

Collor sets up Yanomami reserve

by Silvia Palacios

On Nov. 15, the day on which Brazilians commemorate the 1889 overthrow of the Braganza monarchy and the birth of their republic, President Fernando Collor de Mello insulted nationalists by signing a long-awaited decree demarcating the creation of a "Yanomami" Indian reserve. Some 9,000 members of the stone-age Yanomami tribe now have sole habitation rights in an area of 9 million hectares of Amazon land along the border with Venezuela.

With that decree, President Collor submitted to one of the key demands of George Bush's "new world order," the imposition of "limited sovereignty" over specific regions of nations—like Brazil—which possess vast and untapped natural wealth. The problem is made worse by the fact that there also exists a Yanomami tribe on the Venezuelan side of the border, whose territory was demarcated last June by Venezuelan President and "new order" fanatic Carlos Andrés Pérez. This de facto unification of the two sides has created a bi-national territory, whose vast mineral wealth is still unknown.

An Anglo-American project

It is no accident that one of the most aggressive campaigns of the powerful world eco-fascist lobby—headed by the British monarchy and its junior partner in the White House, and represented in Brazil by Environment Secretary José Lutzenberger—is to assure the demarcation of Indian territories, and of the Yanomamis in particular. Actually, the Anglo-American project is an old one, and seeks to use preservation of ethnic groups as a pretext for creating "Indian nations" as separatist battering-rams against existing nation-states. For example, in the deliberations of the U.N. Security Council that followed the cease-fire in Iraq, the "Kurdish question" was used as a maneuver to set the precedent for creating "enclaves," based on "ethnic" or "humanitarian" grounds. In those deliberations, the case of the Brazilian Amazon Indians was referenced.

Since then, the Brazilian Armed Forces have begun to place increasing emphasis on the danger posed to Brazilian sovereignty by the creation of a Yanomami reserve of the sort just decreed by President Collor. They have been joined by a group of civilians. On Nov. 10, Amazonas state governor Gilberto Mestrinho testified before the Commission of Inquiry of the Chamber of Deputies which is studying the potential risk of "internationalization of the Amazon." Mes-

trinho warned that creation of the Yanomami enclave would be the first step toward creating "an area under United Nations' protection" inside Brazil.

Despite the national security arguments presented against the creation of an Indian enclave, President Collor proceeded to announce the decree with Secretary Lutzenberger at his side, stating: "With today's decision, sovereignty remains intact and even reinforced, since we are complying with Article 20 of the Constitution, which includes among the assets of the Union lands traditionally occupied by the Indians."

However, the Brazilian Constitution explicitly demands that a strip of land along the border of at least 150 kilometers is necessary "for the defense of national territory" in those areas that become Indian reserves. In the case of the Yanomamis, Collor violated that requirement by failing to create such a security strip. What he did create was a "continuous" territory, precisely as the eco-fascist lobby, which is organizing the U.N.'s Eco-92 "Earth Summit" scheduled for next year, has been demanding.

Indeed, their demands were backed by blackmail threats. According to the Nov. 16 issue of *O Estado de São Paulo*, President Collor hastened to delimit the Yanomami reserve after Lutzenberger threatened to resign, reportedly with the backing of all the Non-Governmental Organizations accredited at the U.N. The magazine *Veja* reported Nov. 20 that Survival International, a Harvard-spawned advocate of so-called Indian causes, had threatened to boycott Eco-92 if the Yanomami demarcation was not satisfactorily resolved. Finally, just before the presidential decree, the British parliament sent deputy John Battle to Brazil, to tell Collor that the British government was very concerned with the Yanomami situation.

On the side of the British monarchy, World Wide Fund for Nature president and "Indian rights" lobbyist Prince Philip recently sent one of his spokesmen to intercede on Lutzenberger's behalf in a factional battle undertaken by Brazil's Armed Forces. Henner Ehringhaus, one of WWF's three directors, arrived in Brazil on Oct. 22 to deliver a document, entitled "Caring for Planet Earth," to President Collor. The document was distributed by WWF simultaneously in more than 60 countries. A Lutzenberger intimate, Ehringhaus was emphatic that "Professor Lutzenberger is an ambassador, a very popular emissary. The prestige of the Collor government in the opinion of the international public, which highly values the environment, owes much to him."

Behind their supposed humanitarian concern for the Yanomami Indians, who wear no clothing and hunt with bows and arrows, is nothing but the old Nazi view of the human being which the British oligarchy inspired. To them, preservation of the Indians is meant in a literal sense. Thus, the Yanomamis will be the first Indian tribe whose genes will be frozen and archived at the History of Humanity Museum in London, which seeks to catalog blood samples of 500 "peoples facing extinction," according to *O Globo* of July 21.