

The plot to annihilate the nations of Ibero-America

by Dennis Small

EIR Ibero-American Editor Dennis Small gave this speech at a conference of the Schiller Institute and the Civil Rights Movement-Solidarity, held in Kiedrich, Germany on Dec. 12, 1993.

At the end of July of 1990, less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, John Reed, the president of the world's largest bank, Citibank, visited Brazil, the most indebted nation of the developing sector. His purpose was to pressure and threaten that country to more rapidly destroy its economy and loot its population in order to pay its gigantic foreign debt, which at that time totalled \$118 billion. The way in which Reed issued his threats is of immediate interest to our subject matter today. Speaking to the Brazilian magazine *Veja*, Reed warned Brazil of its future if it didn't knuckle under to the bankers' demands:

"If we look at the map of the world economy, you will see that there are countries that have disappeared. Where did Burma end up? The fact is that, after the war, Burma disappeared, poof. It was a rich country, like Brazil. Peru and Bolivia will disappear. The Soviet Union had better watch out, because it might disappear."

These remarks of Reed's should not be dismissed as a mere political forecast, or a banker's typical exaggeration. They must be understood for what they are: policy. They are a statement of intent for the 1990s by the Anglo-American financial establishment, of their intent to annihilate entire nations and peoples, to redraw the map of the world at their whim, in a desperate effort to keep their bankrupt financial system afloat and to maintain their malthusian world order.

Nor is it accidental that Reed mentioned the nations of Ibero-America and the former Soviet Union in the same breath. The bankers have the same fate in store for both regions, to wit: a) the elimination of national sovereignty; and b) the forced imposition of a malthusian economic order of unbridled looting.

Defeating this oligarchical gameplan also requires a combined, coordinated approach, but, obviously, in a contrary direction. Lyndon LaRouche strongly restated the outlines of such a strategy in an October 1986 essay entitled "Conditions in Which Moscow Would Accept Reagan's SDI Offer": "The keystone of any durable agreement to peaceful relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. is a fundamental change

in both U.S. and Soviet relations toward Central and South America," LaRouche explained. The reason is that "the ability of the United States, Canada, western Europe, and Japan to develop an effective strategic depth for the long haul, depends upon a radically changed relationship between the OECD and developing nations generally. 'Latin America' is the keystone for such a change in strategic policy." This is so because "the Hispanic republics of the Americas, most emphatically, have a distinct Roman Catholic culture derived from the evolution of the Italian-speaking heritage. It is this cultural heritage which makes these republics, as a group, of such decisive strategic importance today."

Hence, LaRouche concluded, "What the world might become during the twenty-first century, will be decided by our policy toward these Hispanic republics today." He then reaffirmed what he himself calls the "LaRouche Doctrine," consisting of three essential points:

- 1) "All nations of the world are absolutely sovereign;
- 2) "All states have the obligation and right to pursue technological progress and the right to reasonable access to credit and trade arrangements; and
- 3) "All nations should assist one another in maintaining their respective sovereignties and in fruitful pursuit of technological progress."

Today, however, a diametrically opposite policy is in effect. The nations of Ibero-America—of Central and South America—are under deadly assault by the Anglo-American establishment: Their sovereignty, their very existence as independent nation-states, is on the line. In fact, it is safe to assert that there is a "Plot to Annihilate the Armed Forces and the Nations of Ibero-America"—so much so, that *EIR* has just published a Spanish-language book with that exact title, which will also be published in English in early 1994.

But just as there is an enemy plot, there is also an upsurge of nationalist resistance to it across Ibero-America. This resistance is quickly reaching proportions similar to that in eastern Europe in the 1989-91 period, although its characteristics are of course different in many ways. In a number of Ibero-American countries, for example, the civil-military resistance movement is already engaged in irregular warfare against an armed narco-terrorist insurrection. But, as in eastern Europe, the key to its prospects for victory is the fact that many of the principal military and civilian leaders of the

nationalist movement are friends and allies of the LaRouche movement.

Much can be said about the institution of the nation-state and its history to explain why the Anglo-Americans are out to destroy it. But for purposes of our discussion today, I want to focus on three of its central features, without which no nation can long endure, and each of which, for that very reason, is under full-scale assault by the oligarchy.

1) A national currency. A country that does not have its own currency does not control its own credit system, nor therefore, its own economy. It has no sovereignty. The attack on this front goes under the heading of “free trade.”

2) National armed forces. A country without its own military, cannot defend its national existence when faced with the ultimate test. It has no sovereignty. The assault here goes by the name of “promoting democracy.”

3) An underlying concept of man as *imago viva Dei*. This view of man is indissolubly linked with the development of the nation-state as its natural and highest form of social expression. As Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly insisted, the “sovereign power of individual creative reason” finds its most appropriate medium of development in the “perfectly sovereign nation-state republic,” whose “sovereignty is to be subordinated to nothing but the universal role of natural law.”

