

Algiers conference addresses the global threat of a 'Pax Americana'

Some 200 attorneys, intellectuals, journalists, parliamentarians, and politicians, representing a variety of political tendencies, met in Algiers to address the abuse of international law committed during the Gulf war, and to indict the Bush administration for its criminal behavior, during a three-day colloquium Feb. 28-March 2. Their final report details how the U.S. government and its allies have violated the U.N. Charter; privately most people there had to agree that the present Charter no longer protects the weak and the innocent, and needs to be totally rewritten.

During the first day, there was a very clear—if diplomatic—gap between the presentations given by speakers from the Maghreb and those from France. The latter continued their attempts to justify France's unconscionable and self-interested role, which was treated with contempt by the Algerian press.

The second day of the conference put matters back on track. First, a very moving speech was given by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, in which he reported on his trip to Iraq to view the civilian damage from U.S. bombing of population centers, and concluded that Bush's new order "only aims at keeping the poor in poverty. It is no more sophisticated than that; it has only one meaning: The U.S. wants to control international life by force. The U.N. has become an instrument of war, and suffered from a total defeat if you think of its original aims." Then, Mrs. Leila Aslaoui, a justice of the Algerian Supreme Court, blasted the French speakers from the day before, stating that "we have no lessons to receive from those who organized or covered up for a genocide. . . . The Gulf crisis is an international conspiracy to whom a long preparation gave some appearances of spontaneity. Since 1948, international law is determined by sheer force. The Bush international order is a colonial order for the 21st century."

Bush, Harriman, and 'administrative fascism'

Jacques Cheminade, the president of the Schiller Institute in France, spoke next on the "Administrative Fascism of the Bush Regime." That title alone piqued interest, and for the next three days, Cheminade was the center of a maelstrom of discussions with journalists, politicians, lawyers, and diplomats. The description of the American economy and culture as already fascist in its direction, with a military machine

organized to loot others from the goods that it itself is unable to produce was welcomed as the "only rational explanation of what had happened." "You have to understand," stressed Cheminade, "that today's America is no more the America of the American System, but an America that has betrayed itself, betraying the values of its Founding Fathers. Instead of bringing freedom and science to the world, it brings oppression, exactly like the British did to America in the 18th century. What has acted so criminally in the Gulf war is in fact a British America, who has endorsed the system of its oppressor."

But even more interest was raised by the story of the Bush and Harriman families, and how Bush with his "population control" means exactly the same as the "eugenics" promoted by his family and its friends in the 1930s. "Pax Americana is no pax," concluded Cheminade, "it is an everlasting war. It has to be replaced by a peace coherent with the message of the brotherhood of Abraham, expressed in a concrete way, through common economic development. The peace of a new Versailles Treaty that the Bush administration wants to impose leads to death and disaster, and should be replaced by great projects led by citizens, like those conceived by the Bush administration's 'man in the iron mask,' Lyndon LaRouche." With the mention of LaRouche's name, the whole room was set abuzz, to the discomfort of French ecologists and socialists, and increased interest of the Arab and Muslim delegates. Some Communists from the old guard, who had fought along with the Algerians in the war of independence, sought out Cheminade later, while the Church representatives thanked him for saying aloud what everybody thinks to himself.

As a result of the presentation, Cheminade appeared three times on Algerian television, including the regionally viewed "Meet the Press," and in a 45-minute program of the students' association, along with the head of the Egyptian Labor Party, Mr. Mahfouz Azzam, the former dean of the Algiers Law School, and the head of the Algerian League for Human Rights. The National Agency for Movie News filmed a 30-minute interview on the U.S. economy, LaRouche, the Schiller Institute, and the Islamic Renaissance. "We did not know that the stained glasses of Chartres were partially made from the discoveries [in optics] of Al Hazen; now we are going to look at Islam and Christianity differently," said the head of

the program, which is supposed to run in all Algerian movie theaters.

Interviews were also given, including to Egypt's *Al Shab* and the National Liberation Front newspaper from Algiers. In one radio panel discussion with Cheminade and a group of French "leftist" lawyers, they were surprised to hear what they thought was an "extreme right-winger" denouncing U.S. fomenting of North-South conflict. The most intelligent had to admit that they "had been disinformed on the U.S. in the same way that the U.S. had spread false news on the Gulf."

Cheminade's clear political profile of George Bush attracted all serious people, either from the "secular" parties or from the Islamic movements. "We are left aside, ill-informed, disinformed and cheated. At least we have learned one thing, it is when somebody comes to really care for something higher than his career or interests," declared a young Islamic leader. He added, "If I understand well, what you have said on the Bushes and the Harrimans relates them to what we hate in the West, the irrationalism promoted by Nietzsche which led to Nazism and colonial arrogance." Another speaker, Mrs. Fatima Mernissi from Morocco pointed out that, in the same way Abbasid Baghdad was destroyed by the Mongols, "the West is presently being mongolized by the Anglo-American barbarians." She stressed that "the Arabs should learn now to act in a planetary, universal way, allying with the resistance in the West against the New Mongols, or we are all going to be exterminated."

U.N. adopting a double standard

The final resolution of the colloquium, which many, including some of the conference organizers, thought "too soft" denounced:

- the use of force before all other means were tried, contrary to the dispositions of Article 41 on the U.N. Charter;
- the double standard of justice used by the U.N. Security Council which treated the occupation of Kuwait differently from others, especially the Israelis in the Occupied Territories;
- the use of Resolution 678 as a legal basis for war, even though it had not received a unanimous vote from the five permanent Security Council members as required by the Charter;
- the abandonment of the declaration, prosecution, and conclusion of the war to the discretion of the U.S. President, contrary to all requirements;
- the use of "considerable [means] disproportionate to the goal achieved," massive and indiscriminate bombings, the systematic destruction of foodstuffs, water systems, everything necessary for civilians to survive, as mandated by Article 54 of the additional Protocol to the Aug. 12, 1949 Geneva Conventions on the protection of the victims of armed international conflicts;
- the use of both formally prohibited weapons and new



Jacques Cheminade

ones that are designed to cause great damage.

Finally, the participants called for:

- the need to organize an interdisciplinary Commission of Inquiry to take stock of the damage caused to Iraqi civilians and demand the withdrawal of all foreign military forces from the region;
- the immediate respect for all resolutions on Israel and Palestine, the implementation of the rights of the Palestinian people and state, and the reestablishment of Lebanon's sovereign rights on the entirety of its territory;
- the right to all people in the region to their identity, and to their free disposition over their natural resources.

The participants, taking into account the unprecedented censorship and distortion of information during the conflict, have decided to widely publicize their report, and to address a copy to U.N. General Secretary Javier Pérez de Cuellar.

Those who wanted stronger resolutions pointed out that without a new world international order in the spirit of the founding Non-Aligned conference at Bandung in 1961 and the 1976 Colombo Non-Aligned conference, Bush's new world order would be unopposed. Therefore, they said the conference should not only criticize leading international institutions, but demand the creation of new ones, including one to try President Bush for crimes against humanity, and another to elaborate the basis for an international order based on common development.

Very interesting discussions took place on those two issues, and connections were made between various individuals and forces to go beyond "Algiers' first step." Following CNN's distorted news in one's hotel room, what strikes one is how it reduces the viewer to an infantile dependency—not only manipulated, but addicted to manipulation—and makes conferences like the one in Algiers precious opportunities to raise the key issues defining our future.