, to be exercised in the name of all the American republics."

Considering the strength of American imperialism and the weakness of its opposition, this innocent-sounding proposal, of course properly camouflaged with altruistic phraseology about the defense of the Americas from war and barbarism, constituted a bold attempt of the United States to seize the valuable colonies of the various European powers. Not deceived by Hull's honeyed words, German imperialism raged at the project, and British imperialism, although seemingly about to grant the United States strategic naval bases, sent the Duke of Windsor to the Bahamas to dramatize its intention of hanging on to its American colonies. Its controlled Argentina delegation took up the fight at Havana against Hull's proposal. But this opposition was fruitless. Save for the substitution

of the word "administration" in place of "trusteeship," the American proposal carried.

Under the resultant "Act of Havana" the "Inter-American Commission of Territorial Adjustment" will be set up, consisting of one representative of each of the states which ratify this convention. Meanwhile, a small committee dominated by the United States has been established. In case of emergency this committee is to seize, temporarily it is assumed, possessions and colonies menaced with transfer from one non-American power to another and to set up an administration over them. Especially important is the provision that permits any one of the republics, in case of necessity, to take over colonies in question, pending the meeting of the full committee. Also a very important departure from former Pan-American procedure was the abolition of the unanimity rule. This makes it easier for American imperialism, by manipulating the most subservient and reactionary governments of Latin America, to seize various colonies.

In view of the tremendous strength of the United States, the present weak position of British and German imperialism, and the unorganized and undemocratic condition of most of the Latin American republics, the occupation of colonies under this arrangement would be tantamount to an American conquest. The colonies would be denied the right of self-determination. Their seizure would be carried out by United States armed forces principally, and their "administration" would be dominated by Yankee im-

perialism. What this would mean to the peoples involved is made clear by the intolerable conditions prevailing in Puerto Rico after forty years of American rule.

That the American bourgeoisie thoroughly understands that the Act of Havana would facilitate American aggression in Latin America is shown by the high degree of unanimity in Congress and the press behind Hull's proposal. There is backing for it also in middle-class circles, the Gallup Poll recently announcing an 87 per cent vote in favor of the United States seizing if necessary all foreign-held possessions in the Panama Canal area. The *New York Post* (July 31) characteristically says that the Act of Havana "gives the United States full authority to take over any French, Dutch, Belgian or Danish possession at any time." *The New Republic* (August 5) declares, "Thus the United States could, if need arose, take over the French or Dutch colonies, under the sanction of the Pan-American doctrines, simultaneously asking the Committee to approve the action. Failure to approve would be unlikely." *The New York Journal-American* (July 31) cynically inquires:

"Why all the elaborate nonsense about establishing a protectorate of all American Republics over these islands? What nation is going to maintain the protectorate. . . . The United States alone—none other."

(b) *The Question of Commodity Surpluses*

On the matter of the European-held colonies American imperialism

won a victory in the Havana Conference. Regarding its attempted economic domination of Latin America, however, its success in the Conference was more circumscribed.

On the eve of the Conference President Roosevelt announced, with a big fanfare of publicity, a scheme for organizing a great Pan-American economic cartel, the purpose of which was to buy up and market the entire surplus commodities of all North, Central and South America, including Canada. Tentatively called the Inter-American Trading Corporation, this continental cartel was to have been capitalized at two billion dollars, and it would have required a yearly subsidy of half a billion dollars from the United States. The true purpose of this gigantic project was to drive not only the "enemy" imperialisms of Germany, Italy and Japan, but also of "friendly" England, out of the Latin American markets. *Pravda* correctly said that "the plan actually provides for complete monopolization of Latin American trade by the United States." (July 28.)

