America Prepares for War thru Buenos Aires Peace Conference

By ELLEN WARD

THE official call to the "Buenos Aires Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace" featured the following agenda, drawn up by the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union:

1. Organization of Peace
2. Neutrality
3. Limitation of armaments
4. Juridical problems
5. Economic problems
6. Intellectual cooperation

Before discussing the agenda we might consider several preliminary questions: Why did the United States call this peace conference and why at Buenos Aires?

The Why of the Conference

It is generally agreed that the threatening world war was the prime motive. The American ruling class needs to line up all the units of its hinterland in preparation for the war. Could it have forged all the Latin American countries into one solid bloc, say into an American League of Nations, it would have had an effective instrument at its command. It is this long view of the future that inspired President Roosevelt's policy of the "Good Neighbor."

An American League of Nations would mean not only a most effective defense but also no mean help in supplying war's voracious needs, for both Americas are vast storehouses of indispensable raw materials and supplies for troops. If these could be "padlocked" by common agreement it would give the United States tremendous advantages in raw materials—oil from a number of Latin American countries, tin from Bolivia, rubber and coffee from Brazil, nitrates from Chile, copper and manganese from Peru, and meat and wheat from Uruguay and the Argentine.

Argentina Balks

All these major considerations and a few "minor" ones—such as giving Great Britain another shove towards the Atlantic, explain the deep chagrin of Cordell Hull when Argentina lined up the largest countries against the American pet plan of an exclusively American League of Nations. Argentina of all countries! Argentina whom we had wooed so effusively and with such anxious hope! Argentina whom we "honored" by calling the conference in her capital city. Good old Argentina put on a great show for our chief executive; outdid all Latin-America in courtesy and warmth and shouted herself hoarse over the privilege of entertaining Roosevelt but when the moment came for delivering—the pull of Great Britain upon the economic life and political thought of Argentina was too strong. The rope didn't even loosen, much less break.

President Justo's (Argentina) keynote address spoke out against a separate American league and once more stressed the importance of close cooperation with the League of Nations.

Saavedra Lamas, her foreign minister and master of ceremonies at the conference, led the opposition against any suggestion of a permanent machinery for concerted American action or any positive declaration of policy such as prohibition of export of arms or loans to belligerents.

On December 15, Harold Hinton, **N. Y. Times** correspondent sent the following despatch. **"The Argentina delegation today again upset the equilibrium at Buenos Aires by withdrawing its approval of the Neutrality convention. It was hinted that the British Foreign Office had a hand in stiffening Argentine opposition to the United States neutrality plan. . . . Great Britain doesn't appear to fear the present scope of the proposal but rather possible future developments. In the event of war Great Britain would undoubtedly be largely dependent on the Argentine for wheat, beef and mutton."**

And althought the United States neutrality plan carefully limited restrictions to arms and loans, nevertheless Argentina (that is Great Britain) feared that other commodities might be included later if the principle were once established, and before she would even agree to the neutrality convention she insisted upon writing into it that—**"nothing in the convention interferes with the obligations of members of the League of Nations"** and insisted upon a further reservation as to the export of food, raw materials and money to purchase food for belligerents. It is obvious that all these reservations castrate the whole neutrality plan.

"Culture" vs. Solidarity

Uruguay, siding with the Argentine, also opposed the project of a permanent consultative commission charged with settling disputes which Hull had set his heart on and included in his neutrality draft. Uruguay along with Colombia, Chile, and Mexico, insisted upon calling a consultative commission only **after** a controversy has started. Her delegation also stated that they were opposed to American countries adopting sanctions against European nations because Uruguay's**"cultural relations with Europe were closer than those with America and we cannot break those relations just to maintain solidarity with Latin-American countries."**

All these sharp words at a conference begun so auspiciously grieved the American delegation no end. Hull had come not only to establish an American League but also to secure our hinterland as well as to reach an understanding that would further pry open the rich South American markets to our exports, but he met unexpectedly stiff resistance on all fronts excepting the central American countries which are so completely under the economic and political dominance of the United States.

Saavedra Lamas stated: **"I have had the great satisfaction of being in charge of Argentina's foreign affairs during the last four years in which there has been a complete about-face in the relationship between Argentina and the United States. There is however one troublesome question between us now. That is the insistence of the United States on shutting out our meat by a sanitary regulation that holds that hoof and mouth disease is rampant in Argentina, when everyone knows it is not."** And a little later:

"As far as the conference is concerned the United States and the Argentine show the same absolute divergence of views on foreign trade policy as they did on the political aspects of the peace machinery. Argentina has developed the European methods of bilateral trade balancing, exchange control and clearing agreements. It is a policy that conflicts with that of the United States and this divergence added to the essentially competitive nature of the produce of two countries would make a trade agreement difficult to reach." (N. Y. Times, Dec. 22).

Difficult indeed! It is not difficult to imagine the state of mind of the American farmer if the Roosevelt administration should by chance decide to let in Argentina's beef and hides.

