

Government Agents Speak as Labor Delegates

By MANUEL GOMEZ.

(This is the second of a series of articles analyzing the Pan-American Federation of Labor and its recent convention at Washington.)

Martinez Unmasks Pan-A. F. of L. The Washington convention would be a memorable one if only because it furnished the unprecedented spectacle of the rising anti-imperialist protest of Latin America finding its way even into the Pan-American Federation of Labor, where everything was organized against it. The Ocotul massacre provided the setting but actual accomplishment must be credited largely to the championship of delegate Martinez of Venezuela, whose convention fight, tho defeated, could not be annulled.

Martinez's stand in opposition to the rest of the convention was hesitant and faltering but it will have deep-going consequences. For not only did Martinez say his say, at least momentarily, but he obliged Mr. Green and the others to defend their own position. Their replies to the Venezuelan "hot head," as they called him, constituted as perfect an example of self-exposure as has ever been witnessed.

Delegates Were Fakes.

Before the convention was four days old it had become plain that the greater part of the participants were not labor delegates at all but a choice collection of government agents and toadies!

Most of the evidence came out in the discussion on Martinez's general resolution against the Monroe Doctrine and American imperialism. Martinez had attacked Wall Street and Washington for their consistent aggressions against Latin America, pointing out among other things that they had robbed Colombia of the Panama area in 1903 and continued to tyrannize over the republic of Panama to this day, that they held Cuba under the Platt Amendment, that they had violated the sovereignty of Haiti, Santo Domingo and Nicaragua, that they had repeatedly conspired against Mexico, that they were supporting the most flagrant and repulsive dictatorships in Latin America: such as that of Gomez in Venezuela, that of Leguia in Peru and that of Machado, the notorious assassin of trade-unionists, in Cuba.

As soon as I heard the reading of Martinez's resolution I knew it was going to mean trouble, but I was entirely unprepared for the exhibition that followed. It was not Green or Woll but the Latin-Americans who jumped first to their feet with eager replies upon their lips!

Peruvian Traitors Loudest.

"I understood the report of the resolutions committee was to be accepted unanimously," one of the Peruvian delegates declared indignantly. "This resolution is an insult to all of us. There is no tyranny of any kind in Peru. I believe the only tyranny that exists is in the hot head of the delegate from Venezuela. We, who come as delegates from a land where freedom reigns, where labor has every legitimate right, cannot consent to a statement being made that the President of Peru is a tyrant."

Now the dictatorship of Leguia in Peru has long been one of the scandals of South America. To anyone even vaguely familiar with the conditions in that unhappy land—where there is a labor conscription act under which practically the entire Peruvian working class is conscripted to work a certain number of days each year without pay on the construction jobs of the Foundation Co. (owned by Wall Streets interests, with President Leguia himself holding some of the shares)—this speech of the Peruvian delegate is a tell-tale one. That it was no chance utterance was proved the next minute, when the other delegate from Peru rose and elaborated upon it.

The Peruvian delegates had much to say in the convention, both in support of Leguia's government and in support of any reactionary measure that came up for consideration. To complete the mission for which undoubtedly they had been sent to Washington, they introduced a chauvinistic resolution on the Tacna-Arica question, denouncing the population of Chile and demanding that the Tacna-Arica territory be handed over to Peru, "in accordance with the patriotic insistence of the Peruvian government."

Peruvians From Paper Organizations Inasmuch as the Federation of Labor of Lima, the only labor body in Peru having any substantial strength, has refused to have anything to do with the so-called Pan-American Federation of Labor, it is worth while asking what organizations were re-

presented by the two Peruvians at the Washington convention. Their credentials bore high-sounding names: the "Universal Union of Confederations of Artisans and Laborers of Peru" and the "Assembly of United Societies of Peru." This is the first time that either of them has been heard of. I overheard one of the newspapermen asking delegate Luis Roberto Rios Castell of Peru exactly what kind of organization it was that he represented. The query was a puzzler, but he answered: "Oh, a general organization." "Is it a trade-union organization?" "No, it isn't a trade-union organization." "Is it a cooperative, then?" "No, it isn't exactly a cooperative." "Well, then, what can it be?" "You see, it is an organization friendly to the working people." The Peruvian attack on Martinez did not lack delegates to second it. A delegate from Panama took a hand in the debate in order to reply to the insinuation that the United States government had ever interfered in Panama, and declared proudly if unconvincingly that "the republic of Panama is just as free and sovereign as any country on earth."

Dominican Delegate Terrified.

Then came delegate Pozos of Santo Domingo to say that although the Dominican delegation had originally signed Martinez's resolution it was under a grave misapprehension and to request that the delegation's name be "erased from a document which details a long list of unproved charges and which attacks governments." (President Green arose from the chair to say graciously that the request of the Dominican delegate would be granted.)

It should be stated here that the Dominican Confederation of Labor is another one of the myths represented at the convention of the P. A. F. of L. There is no real labor movement in Santo Domingo. There has been a small body of intellectuals here known as the "Nationalist Brotherhood" which sent delegates to the 1921 and 1924 conventions of the P. A. F. of L. It is now announced that this "Nationalist Brotherhood" has been merged with the mythical "Dominican Confederation of Labor."