But this grandiose imperialistic scheme had to be laid aside for a more subtle approach. A big section of Wall Street did not want any such sharp warfare against Hitler. The Latin American peoples displayed wide opposition to the cartel for their own democratic reasons. Brazil, Argentina and neighboring countries came out openly against it. Consequently Hull had to withhold the cartel scheme from the Conference and to present a program more modest and innocent-looking, but aiming towards the same monop-

listic objectives. He stated it as follows:

"1. Strengthening and expanding of the activities of the Inter-American Financial and Economic Advisory Committee as an instrument for continuing consultation with respect to trade matters, including especially the situation immediately confronting the American Republics as a result of the curtailment and changed character of important foreign markets.

"2. Creation of facilities for the temporary handling and orderly marketing of accumulated surpluses of those commodities which are of primary importance to the maintenance of the economic life of the American Republics, whenever such action becomes necessary.

"3. Development of commodity agreements with a view to assuring equitable terms of trade for both producers and consumers of the commodities concerned.

"4. Consideration of methods for improving the standards of living of the peoples of the Americas, including public health measures, nutrition studies, and suitable organizations for the relief distribution of some part of any surplus commodities."

The foregoing statement of Hull's proposals can serve also as a report of the action taken on the question, so closely did the Conference follow the United States line. The economically stricken Latin American countries had no counter-program of their own, nor were German or British imperialism in a position to block Hull's project. It was not so much a case of specific economic decisions by the Conference, as of a course of procedure. It now remains



for the United States to work out its economic treaties with the specific Latin American countries. These arrangements will go far beyond the eleven reciprocal trade agreements now in effect. To implement its new economic program in Latin America with funds to make loans to finance surpluses, the Roosevelt Administration proposes that \$500,000,000 be allocated by the United States Congress.

Behind Hull's sugared economic plans, adopted by the Conference, lurk many dangers of subjugation for the Latin American peoples. In its cartel scheme the Roosevelt Administration exposed its hand, showing unmistakably that it was seeking to monopolize the trade and to regiment the economic life of the Latin American countries. Under the plan adopted at Havana it can and will work towards these same general ends. It can scarcely be termed an accident that Nelson Rockefeller [owner of great Venezuelan oil interests.—*W.Z.F.*], the man who broached the cartel idea to the President, should have been given the post of coordinator of relations with Latin America.

The crux of Latin America's economic problem is to increase its reduced production or to dispose of its surpluses of commodities, now piling up faster than ever because of lost European markets due to the war. This year Brazil is burning nine million bags of coffee, half its total crop. Many of the Latin American commodities, especially those of the countries south of the "bulge," are either directly competitive with

commodities with which American markets are already saturated, such as meat, wheat, corn, hides, wool, cotton, sugar, coffee, nitrates, copper, oil and silver.

"Even geared to a war economy," says *PM* (July 31), "the U.S.A. could not consume more than 50 per cent of normal South American exports."

Ordinarily, 70 per cent of the exports of Chile, Argentina and Uruguay go to Europe and only 15 per cent to the United States. Hence, notwithstanding all of Hull's rosy promises, the United States, when dealing with this problem, whether by a general cartel or by individual agreements, will face the alternative of either carrying through a limitation of Latin American production or a wholesale destruction of surplus commodities. It will inevitably choose the former, because it will not want either to hand a half-billion-dollar yearly subsidy to rival imperialist concerns and Latin American interests, or to curtail American production. Production in Latin America would be worked out in favor of the big American companies both in those countries and in the United States.

In consequence, we may expect that the United States will use the most drastic financial and political pressure upon the Latin Americans to force them to cut production of their competitive export goods. A strong weapon to this end will be its power to grant or refuse loans. American Big Business will also seek to direct the import buying of the Latin American countries into United States markets. The whole

tendency will be to infringe upon the economic and political independence of the Central and South American nations, to degrade their economy down to a colonial status, into a mere feeder to American industry and profit-making.

Because Europe is the natural market for many Latin American products which the United States cannot absorb (meat, oil, coffee, cotton, etc.) American imperialism will be compelled to resort to various forms of force in its trade wars against Germany and England in Latin America. The Havana Conference resolutions forecast this line of policy. Latin Americans would do well to heed this warning in the "liberal" *New Republic*, which is a thinly disguised statement of the design for Wall Street hegemony over Latin America:

"The attitude of the United States is that we intend to carry through our plans of keeping the fascist dictators out of the New World, with Latin American support if possible, but without it if necessary." (July 29.)

