

Ibero-America is against Iraq war

by Carlos Wesley

The Anglo-American-led war against Iraq has given rise to a mass-based protest movement in Ibero-America. "Bush war against Iraq is a war against the whole Third World," said a headline in Panama's only opposition daily *El Periódico*. Citing a leaflet "being distributed all over the world," *El Periódico* says that the war in the Gulf could "set a world war with unforeseen consequences for all of humanity."

According to the leaflet, Iraq's military intervention in Kuwait was just a pretext "for the Anglo-Americans to implement their fascist 'New World Order,' conceived more than 20 years ago. As was the case with Hitler's 'New World Order,' the plan is to stop us from any further industrial development, to destroy what industry there already exists in the countries of the Third World, and to force reduction of the darker-skinned populations of the planet, through war, famine, pestilence, wholesale abortions and other genocidal depopulation measures. On these Malthusian aims, Washington, London and Moscow are fully agreed."

The leaflet asks, where are Bush's troops, now that the Soviet imperial Red Army is crushing the independence of the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia? "Where was the U.N. during Christmas 1989, when the U.S. invaded Panama and massacred thousands of its citizens?" It questions the coalition's stance as to the treatment accorded by the Israelis to the Palestinians, and asks why there has been no outcry regarding the territories illegally occupied by Israel and by Syria.

"Where is the indignation of the superpowers against the International Monetary Fund conditionalities, which destroy our sovereignty and take the bread out of the mouths of our children to pay an unpayable debt?"

In Mexico, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement distributed more than 100,000 copies of the leaflet. In Colombia, tens of thousands were given out by the Andean Labor Party; similarly in Peru, Venezuela, and elsewhere.

In Argentina, demonstrators forced Congress to reject a request by President Carlos Menem, the only Ibero-American leader who has actually sent military forces to the Gulf. Menem had requested that the two Argentine war ships deployed to the Gulf be allowed to give "logistical support" to the same Anglo-American forces that joined to humiliate

Argentina militarily in the Malvinas War of 1982. The measure was defeated in the House of Representatives, following a heated debate in which opponents of the measure, some of them dissident members of Menem's own Peronist party, came to blows with its supporters, whom they accused of being "cowards" and "sons of bitches."

The Brazilian daily *Jornal do Commercio* printed a series of commentary articles by *EIR*'s Rio de Janeiro correspondent Lorenzo Carrasco. Since Brazil imports about half the oil it consumes from the Persian Gulf, its economy has been shaken by the war. Brazilian industrialists reacted with much interest to Carrasco's proposal that the country change its current economic strategy "and immediately abandon those liberal policies of opening up monetarily and economically to be in tune with President Bush's 'Initiative for the Americas' and other such." Instead, says Carrasco, Brazil should move towards a policy of providing low-interest credits for oil exploration, industrial expansion, infrastructure development, "including completing the construction of nuclear generating plants."

Brazil must also move forward to integrate its economy with the rest of Ibero-America as quickly as possible, wrote Carrasco. Brazilian officials are now calling for emergency meetings of long-dormant hemispheric economic cooperation organizations.

A fight for ideals

In an interview televised nationwide in Venezuela, Román Rojas, one of the most respected veterans of the country's diplomatic corps, challenged the pro-war policy of Social Democratic President Carlos Andrés Pérez. Rojas said that the war was an Anglo-American operation against German reunification, that the U.S. is now plunging into an economic depression, that the Anglo-Americans want to destroy the development potential represented by their rivals, Germany and Japan, and that this was part of their genocidal plans, in connivance with the Soviets, to wipe out the populations and grab the resources of the Third World.

In Peru, television and radio networks publicized the full text of the leaflet and ran interviews with the leaders of the Peruvian Labor Party, Ronald Moncayo and Luis Vásquez Medina. Channel 5, which is seen all over Peru, also ran an interview with Julio Vargas Parada, a noted expert on international law and leader of a faction of Catholic conservatives who rejected the line that the followers of Saddam Hussein were "fanatics." Vargas praised the Iraqis for being willing to die for "higher ideas, for God. We in the Western world have lost that quality. We kill for women, for money, for petty ambition."

Perhaps the most telling sign of the sea-change taking place in the continent was the fact that the ruling PRI party of Mexico's President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, one of Bush's staunchest allies, was itself forced to organize "peace" demonstrations, in an attempt to control the popular protests.