

Editorial

Operation Juárez hits home

A fire-eating macho, the President of Colombia, demanded that Ronald Reagan get soft on Cuba and Nicaragua when the U.S. delegation arrived in Bogotá on Dec. 3. So the front page of the *New York Times* reported the next day.

Thank God the *Times* does not control all channels of information. The fact of the matter is that Colombia's new head of government, Christian Democrat Belisario Betancur, warmly invited Mr. Reagan to establish a new hemispheric alliance and secure collective renegotiation of Latin America's murderous \$300 billion in foreign debt. This, he said accurately, would be to the benefit of everyone concerned:

"Latin America is illiquid, but not insolvent. Latin America can pay, and wants to pay, but it has been placed at the edge of an abyss of brutal economic adjustments without being able to count on the support of the financial world to provide liquidity." Up to now, U.S. financial policies have "caused frustration and irreparable harm" to the continent.

"The hour has come to propose a renegotiation that takes into account the development of the debtors' economies—if one wants to assure payment of the debt. Of course, this would be in the interest of the creditor banking community. This conception means that the service on the debt . . . should not exceed a specific percentage of the value of yearly income. We should also discuss an emergency plan so that the [debtor] countries in question can deal with their own particular problems."

A day earlier, Victor Acosta, the Secretary-General of the nation's biggest labor federation, the Union de Trabajadores de Colombia (UTC), met a wave of passionate approval when he told a regional trade-union conference in Duitama that the current crisis requires not only nationalization of Colombia's corrupt banking system, but a continent-wide freeze on debt repayments until an adequate repayment plan based on real and rapid development of Latin America has gone into ef-

fect. The UTC's official economic adviser is Andean Labor Party leader Maximilian Londoño, an *EIR* contributor and associate of *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., and a member of the Club of Life's task force on high-technology development of the Southern Hemisphere.

Following LaRouche's meetings with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and former Mexican President José López Portillo earlier this year, LaRouche wrote the document titled *Operation Juárez*. He specified that the most elementary prerequisite for world economic recovery is the removal of the debt burden. If creditor entities refuse to recognize that their leech-like exactions from debtors' productive powers will bring down the entire world financial system, he said, the debtor nations must wield "the debt bomb" and ask the banks and international institutions if they would rather forego payment altogether or restructure the debt.

The debt cannot be repaid under current circumstances, LaRouche said, and that has since become clear to all parties. The question now is whether debt-repayment "conditionalities" will be imposed by the Malthusians who seize upon the pretext of rolling back red ink, in order to wreck nation-states and their industrialization potential. They are not interested in solvency; if they were, they would move with Operation Juárez. They are interested, to put it succinctly, in the murder of billions of people of "lesser races," as *EIR* has documented for the past five years.

We are at a profound and delicate juncture in this war. Brazil has formally agreed to deal with the International Monetary Fund, after years of nationalist resistance. Mexico's new administration is also acceding to new levels of IMF austerity and monetarist orthodoxy. Yet these phenomena are shadow-boxing as a harsh light bears down: the reality that there is no money for the creditors, and the greater reality, voiced by Belisario Betancur on behalf of the continent, that there is no remedy without industrial development.