Secretary Hull's assurances that all the economic control measures American imperialism is now striving to put through on Latin America are temporary, and that trade will return to a free basis after the war, have no more validity in fact than has his demagoguery about disposing of the troublesome economic surpluses by systematically raising the living standards of all the American peoples. The true prospect is that even after the war ends chaotic conditions will prevail in the world markets

while capitalism lasts, and barter systems and cartels will be the order of the day on an unprecedented scale. Therefore, should American imperialism in its quest for world domination succeed in getting the iron-clad grip upon Latin American economy that it is now working for, it would never again willingly relinquish it, peace or no peace. The aim of Yankee imperialism is definitely to subjugate Latin America economically, and with this, politically.

#### (c) *The Question of Subversive Activities*

Another important resolution adopted by the Havana Conference contained a series of proposals ostensibly designed to defeat "fifth column" activities throughout the Americas. This matter was heavily stressed by Hull in his opening speech. It is basic in the plan of American imperialism to control Latin America. The insidious proposition adopted was dressed up in the usual elaborate pretenses of democracy and national self-defense.

The resolution provides for joint consultation, and presumably joint action, by the Western Hemisphere governments "to prevent and suppress any activities directed, assisted or abetted by foreign governments or foreign groups, or individuals which tend to subvert their domestic institutions or to foment disorder in their internal political life or to modify by pressure, propaganda, threats, or in any other manner the free and sovereign right of their

peoples to be governed by their existing democratic systems." To make this proposed cooperation effective, the resolution provides for an exchange of police information regarding "subversive activity" in the various countries, and also for the tightening up of passport restrictions.

These provisions constitute a serious menace to the democracy and national independence of the Latin American peoples. American imperialism long ago learned that its program of exploitation in Latin America can succeed only by suppressing the popular movements of the masses. We may be positive, therefore, that the American Government's fight against "subversive activities" will be directed not only against agents of its imperialist German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese rivals, but above all, against the Communist Parties, the trade unions, the Popular Front movements, the peace activities, and all other organized expressions of democracy in Latin America. The imperialism of the present United States Government makes it automatically the enemy of everything progressive in Latin America. It was no mere coincidence, therefore, that in Mexico Americans, unrestricted by Roosevelt, supported the bandit Cedillo against Cardenas. And now by virtue of American support of the fascist Almazan against Camacho, Mexico has been brought to the brink of a dangerous, reactionary rebellion. The American imperialist idea of fighting the "fifth column" is well typified by Martin Dies' reactionary activities, both in

the United States and in Latin America.

Under the Havana resolution to suppress "subversive activities," the near-fascist dictator of Brazil, Vargas (or any one of a dozen others like him at the head of Latin American governments), should he feel that, in the language of the resolution, the "democratic institutions" of his country were threatened by a Popular Front movement (which he would surely brand as the work of foreign agents) he could call in to his aid the United States. When we recall Roosevelt's shameful record in crushing Spanish democracy, and the innumerable American interventions in Latin America on behalf of reactionaries, how can we doubt that any such reactionary in trouble with his people would find forthcoming aid from the United States Government? The Latin American peoples will do well to beware of the resolution in question. Unless they do this it may easily become a dangerous source of American-financed counter-revolutions and a deadly weapon generally in the hands of native tyrants and Yankee imperialists against Latin American democracy and prosperity. The danger is all the greater because in Latin America the reactionary elements, demagogically seizing upon the issues of the war and the economic crisis, are everywhere raising their heads.

#### (d) *Other Decisions of the Conference*

The foregoing questions regarding colonies, economic surpluses and

"subversive activities" constitute the main business of the Havana Conference. But there were also various other matters disposed of. One of the most important was the proposal by the Chilean delegation, leading to the nationalization of European-held properties. Its key proposition reads:

"Chile recommends to the Consultative, Economic and Finance Committee a study of the ways and means to facilitate matters for the American Republics in acquiring the rights that foreign continental enterprises enjoy in several countries in this hemisphere, especially in public utilities."

