

# THE CONQUEST OF PANAMA BY MARINES

## *Now Section of "Our Empire"*

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All-America Anti-Imperialist League  
ARTICLE II.

"The name of 'Panama,' which is associated with the most notorious financial scandal of the nineteenth century, is associated also with one of the most formidable scandals of American diplomacy."—Carlos Pereyra, in "El Mito de Monroe."

How American troops happen to be so much at home in Panaman territory was explained in the first article of this series, printed in yesterday's DAILY WORKER. I pointed out there that U. S. control is not limited to the Canal Zone, as popularly supposed and officially propagated, but includes a protectorate over the entire so-called republic of Panama, definitely established by the written constitution of the "republic." Panama is thus an integral part of the American empire.

New light is now thrown on what Professor Pereyra, member of the Hague permanent court of arbitration, calls "the most formidable scandal of American diplomacy"—that is, the steal of Panama from Colombia, in 1903. Scandal has long been connected with the action of the United States government in this episode, but few have realized how great the scandal was. Rough-riding Teddy Roosevelt did more than simply foment a revolution in order to be able to lease a strip of land six miles wide across the Isthmus of Panama and construct a canal; he carried on a war of colonial aggression against the republic of Colombia, tore away 33,800 square miles of her territory, baptised it as the "republic of Panama" and then leased the Canal Zone from himself to cover up the nature of the proceeding.

### **Canal Central Factor**

Of course the proposed canal was the central factor in the affair. Congress authorized the president to proceed to construct a canal at Panama, provided he could secure a clear title to the property of the French company which had previously obtained the franchise. The French company was able to give a satisfactory title; the company was virtually bankrupt and was eager to boost its stock by a deal with the United States. But Panama was a province of Colombia, and the Colombian senate unanimously rejected Roosevelt's terms for the lease of the Canal Zone. Whereupon Roosevelt, after consultation with the French company, decided upon a revolution.

### **Proclaim Independent—Marines Land**

On November 3, 1903, Panama "proclaimed its independence from Colombia," and American marines were immediately landed on the isthmus with instructions from the president to

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prevent the landing of Colombian troops within 50 miles of Panama. Four days later the republic of Panama was recognized, in marked contrast to the time-honored precedent of U. S. governments of making haste slowly when it came to the recognition of revolutionary governments! Before the 15th of the month, Buneau Varilla, the resident manager of the French company in Panama, was received at Washington as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the republic of Panama.

## Staging a Revolution

It is well known that on Nov. 3, Assistant Secretary of State Loomis had wired to the American consul in the city of Colon: "How is it that we hear nothing of the revolution?" (This was before any revolution had broken out).

"Have patience. The revolution has been delayed a little; but it will take place at 6 p. m."

And it did!

A treaty was promptly signed with the new "republic" by which the United States secured the right of way for the canal on the same terms that had been offered to Colombia. The treaty also gave the U. S. government—by the way, as it were—complete supervision over the police powers of Panama. And when the "newcomer in the family of nations" adopted its constitution, in 1904, its position was found to be that of a plain protectorate of the United States.

## Panaman People Betrayed

The Panaman people had nothing to say in the process by which they suddenly found themselves part of a colonial possession. The whole matter was cooked up with the aid of a handful of bootlicking politicians and renegade officers. No native administration in the country has ever been the true representative of the people of Panama. The presidents have all been miserable hand-picked lackeys of Wall Street, working in the shadow of U. S. guns always at hand in the Canal Zone. Rodolfo Chiari, the traitor who co-operated with General Lasiter in bringing about the present strike-breaking invasion, is a typical example.

(To be Continued)