

Turbay Victory In Colombia Paves Way For 'Party Of The Government'

This week's congressional elections in Colombia, which doubled as a presidential primary for the ruling Liberal Party, signify a decisive breaking-point in the Colombian political scene which has until now been dominated by forces allied to City of London and Wall Street interests. The overwhelming victory of candidate Turbay Ayala over his opponent, Lleras Restrepo, in securing the Liberal Party presidential nomination offers a vital opportunity to break the monetarist control over Colombia which agents-of-influence like former President Lleras have labored to bring about for the last 40 years.

COLOMBIA

In a campaign address to more than 150,000 supporters one week before the elections, Turbay promised that his government would seek to revive "the spirit of democratic revolution that characterized the first administration of (President) Lopez Pumarejo." Lopez's 1934-38 administration marked the first and only time in Colombian history that a Liberal Party government based itself on an alliance of progressive nationalist capitalist forces with the Communist Party-led labor movement. The "spirit" of the first Lopez administration is thus best characterized by the phenomenon of a Liberal Party which succeeded in becoming a genuine "party of the government," as Lopez himself described. By adopting the call for a "party of the government" as his own campaign slogan, Turbay has affirmed his commitment to convert the present degenerate and agent-riddled Liberal Party into the nation's hegemonic popular institution — like Mexico's ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) — which will be capable of defending the national interests.

Behind Turbay's "Mexican" tendency is a powerful faction within his own camp which is firmly committed to a program of industrialization and development of the state sector as the only means to achieve an independent and vigorous economy. This group, which advocates the Mexican model of government for Colombia, also has a healthy Mexican-style hatred for the colonialist aspirations of British agents like Lleras Restrepo, whom a spokesman for Turbay's backers recently labeled as belonging to "the decadent and pro-Anglo Saxon class."

Building a Party of the Government

The ascendancy of the Mexican faction into relative dominance within the Turbay camp has been facilitated by the organizing influence of the Andean Labor Party

(PLAN). The PLAN, together with its cothinker parties in the United States and Mexico, is organizationally committed to the concept of a "Mexican system" for Latin America. This system, like its forebear, the American System of Alexander Hamilton, is premised on an explicitly antimonetarist program of high-technology capital-intensive industrialization and mechanization of agriculture. The PLAN platform for the Mexican-style development of Colombia and the Caribbean region, which is grounded in a program of rapid nuclear energy development, has been widely circulated throughout Colombia. It is serving as the foundation of a "programmatic bridge" between the Turbay circles and the popular forces grouped around the mass-based Colombian Communist Party among whom the PLAN has organized for several years.

Turbay's forces have recognized the catalytic role of the PLAN in the forging of a Mexican-style party of the government, as indicated by the appearance in the Feb. 9 issue of Turbay's newspaper *Consigna* of an entire centerfold reprinted from the PLAN newspaper *Solidaridad Internacional*. The centerfold focuses on the role played by ex-president Lleras Restrepo during his 1966-70 administration in selling Colombia's national sovereignty to the International Monetary Fund, and details the disastrous effects of Lleras' imposition of the "British System" on Colombia.

The Communist Party, meanwhile, is demonstrating an increasing openness toward allying with progressive capitalist forces in an "antifascist mobilization" which can secure the nation's growth. A recent issue of the party's newspaper *Voz Proletaria*, called for "an alliance with nonmonopolistic bourgeois layers that are openly committed to the independent development of the country," while other statements from the party's leadership have begun to stress concern for Colombia's "scientific-technological development" and to call for repudiation of Colombia's foreign debt, both key tenets of the PLAN program.

The "bridge" being constructed by the PLAN passes through progressive government layers as well. PLAN programmatic literature, particularly that dealing with the role of nuclear energy in Third World development, has received widespread attention among prodevelopment government officials, especially within the ministries concerned with science and technology. A 1977 Mines and Energy Ministry prospectus on Colombia's energy future cited four separate publications of the Fusion Energy Foundation, whose ideas on the development of nuclear energy are endorsed and promoted by the PLAN.