This third point is the locus of the most fundamental of all the assaults on the sovereignty of the nations of Ibero-America. It is today expressed in the form of a vast, subversive attack on the Christian, specifically Catholic, cultural matrix which is the basis of the progress of civilization in Ibero-America, and an effort to replace it with a return to bestial, pre-Columbian, pre-Christian indigenism, of the sort associated with Aztec human sacrifice rituals, or the modern variant of the same outlook found in the pagan Nobel Peace Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchú, or the horrific Shining Path terrorists of Peru. This cultural warfare goes by the name of the “Black Legend,” about which more later.

Let us now take up each of these three features in turn.

‘Free trade’: dollarization and loss of sovereignty

I’m sure you all read about the recent approval by the U.S. Congress of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among the United States, Mexico and Canada, which Wall Street has hailed as the model economic agreement for the entire world for millennia to come. When Wall Street starts talking like that, hold on to your wallet!

Wall Street and the City of London’s problem is simple: Its name is financial derivatives. Derivatives are actually properly studied not by economists, but by oncologists, since they are the most mind-boggling display of financial cancer imaginable. Based on flat zero in physical economic terms, these instruments have grown from a total of about \$1 trillion in 1986, to over \$12 trillion in 1992. This amounts to an annualized growth rate over six years, of more than 50% per

FIGURE 1

The nations of Ibero-America today



year—which is enough to make any self-respecting cancer tumor drool with envy! There is nothing in any area of the world economy which is growing at that rate, except for drugs, which have been growing at a mere 25% per year over the same period of time.

How does the banking crowd intend to keep this cancerous speculative bubble alive?

Let’s look at it from the angle of Ibero-America’s foreign debt (**Figure 2**). In 1980, the total foreign debt of Ibero-America stood at \$257 billion. Over the course of the next 12 years, in which IMF liberal economic policies were imposed on the nations of Ibero-America, they were forced to pay out \$409 billion in cumulative interest payments alone, which is much more than the original debt owed. Yet, at the end of this 12-year period, Ibero-America owed \$513 billion, double what they owed in 1980. Or to summarize, they owed \$257; they paid \$409; and they ended up owing \$513 billion. $257 - 409 = 513$. That’s what I call “bankers’ arithmetic.” Quite a business!

Or take the equivalent picture for the nation of Mexico (**Figure 3**). Mexico’s official foreign debt in 1980 was \$57 billion. They paid \$124 billion over the next 13 years, and ended up owing \$121 billion, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what they originally owed. $57 - 124 = 121$. Again, bankers’ arithmetic.

But these are just numbers. How was all this debt paid in reality over the 1980s? By gouging it out of the flesh and blood of the Mexican people. By driving the already misera-

FIGURE 2

Ibero-America: Interest payments and total debt

(\$ billions)

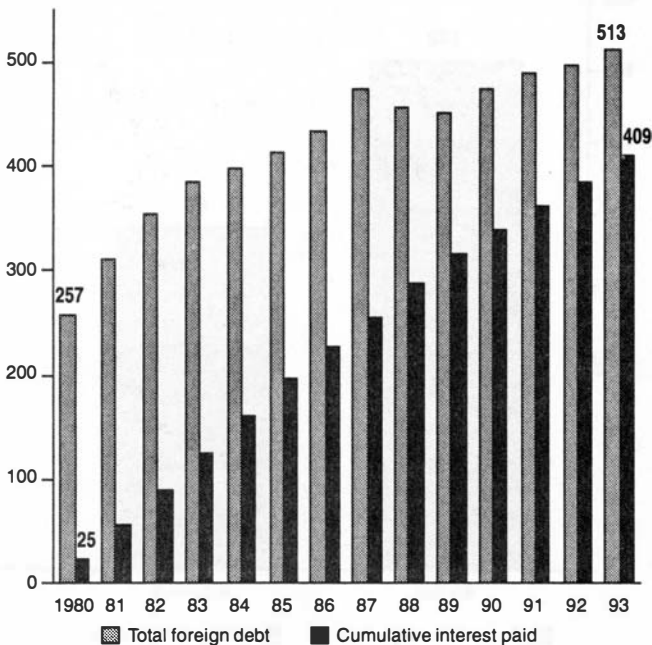
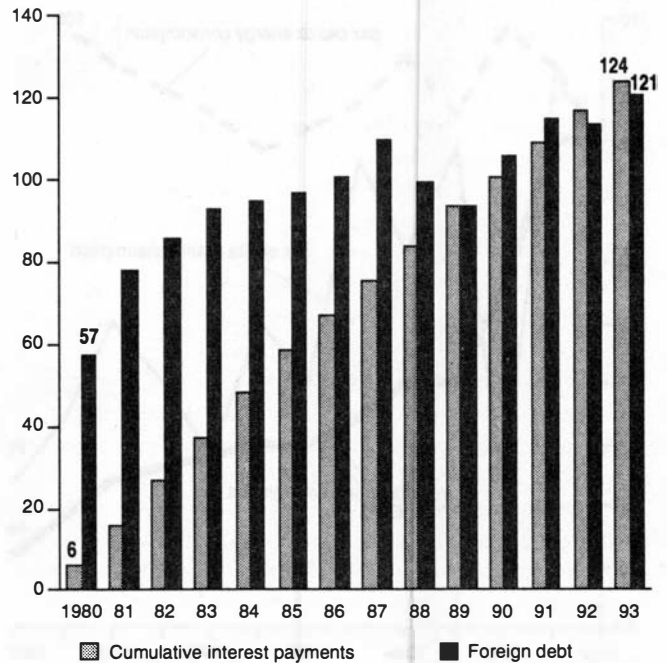


