
THE RIO DE JANEIRO CONFERENCE

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE Third Conference of the Foreign Ministers of the twenty-one American Republics, held under the auspices of the Pan-American Union in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, January 15-18, upon the proposal of Chile, resulted in a significant defeat for the fascist Axis. Hitler and his allies have been eagerly moving to seize Latin America, because of its tremendous natural resources and also because a firm grip in any of the Central and South American countries would provide an excellent jumping-off place for German imperialism to attack the United States.

President Roosevelt, on October 27, exposed the plans of the German fascists to transform all Latin America into five Nazi-dominated vassal states, and a couple of years ago Mussolini insolently stated that the Panama Canal was the frontier of the Axis in the Western Hemisphere. The fascist leaders have spared neither pains nor money to make the Canal, or even the Rio Grande, their front line in the New World. But their grandiose plans received a real check at Rio de Janeiro. There the peoples of this Hemisphere, proceeding on the basis of the Good Neighbor Policy, showed unmistakably that they are increas-

ingly alert to the danger of world fascism and that they are more and more aligning themselves on the side of the United Nations fighting against the Axis mass murderers and enslavers.

The Question of Policy Toward the War

Even before the Conference assembled, nine Latin American Republics—Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Nicaragua and Panama—had joined the United States in the war, while three others—Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela—had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy and Japan. The peoples of the remaining eight Latin American nations—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay—had given unmistakable signs that they, too, were enemies of the Axis powers. The question at Rio, therefore, was not whether the twenty-one Republics would oppose Hitler, but how far and how unitedly they would go against him.

Sumner Welles, head of the United States delegation, declared in his opening speech: "The only assured safety which this Continent possesses lies in full cooperation be-

tween us all in the common defense; equal and sovereign partners in times of aggression as in times of peace." This was a diplomatic invitation to a joint declaration of war. This nearly all the countries of the Caribbean area and Central America wanted, but the countries below the "bulge," more exposed to Axis attack and more saturated with fascist propaganda, demanded less drastic action. Nearly all of the latter favored a strong resolution calling for the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Axis powers; but the Argentine government, dominated by the reactionary Acting President Castillo, despite strong pressure from Brazil, Mexico and other Latin American states, managed to force the Conference, which did not want to break the formal all-American unity, to adopt a proposal merely recommending the cutting off of diplomatic relations with the Axis gangster states. The key section of the unanimous resolution reads:

"The American Republics, following the procedure established by their own laws and within the position and circumstances of each country in the actual international conflict, recommend rupture of their diplomatic relations with Japan, Germany and Italy, inasmuch as the first of these states attacked and the other two declared war on an American country."

The Axis powers sought to prevent hostile action by the Latin American states. Their agents swarmed about the Rio Conference, trying to terrorize the delegates; while the Berlin and Tokio foreign

offices made direct threats against Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia and Chile. The fascists hailed the disruptive stand of Argentina and ridiculed the final resolution as a defeat for the United States. But such efforts of the Axis were largely unavailing. During the course of the conference seven additional South American states broke off relations with the Axis, leaving only Chile and Argentina, which have not taken such action. Chile, too, as indicated by the recent election of Rios, who was backed by the anti-Hitler forces, will probably break with the Axis; and it is likely also that the people of Argentina, who are overwhelmingly anti-fascist, will force their reactionary government to do likewise. The Rio Conference showed that the peoples of all the Americas, despite Axis pressure from abroad and fifth column treachery at home, are bound together in anti-Hitler solidarity and are headed for an eventual all-out participation in the war of the United Nations against the fascist Axis.

It was a foregone conclusion that, at the Rio de Janeiro Conference, the Latin American Republics would move definitely against the Axis powers. The value of the conference is to be measured by the extent to which it accomplished the great task, thrust upon it by history, of helping to organize all the millions of the Americas for joint anti-Axis struggle. The conference achieved much, despite the fact that the main resolution, above cited, was watered down to conciliate Argentina. For there were forty other resolutions, mostly recommenda-

tions, adopted, including an endorsement of the Atlantic Charter. These resolutions, relating to complex military, economic and political questions, went far to develop a war course for the combined American nations, not excluding Argentina and Chile.

The Military Problem

The conference delegates were in their great majority keenly alert to the danger of invasion from the predatory Axis powers and the need for adopting joint military measures to defend the Hemisphere. This danger was utilized by isolationist and appeasement elements in the more remote countries of Argentina and Chile, which are in a position of special vulnerability to Axis attack, while it lent great anti-Axis militancy to Brazil (acutely threatened from Dakar) and to Mexico (menaced by Japan), countries which are in a better position to receive effective military and naval cooperation from the United States.

