

The Pan-American Congress.

M. N. Roy (Moscow).

The American government will not permit the **Monroe Doctrine** to be touched by any treaty of arbitration that may eventually be contracted between the Powers. The reservation has been made in the proposal presented by **Kellog** to **Briand** for a multilateral treaty among the powers, the preamble of which will be a declaration outlawing war. The significance of this reservation is that the United States consider **Latin America** as its colony and demand that the European powers docilely recognize this as a **fait accompli**. There was a time, up to the middle of the Nineteenth Century, when the European Powers — France, England, Austria, Spain — disputed the pretention of the United States “to protect the republican system in the New World against the aggression from the Old”. Those days are gone. The hegemony of the United States over Latin America is now tacitly recognized, although competition for economic and financial influence and political intrigues are never suspended. None of the European Powers, however, would now displease the rich Uncle Sam by openly disapproving his bullying methods of managing his southern neighbours. Otherwise, it might have been demanded by the European powers, who do not very much relish the recurring “peace-proposals” from Washington, that the war of open aggression against

Nicaragua ceased before any such proposal could receive serious consideration.

Uncle Sam has really beaten the other imperialist governments in bourgeois hypocrisy. In his own parlance, he has “some nerve” to talk superciliously of peace while cynically bombing the people of Nicaragua and planning to build 50 more battleships costing 800 million dollars. Whatever may be the attitude of Europe to American imperialism, Latin American resistance to it grows steadily. It is remarkable how even little Nicaragua has one uprising a few months after the other has been so brutally crushed. But the latest and the most unexpected resistance comes from **Argentina**. Being the farthest away from the United States the Argentine Republic has all along been rather lukewarm towards the anti-American sentiment generally prevalent throughout Latin America. While Uncle Sam was busy in putting the smaller republics bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Panama Canal Zone into order, the far off Argentine developed into a full-fledged modern bourgeois State without much interference from the north, and in closer economic connection with Europe. Until the war British capital was predominant in Argentine and her trade with Europe was much greater than that with the United States. During the war Wall Street gained

much ground; but obviously Argentina had passed that stage of political minority which might be a pretext of foreign intervention in her internal affairs. This being the case, there was no cause of open conflict between Argentina and the United States. The Argentinian bourgeoisie, which since the war is as much connected with New York as with London, did not care to displease Washington by mixing up in its quarrels with other Latin American republics.

On the eve of the Pan-American Congress, which meets at Havana on January 15, a powerful anti-American agitation has broken out in Argentina. Under the pressure of this campaign the government has been forced to consider what attitude its delegation to the Pan-American Congress should take in case the Nicaraguan question were excluded from the agenda as it is likely to be on the dictation of the United States delegation. The decision of the government is not yet known; but it is of significance and importance that the Argentinian government has abandoned its indifference to the situation in Nicaragua, an indifference which was a few days ago emphasised in Berlin by its Foreign Minister. The entire Argentinian press carries on, as the correspondent of the Berliner Tageblatt reports, "a campaign against American imperialism with bitterness hitherto unusual here". For example, the leading bourgeois daily "La Prensa" writes:

"It cannot be allowed that our delegation to Havana keeps quiet (on the Nicaraguan question). It must either express its opinion or withdraw from the Congress. The public opinion of Argentina cannot suffer its delegation to play the chorus girl in Havana. Before any other business the delegations from the (Latin) American Republics must demand immediate cessation of the aggression against peace that the American troops carry on in Nicaragua. While Nicaragua is attacked there can be neither alliance nor entente. While a country is occupied by foreign troops there cannot be any confidence in the speeches and declarations about continental solidarity."

It is doubtful that the American delegation, which is led by the Wall Street spokesman Hughes and the Standard Oil Co. man Fletcher (formerly Ambassador to Mexico), will have a plain sailing in Havana. It is very disagreeable for American imperialism that in the eleventh hour resistance should come from such an unexpected quarter in the Congress which will be attended by President Coolidge himself. By her political solidity and economic development Argentina is recognized as the premier republic of Latin America. An opposition to American imperialism led by her will be supported by other Latin American governments thus putting the question of Latin American Alliance in the realm of practical politics.

Mexico, which owing to close proximity bears the brunt of American imperialist aggression, has always been the champion of a Latin American alliance against the United States. But it always lacked the power and prestige to command the adhesion of all the other republics to its strivings. Owing to the lack of this general support, the government of Calles recently capitulated to American demands after a resistance of several years. Indeed, the struggle between Mexico and Washington over the Mexican Oil Law dates from 1917, when after the overthrow of the Wall Street protégé Victoriano Huerta from the presidency, a new Constitution was adopted embodying the principles of the revolution of 1911. The article 27 of the

new Constitution has ever since been the bone of contention. By this article all sub-soil riches were declared to be property of the nation. The meaning of the article was nationalization of petroleum and other mineral deposits which had all been leased out to foreign capitalists, particularly American and English by the Diaz government. That act of the Mexican government, of course, was met with undying hostility of the imperialist powers who refused to recognize the Carranza government until the article 27 was removed from the Constitution. A reactionary in internal questions, Carranza stubbornly refused to abide by the wishes of the foreign powers, and for the first time sought to unite all the Latin American republics in a common resistance to the northern giant. Failing to bring the Carranza government to terms by open armed interventions, American imperialism fell back upon the effective method of fomenting civil war. Obregon, who with the help of the United States, overthrew Carranza in 1920, for four years carried on a policy which was calculated not to annoy the powerful northern neighbour. In 1924 the United States tried to prevent the election to the Mexican presidency of Calles who was then notorious for his radical inclination. But supported by the workers and peasants, Obregon defeated the rebellion of the American nominee de la Huerta and secured the election of his candidate, Calles.

The struggle over the Oil Law revived. To break the deadlock on the petroleum question, which deprived the Mexican government of a rich financial resource, the Calles government amended the article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 making the law not retro-active. It was provided that oil leases granted before 1917 could be renewed for not more than 50 years on the application of the lease-holders. Even this did not satisfy the oil kings who wanted the renewed lease to be perpetual which would render the disputed article 27 practically null and void. At last on the eve of his exit from office Calles has given in. American imperialism has triumphed and the Pan-American Congress in Havana is to be staged as a demonstration of American hegemony over the New World. This is the first time that all the Latin American Republics will be represented at the Pan-American Congress. But in the eleventh hour comes the note of discord from Argentina, which is sure to crystallize the resentment of the little republics coerced by the Washington policy of "big stick", in a united Latin American opposition to the imperialism of the United States.

For obvious reasons, the United States government does not desire that the Nicaraguan question is discussed in the Pan-American Congress. To have the Congress leave the Nicaraguan question alone would mean that Uncle Sam's right to do whatever he pleases in the New World is indisputable. His supremacy is recognized by the very States over which he seeks to rule supreme. A part of the recent capitulation of Calles was that he very likely agreed that the Mexican delegation to the Congress would not raise the Nicaraguan question. Now, the attitude of Argentina may influence the policy of the Mexican delegation. The Calles government has all along been accused by Washington of helping the Nicaraguan rebels. Undoubtedly, there exists in Mexico a widespread sympathy for the Nicaraguan people fighting against American imperialism. Therefore the Mexican delegation will be obliged to support any move to raise the Nicaraguan question. Thus the Havana Congress, which is staged as the demonstration of American supremacy, may turn out to be a scene of Uncle Sam's defeat.