

FIRST ANTI-IMPERIALIST WORLD CONGRESS

BY MANUEL GOMEZ
Sec'y All-American Anti-Imperialist
League (U. S. Section.)

I HAVE just returned from Brussels, Belgium, where I attended one of the most far-reaching international conventions that has ever been held.

Representatives of labor organizations from all parts of the globe, with a combined membership of 7,992,000 trade unionists, participated in the gathering. These organizations included the General Confederation of Labor (Unitarian) of France, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, the British Minority Movement, the South African Trade Union Congress, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the Mexican Confederation of Labor (CROM), etc., etc. Among those present were such outstanding labor men as Edo. Fimmen, head of the International Federation of Transport Workers; J. W. Brown, secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions (Amsterdam), and George Lansbury, vice-chairman of the British Labor Party.

Oppressed Peoples Represented

But the power expressed in the Brussels gathering far exceeded that of the millions of trade unionists represented there. It was a congress of the representatives of the oppressed of the world. The many-millioned masses of Asia, Africa and Latin America, some organized in one way, some in another, joined hands with the delegates from the more industrial nations in what will be known as the first world congress against imperialism.

What is the significance of the Brussels congress to the labor movement? What does it mean when Fimmen of the Transport Workers clasps hands with J. Lal Nehru of the Indian National Congress, or when Herriot of the French labor confederation comes together with El Bakri of the fighting Syrian nationalists, or when Lansbury of England aligns himself with Liao of China, or when delegates from the United States make common cause with those from Latin America?

It means that a new force has

come into being to resist the moneyed powers of the world.

Imperialism Menaces Workers at Home

All the big industrial nations are today empires—including the American empire. Big Business strives more and more to set up monopolized areas (or colonial spheres) for investment in so-called backward countries, where cheap labor can be exploited under colonial conditions to compete with trade union labor at home, thus serving as a constant menace against decent standards of living.

It is already some time since the British textile workers were obliged to send trade union organizers from Lancashire to India, to help organize the Indian textile workers.

International Big Business, constantly expanding upon an imperialist basis, derives strength from imperialism to fight the demands of the workers at home.

But the strength of Imperialism is also its weakness. The oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies struggle for their national independence, refuse to remain under the yoke of imperialism, and thus become potential allies of European and American labor.

Common Struggle of All Oppressed

The "awakening of the East," which stands out after the Cantonese capture of Shanghai as an epochal fact, indicates what powerful support against imperialist Big Business is developing by the side of the international labor movement. Who can doubt that the thunder of the nationalist guns in China strengthens the British workers in their dealings with their bosses, now challenged on two fronts. Certainly the British workers do not doubt it. President Hicks of the General Council of the British Trade Union Congress became head of the Com-

mittee for Friendly Relations with China, organized as soon as the British government began its policy of sending military forces to Shanghai. The London Trades Council initiated a wave of hand-off-China demonstrations which were taken up by the workers throughout England and which were largely responsible for the hesitancy of the British government in going ahead with intervention in China.

Similarly in the western hemisphere, the interests of the American workers are against colonial schemes in Nicaragua, Mexico, etc., carried thru under the slogan of the Monroe Doctrine. Not only has the American working class nothing to gain through American imperialism in Latin America, the Philippine Islands or anywhere else, but it must support the struggles of the natives for independence from imperialist domination. It must make common cause with them.

The international trade union movement must become part of the movement for the emancipation of all the oppressed—whether oppression be along class, race or national lines.

United Action against Imperialism

Brussels proved that workers and oppressed peoples are coming together not merely in isolated instances (as in the case of the Chinese situation), but as part of a conscious and unified movement. Properly enough, China occupied the center of the stage at the first world Congress against Imperialism. However more than thirty different nationalities were represented. In addition to those already cited, delegates were present from Mexico, Cuba, Central and South America, the Riff area of Morocco, Senegal, Egypt, the Dutch East Indies, Korea, French Indo-China, etc., etc.

Thus the combination means power and that it is capable of effective measures against imperialist Big Business is reflected in all the decisions adopted at the Brussels Congress. Here, for instance, are some of the points in the trade union resolution:

1) The right to strike and to organize in trade unions must be (Continued on page 7.)

THE WORKERS' SLOGAN



INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

(Continued from page 5)

keep the workers on the job and make them produce more and more.