The Voice of Britain

The opposition spoke through the voice of Argentina but the words were of Great Britain. Despite America's giant strides in penetrating Latin America, England is still considerably the superior in South America. In Argentina alone she controls the Central Bank, the railways and export trade; especially since the 1933 trade treaty. And it is now, in the name of peace, that the United States comes to resume the struggle against England. Argentina's foreign trade is greater than that of all the rest of South America, excluding Brazil, and it is also greater than Brazil's. In 1935 England's business with Argentina reached 705 million pesos. The United States came second with 342 million and Germany third with 207 million pesos.

A Case of Total Amnesia

From this brief summary it should be obvious that the many words of greeting and rejoicing and good cheer in the columns of the **Daily Worker** had very little justification. Gannes showed a woeful lack of understanding of social forces in Latin America and of his own imperialist government when he stated so pompously (**D.W.** Nov. 19, 1936) **"The Conference can become one of the most powerful forces to block the fascist drive to a new world conflagration."** And then again a little later:

"The Inter-American Peace Conference must act to stay the bloody hand of Hitler and Mussolini. . . By warning the fascist powers that the United States is ready to act with all forces standing for peace . . . the fascist bandits can be stopped in their tracks". And on December 9, **"It is the object of the Roosevelt government representing American imperialist interests as it sees them, to create an alliance of the American nations for the maintenance of peace."**

To promote such illusions betrays complete amnesia of all that Lenin ever taught about imperialism in its relation to colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Picture the astonishment of the **Daily Worker** when it found itself "betrayed" so soon after the end of the conference. In its editorial on January 7, 1937, it is forced thus to chide President Roosevelt: **"At the Buenos Aires conference both Roosevelt and Hull emphasized in their speeches the relationship between democracy and peace. They expressed the view that the defense of democracy means the defense of peace. Now the joint resolution (prohibiting the sending of arms to the Madrid government) inspired by Roosevelt becomes an abandonment of aid to democracy in Spain. Thereby it plays into the hands of the fascist war makers."**

The naughty boys at Washington! Mean of them to go off on such a tangent, and let Gannes of the **Daily Worker** remain holding the bag chock full of the rosy illusions of the peoples fronters.

(Concluded in Next Issue)

WORKERS AGE

Organ of the National Committee, Communist Party U. S. A. (Opposition). 131 West 33rd St New York, N. Y.

Published every Saturday by the Workers Age Publishing Association. Subscription Rates: $1.00 per year; $.60 for six months; 5c a copy. Foreign Rates: $1.50 per year.

Entered as second class matter Nov. 5, 1934, at the Post Office New York, N. Y. under the act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. 6, No. 4. Saturday, January 23, 1937.

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LABOR PLA ROLE IN E

By JAY LOVESTONE

NO matter what criticism one may justifiably make of labor's conduct in the last elections, it cannot be denied that, as a class, the workers played a role more distinct, more important, and more decisive than in any preceding election struggles. Granting all the vagueness and lack of class-consciousness featuring the attitude of labor toward Roosevelt, yet, it must be admitted that more than ever before, did labor appear politically as an independent entity. This obviously is a mortal blow to the Gompers theory of labor non-partisanship and to the Green practice of "reward your friends and punish your enemies"—a practice which almost uniformly operates in reverse insofar as labor's interests go.

A no small phase of the consequences of labor's role in the last campaign was the death of Hutcheson, politically. This specimen of the rankest reaction and questionable integrity in American labor is politically through, because the Republican Party, whose servile tool he had been, has been unable to pay him twice in succession. In Hutcheson's fold, this is bad business. And what is bad business for this type of labor leader breeds no following!

For the ruling class as such, the very existence of the Labor Non-Partisan League and other organizations of this kind, means that even the most liberal section of the dominant bourgeois group will have to deal with labor *more and more as an organized force* and not resort to buying individuals. Here is a new factor making for a national Labor Party. In this sense, the American Labor Party of New York was far more important than it appeared to some of the people who thought that they were toying with it. Mr. Frank R. Kent, a Landon convert of some calibre, saw this when he pointed out in the *Wall Street Journal* of November 4th, that:

"The real Third Party movement in this campaign was not the Coughlin-Townsend-Smith-Lemke effort. The real one was that promoted by the Lewis-Berry type of Labor leader who put a full electoral ticket in the field in New York and one or two other states—all in the interests of Mr. Roosevelt.The reason this movement is serious is because its backers had no purpose except to lay their foundation. They look to 1940 *for their real effort, and this gives them four years in which to prepare. Theirs was not a single campaign proposition but the beginning of a drive for the establishment of what they expect to become, one of two major political parties in this country, and they are too smart to think that can be achieved in one campaign or one year."*

Lenin, in analyzing the development of the British Labor Party, time and again made it clear that the beginning of such a movement necessarily must be vague, confusing and lacking in class consciousness. Nevertheless, even tho the leaders of the United Mine Workers and the I.L.G.W.U. may not all have understood the dy-