FIGURE 3

Mexico: Interest payments and total debt

(\$ billions)



ble standard of living through the floor, to the point where over 40% of Mexico's 80 million population today live in extreme poverty; by provoking real unemployment rates of over 50%; by asset-stripping the Mexican economy to the bone, cutting real investment levels by half; by handing what remained of the economy over to foreign financial interests under the so-called "privatization" program of the Harvard-graduate President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

The effects of this on three critical parameters of Mexico's physical economy are shown in **Figure 4**. First, grain consumption per capita has plummeted from an index level of 100 in 1982, down to 72 in 1992—a 28% collapse from what I can assure you were already totally inadequate levels of 1980. Second, employment in manufacturing, as a percentage of the Economically Active Population, dropped from an index level of 100 in 1980 to a pathetic 66 in 1992—a one-third reduction. And third, energy consumption per capita, which should rise in any healthy economy, has pretty much stagnated for the past decade.

An economy with this physical economic profile, is an economy that cannot long keep its own population alive.

But as bad as this picture of the 1980s is, it is nothing compared to what is under way already for the 1990s. The bankers' strategy for this decade is overtly genocidal, and it revolves around the recently approved NAFTA accord.

NAFTA stands for the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is a complete misnomer, because the ac-

cord has very little to do with free trade. Rather, NAFTA's most essential feature is the part that was negotiated secretly, and which establishes a single, integrated financial system among the U.S., Mexico, and Canada—but outside the control of any of the governments in question. Mexico, in particular, has been transformed into little more than the 13th regional branch of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, in which all its essential economic and monetary policy decisions are now to be taken by the private banking clique which runs the Fed. So much for Mexican—or U.S.—sovereignty.

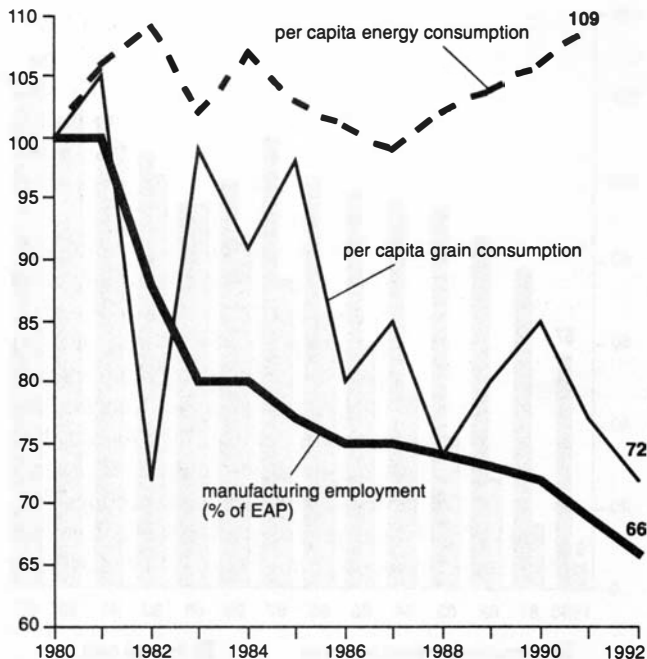
In addition to this loss of sovereignty, there is a second key feature of the NAFTA secret protocols: dollarization. What this boils down to is a series of technical tricks to vastly increase the real foreign indebtedness of Mexico, and other countries of Ibero-America, in order to expand the volume of loot that can be extracted from them. The more you owe, the more you can be forced to pay.

Mexico's official foreign debt (**Figure 5**), as we noted earlier, is currently estimated at \$121 billion, \$85 billion of it public sector debt, \$36 billion of it private. But there are at least another \$21 billion in Mexican treasury bills, or Cetes, which are currently held by foreigners, mainly by Wall Street banks. Although these T-bills are denominated in Mexican pesos, they are mainly extremely short-term notes, and since the peso is freely convertible into the dollar, those Cetes are in fact payable in dollars on a moment's notice—i.e., they are in fact part of Mexico's real foreign obligations.

FIGURE 4

Mexico: Physical economy parameters

(Index: 1980=100)



So it is safe to say that Mexico actually owes at least \$142 billion abroad.

In Argentina, the bankers have pulled the same stunt, only inside out. In that country, the official foreign debt is \$63 billion. But since the dollar was made legal tender in parallel with the Argentine peso, a giant bubble of dollar-denominated internal debt has also been generated. The government itself has issued \$14 billion in internal bonds, payable in dollars, while the private sector has another \$19 billion in dollar-denominated debts, principally high-interest rate credit cards. So Argentina has another \$33 billion in dollar obligations, bringing up its total real foreign debt to about \$96 billion.