A Stupid Illusion

Hence the employers are willing to and do make modest concessions to reactions of their workers in the shops of higher wages, shorter hours, company unions, welfare systems, profit-sharing, etc. To suppose that such concessions will cumulatively free the workers is stupid. But along comes Mr. Lauck and magnifies these concessions and the system of making them as real progress and the open road to emancipation for the workers.

The upper bureaucracy of the unions are captured by the class collaboration schemes, of which Mr. Lauck is such an able champion. Many of the workers are also deceived by them. For these a rude awakening is in store. They will be made to learn by bitter experience that power is the deciding factor in the class struggle. The employers will give the workers nothing. If they appear to give them anything, as in the various class collaboration schemes, it is only so they can rob them more effectively.

The workers' sole reliance is in strong organization, political and industrial. All else is vain illusion. To put hope in class collaboration illusions instead of building strong fighting organizations is to sacrifice the interests of the working class.

PIOUS IMPERIALISM

THE "Manufacturers Record" has been getting more and more worried about militant labor. Now, on top of everything, comes China, with—its alleged—Bolshevism leading the poor, misguided Chinese astray and blinding them to the glories of life beneath the imperialist yoke. In a lengthy article portentously entitled: "A World Menace of Fearful Import is Bolshevism in China and Elsewhere," the "Manufacturers Record" howls for intervention against the forces sweeping China along the road of liberation and out of the grasp of imperialism.

The diabolical ingenuity of the Bolsheviks, says the "Record," has made the discovery that "where there is discontent, where poverty is greatest, there is the best ground to sow the seeds of revolt"; and "therefore, in China and India, where wages are low and the standard of living correspondingly bad, the Bolsheviks are at work." The fervor of its denunciation mounts to a revivalist pitch:

"Not if the devil himself, assuming human form, had undertaken to bring misery on man and lead him into Hell, could he have devised anything more devilish than Bolshevism."

"Protect Property Rights"

Looking with greedy eyes at awakening China, the "Record" sees a vast field for investment and exploitation within the reach of American imperialism:

"China will need vast capital, vast supplies of machinery, vast technical resources, a vast outpouring of all the power of the Occident. . . . If duly 'educated and modernized' . . . she can take up all our surplus products"; and if taught to eat wheat instead of rice, "she will end the agricultural crisis in our own wheat belt." And if exploitation is to proceed unhampered, China must be governed in proper capitalist fashion, with "sound laws, soundly administered," and a stable government "that shall guarantee property rights."

"Suppress Anti-Imperialism"

But there is an obstacle to the realization of this pleasant prospect—the anti-imperialist leadership in China—and it must be destroyed. Its destruction, says the "Manufacturers Record" with true imperialist piety, "is the affair of all nations that serve God." The editor calls for a holy crusade, not alone in China, but wherever the workers show signs of resistance to imperialist exploitation. This country must take the lead, since our immense foreign investments give us "a superior interest throughout the world in the sanctity of property rights," and "Bolshevism, wherever it lifts its accursed head, directly menaces our prosperity."

The crusade is in a sacred cause: "Our vast wealth, has, we believe, been given us by the Almighty to hold in trust for the world's benefit. . . . That wealth must be wisely used for the uplifting of humanity."

This is typical imperialist talk, the sort of pious cant that the imperialists of Great Britain are so fond of getting off whenever they shoot a few hundred Indian strikers, or stage a massacre of Egyptian nationalists. The presence of this kind of thing in the American press is one more point to add to the heap of testimony piling up that the United States has fully entered upon her role of leading imperialist nation.

—A. B.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST CONGRESS

(Continued from page 6)

maintained for colonial and semi-colonial peoples, as well as for all others.

2) International strike action must be insisted upon in the imperialist nations—partial and general strikes—in the event of imperialist war moves.

3) There must be no more segregation of black from white workers in the industrial countries.

4) All must strive for the establishment of a single international federation of labor, embracing all trade union organization, irrespective of race, nationality or color.

5) Trade unionists in all the imperialist countries must support the movements for national independence in the colonies and semi-colonies.

The Brussels congress is now a thing of the past, but it leaves an organization behind it: the International League against Imperialism and Colonial Rule, with temporary headquarters at Berlin.

American trade unionists should work for the affiliation of American labor organizations to the League. The American delegation was the weakest of all those participating in the Brussels congress. It is worth asking why? It might not be amiss for trade unionists to make their leaders state definitely whether they intend to stand with the oppressed peoples of the world or against them.

Whatever a few leaders may decide to do, the international organization of workers and oppressed peoples is already a historical fact, which the future cannot erase but can only build upon.