Not unnaturally, the delegates from Latin America considered carefully what help they might expect from the United States in case of Axis attack. One correspondent (*Chicago Daily News*, January 15) summed up their attitude as follows: "If we break off relations with the Axis has Uncle Sam enough battleships, cruisers, destroyers and planes to defend us now against Axis reprisals?" The incredible debacle of the American land, air and naval forces at Pearl Harbor, and the weakness currently being shown by Great Britain at Singapore, were anything but reassuring

indications to the virtually unarmed Latin American countries. On the other hand, the big victories of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany greatly encouraged the Latin Americans and convinced them of the possibility of defeating the Axis. The prevalent admiration for the Red Army was skillfully used by Sumner Welles, who twice referred to its successes. He said:

"Today the German armies are retreating from Russian territory, routed and dispersed by the magnificent offensive of the Russian armies. Hitler has lost over one-third of his air-force, over one-half of his tank force, and more than 3,000,000 men. But more than that, the German people now see for themselves the utter fallacy of the promises held out to them by the evil charlatan who rules them."

The conference did not make public all the military measures now being taken to defend the Hemisphere, especially regarding the disposition of American naval forces and the progress being made toward building up the chain of Hemisphere encircling naval and air bases. Nevertheless, a number of important steps were decided on by the conference or in connection with it, including United States-Mexico military cooperation to protect the west coast of Mexico from Japanese marauders; the United States-Brazil joint action against threatened Nazi invasion via Dakar; the allocation of \$20,000,000 by the U.S. to five Central American countries to complete the Pan-American military highway from the United States to the Panama Canal;

the allotment of \$20,000,000 by the U.S. to Uruguay under Lend-Lease provisions, and the proposed holding of a joint conference of the general staffs of Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Peru on continental defense matters. But of greatest importance was the adoption of a resolution to call immediately in Washington a military and naval conference of delegates appointed by each of the governments, "to study and recommend to them the measures necessary for the defense of the continent." Another military matter of significance disposed of by the conference was the settlement of the 100-year-old border dispute between Ecuador and Peru, a quarrel which recently burst into open warfare and which Axis agents have done their utmost to inflame.

In comment upon these actions by the conference it may be said that the key to the great task of the military defense of the Western Hemisphere is that this defense must be a joint enterprise of all the nations, from Hudson's Bay to Cape Horn, as part of the United Nations. The United States, notwithstanding the big demands made upon it by the decisive front against Hitler in the U.S.S.R. as well as by the front in Africa and by the far-flung battle lines against Japan in the Far East, must also extend powerful support to the at present militarily weak countries south of the Rio Grande. At the same time, these countries should develop their own strong military potentialities. At present the twenty Latin American lands have about 1,400,000 soldiers and reserves, partly or wholly

equipped. When necessary, these forces could be strengthened with United States lend-lease assistance. By the adoption of universal military conscription systems and the appropriation of maximum war budgets, the Latin American countries can develop a formidable military force; one which, acting jointly with the United States, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and China, can not only successfully repel all Axis invaders, but also play a positive world role in the military strategy of the United Nations. It would be a basic mistake, however, for Latin America merely to rely upon the United States to defend the Western Hemisphere. The greatest military efficiency of the united American peoples, as well as the full preservation of the sovereignty of the Latin American lands, requires imperatively that these countries arm themselves and proceed with the United States, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and China as equal military partners in the war of the United Nations against the Axis. To accomplish this goal requires especially that the Latin American countries enter into full diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.

The Economic Problem

In its task of mobilizing the peoples of the Western Hemisphere against Hitler the Rio Conference faced many thorny and urgent economic problems. Sumner Welles said correctly: "Of equal importance with measures of political solidarity, defense and cooperation, and the repression of subversive activity are economic measures related to the

conduct of war against the aggressor nations and the defense of the Western Hemisphere." Among the major economic problems facing the conference were the urgent need for the United States to secure new sources of supplies of strategic war commodities to replace those cut off by Axis war action; and the need to speed up war production generally in Latin America; the allocation of finances and commodities by the United States to strengthen the weakened Latin American economies; the mutual control of prices; the pooling of the economic resources of the Hemisphere countries, for the United Nations, and the general question of the industrialization of Latin America.