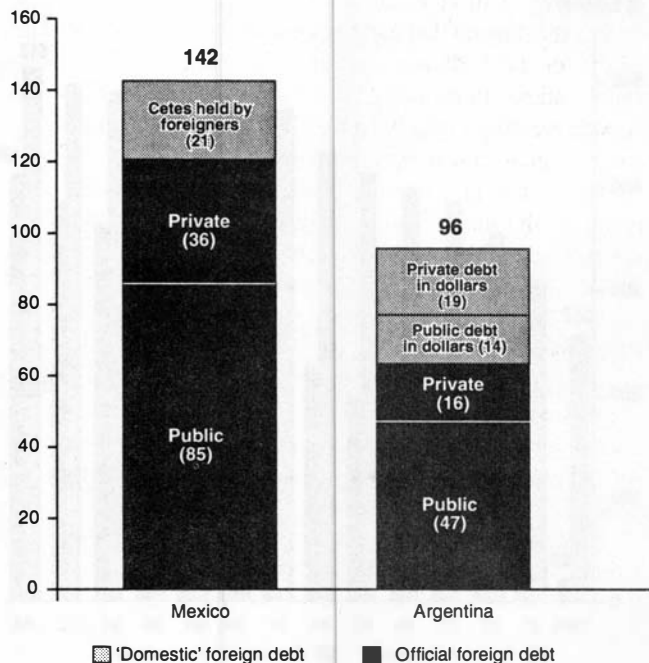
Argentina has gone one step beyond making the dollar a second national currency. They have passed legislation which prohibits their central bank from printing their own national currency or otherwise creating domestic credit, unless that new issuance is matched, one-for-one, by an equivalent amount of dollars on deposit in their central bank. In other words, they have given up their right to control their own money supply and credit. They too have given up their sovereignty.

Under these circumstances, one might ask why even bother to have a central bank? That is exactly the argument made by quack economist and drug legalization proponent Milton Friedman, who believes that all central banks in Ibero-America should be disbanded, and that the countries

FIGURE 5

Real foreign debt, 1993

(\$ billions)



should just go ahead and join the British-designed U.S. Federal Reserve System.

The next step down this path takes you to the situation existing in Panama. That country's national currency is called the balboa. But if someone gives you one balboa, what you actually get is a U.S. dollar bill. There is no national legal tender in Panama, other than the U.S. dollar. The country has lost its sovereignty. You will notice that Panama also does not have its own armed forces; that, too, is supplied by the United States. On both of these counts, Panama is the perfect bankers' model, which they intend to make the future of every nation of Ibero-America shortly, with the nations of central and eastern Europe following close behind.

If we analyze the real foreign debt of all of Ibero-America as we have with Mexico and Argentina, it is safe to conclude that the continent's real foreign debt is not the officially reported \$513 billion, bad as that is, but probably something closer to \$625 billion, about 20% higher.

How in the name of heaven will the countries of Ibero-America be able to pay these debts? By wiping out their populations; and by disappearing as sovereign nation-states.

Mexico, again, is exemplary. The banks intend to collect on that country so violently, that they are now demanding that one-third to one-half of the nation's agricultural producers be bankrupted and driven off the land with their families. That's 9 to 10 million people, in a nation of 80 million. Where are these victims of NAFTA to go? To Mexico's teeming cities,

where there is already 50% unemployment? Not likely. Across the border to the U.S.? Not if the establishment has its way.

The oligarchy's plan is to construct hundreds of kilometers of steel wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, using discarded sheet metal that had been used to build runways in the desert for the Gulf war against Iraq, and let the Mexicans simply starve to death inside their own borders. They are already erecting a new Berlin Wall; they intend to turn Mexico into a giant concentration camp.

Ladies and gentlemen: The "Limes" project is not some nightmarish futuristic proposal of a few psychotic authors; it is the policy of the Anglo-American establishment, and it is already operational against Mexico.

Nor is this a new idea for the establishment. Back in 1975, Rockefeller agronomist and top depopulation lobby fanatic William Paddock stated: "We're going to clamp the U.S.-Mexican border down. Then watch them scream! Mexico cannot support its present population of 58 million on a stable basis. The population will have to be cut to 30 million people."

That is a call to murder nearly 30 million Mexicans! Lyndon LaRouche warned the world about this Paddock Plan, in his first nationally televised address in the United States, delivered on Nov. 1, 1976. Don't you wish the world had listened to him back then?

'Democracy': dismantling the military

Let us now take up the second of our three points: the plot to dismantle the Ibero-American military.

There are two principal institutions in Ibero-America that are standing in the way of the establishment's assault on the nation-state: the Catholic Church, and the armed forces, or "the cross and the sword," as they are often referred to.

The western financial elite has been explicit in its demand for the destruction of the military. In a full-page advertisement taken out in the *New York Times* earlier this year, Paul Soros, partner and brother of the infamous speculator George Soros, stated brazenly: "When you can be sure that the military influence in the government is really firmly finished, the value of any investment goes up 30, 40, even 50%. In Latin America, whenever the army, as an institution, is part of the country's power structure, all investments are discounted."

