

Soviet Russia, Friend of the Oppressed Peoples

By MANUEL GOMEZ

AS the lordly powers of the world meet each other today across the table at the Chinese customs conference in Peking, there is one great nation, deeply concerned in all the affairs of China, that is conspicuously among those missing. That nation is Soviet Russia, now the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

Soviet Russia was not invited, and her request to be included was refused. The reason must be clear to everybody. Soviet Russia would scarcely be of help to the other great powers in such imperialist aggressions against the Chinese people as are being re-forged at the conference table, in the name of "guarantees" for eventual Chinese customs autonomy. If Soviet Russia were at the conference she would not side with the imperialists. She would expose them. She would defend the interests of exploited China.

Lenin called Russia the bridge between Europe and Asia, capitalist newspapers tell us that this is the bridge between civilization and barbarism. They do not, however, go so far as to cite in evidence the bloody assault of British "civilization" against the defenseless students of Shanghai, or the most recent exploits of French "civilization" in wiping out whole Moroccan villages and in unloosing upon the old city of Damascus such a mad orgy of fire and destruction that even the capitalist world stands aghast. Happily for the future of the world, the British and French militarists do not constitute all of European civilization, any more than the United States government, fresh from its latest rape of Panama, constitutes all of American civilization. The revolutionary proletarian elements of the west, the class-conscious vanguard of the oppressed masses struggling against exploitation and imperialism—it is of these elements that the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is the triumphant expression. They stretch out the hand of alliance to all peoples fighting for national liberation. Russia is thus no longer merely the bridge between Europe and Asia. She is the bridge connecting the class struggle of the industrial proletariat with the liberating move-

ments of the oppressed of all countries.

It was only natural when the American soldiers, Paul Crouch and Walter Trumbull, became sickened of their role of guardians of Wall Street's interests in Hawaii and determined to help the Hawaiian people throw off the yoke of American imperialism, that they turned their eyes toward Soviet Russia. And conversely, it was to be expected that when the Soviet steamship "Vorovsky" touched at Latin-American ports a month ago, the Communist nucleus aboard would send a message of fraternal greeting to the oppressed peoples of Latin-America.

At the time of the November revolution in 1917 the Russian government had special privileges in China, as well as the "right" of extra-territoriality and all the other "rights" enjoyed by the great capitalist powers today. These privileges and "rights" were voluntarily surrendered by the Soviet regime. Russia, which under the czar, had been foremost among the imperialist oppressors of China, became her friend and ally. In every instance where the diplomatic representatives of the capitalist powers in Peking took a stand prejudicial to the interests of the Chinese people, notably during the Shanghai outrages of this year, the Soviet ambassador stood out single-handed in opposition. It is no secret that only fear of Soviet Russia prevented the powers from open war against China following the Shanghai affair.

BEGINNING in 1919 and 1920, close ties were established with the Kuomintang party and the Canton government headed by the heroic Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who is loved and honored by all friends of Chinese freedom. How much Dr. Sun valued the association is seen in his dying message to the central executive committee of the Soviet Union. The message is well known but it is of such significance that I give it here in full:

Dear comrades:

Here on my death bed my thoughts turn to you, as well as to the future destiny of my party and of my country.

You are the head of the Union of Free Republics, that heritage which the immortal Lenin has left to all

suppressed peoples of the world. By means of this heritage the victims of imperialism will inevitably win their emancipation from that social order which has always been based upon slavery, war and injustice.

I leave behind me a party which, as I always hoped, will be allied with you in its historical task of liberating China and other suppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism.

My charge to the Kuomintang party before all is that it shall continue to promote the cause of the national revolutionary movement for the emancipation of China, which has been degraded by imperialism into a semi-colonial country. I therefore charge my party to maintain permanent contact with you.

I cherish the firm belief that your support of my country will remain unaltered.

In taking my last leave of you, dear comrades, I express the hope that the day is approaching when the Soviet Union will greet in a free and strong China its friend and ally, and that the two states will proceed hand in hand as allies in the great fight for the emancipation of the oppressed of the whole world.

With brotherly greetings,
SUN YAT-SEN.