Britain's "Spoiler" Options

With Turbay's victory this week considered "unquestionable" within the Liberal Party leadership, Lleras & Co. are scrambling to ready their "spoiler" options. At this point, the 68-year old Lleras himself has no hope of gaining the Presidency and can only devote his waning influence to splitting the Liberal Party in an attempt to sabotage Turbay's chances in the June elections. To that end, Lleras and his forces have already raised a hue and cry over vote fraud allegedly perpetrated by Turbay's supporters in the primary, and hints have begun to emerge in the international press that Lleras may throw his faction's support to Conservative Presidential candidate Belisario Betancur.

Meanwhile, Alvaro Gomez Hurtado, head of the most reactionary wing of the Conservative Party and chief

sponsor of Belisario's candidacy, is planning to come out on top no matter what scenario triumphs. Belisario's victory at the polls would give Gomez a clear hand in the next government, but Gomez is determined to have a stranglehold on Turbay in the more likely eventuality of a Liberal victory in June. Through his control over a substantial section of the military, including Armed Forces commander Camacho Leyva, Gomez has successfully blackmailed the outgoing administration of Lopez Michelson into yielding much of his power under threat of a coup. Unless Turbay rapidly mobilizes an antifascist alliance of forces against such blackmail attempts, he will be vulnerable to the same "National Front" pressures aimed at sabotaging his plans for a party of the government.

World Bank Seeks Fragmentation of Brazilian State Sector

Brazilian military and civilian nationalists will have to abandon their hopes of building their country into a world industrial power by the end of the century if the recommendations in a confidential World Bank report are implemented. Yet, General J.B. Figueiredo, who will become president of Brazil in March, 1979, is already acting to follow the World Bank mandate. Brazil is quietly slowing down what the World Bank calls "over-ambitious programs" including its nuclear energy program, the centerpiece of future industrial development. Instead, following Figueiredo's state policy emphasis on the agricultural sector, the country is shifting towards flooding the world with agricultural exports to keep up with debt payments.

BRAZIL

The annual World Bank report on Brazil, leaked Jan. 22 in the daily *O Estado de Sao Paulo*, plots the course of the Brazilian economy from now until 1985 based solely on the criteria of what would permit it to meet scheduled debt obligations. "If imports can be held within reasonable limits, and if export volume can be expanded by 12 percent per year in real terms, then there is a good prospect of having a positive trade balance of \$800 million in 1980," says the report.

"In the long run the world market perspectives are extremely favorable for some of the major commodities exported by Brazil, especially sugar, soy beans and derivatives, corn, and iron ore," the World Bank forecasts. It predicts that Brazil could churn out \$8.8 billion worth of soy alone in 1985, which would be worth enough to give the country a trade surplus of almost \$5 billion. These figures which the Bank itself admits are "optimistic," are probably little more than a pleasing fairy tale to lure Brazilians into being obedient to bank dictates that they dismantle the centralized public sector

apparatus, implement austerity, and hold the lid on popular pressures for survival-level living standards. There are presently no indications that the world market could absorb such a flood of Brazilian agricultural goods.

"There are clear signs of difficulties in overall fiscal performance," the World Bank complains. "Many autonomous agencies and public enterprises seem to have embarked on investment programs which are overly ambitious within the context of the revenue limitations of the public sector and have run up heavy debts... It appears that real levels of public investments increased during 1975 and 1976... despite serious balance of payments deficits and accelerating inflation... Some decentralized agencies faced big piles of unpaid bills all during 1976... At the end of 1976, the government recognized that the public sector was one of the most important causes of inflationary pressure and made the decision to reduce investment programs proposed for 1977 by public enterprises and autonomous agencies."

In order to guarantee that the "overly ambitious" development programs be guillotined on the basis of monetarist cost-effectiveness criteria, the World Bank demands the establishment of a body similar to the U.S. Government Accounting Office or New York City's Emergency Financial Control Board "to oversee the execution of public investments."

The Bank demands a free hand for the austerity hounds by replacing procedures which permit the funding of long-term projects to completion with a zero base budgeting system: "In Brazil the technique of tying budget allocations to specific purposes has been extensively used to assure a continuous flow of resources to large infrastructure programs and other public sectors... This practice introduces a considerable rigidity of allocation of public resources to the various sectors... It is a cause of increasing government expenditures. At the same time, it leaves little margin for financing new programs through existing budgetary resources."