The establishment project to wipe out the military was launched in earnest in 1982. That year, the debtor nations of Ibero-America, led by Mexico, almost brought the world financial elite to their knees by threatening to declare a debt moratorium and break with the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The strategy for how to do this was designed by Lyndon LaRouche, in his famous "Operation Juárez" policy proposal for Ibero-American integration, which was studied closely in every Ibero-American capital. And the establishment never forgot it.

In October 1982, they established the Inter-American

Dialogue to counter LaRouche's influence. Its founding members included the likes of Robert McNamara, Cyrus Vance, and McGeorge Bundy. And if you've ever wondered why the Clinton administration's policy towards Ibero-America is such a disaster, it is useful to know that no less than four members of his cabinet are members of the Dialogue, including Warren Christopher at the State Department. The head of the Latin America desk at the National Security Council, Richard Feinberg, was also president of the Dialogue until he took his current post earlier this year. His specific contribution to the Dialogue was to set up a task force called "Redefining Sovereignty."

Then, in 1986, the establishment hired a group of U.S. and Ibero-American deconstructionists—open followers of the psychotic Theodor Adorno and Michel Foucault—to design an all-out assault against the institution of the military in the region. They set them up at American University in Washington; they bankrolled them with money from the State Department's U.S. Information Service; they loaned them experts like Luigi Einaudi; and they had the U.S. Army's Southern Command supply logistics for their meetings.

The heavy artillery they produced is a 1990 book entitled *The Military and Democracy; the Future of Civil-Military Relations in Latin America*, which we at *EIR* named the "Bush Manual," and which quickly became known as such among its intended victims in Ibero-America. It reveals the real reason why the establishment has proclaimed the Ibero-American military to be "Public Enemy #1."

The problem, the Bush Manual authors complain, is that the military still believe that they have a national mission to defend the values of "the Christian West: honor, dignity, loyalty, and to guard and guarantee the development process." They label such an outlook "messianic, fundamentalist, authoritarian, ethical-religious, and patriarchal," and denounce it for premising itself (horror of horrors), on "a historical period predating the Enlightenment." In the final analysis, military men foolishly view history as a "battle between good and evil." All of these views, the State Department-financed study complains, were "disseminated throughout the rest of the subcontinent through numerous technical missions, the most notorious of which was the presence of Argentine Col. Mohamed Alí Seineldín in Panama between 1986 and 1988." Seineldín, by the way, is one of LaRouche's strongest supporters and collaborators in Ibero-America.

The Bush Manual goes on to call for the military to be "closed down," because of their belief in the Christian tradition: "They do not accept the idea that they are members of an organization that can be created, changed, and even 'closed down.' Adherence to forms of thought derived from the Christian tradition is a constant among the armed forces of Latin America."

And on the subject of the nation-state, the Bush Manual authors are contemptuous: "The legitimacy of the armed forc-

es as a political action is founded on the nation. They exist because of and for the nation. It is to that mythical entity—the nation—that they owe ‘subordination and obedience.’ ”

A “mythical entity”! The nation-state, the highest form of social organization known to mankind, is described by these criminals as a “mythical entity.” Does any doubt remain as to what Citibank’s John Reed really meant when he warned that entire nations will disappear?

The Anglo-American establishment has developed a number of political and economic strategies to achieve their goals of annihilating the armed forces and the nations of Ibero-America.

Strategy #1: human rights. A gigantic media barrage has been unleashed accusing the military of violating “human rights” by their very existence. The Peruvian Armed Forces are a particular target of this campaign: They are under constant international attack for supposedly violating the human rights of the bloodthirsty Shining Path terrorists.

Strategy #2: democracy. Any civilian or military force in Ibero-America which rejects the establishment’s economic or political agenda is denounced for opposing “democracy.” This is then used to justify supranational intervention into their internal affairs, supposedly to “defend democracy” and establish what is euphemistically called “limited sovereignty.”

For example, when the Haitian Armed Forces in September 1991 overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, an avowed Marxist and terrorist who was engaging in necklacing his opponents—chopping off their arms, placing a tire with gasoline over their head, and then burning them alive—the military were denounced internationally for violating “democracy.” Then an economic embargo was imposed to starve the nation into submission, and an actual international armed invasion remains a live possibility.

The State Department and the Inter-American Dialogue have marshalled the services of communists and narco-terrorists to impose their version of “democracy” across the continent. A collection of narco-terrorist parties called the São Paulo Forum, which was founded in 1990 by the Cuban Communist Party, are coming up for election between now and the end of 1994. All of them are being actively supported by the State Department, including:

December 1993: Venezuela’s Andrés Velásquez of the Causa R party.

