

Andean Report by Diana Olaya de Terán

Colombia: New target of the greenies?

The Gaviria government has lent itself to the "sustainable development" campaign of Eco-92.

In April of this year, Maurice Strong, the secretary general of the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, went on tour in Colombia to promote next year's Earth Summit, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil under UNCED's sponsorship. At that summit, or Eco-92 as it has been popularly dubbed, Strong and his co-thinkers hope to see the adoption of global ecological norms, starting with the "internationalization of the Amazon" and all the strategic and natural resources contained therein, which would establish a precedent for a new "green colonialism" worldwide.

Strong devoted special praise to Colombia's role in promoting the environmental cause noting, for example, the efforts of Colombia's oligarchic National Federation of Coffee Growers in financing ecological projects in Colombia. He said that its program "contributes in an exemplary and tangible way to the goals of the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, to take place in Rio de Janeiro in June of 1992, which is to implement in practice the theory of sustainable development."

Colombia has been singled out as a target of the malthusians due to the fact that it is perhaps the only country in the world whose Constitution—written earlier this year—incorporates the concept of "sustainable development" and "ecological rights" in the body of its text.

Article 80 reads: "The state will plan the management and use of natural resources, to guarantee their sustainable development, their conserva-

tion, restoration or substitution." Article 58 reads: "Property has a social function. As such, its ecological function is also inherent." And Article 277, incredibly, argues that the Attorney General of the nation has the obligation to "defend the collective rights, especially of the environment."

"Sustainable development" is the euphemism that has been adopted by today's environmentalist followers of Parson Thomas Malthus, to con the technology-starved developing sector nations into endorsing what in the 1960s and 1970s was otherwise known as "zero growth." Terms like "sustainable development" and "appropriate technologies" are the cover under which the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, and similar financial gendarmes for the international banks, impose "technological apartheid" upon the Third World, prohibiting the use of the most advanced scientific and technological discoveries to provide a higher and more dignified quality of life for those millions throughout the world who are today succumbing to plagues such as cholera and AIDS, and starvation.

It is in this sense that Colombia and its new Constitution fulfills the demands of George Bush's new world order, by effectively prohibiting the use and development of nuclear technology while elevating environmentalism to the status of constitutional law. And yet, the real collapse of Colombia's ecology can be seen in the reappearance of diseases that had disappeared a century ago, such as chol-

era. Latest official figures from the Health Ministry show that there are more than 7,400 cholera victims in Colombia, while nearly one-half the country is isolated due to the collapse of bridges that link the vast Eastern Plains (or *Llanos*), the country's primary breadbasket, with the rest of the country. While daily protests are held throughout the country against the government's insane economic policies of "liberalization," President César Gaviria is responding with a series of forums entitled "Conquering Markets."

In the midst of this desolate picture, there are still those who apparently have not swallowed the argument that environmentalism is the solution to man's ills. Fernando Casas, special adviser on environmental affairs to the Foreign Affairs Ministry, gave a forum in September at the National University of Bogotá in which he argued that the interests of the industrialized countries appear very different from those of the Third World. The former, he insisted, "are interested in the Third World's arms race, population growth, and forests, and they don't want the question of ecology mixed with the problem of development. We, on the other hand, are concerned with low per capita income, low prices for our raw materials, non-tariff restrictions on our imports, and the increasingly onerous conditions of the International Monetary Fund and other credit institutions."

Casas attacked the proposal for a U.N. ecology police force—so-called green helmets. "We do not agree that the Amazon should be declared the patrimony of humanity, and it would be absurd for the United Nations Security Council to suddenly decide to send its blue, green or whatever-color helmets to 'protect' our natural and ecological resources."