This proposal, indicating the path which is essential to secure the independence of the Latin American countries, shocked the imperialist Americans. With five billion dollars of American investments in Latin America, about the last thing they wanted to see was a nationalization movement, even of this limited scope, getting under way in Latin America. So Chile's proposal was rejected.

Mexico, supported by Argentina and Uruguay, also made a progressive and therefore an unwelcome proposition. This was that arrangements be worked out to receive Spanish Loyalist refugees on a hemisphere scale. Hull wanted none of that. The plan was knocked on the head by referring it to a committee for further study.

Cuba, through Batista, made the democratic proposal that in the event European-held colonies in

the Western Hemisphere were taken over by the American Republics, their peoples be accorded the right of self-determination and started on the road to independence. This proposition, too, was pushed aside.

Among other matters disposed of by the Conference were the adoption of proposals reaffirming the use of peaceful methods for settling inter-American disputes and the establishment of a committee therefor; for the removal by the various republics of all internal barriers to continental solidarity; a declaration for joint defense by the American Republics in case of aggression by a non-American power; a resolution of sympathy with the Chilean Government in its break of diplomatic relations with Spain; for the completion of the Pan-American highway.

The Havana Conference wound up amid a general salvo of applause from American imperialism and its hangers-on in the United States. Politicians of both capitalist parties, great daily papers of Republican and Democratic persuasion, and reactionary radio commentators, all joined in a paean of applause for the "splendid work done for peace and democracy" by the American delegation in Havana. With few exceptions, liberals, conservative trade union leaders and Social-Democrats also joined in this nauseating praise. *The New Republic* (August 5) said, "The Secretary of State and his collaborators have done a magnificent job." "Well done, Cordell Hull," cried the *New Leader* (August 3); and Matthew Woll had the gall to assure Mr. Hull that organized labor was solidly behind him.

## III.

*The Latin American National Liberation Movement*

Obviously the Latin American peoples are in a difficult position in the face of the determined drive of American imperialism to dominate them militarily, to control their economic and political life, to use them as pawns to "appease" the fascist dictators, and to kill off their young manhood as cannon fodder in the imperialist war. And their troubles will hardly diminish with the end of the present war, especially if Germany should win. For then they will face the prospect of their countries being made the scene of a bitter economic and ultimately also military struggle between clashing imperialist powers. It is clear, therefore, that the Latin American peoples have an acute need to take steps in their self-defense. Their fight takes the form of a national liberation movement against world imperialism. For them to rely upon the United States or upon any other imperialist power would be a fatal error.

The Communist Parties throughout our hemisphere have outlined the general program necessary for the Latin American peoples to defend their well being. Its starting point is the struggle for democracy in the respective countries on the basis of the development of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution. The Latin American peoples cannot protect themselves from their imperialist exploiters and oppressors so long as their governments (with the exception of Chile, Mexico and

Cuba) are in the hands of reactionaries of various stripes. Many of them, corrupt to the core, endorsed the Franco rebellion and are notorious imperialist tools. The people's front movement of workers, farmers, professionals and other democratic strata has made great progress in many countries of Latin America, although its tempo of development has slowed up somewhat since the outbreak of the war. Its spread and victory throughout all Latin American republics are the fundamental condition for the maintenance of their national independence and the development of their democracy and prosperity. To cultivate this movement is the basic task of the Communist Parties of Latin America.

Another urgent necessity for the Latin American peoples is to develop a unity of program and action among their various countries. Affiliation to the Pan-American Union on the basis of a supposed equality with the United States cannot provide such unity. The exact forms of the necessary Latin American solidarity cannot now be forecast. Acting individually, their states cannot possibly defend themselves against the economic, political and military attacks of the great imperialist powers who, now more than ever, are determined to subjugate them. The Latin American peoples have the most basic interests in common and they can unite. A democratic and united Latin America would be powerful enough to defend itself against all the assaults of the imperialists—*European, Asiatic or American*. A strengthened Latin

American Confederation of Labor and a linking up of the various national people's front movements would serve as the backbone of a solidarity among the Latin American republics.

