

Schiller Institute catalyzes ferment against the IMF in Ibero-America

by Carlos Potes

Over 2,000 people marched in Strasbourg, France—the seat of the European Parliament, located at the border of France and Germany—on April 13, in the largest-ever demonstration in Western Europe to protest the murderous looting policies of the International Monetary Fund. The Strasbourg march was part of a worldwide mobilization called by the Schiller Institute which pulled more than 20,000 people into the streets over the weekend of April 13-15, in a global show of political will to defeat the financial policies now destroying industrial and underdeveloped countries alike.

The effect of the simultaneous mobilization of Western Europe and the United States with the Third World began to be seen at once in Ibero-America. On Monday, April 15, the president of the Mexican Workers' Confederation (CTM) called on Mexican labor to make May Day a day of labor demonstrations against the IMF. The CTM is the largest labor organization in Ibero-America, and May 1 is the traditional "labor day" which brings huge crowds of workers into the streets.

Also on April 15, Panama's National Council of Organized Workers (CONATO), the most important labor federation there, called on U.S. President Ronald Reagan to return to the American System and dump the IMF. The Panamanian union quoted the American Declaration of Independence as proof that the United States should join and not oppose the quest of Ibero-Americans for "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" which the IMF has deprived them of.

Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche had set the process in motion with her call for an "Indira Gandhi Memorial Summit" at the Fourth International Conference of the Institute last January in Richmond, Va. She proposed that Schiller Institute chapters around the world lead mass protests against the IMF, timed to precede the meeting of the Fund's Interim Committee in Washington April 17-19, where IMF "conditionalities" would be accepted, ostensibly, by the United States as well.

Former U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. characterized the urgency of joining all possible forces against present IMF policy as follows: "An epidemic of the dreaded disease, cholera, has erupted among the increasing millions already dying of famine and disease throughout most of black Africa. This epidemic, which may

soon spread into other continents, is the inevitable consequence of both the International Monetary Fund's 'conditionalities,' and the racist 'Global 2000' doctrine of the Carter administration. Unless the policies of the IMF and the State Department's 'Global 2000' are reversed promptly, as many as 300 millions out of approximately 500 million black Africans, will be victims of a genocide vastly greater than that for which we condemned the Hitler regime at the postwar Nuremberg Trials," said LaRouche in a message read at all the rallies.

"We are demonstrating worldwide against the intention of the IMF Interim Committee to force even the U.S. under so-called IMF surveillance, eliminating national sovereignty and giving the U.S. the same kind of treatment and subjecting it to the same brutal austerity conditionalities imposed on only so-called Third World countries so far," read a message sent to the rallies by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute. "Against this injustice, which cries for vengeance to the heavens, and which will lead without any doubt to either a soon-to-come Soviet world hegemony or a Third World War, the Schiller Institute and the International Movement for the Inalienable Rights of All Men have called for the immediate abolition of the IMF and the establishment of a New Just World Economic Order."

Mrs. LaRouche's message stressed again the need to convene "a world summit which realizes a general reorganization of the world monetary system, and which generates long-term, low-interest credits for production, agriculture, great infrastructure, and development projects worldwide. This summit is supposed to be named the Indira Gandhi Memorial Summit," she emphasized. "Its immediate realization is the only hope for Africa, for the developing countries. It is the only way that President Reagan can be freed from the present complete control of the Eastern Establishment, which otherwise has already reserved for him the role of a second President Hoover."

Pro-America, anti-IMF

One of the most significant aspects of this latest round of resistance to IMF "conditionalities" is precisely the absence of a blind anti-Americanism which has characterized such activities in the past. Particularly labor leaders in Ibero-

America, where the mobilization has gathered the greatest momentum, are keen to the distinctions pointed out by the Schiller Institute between IMF policy and U.S. interest, and hope that the United States can still be relied upon as an ally for development.