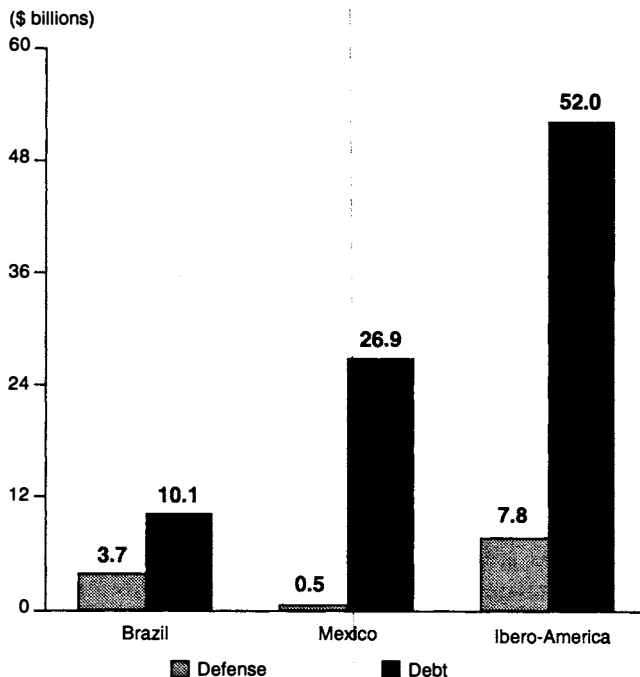
March 1994: Colombia’s Antonio Navarro Wolf of the M-19.

August 1994: Mexico’s Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD.

October 1994: Brazil’s Lula of the PT or Workers Party.

Strategy #3: reform the OAS. The establishment wants to transform the Organization of American States into a supranational body empowered to intervene—including militarily—into the internal affairs of its member states. The idea here is to make the OAS into a junior version of the U.N.

FIGURE 6
National expenditures for defense and debt service



Security Council, complete with their own brand of “blue helmets.”

Strategy #4: Cut the military budgets. Robert McNamara has played a leading role on this front. In September 1991, he gave a speech to the IMF in which he blamed the Third World’s poverty on their supposedly exorbitant, skyrocketing military budgets.

This is a lie. The fact is that in Ibero-America, less than 1% of GNP goes to the military; about 2% is spent on health; and a whopping 6% is spent on debt service. Furthermore, even these meager defense expenditures have been falling over the last decade, in many cases by as much as 40 or 50%. And in any event, the biggest budget-buster in Ibero-America is its debt service payments—a topic which McNamara doesn’t even deign to mention (see **Figure 6**).

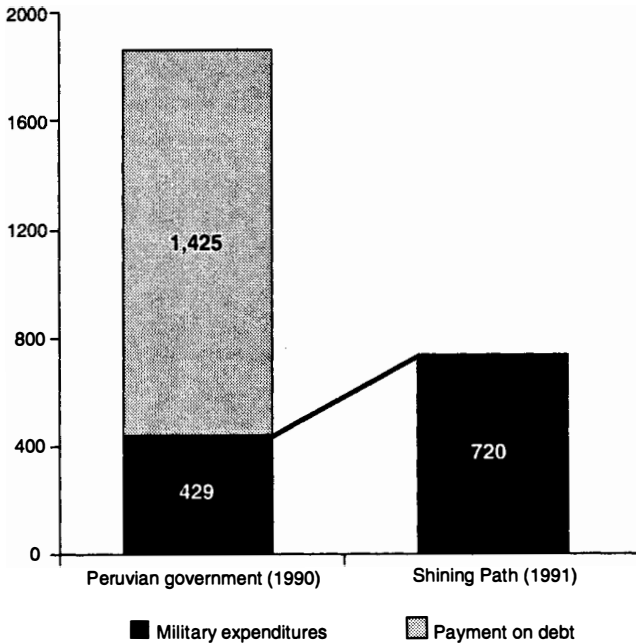
Brazil, for example, spends three times as much on annual debt service as it does on the military; Mexico spends 50 times as much; and for Ibero-America as a whole, \$52 billion is spent yearly on the debt, as compared to less than \$8 billion on defense.

The case of Peru is perhaps the most scandalous (**Figure 7**). The government military budget was a pathetic \$429 million in 1990, compared to \$1.425 billion spent on debt service to the banks. This was done despite the fact that the nation is at war with the Shining Path terrorists, who have annual resources from the drug trade totalling about \$720 million, according to some estimates. This is 68% more mon-

FIGURE 7

Peru: Government and Shining Path military expenditures

(\$ millions)



ey than the national Armed Forces have at their disposal!

Not surprisingly, it has been Ibero-America's military nationalists who have been leading the battle against the Anglo-American establishment over the past few years. Many of them have a close working relationship with the LaRouche movement, as is also the case with civilian groupings sharing this outlook. In 1992, a tremendous wave of resistance to IMF policies and to the Bush Manual exploded:

- in February 1992 in Venezuela, there was an attempted military coup against the corrupt, IMF-run Pérez government;
- in April 1992 in Peru, President Fujimori rightly shut down the pro-terrorist Congress and Supreme Court, and launched an all-out offensive against Shining Path, with spectacular success;
- in October in Brazil, President Collor was impeached for his corruption and support of the IMF; and
- in November in Venezuela, there was a second coup attempt against Pérez, which failed. But in May 1993, the efforts paid off, when Pérez was impeached and finally driven out of office.