Although the United States delegation at Rio de Janeiro spoke somewhat softly upon the question of a general war declaration and also regarding measures being taken for the military defense of the Hemisphere, its voice was loud and insistent upon economic matters. Mr. Welles put before the conference an elaborate economic program, most of which was summed up in eight points, under the title of the Hemisphere War Production Plan, and stated by the Associated Press, on January 22, as follows:

"1. Recommendations that each country take steps to minimize trade barriers on strategic materials for the duration of the emergency.

"2. A program whereby the intricacies of foreign exchange would be eliminated by a common denominator for international trade between anti-Axis countries.

"3. Joint use of all merchant

ships with the United States and other large maritime nations providing naval and air convoys.

"4. Construction throughout the hemisphere of a multitude of projects designed to speed war production.

"5. That all airlines in the hemisphere be operated by bona-fide nationals of each country.

"6. Assurances that essential imports required by various Latin American governments will be made available to the extent consistent with each country's defense requirements.

"7. Exchange of skilled workers and technical missions so that new war industries can be established throughout the continent.

"8. Operation of a Pan-American statistical union to provide a standard inter-American formula for determining the assets and liabilities, financial and economic, of each country."

In the main the conference acted within the framework of the United States proposals. Argentina showed more cooperation on economic than on foreign policy. The conference declared for cutting off economic relations with the Axis powers; the mobilization of all shipping; the holding of an international conference to set up a stabilization fund; the freezing of funds belonging to Axis nationals; the closing of telephones, telegraphs and the radio to enemy forces; and the speeding up generally of war production.

Meanwhile the United States delegation was busily employed working out its economic program with the respective Latin American states. Important steps taken were

the sixteen agreements (with more probably to follow) with Latin American countries to eliminate tariff barriers between them during the war emergency. Announcement was also made that Douglas MacKeachnie, Director of the Division of Purchases, had already allocated to Latin American countries 26 of the 110 vital commodities necessary to relieve their priorities crisis. In accordance with Mr. Welles' statement that the United States "is ready to enter into broad agreements for the acquisition of supplies of basic strategic materials, and to cooperate with each of the other American Republics in order to increase rapidly and efficiently their production for emergency needs," announcement was made that the United States Government had signed a contract with Chile to take over all its surplus of strategic commodities, that a loan of \$25,000,000 had been made to Bolivia mainly to develop its valuable tin mines and that their output would be bought by the United States; that a definite settlement had been arrived at with Mexico on the oil question, and that arrangements were being made to buy the entire supplies of Cuba's sugar crop. Mr. Aranha, Foreign Minister of Brazil, especially hailed Mr. Welles' economic program, assuring him that sufficient supplies of rubber, tin, manganese, coffee and many other important commodities could be secured by the United States in Latin America, without going to the Far East and to other remote parts of the earth for them. Responding to Mr. Welles' suggestion, the conference also de-

cided to have the Inter-American Technical Economic Conference survey the probable economic problems of post-war Western Hemisphere.

The measures of the Rio Conference went a considerable distance toward meeting the present difficult economic situation in Latin America and to mobilize the productive power of the Western Hemisphere against Hitler and his allies. Yet there are various inadequacies and dangers in them which must be guarded against—especially if the economic independence of the Latin American states is to be preserved.

Regarding the question of loans for economic purposes by the United States: First, the quantity of these needs to be drastically increased. During the crisis of the 1930's the export of United States capital to Latin America fell to zero, with some 80 per cent of American loans to the governments of those countries in default. Since then the Export-Import Bank has outstanding but \$131,000,000 in loans, which is only a drop in the bucket in so far as the needs of this vast undeveloped area is concerned. If the full economic war power of Latin America is to be developed, therefore, Uncle Sam will have to loosen up his purse strings, and quickly. Moreover, the United States loans must be changed in character. Departing from previous practices, they should permit of the general industrialization of the Latin American countries and not bear the imperialistic restrictions limiting them to the development of public works,

transportation, and the extraction of raw materials needed in the United States.

Regarding the elimination of trade barriers in the Hemisphere: Economically healthy are the tendencies to break down trade barriers between the various Latin American countries (for example, the River Plata Conference between Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia, looking toward freer trade among these countries) and also the plans to admit Latin American products duty free into the United States. During the war it is necessary to get all possible United States war goods into Latin America, but simply to cast aside permanently all tariffs in Latin American countries against United States industrial commodities would mean to put the feeble industries of these countries at a serious disadvantage with regard to the powerful industries of the United States.