In the anti-IMF rally held in Panama City on the 15th, over a thousand labor leaders, selected by rally organizers to represent some 200,000 Panamanian workers, marched right up to the doors of the U.S. embassy to deliver a statement addressed to President Reagan, urging him to use his powers to put an end to IMF austerity in Ibero-America and launch a new era of inter-American cooperation (See *Documentation*).

Embassy officials were somewhat confounded by the fact that no U.S. flags were burned during the demonstration, but even more so when they realized that the statement presented to them for transmittal to the President began with a quote from the U.S. Declaration of Independence! When reached for comment, office after office of the embassy "could not confirm" that such a letter had been received there. Finally, the labor attaché attempted to return the letter—perhaps too hot to handle—to CONATO headquarters, with the odd argument that President Reagan doesn't run the IMF. Nonetheless, embassy spokesmen were quick to clarify that the rally was "not anti-American; it was against the IMF."

Pro-American sentiment, however, has few chances of survival in impoverished, undernourished, and war-torn Ibero-America unless the United States moves quickly to reverse decades of foolish support for IMF looting policies in the continent. Unless the Reagan administration gets off the "free-enterprise" bandwagon which has only benefitted the dope-profiters so far in Ibero-America, pro-Western, democratic forces in the area have a fine line indeed to walk between Communist subversion and economic holocaust.

The Schiller Institute's 1,000-strong march in Mexico City, as well as other marches in at least five more Mexican cities, demonstrated quite vividly the population's anti-IMF fervor. One day later, CTM leader Fidel Velázquez decided to call for another round of demonstrations against the IMF. According to the daily *Excelsior*, the CTM asked all of its member unions and federations "to prepare messages for this coming May Day, rejecting the International Monetary Fund and showing that the crisis isn't merely a financial problem, but also means hunger and injustice to the population." As labor delegations from around the world poured into Mexico City for the 11th Congress of the Inter-American Regional Labor Organization (ORIT), the CTM informed them of its decision to make the IMF the focus of the May 1 mass demonstrations.

At the same time, says *Excelsior*, the CTM "suggested to the government of President Miguel de la Madrid that it promote a world meeting on foreign debt, to find formulas and mechanisms for multilateral negotiations, given that it is ever more difficult to meet the International Monetary Fund's conditionalities." The CTM's proposed international summit would assemble creditor and debtor *governments* to discuss,

as proposed by the Schiller Institute, a New World Economic Order *outside* of the IMF.

That heightened labor organizing against the IMF is a result of the Schiller Institute's international mobilization was also pointed out by the Dominican daily *La Noticia*, which noted on April 13 that the demonstration held that afternoon in Santo Domingo "forms part of a world mobilization beginning today against the IMF and its monetarist policy," and reported on the resolution passed April 11 by the Senate of the State of Alabama condemning IMF policy and calling on President Reagan to launch a 30-million-ton food-relief program for Africa (*Documentation*).

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With these anti-IMF rallies, cooperation among labor organizations has also reached a new level, as demonstrators in every country heard messages from Colombian, Dominican, Panamanian, and Argentine unions conducting similar events at home. In the case of Argentina's General Labor Confederation (CGT), which sent fraternal greetings to CONATO and the Bogota and Cundinamarca Worker's Union (UTRABOC), such messages of international unity constitute the first such coordinated action since the days of President Perón, its founder.

One rallying cry around the world

The worldwide round of marches and rallies against the IMF and for a new world economic order began early in Argentina, when thousands flooded the streets of Buenos Aires on April 2, the third anniversary of Argentina's recuperation of the Malvinas Islands from the British. The marchers demanded that the IMF return economic sovereignty to Argentina as well. The Schiller Institute of Argentina circulated a statement comparing genocide in Africa with the fate Ibero-America faces unless an alternate monetary system is established (*Documentation*).

In Colombia, the main labor unions staged a 4,000-per-

son rally in downtown Bogota, where greetings were read from the Schiller Institute and other Ibero-American labor unions. Anti-IMF activities were led in Peru by republicans for the PLAN-Peru, a political association which presented 40 candidates for Congress in the April 14 elections. PLAN-Peru organizers, who addressed a crowd of some 4,000 in Lima's Plaza de San Martín, emphasized the insistence of the IMF on growing illegal drugs as a means of debt repayment.