The Black Legend: war on 'imago viva Dei'

The historical roots of the oligarchy's commitment to dismantle the Ibero-American military go back to a centuries-old project of cultural warfare known as the "Black Legend," which is our third and final theme today. The Black Legend is the Brit-

ish-spread lie that Spanish culture is by definition authoritarian, autocratic, and dictatorial because of the dominance of the Catholic Church and the military, and that progress and growth will continue to elude the Hispanic nations until they get rid of these institutions, and implant in their stead "pluralist democracy," Enlightenment pragmatism, Adam Smith's "invisible hand," and bestial indigenous religions.

The U.S. State Department has promoted this view as explicit government policy: "The pervasiveness of hierarchical structures with deep historic and cultural roots has created ingrained authoritarian habits. The religious and military institutions—the cross and the sword' of the Spanish conquest and key pillars of traditional order ever since—must yield to new values and organizational diversity."

What are the "new values" being promoted by the State Department and their establishment patrons? There is no better summary of the profoundly anti-Christian world view being espoused, than the following shocking statement issued in 1981 by the International Indian Treaty Council, on whose board of directors sat at the time Guatemala's Rigoberta Menchú: "European faith—including the new faith in science—equals a belief that man is God. American Indians know this to be totally absurd. Humans are the weakest of all creatures. Humans are only able to survive through the exercise of rationality, since they lack the abilities of other creatures to gain food through use of fang and claw. But rationality is a curse since it causes humans to forget the natural order of things in ways other creatures do not. A wolf never forgets his/her place in the natural order. Europeans almost always do."

The simplicity of this call is stunning. In it, we are explicitly urged to reject the "European" Christian concept of *imago viva Dei*, of man in the living image of God based on his power of reason, and choose instead the overt bestiality of pagan Aztec fundamentalism. And let us not forget that in 1992 the establishment gave Menchú the Nobel Peace Prize to underscore their commitment to this policy. And they did it on the eve of the October 1992 celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the discovery and evangelization of the Americas—as a deliberate declaration of war against everything that Christianity stands for in the New World.

But is it really possible that Menchú's call will be heeded by Ibero-Americans? Will we see a return to a period of Aztec ritual sacrifices? Will the Shining Path barbarians be victorious in Peru?

Do not lightly dismiss the destructive influence of the Black Legend. Across Ibero-America, for decades, the population has been bombarded with these messages: If it is Spanish, it is authoritarian; if it is Catholic, it's irrational and inquisitional; if it has to do with Spain's conquest of the New World, it was genocide against the Indians; if it's not Anglo-Saxon, it is inferior.

Just how corrosive and psychologically destructive this Black Legend is on the Hispanic mind is perhaps hard for

many Europeans to fathom. I can only compare it to the terrible damage done by the lie of “German collective guilt” in the postwar period. Like German collective guilt, the anti-Spanish Black Legend is to be found everywhere, but it is always intangible and invisible. It is like a poisonous fog.

And as with the case of so-called German collective guilt, our association’s unique responsibility is to shatter these crippling myths, if their sovereign nation-states are to survive.

The entire edifice of the Black Legend rests on a handful of central historical lies. First and foremost, is the argument that the Spanish conquest of the New World committed a mass genocide against the native Indian populations, such as the Aztecs and the Incas. The second, is that the Spanish destroyed the valuable Indian cultures that they encountered, replacing them with nothing but slavery, misery, and destruction.

Let us briefly study these assertions. In so doing, I will make use of valuable original research by a number of my colleagues in Ibero-America, in particular Carlos Cota in Mexico and Sara Madueño in Peru.

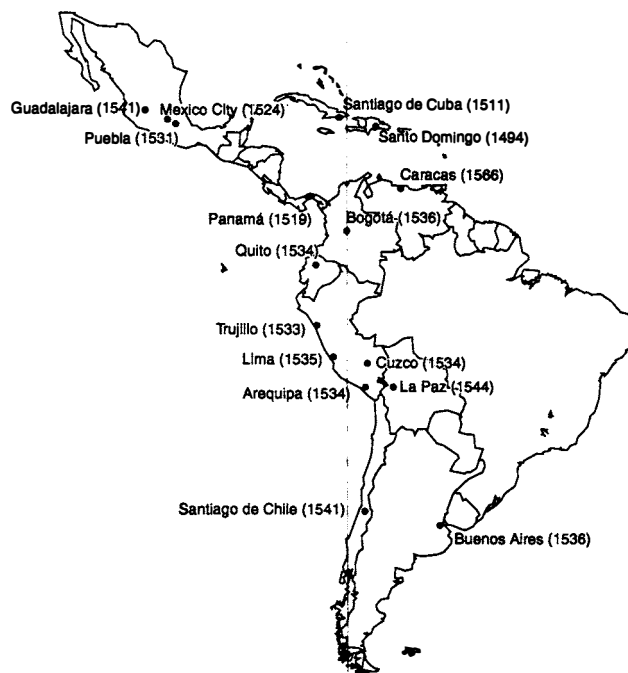
No one knows for sure how many Indians were living in Mexico when the Spanish arrived, but the standard Black Legend account asserts that there were 25 million, and that the conquistadors killed 90%, or 23 million of them. They left only 2 million alive—or so the story goes.