IS it any wonder that the imperialist robbers do not want Soviet Russia to sit in at a Chinese customs conference which all China is denouncing?

The people of India, struggling for freedom from the crushing rule of imperialist Britain, find in Soviet Russia no less a friend than the Chinese. It was Soviet Russia—who, following the massacre of Hindus by the British soldiery at Amritsar—a lesson in "civilization" comparable only to the French fury at Damascus—launched the protest that went around the world. In the great Bombay strike, Russians workers helped liberally with funds. So great and so apparent is the Soviet support of Hindu liberation that Great Britain has repeatedly insisted as a first condition before opening negotiations with the U. S. S. R. that it refrain from anti-imperialist propaganda in India. But not all the pledges in the world can destroy Soviet Russia's elemental sym-

pathy for the cause of Hindu liberation.

Almost the first foreign alliance consummated by the government of revolutionary Russia was with Mustafa Kemal Pasha and his Turkish liberation movement; this alliance was maintained through the course of Kemal's struggle to free Turkey from imperialist rule and was an important factor in his success. In Egypt, Russia's sympathies have been outspokenly with the nationalist movement headed by Zaglul Pasha—even when Zaglul himself threatened to desert it. British "civilization" has just seized control again in Persia, by means of a particularly venal coup d'état, but a wholesome respect for the red army of Soviet Russia has been, and remains, the constant friend of Persian independence.

Soon perhaps the forces opposing the British-inspired coup in Persia will be denounced in the press of Europe and America as "Communists and Bolsheviks."

Those are familiar epithets in the mouths of imperialists, and no doubt seem fearsome enough to them—but they have no terrors for the revolutionary nationalists of the colonies and semi-colonies, who have learned to know imperialism as death-dealing oppression and Communism as the ally of national liberation.

EVEN the revolt of the Riff tribesmen under Abd-el-Krim has been attributed to bolshevist propaganda. This is of course untrue, for it is the brutal imperialism of France and Spain that drove the Riff natives to war for freedom. Nevertheless, no one doubts where the Soviet government's sympathies are in the struggle. The Communist Party of France rendered direct aid to Abd-el-Krim at the very time when French imperialism was attacking him, and the C. P. of France together with the other Communist parties are the paladins of Soviet Russia in western Europe.

National questions are now assuming special significance and acuteness, not only in Asia, Africa and Latin-America, but even in Europe. The eruption of Greeks and Bulgars which we are reading so much about these days is but an incident in the struggle over Macedonia, which was

in no way settled by the great war. The imperialist powers support the claims, now of Bulgaria, now of Greece, now of Yugo-Slavia—as their interests may dictate. Soviet Russia echoes the slogan of Theodore Alexandrov: Independence for Macedonia! Similarly, the Soviet Union endorses the aspirations for Croatian autonomy as originally defended by the republican Croatian party, when its leader, Raditch, was still loyal to the interests of his peasant followers.

SUBJECT peoples everywhere are able to have confidence in the attitude of the U. S. S. R. toward them because it is not seeking super-profits. It has no imperialist aims, for the simple reason that it has no imperialistic economic base, and no dominant capitalist class. It is not even a national state in the older sense, but a union of autonomous socialist Soviet republics, welded together under a constitution which leaves each one free to leave the union at will. It cannot by its very nature, acknowledge the supremacy of any chosen people, of any select race. It knows phrases such as "white supremacy" are actions on white robbery . . . on imperialism, which must be destroyed if Communism is to live.

One of the great accomplishments of the Russian revolution, as Stalin puts it, was to aid in converting the colonies and semi-colonies from citadels of capitalist imperialism, power into citadels for the overthrow of world imperialism. Lenin added a few words to those of Marx and created the historic slogan: Workers of the world and oppressed peoples, unite! But it is after all, only a slogan. Soviet Russia gives it reality, and demonstrates by its relations with the subject peoples of all lands the unity of the proletariat and national liberation struggles.

Russia has established the first lasting proletarian dictatorship. She has also made the first breach in the ring of capitalist imperialist states. This is the unmistakable sign, to the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, of how the advancing march of the industrial proletariat in all the great nations of capitalism will inevitably shatter the yoke of imperial slavery that bears down on them.