Brazilian organizers of the Schiller Institute and the National Mobilization Party (PMN) gathered some 500 demonstrators in Rio de Janeiro on April 15, to hear several speakers from both organizations indict the IMF's economic crimes and call on the Brazilian government to join with other Ibero-American nations in the creation of a debtors' cartel and a common market to bypass IMF conditionalities and spur development. One of the speakers was PMN leader Celso Brant, an adviser to the 1950s regime of Jucelino Kubitchek, who was the first President to break with the IMF on grounds of national sovereignty.

In Europe, at least 3,500 marchers took to the streets of Strasbourg, Stockholm, and Rome on April 13. At the largest of these rallies, convened by the Schiller Institute in Strasbourg, 2,000 demonstrators from all the European countries marched over a mile with bands, color guards, and banners denouncing the IMF. Fifteen mayors from the Alsace region of France signed a telegram supporting the rally and the Schiller Institute's initiative "against poverty and for a re-launching of economic growth in both the industrial and agricultural sectors." All three rallies passed resolutions for President Reagan to drop U.S. support for the IMF, urging him to "take action in the best tradition of the American Revolution to free the peoples of the developing sector nations from the burdens of crushing poverty, starvation and disease which increasingly threaten their very existence."

In spite of heavy harrassment and suspected FBI interference in the United States, major rallies were held in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., where "freedom caravans" coming from many corners of the country converged after a nationwide publicity tour which captured headlines and newscasts in numerous local newspapers, and radio and TV stations. Notwithstanding the careful black-out policy maintained on the subject of the Schiller Institute's mobilization against the IMF, marchers were able to join tens of thousands around the world in communicating to the American population the urgent message best summarized by Lyndon LaRouche in his message to all the demonstrations:

"Every adult man or woman, in every part of the world, who does not arise to combat this genocide, is as guilty of this mass-murder as those who failed to resist Adolf Hitler's rise to power during the 1930s. This guilt lies heavily on every citizen of the United States. . . . Let us prove once again, that the people of the United States are still morally fit to survive. If we continue to condone IMF 'conditionalities,' we are not morally fit to survive."

Documentation

Ibero-Americans rally against IMF

Text of the letter sent by the Panamanian National Council of Organized Workers to President Reagan, April 15, 1985.

Mr. President:

We begin this letter with an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence of the United States, dated 4th of July, 1776, which says:

" . . . We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. . . ." These truths still hold, notwithstanding 209 years since gone by.

The government of the United States, in consequence of a policy completely opposite to the principles expressed in its Declaration of Independence, has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the fact that the peoples of the Third World, particularly neighboring Latin America, cannot in fact count on Life, Liberty and Happiness.

Latin America suffers from innumerable problems, among which the principal is its foreign debt, estimated to be 336 billion dollars, of which our country, Panama, has a share of 3.1 billion dollars. The problem is compounded by the inability to pay the interest on the debt, even when countries comply with the readjustment or economic stabilization programs imposed upon them by the International Monetary Fund—the IMF.

As you know, decisions in the IMF are made by the five countries with the highest quotas and therefore the most votes, which are the United States, the United Kingdom, Federal Germany, France and Japan. Important decisions are adopted with an 85% majority of the votes. The United States has 20% of the votes, which allows it to veto any important decision, by virtue of the fact that without its votes the required majority cannot be attained. This same role can be performed by the European Economic Community.

Some economists and serious institutions hold that the

IMF has decided to impose "structural adjustment programs" with the aim of politically and economically destabilizing countries, sowing popular discontent, riots, insurrections, civil wars and mainly genocide. The populations they target, of course, are the inhabitants of the Third World: Africa, Asia and Latin America; *non-Caucasian races*.