The only problem with that account, is that there could not have been 25 million Aztecs and other Indians living in the area in question in Central Mexico at the time of Hernán Cortes’s arrival. Such numbers would have meant a population density in the area in question of Central Mexico of over 115 inhabitants per square kilometer—nearly three times the population density of 40 that that very same region had in 1985! And yet, the primitive agricultural and other technologies employed by the Aztecs—for example, they didn’t even have the wheel—could at best have supported a population density in the range of 20 people per square kilometer. So simple physical economic calculations prove that the Mexican population found by the Spaniards could not possibly have exceeded about 4.3 million. The other 18.7 million Indians supposedly “butchered” by the Spanish never existed—outside of the feverish imagination of British historians.

What did happen in reality? Many historians report that the Mexican population had dropped to 2 million by the mid-1500s. But Alexander von Humboldt, an assiduous student of population and economics in the New World, reports that Mexico’s population in 1570 was actually about 3.5 million. So it is safe to conclude that somewhere between 1 and 2 million Indians, out of a population of about 4.3 million at the time of the conquest, died in the first 50-60 years of the sixteenth century. Why?

For two principal reasons. First, the majority of those who died, died as a result of their contact with the new diseases that the Spaniards brought with them to the New World, such as measles. Secondly, the Aztec empire had imposed on its subject population a level of cultural and

FIGURE 8
City-building during the evangelization of Ibero-America



economic pestilence which was *already* destroying its potential population density. Human sacrifice was a central feature of society, reaching levels of thousands per year. Cannibalism was rampant. The most common occupation was warfare. It is safe to conclude that the Aztecs were well on the way to self-extinction, and if anything, the arrival of the Spanish saved them—from themselves.

What did the Spaniards bring to the New World? A new concept of man, *imago viva Dei*, expressed, above all, in a monumental city-building enterprise of Renaissance proportions (Figure 8).

The first city built in the New World by Christopher Columbus was called La Navidad, and it was constructed on the basis of a plan drawn up by Leonardo da Vinci. In 1494, Santo Domingo was founded. In 1511, Santiago de Cuba. In 1524, Mexico City. In 1535, Lima. In 1536, Buenos Aires. And so on and so forth.

By 1573, after about 80 years of evangelization, the Spanish had already built 230 new cities. That’s a rate of almost 3 cities per year. Just consider the enormous human and natural resources that had to be mobilized to carry out this task. By 1630, a total of 330 new cities had been built. And by 1810, the time of the wars of independence from Spain began, over 600 cities had been built.

And who populated these new cities? Not principally European immigrants, who totalled only about 2,500 per year to the entire continent during this 80-year period up to



Schiller Institute demonstration in Bogotá, Colombia, April 1985, against the IMF's austerity demands.

1573. Rather, they were inhabited by a growing population of mixed-race Indian-Spanish people, the so-called *mestizos*, a population whose growth exploded, particularly from the early 1600s on. Thus, a backward, pagan population was progressively evangelized and incorporated into modern science, technology, and Renaissance culture, as New World colonial architecture clearly attests.

It is this *mestizo* feature of the Spanish evangelization that drives the British wild to this day, because above all, it proved that all men, regardless of race, are in the living image of God. The battle over this concept of man surfaced repeatedly in both Spain and Spanish America during the colonial period. For example, on the question of slavery, as early as 1494, Queen Isabel of Spain had issued edicts proclaiming that the Indians of the New World could not be enslaved, as they were also children of God and therefore had souls. Many in Spain opposed this outlook, however, and a fierce battle ensued over the next 50 years.

This crucial issue was definitively settled, at least from the standpoint of law, in King Charles V's "New Laws of the Indies" of 1542, which proclaimed: "We hereby order that henceforth, for no reason will any Indian be made a slave." In 1551, the viceroy of Mexico, Luis de Velasco, issued an edict actually freeing the 150,000 slaves in Mexico. Thus did Hispanic America receive its Emancipation Proclamation—300 years before Lincoln's in the United States.

And what about education?

In 1534, the first higher education institute for Indians was set up in Mexico City. In 1548, Mexico City saw its first school for girls—the same happened in Boston only in 1825. South America's first university, the University of San Marcos, was established in Lima in 1551—Harvard wasn't founded until 100 years later. Bishop Zumárraga brought the first printing press to Mexico in 1539—the first one in North America didn't arrive in Boston until 1639.

After visiting Mexico in 1803, Alexander von Humboldt wrote: "There is no city in the New Continent, not even in the United States, that can boast such great and solid scientific establishments as those of the capital of Mexico."

Mexico today is, of course, a far cry from what von Humboldt found 190 years ago. It leads the world not in science, but in being one of the first intended victims of the oligarchy's criminal "Limes" project, as Mexico's new "Berlin Wall" attests. But the fault lies not with the Spanish evangelization—as imperfect and flawed as it certainly was—but with British-sponsored economic and cultural policies that have been imposed on Mexico and all of Ibero-America ever since. It is such policies of "free trade," "democracy," and the "Black Legend" that now must be put to their final rest.

It is for us to succeed in completing the Renaissance efforts begun by the earlier evangelizers.