

Venezuela pushes for new continental order

by Gretchen Small

Neither Kissinger's coup in Panama, nor relentless economic warfare against every country in Ibero-America, has yet ended the motion to create a new economic and political order in the continent, organizing which began following the shock of the Anglo-American war against Argentina this spring. Venezuela continues to be the coordinating center of these continental discussions.

Diplomatic initiatives

Representatives of SELA, the Latin American Economic System set up in 1975 to coordinate regional integration independently of the United States, are meeting in Caracas from Aug. 16 to 25 to map out plans for consolidating economic unity. The coercive economic measures applied by the European Community and the United States against Argentina and some of its allies during the war are top on the agenda, with some approximation of an agreement on a "strategy of economic security and independence of Latin America" expected to be reached.

"Latin America has before it the opportunity, infrequent in the life of institutions and men, to give a historic turn to the process of consolidating its economic security, to affirm its autonomy, and to guarantee its rights to an independent development," SELA Secretary General Carlos Alzamora instructed the representatives at the inauguration of the week-long discussions.

As Mexico's financial crisis reverberates in Caracas, radical shifts in international economic policy—both debt and trade—are the number-one item on everyone's mind. *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche's proposals for an Ibero-American Common Market and joint renegotiation of the foreign debt of the region, have been featured in past weeks in the Caracas press, while Venezuela's Ambassador to the Organization of American States, Hilarión Cardozo, has taken the lead in arguing that it is economics that is at the center of Ibero-America's problems. (See interview, page 34.)

Venezuela was the first stop on a several-country tour of Ibero-America by Argentina Foreign Minister Aguirre Lanari which began Aug. 12, a visit which included strategy ses-

sions with President Luis Herrera Campins, Foreign Minister Zambrano Velasco, and the Foreign Trade Institute head, Sebastian Alegrett. Venezuela's President will visit Argentina "in the near future," it was announced at the end of the visit, where new trade agreements are expected to be wrapped up between the two countries.

Venezuela's role in the area has brought upon it, not surprisingly, the wrath of London and London's operatives. "Venezuela is bracing itself for a major economic crisis" on a scale similar to that wracking Mexico, London's Sunday *Observer* predicted Aug. 15. "Venezuela is expected to be forced to devalue its currency shortly," and President Luis Herrera Campins, "who has relished his role as spokesman for Latin America, will now have to divert his attention to more mundane problems, including unemployment," the *Observer* claimed.

When Standard and Poor issued a new report lowering Venezuela's credit rating from triple- to double-A, despite the country's remaining \$6 billion-plus in reserves, few in Venezuela missed the message. The drop in the credit rating is a "sophisticated mechanism of pressure on those countries that have defended independent postures," Venezuelan central banker Diaz Bruzhual told Caracas's *El Nacional* daily on Aug. 14. "Throughout the crisis in the Malvinas . . . the industrialized countries began a slow but progressive process of pressures, whose highest expression was the raising of the 'spread' on loans solicited by Venezuela," Bruzhual charged. "When some voices began to suggest moratoria on the debt, the alarm in the international financial community became plaintive, and from there, new demonstrations of political and economic pressures took off."

Domestic policies

The final decision in mid-August of the ruling Christian Democratic party, COPEI, that Rafael Caldera will be the party's presidential candidate in the 1983 elections, may pose an even greater danger to Venezuela's international efforts. Caldera is a fervent supporter of the Club of Rome. He has opposed the Herrera Campins government at various points, despite his membership in the COPEI.

The surfacing of Caldera's name in the middle of the Freemasonic scandal in Italy this month, in connection with Roberto Calvi's Banco Ambrosiano, the P-2 lodge, and its successor, the "Monte Carlo Committee," to which Henry Kissinger, Aurelio Peccei, and Licio Gelli belong, may explain Caldera's real political ties.

In an exposé entitled "And the Tapes Tell the Story" in its Aug. 16 issue, the Italian magazine *Panorama* reports that one of Calvi's top mafioso cohorts, Flavio Carboni, who now sits in a Swiss jail, wanted by Italian authorities in connection with the Calvi case, named both Rafael Caldera, and Venezuela's current Ambassador to London, Nestor Coll Blasini, as the "South American connection" to the "powerful Masonic circles" trying to rescue Calvi's ailing operation before his death.