Cuban Delegates Defend Dictator.

But for unadulterated depravity the prize must go to the Cuban delegation. Unlike most of the other Latin-Americans, the Cubans carried credentials of a bona fide labor organization, even though it is an organization operating in a single industry and including only a part of the workers in that industry. To have representatives of this one organization—the Railroad Brotherhood of the North of Cuba—speak for the Cuban labor movement is, however, a cruel joke. The great mass of the Cuban unions have repeatedly denounced the Pan-American Federation of Labor and refuse to send delegates to its conventions.

Cuba has been much in the newspapers of late, owing to the brutal attacks against the workers and peasants carried out wholesale by President Machado in connivance with U. S. Ambassador Crowder and the Sugar Trust. Trade unions have been destroyed, their offices scuttled and their leaders jailed or assassinated. So vicious has been the anti-labor tyranny of President Machado that trade-union periodicals in every country in the world have protested against it. Even the A. F. of L. has felt it necessary to send out through its officials news service a series of articles by Chester M. Wright denouncing Machado in the roundest terms.

Yet the Cuban delegation to the Washington convention of the Pan-American Federation of Labor was so brazen in its apology for the Machado government that some of

the pseudo-delegates from Central America felt obliged to "warn the gathering against accepting the Cuban proposals without the most careful study."

Guatemalan Tells Truth About Cuba.

"I don't want to cast any suspicion whatever upon the Cuban delegates," said Quintana of Guatemala, "nor do I want their proposal defeated, but I would suggest that the executive committee of the Pan-American Federation of Labor should act very cautiously and investigate conditions carefully, so that we may not be victimized and taken by surprise. In our brief stop in Cuba on our way here we saw many things that did not look very lovely."

The Cuban delegates—who allowed a message of greeting to the convention to go into the minutes without objection—had a number of obviously governmental proposals to present. I shall take them up in subsequent articles. At present it will be sufficient to reproduce the following resolution submitted to the convention by the delegation:

Yellow Resolutions Fail.

"Whereas, considering that the delegates of Cuba to this Congress have heard read attentively and with great interest, the documents and commentaries referring to the labor situation of their country, which are inserted in the report of the Executive Council, and

"Whereas, considering that opportunely they sent reports to the Pan-American Federation of Labor in relation to the labor events in Cuba, and the attitude that the government of President Machado has observed, and maintains at the present time; therefore be it

"Resolved, By this Congress that its attitude toward the Cuban government be determined by the following:

"1. The Congress declared that it is satisfied to know by the declarations made by the labor delegates of Cuba that the workmen of that Republic are not at present restrained or prevented from organizing freely any unions or syndicates or in developing their work while their activities have the character and aim of favoring labor conditions, civilizing industrial conditions and establishing social and economic reforms, when they do not employ practices and procedures against the public order, or the institutions of the government."

"2. The Congress remains informed also that the genuine organizations and labor leaders of Cuba have had to contend at all times with difficult situations created by the action of the government, while opposing several times the extemporaneous radical movements whose deeds gave place to situations of violence which affect the true activities of labor in the country as a whole; and the congress has the hope that the difficulties which have arisen in Cuba in the functioning of the genuine labor organizations will disappear completely, these labor unions having the guarantees and protection of the law and of the constituted government from which they await protection and constitutional opportunities without favor or privilege."

This resolution was not adopted, but the mere fact that it could be presented with the unanimous approval of the Cuban delegation speaks volumes as to the integrity of that delegation.

Support of Machado was, fitly enough, linked up with support of American imperialism. Joining in the condemnation of the resolution submitted by Martinez of Venezuela, one of the Cubans remarked:

Platt Amendment "Blessing."

"All the Cubans without exceptions whatsoever owe a debt of gratitude to the United States. We are in favor of the Platt Amendment, which has made possible the present successful regimen under President Machado. There is perfect liberty in Cuba except for trouble-makers and Communists. Our freedom from Spain was due precisely to the Monroe Doctrine which the Venezuelan delegate would have us reject."

A word about the Guatemalan delegation which did not like the Cubans support of Machado. As soon as the Guatemalan conscription-of-labor law was criticized the Guatemalans waxed indignant in their turn. The law they said, was not so bad. Guatemala was the freest country on earth except for reds. Labor was well taken care of. Why, only a short time ago the government put in a Bureau of Labor and will soon elevate it to the rank of a department.

"Why should we pass such

"persuaded Fuller" on certain points regarding the credibility of testimony of witnesses for the defense. Such uncritical interpretation of news only aids in lulling the workers into a false sense of security regarding the enormity of the crime against these two workers that will be carried out, unless the protests and organized action of the workers of this and other countries assumes within the next week such gigantic proportions that the malignant powers now conspiring against Sacco and Vanzetti will not dare carry out their plans.

Sacco is aware of the situation and is perfectly correct when he declares that "only an international protest can free us."

Let us spurn further insipid twaddle about the "fairness" of Fuller and the rest of the jackal pack who want to destroy these two victims of class justice in order to terrorize other workers into submission to capitalist despotism and let us exert every ounce of energy in order to mobilize the masses for action in behalf of freedom for Sacco and Vanzetti.