With their fight for democracy and unity as a basis, the Latin American peoples need to accomplish several very elementary urgent tasks in order to guarantee their national independence and to open up the way for the expanding well being of their populations. First of all they have to secure control of the natural resources and industries of their respective countries. These, to a very large extent, are now in the hands of foreign imperialists. For example, 50 per cent of the total land in Costa Rica is owned by the United Fruit Company. Very much needed throughout Latin America, therefore, is a great, united movement for the nationalization of the oil wells, railroads, mines, packing plants, plantations, etc., now owned by American, British, German, Italian and other imperialists. This becomes a burning issue regarding the industries of those European countries already overrun by Germany. A healthy industrial and political life cannot exist in Latin America so long as the economic foundations of the countries are owned and exploited in the interest of these capitalists. Also vital is it to cultivate trade among the Latin American republics without, as now, Americans acting as intermediaries. Regional conferences to this effect would be practical.

Only by effective struggle to secure control of their national re-

sources and industries will the Latin American peoples be enabled to reorganize their industry and agriculture upon a basis conforming to their interests. At present their whole economic life is on a semi-colonial basis, organized for the most part to satisfy the export needs and profits of the imperialists. There must be a more balanced and comprehensive industrialization, necessary resources for which exist abundantly in Latin America. The great haciendas and plantations should be broken up, the land put in the hands of the users, and a mechanized, diversified agriculture developed. In each country there should be developed the broadest and most intense struggle for these reforms, which must also be the objectives of broad movements among all or most of these states.

In this period of the decaying capitalist system, in which the great empires are waging ruthless war upon each other and against weaker peoples, there is the most urgent need also for the Latin American peoples to develop a program of joint armed defense of their various countries. This can be done effectively only upon the basis of the broadest Latin American solidarity and democracy. The individual countries are not strong enough to defend themselves, and for them to rely upon the United States or upon any of the other imperialist powers for protection would mean to become a satellite of these states. The Latin American republics, cooperating as a bloc for defense, would be strong enough to protect themselves from the imperialist powers,

whether in trade wars or military struggle. Moreover, working in collaboration with the Soviet Union, nationalist China, the oppressed peoples of the earth, the world labor movement, and the downtrodden masses generally, the Latin American peoples would be a great force for world peace and progress.

The foregoing proposals—for Latin American democracy and solidarity, for the acquisition of the natural resources, for the reconstruction of industry and agriculture, and for a common defense program—are both practical and imperative. Their realization would provide the basis for national independence for the Latin American peoples and for a measure of protection for them against the wars and other ravages of a dying capitalist world order. But in order to escape wholly from the poverty, misery, oppression and war inherent in the capitalist system, and to open up a path to real prosperity, freedom and peace for themselves, the peoples of Latin America, like those of all other countries, will have to abolish capitalism and establish socialism. Thus, Latin America will one day constitute a great and flourishing section of the world socialist system.

The workers and other democratic forces in the United States and Canada should give the heartiest support to the peoples of Latin America in their fight for democracy and national independence. The interests of all the peoples of the Hemisphere—for prosperity, freedom and peace—are as one against the predatory exploiters and war-makers of the Americas and of the world. As Comrade Browder has said: "Latin America needs the help of the United States, even as we need the cooperation of Latin America." (*Daily Worker*, July 16.) The vital necessity of unity cannot be stressed too much in the successful working out of the great problems—economic, political and social—of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Blas Roca, Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, correctly stated:

"The unity of the people in each nation and the unity of the progressive and anti-imperialist forces throughout the continent, is the best answer to the attempts of the Nazis in the Western Hemisphere, is the best weapon in the hands of the people against the furious assaults of Yankee imperialism." (*Daily Worker*, July 17.)