Regarding the absorption of Latin American economic surpluses by the United States: Up until the involvement of this country in the war little had been done in this vital matter in an organized way, although much talk was heard about it at Pan-American Union Conferences. Almost the only thing concrete that had been accomplished was the formation of the International Coffee Agreement between fifteen countries, with the placing of cocoa and cotton for study. The war emergency program which is now developing and which calls for the utilization of the Latin American economic surpluses by the U.S.A. and the United Nations as

a whole should not only be greatly enlarged as a war measure, but it should also be continued after the war. Practical forms, under the conditions there prevailing, should be worked out.

Regarding the financing of free ports, airlines, etc.: While most of the money for these necessary projects necessarily must come from the United States, their economic and political control must remain strictly in the hands of the governments concerned.

Finally, regarding the proposed emergency labor program, which provides for the shifting of skilled labor to the points where it is most needed: Bearing in mind the many dictatorial exploiters with which Latin America is so heavily afflicted, the trade unions of all the countries of the Hemisphere, particularly the Latin American Confederation of Labor, will need to be on the alert in the application of this measure, to prevent gross abuses.

The Political Problem

The major political problem before the Rio Conference, relating to the internal affairs of the states, was that of smashing of the fifth column in Latin America (no one spoke of the powerful fifth column in the United States, which, under the banner of the America First Committee, got a serious setback upon our entry into the war). The German, Japanese and Italian governments, for several years past, have been making great efforts to build their fifth column forces throughout Latin America. Their

main organizational base has been their consular staffs, which have been greatly increased since the war began. Numbering 5,000 or more persons, these staffs functioned as a wide network of espionage and pro-Axis organizational activities. They were linked up with the strong Axis business interests throughout Latin America, and they found a powerful support, not only among the numerous nationals of the Axis countries, but also among the great landed and industrial interests, as well as among the reactionary circles of the Catholic Church hierarchy. One of the principal instruments of this powerful fifth column is the Spanish Falange. This body, stimulated by the Franco government and financed by Hitler, propagates the illusion of a great resurrected Spanish Empire in the event of a Nazi victory. The Falange is strong in a number of Latin American countries, notably Mexico, where it claims some 500,000 adherents. The political line of the Trotskyite groups throughout the Hemisphere, with their opposition to the anti-Hitler war, their denunciation of all cooperation with the United States, and their violent attacks upon the U.S.S.R., fitted right in with the general line of the Axis fifth column.

With the intensification of the world war and the sharpening of the conflict between the United States and the Axis powers, especially since the involvement of the U.S.S.R. in the war, the fifth column in Latin America greatly increased its boldness and activities. Inso-

lently arming and uniforming its forces and openly plotting to seize various Latin American governments, it operated under slogans reminiscent of the erstwhile America First Committee. It contended that the main enemy was not Hitler, but the Roosevelt Government and the Soviet Union, and that the national policy everywhere in Latin America to follow was one of "isolation," "neutrality" and "appeasement" of the Axis powers. Especially after the United States became a full belligerent did the Latin American fifth column press forward with its program of putschism and support for the Axis.

Meanwhile the democratic and anti-Axis forces intensified the fight against this dangerous fascist movement. In many countries known Nazi and Japanese agents were arrested; in Bolivia, July, 1941, the Nazi-inspired putsch was crushed; in Panama, during October of the past year, the Nazi-influenced President Arias was deposed. The United States put on the blacklist thousands of firms doing business with the Axis powers; during the past year over 5,000 miles of Axis-controlled airline in Latin America were taken over by the governments concerned; the notorious Trans-Ocean Service was abolished everywhere except in Argentina; the transatlantic airlines to the Axis countries were closed down. After the United States entered the war and as the Rio de Janeiro conference approached this economic and political warfare against the Axis fifth column grew more and more intense.

The trade unions, Communist Parties and other people's organizations in Latin America are playing a leading role in developing the fight against the Axis and their powerful fifth column, and for the national interests of the Latin American countries. One of the most striking features of this growing democratic struggle was the demand of the labor movements throughout Latin America, as well as of many other organizations, for the release of Comrade Browder. Long before American labor began to demand Browder's freedom the Latin American trade unions had gone on record for it. The Latin Americans have linked their fight for Browder with that for Prestes. V. L. Toledano, President of the Confederation of Latin American Workers (C.T.A.L.) expressed the anti-Axis spirit of the great toiling masses of Latin America in the following telegram to the Rio Conference:

"The Latin American working class, which has followed the work of the conference with great interest, offers to you and all the governments in the Western Hemisphere its sincere and enthusiastic cooperation in the common work of continental defense, believing that all aid denied this historic task is treason to the cause of human liberties and independence."

