

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

Soviets seek an ally in Brazil

Mediated by the friends of Henry Kissinger, the Russians are offering "science," "culture," and business deals.

Representatives of the Soviet government have begun an aggressive diplomatic and propaganda drive in Brazil, including the possible visit in the near future of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. According to reports in *Jornal do Brazil*, Shevardnadze will arrive before the next United Nations General Assembly meeting, and may also visit Argentina.

From what is publicly known, the Soviet ambassador in Brazil, who has organized this diplomatic offensive, and a bevy of Soviet journalists who have just left the country, devoted their efforts to vitriolic attacks against the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), while encouraging the environmentalist-pacifist movement here. The representatives of Imperial Russia also tried to take advantage of the crisis caused by International Monetary Fund austerity demands and Brazilian pragmatism to increase trade between Brazil and the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet campaign began with a briefing on the results of the recent 27th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party given by Ambassador Vladimir Chernichov to President José Sarney and to the heads of the two houses of Brazil's Congress. Immediately afterward, Chernichov asked the Foreign Relations Commission of the Chamber of Deputies for Brazilian support for the Soviet program for Western disarmament and fulminated against the "Star Wars" program of the U.S. government.

On April 4, the ambassador showed up at the University of Sao Paulo to speak on the same subject. His proselytizing was so blatant that a group of professors protested, arguing that the university "should not serve as a forum for the policies of either of the two superpowers."

Later, on April 8, a Soviet delegation arrived, made up of cosmonaut Valery Kubasov, director of *Pravda* in Moscow Nikolai Prozhogin, and the Latin American editor for *Pravda*, Sergei Isistnov.

In his tour throughout the country, cosmonaut Kubasov—always flanked by a Russian reporter or diplomat—made the attack on Reagan's defense program his apparent sole purpose on earth. Speaking in a mystical pacifist tone recalling the flower-waving hippies of yesteryear, he gave a lecture at the Institute for Space Research in São José dos Campos, one of the most important centers of the scientific community. His delegation also met with President Sarney and the governors of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

As a sequel, a group of Brazilian politicians and scientists—some, disciples of the agnostic pervert Bertrand Russell, and others, like Archbishop Helder Camara, followers of the theocratic doctrines of Integralism—decided to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first flight into space by organizing a hookup between the Rio de Janeiro radio network Roquette Pinto and Moscow radio to hear a message that the Mir cosmonauts would be sending

to from space that "Brazil appears as an enormous green zone crossed by blue rivers" (i.e., a zone of rich and enormous natural resources.)

The Soviets' sudden interest in Brazil, however, is neither science nor culture. Rather, it is to ready Brazil as a launching pad for Soviet operations on the continent, be they intelligence-related or strategic.

In December 1985, then Brazilian Foreign Minister Olavo Setúbal, a banker close to Henry Kissinger, became the first Brazilian foreign minister to visit Moscow. At that time, the Soviet government expressed interest in opening up Aeroflot operations to Brazil. Brasilia said no.

Brazil has, however, proven more vulnerable to the offer of a "cultural-scientific" interchange, the means typically used by the Soviets to disseminate their feudal culture and expand trade. The appeal to "culture" and "science" has worked well, fed by the bureaucracy of the Brazilian foreign ministry.

The Soviet delegation's Brazil trip dovetailed with the meeting of the Mixed Brazil-Soviet Commission, attended by Soviet Foreign Relations Vice-Minister Aleksei Mazhulo. Some 50 private Brazilian companies attended as observers. Parallel to the meeting, it was announced that the Brazilian company USIMEC and the Soviets' Technopromexport have struck a deal to jointly produce electrical equipment for sale to third countries. Also, the Cacique company agreed to sell Brazilian food to the Soviet company Soyuzplodimport. A Soviet technical delegation will shortly be traveling to the state of Minas Gerais to evaluate mineral production for energy needs. The Soviets are also offering to participate in an irrigation project for Brazil's northeast.