Central America, with \$10.15 billion in foreign debt, and 21.82 million inhabitants, is already paying its share, the fruit of such a neo-Malthusian strategy. Thousands of people have been exterminated, thousands more have had to seek refuge in neighboring countries, but in the end a great percentage dies, as a result of hunger, poor living conditions and even repression.

As you can see, our peoples have only one alternative: to fight for Life, Freedom, and the pursuit of Happiness, just as you did, 209 years ago. But we shall carry this fight to the metropolises themselves: the United States, the United Kingdom, Federal Germany, France and Japan, that the peoples of these countries may establish governments based on the principles established in the Declaration of Independence of the United States, and at the same time suppress once and for all the financial groups that control the governments and economies of our countries.

This is the message we hope you will relay to the leading bodies of the International Monetary Fund.

Sincerely,
for the Joint Direction of the National Council of
Organized Workers (seal),
Santiago Cajar, coordinator

The powerful General Labor Confederation (CGT) of Argentina moved in concert with continental forces for the first time since the death of its founder, General Juan Perón. The CGT telegram, directed to the Colombian UTRABOC and the Panamanian CONATO labor organizations holding rallies on April 13-14, states:

In the name of and in representation of the Executive Committee of the General Labor Confederation of the Argentine Republic, we communicate to you our solidarity with the event repudiating the recessive measures of the IMF. We fervently hope that through worker unity and solidarity, we will forge our common destiny and the unity of Latin America.

Manuel Diz Rey, International Secretary
Patricio Dana, Interior Secretary

From La Noticia, April 13, Dominican Republic: "World Mobilization Against IMF Begun," by Vianelo Perdomo.

The march which various popular organizations will hold this afternoon forms part of a world mobilization beginning today against the IMF and its monetarist policy, according to what the top leader of the CGT revealed this morning. Julio de Peña Valdez said to *La Noticia* that this mobilization coincided with the annual IMF meeting which will be held in Wash-

ington from the 17th to the 19th of this month. . . . Similar activities will be held today in Panama, Colombia, Argentina, and Peru, led by the trade union leaderships of those countries.

. . . He reported that demonstrations against the IMF will be carried out next Monday in the U.S. cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Louisiana, Alabama, and Washington. In the Washington demonstration persons of all states of the Union will participate, who since yesterday started to arrive in the U.S. capital, the labor union leader said. He said that last Thursday the state legislature of Alabama approved unanimously a resolution against the IMF, because this imperialist financial organism is destroying the economy of the underdeveloped countries of the Third World. He added that the state legislature of Alabama accused the IMF of being one of the main culprits for the situation of generalized misery which most of the countries of Africa are suffering. . . . The organization accused the IMF, moreover, of provoking the death of hundreds of thousands of children and old people in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Biafra, such as in the other black countries in which it is massacring people with a disease which was believed to have been conquered, cholera. . . .

The Schiller Institute of Argentina circulated a letter (reproduced here in relevant part) to all major government, political, military, business, labor, and financial circles of the country prior to the wave of anti-IMF demonstrations held around the world on or about April 13.

. . . It is necessary to speak clearly to the Argentine people, and to all the peoples of Latin America beset by creditors for a debt which the very monetary system devised by the large banks of the industrialized countries has made unpayable.

. . . If the recipes of the Fund are applied here, all the efforts that have been made to secure democracy will fail.

Hunger, which in the underdeveloped world is suffered by millions of people—whose most pathetic and exemplary case is Africa, but which is extending and expanding across the Latin American continent—is the direct consequence of the IMF's conditionality policies applied with systematic rigor since the last decade. What was denied to Africans then is being denied to Latin Americans now: access to technological means that could contribute to the development of our economies. The loans that they obtained in the past and which we received only in recent years, were not capital loans to be applied to production. They were financial maneuvers and nothing more.

. . . This is what leads us now to declare that the IMF is the best agent of subversion, an agent which conspires against the process of democratization and against the well-being of the people.

And for this reason, we emphasize that the agreements that the government negotiated and now seeks to renegotiate under even worse conditions for our countries, are not simply recessive; they are genuinely subversive. . . .