Likewise outspoken and militant in the fight against the Axis were the Communist Parties of the Hemisphere. In Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, Uruguay, Colombia, Peru, etc., as well as in Canada and the United States, they raised their

voices for national unity in their respective countries, for Hemisphere solidarity, for alliance with the U.S. S.R. and all of the United Nations for all-out struggle against Hitler and his allies. Secretary Labarca of the Communist Party of Chile sounded clearly the general anti-fascist line of the Communist Parties of the Hemisphere when he declared at a great meeting of 15,000 people in Santiago on January 3rd:

"The American peoples have one answer to give—to form a continental military alliance, together with the United States, England and the U.S.S.R., for the complete destruction of fascism."

The Rio de Janeiro Conference adopted a number of sharp measures against the fifth column. The breaking off of diplomatic and economic relations with the Axis powers, with a consequent disruption of the great Nazi consular and business spy and putsch organization, was a heavy blow. Together with this, the conference called for various restrictions upon enemy aliens, the liquidation of their organizations, radio stations, etc. Provisions were made also for an inter-American conference to be held next May in Buenos Aires, to work out ways to combat fifth column activities.

That the Rio Conference recognized, in a measure at least, the great role and prestige of the U.S.S.R. among the Latin American peoples and the growing influence of the Communist Parties, was shown by its soft-pedaling the tendency to lump Communism with fascism as a

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subversive element. The conference was notably free from red-baiting, and Mr. Welles, in summing up its work, specified by implication whom the conference considered to be the fifth column when he said: "All subversive activities directed by the Axis powers or states subservient to them are brought under rigid control." This is not to say, however, that reactionary elements throughout the Hemisphere will discontinue their attempts to turn the fire against the Communist Parties, who are in the forefront of the peoples' struggle to defend their countries and to smash Hitler and the Axis.

The Rio Conference has stimulated the mass fight against the Axis fifth column. In increasing measure, Axis spy diplomats are being hustled out, phony businessmen isolated, and fascist organization leaders arrested. In Brazil especially the pro-Hitler elements suffered a reverse. The sharpened offensive against the Axis forces in Latin America is exemplified by the Presidential election in Chile on February 1, where the rightist General Carlos Ibanez, openly supported by Nazi and other fascist organizations, was defeated by the popularly supported candidate, Juan Antonio Rios, by a substantial majority. During the Rio Conference the Chilean population displayed many signs of disagreement with the failure of the Chilean delegation to support a break with the Axis. The elections gave them an opportunity to register their opposition concretely.

It would be folly to conclude,

however, from all this that the fifth column has been destroyed in Latin America. Far from it. The monster has been wounded but not killed. The Axis forces are still very powerful in virtually every Latin American country, and undoubtedly will continue to put up a serious fight. Especially dangerous is the situation in Argentina, where the pro-fascist Castillo gang is in control of the government. This gives Hitler a stronghold from which to carry on his poisonous activities all over South America. Castillo, head of the Conservative Party, mainly represents the great landowners. What kind of a clique this is may be gauged from the fact that "about 39 per cent of the area of Buenos Aires Province, the richest agricultural patch in America, home of 3,500,000, is held in 230 farms, averaging some 47,000 acres each" (*New Republic*, Jan. 19). But the situation in Argentina is far from hopeless. The Socialist, Communist, Radical, Progressive and Democratic Parties, as well as the whole labor movement, are lined up against Castillo. The anti-fascist elements control the lower house of Congress; they have the backing of the mass of the people, and, in the coming March elections, they will score a victory in spite of Castillo's present desperate efforts to choke Argentina's democracy by setting up a "state of siege"—if the mandate of the people is not thwarted by fraud and violence, as was the case in the recent provincial elections. The anti-Hitler forces will be victorious, as the Communist Party of Argentina declared in its statement of Dec. 20.

"If the different sectors interested in respect for the Constitution and the law, opposed to governments of violence and fraud, and active in the normal functioning of the collective organisms—of Parliament in the first instance—come together, give each other reciprocal support against the dictatorial excesses of the Executive Power, and coordinate the common action against the agents of Hitler, the arbitrary acts of the present government against the people *will cease*, its 'neutrality' policy favorable to the Axis *will terminate*, and the formation of a National Government will result perforce. It is the aim of the Communists, of the anti-fascists, of all patriots, to make the utmost efforts to unite all the Argentine people, the nation, and direct their acts toward strengthening the independence of the country. In case the Government continues its policy of hostility toward the activity of the democratic and anti-Nazi forces, of the advocates of collaboration with the United States, of those organized in support of the continental defense against the Nazi-fascist aggressors, the working class and all the democratic forces must foster, advance and support all the patriotic measures and initiatives, no matter where they come from, whose objective is to strengthen the defense of the nation and destroy the aggressor forces of the Axis. Whatever may be the conditions under which these forces have to act, in the interest of the national safety and defense, they must work toward the end that the foreign policy of the country shall orient itself toward the participation of Argentina in the continental and world front of struggle against Hitlerism and other aggressor powers of the Axis. All the other questions of domestic policy must be considered in

relation to this *central aim* and subordinated to it."

The Fight Ahead

The Rio de Janeiro Conference represented a real defeat for the Axis powers and a victory for the world forces of democracy. But the battle to win the Hemisphere for an all-out struggle against Nazi Germany and its allies has by no means been carried to completion. The compromise resolution, merely recommending the breaking off of diplomatic relations with the Axis powers, which was adopted so as to preserve a formal unity with Argentina and Chile, was only a step in the right direction. But it was a step that will surely be followed by others, until all the peoples of the Americas, from Canada to Cape Horn, stand where they belong, as full participants in the war of the United Nations against Hitlerism.

In their determination to fight the menace of world fascism the peoples of the Americas, especially those of Latin America, face many heavy and urgent problems. There is the big task of achieving national unity of all anti-Hitler forces, real unity of action of all the governments toward the war, and of mobilizing the peoples; there is the necessity of translating the decision of the Rio Conference into reality in the various countries, there is the urgent need to arm themselves against possible Nazi or Japanese invasions; there are many complex and pressing economic questions; there is the deadly threat of the fascist fifth column, which remains strong throughout Latin America.

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The United States, in helping solve these difficult problems, bears a heavy responsibility. It is true that in this war our country has heavy and urgent tasks in other zones of the world war struggle; nevertheless it must not neglect the vital Latin American area. Out of its great and rapidly developing war strength the United States must find means to offer substantial cooperation to the weaker Latin American states. Especially must it extend economic collaboration and provide the munitions now so urgently needed by many countries south of the Rio Grande. It must also stand ready to give these countries strong air, naval and military support in case of Axis attack.

The key to developing united action by all the countries of the Western Hemisphere against the fascist Axis is a genuine application of the Good Neighbor policy by the United States, and the closest collaboration with the United Nations. In its economic, political and military dealings with the other countries of this Hemisphere the United States must strictly respect their sovereign rights as independent nations. A great danger to be guarded against in this general respect comes from the pro-fascist imperialist circles in this country, particularly those represented by the Hoover, Lindbergh, Hearst camp who would utilize the war situation to set up U.S. economic and political hegemony over the whole Western Hemisphere.

The central task in Latin America, following up the Rio Conference, is to mobilize the great masses

for full participation in the war against Hitler and Hitlerism, and to establish national unity. Here organized labor and other democratic and progressive forces in our land share the responsibility. They must set up a closer cooperation than ever with the peoples of Latin America; they must be on guard to defeat the machinations of the pro-Hitlerite imperialist fifth columnists of this country in Latin America. They must see to it that the United States government works together with the other anti-Hitler governments of the Hemisphere in a true spirit of equality, mutual solidarity and cooperation. In all this work, especially the trade unions of this country should develop a closer cooperation with the Confederation of Latin American Workers (C.T.A.L.).

The building of a great front of all the American peoples as an organic part of the world anti-Hitler front is indispensable in order to prevent the Axis mass murderers and enslavers from getting a grip in this hemisphere. At the same time, this vast front of peoples and nations will not be simply a passive, defensive force. Together with the Soviet Union, Great Britain, China, India, and the peoples of the occupied countries, the democratic nations of the Western Hemisphere, bound together in firm solidarity, will play a vital role in the common task of destroying world fascism—the Berlin-Rome-Tokio Axis—and of establishing the just peace for which the peoples of the world are now longing and fighting.