

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios and Lorenzo Carrasco

The end of the Collor farce

Having rid themselves of Collor de Mello, Brazilians must now undertake to chart an opposing policy course.

Fernando Collor de Mello's resignation from the presidency Dec. 29, after having exhausted all the legal dirty tricks up the sleeves of his lawyers, put a welcome end to the political farce that had put the reckless adventurer into the driver's seat of the largest country and most important economy in Ibero-America.

Collor formed part of a crop of Ibero-American Presidents elected by means of nearly identical multimillion-dollar publicity campaigns sponsored by the Anglo-American establishment, for the purpose of defending what it calls Project Democracy. That project amounts to the intended destruction of national sovereign institutions across the Ibero-American continent.

Such was the overwhelming foreign backing that Collor de Mello received, that he became convinced, virtually overnight, that he was above the law—human and divine—and that by some invisible hand he had been led into the ranks of the illusory First World. One of the first signs of such lunacy was revealed when Collor announced that the country, whose Achilles' heel is its deficient energy supply, should call a halt to nearly all of its energy projects, especially nuclear energy, because technological advances in the near future would allow energy to be stored on computer disks.

While President "Indiana Jones" Collor (as he was baptized by George Bush, who one year ago described his Brazilian counterpart as "my kind of guy") was flying around the country

in supersonic military jets, driving around in tractor-trailers, and racing speedboats, the country was suffering the worst assault on its sovereignty in history. During two and half years of a Project Democracy government:

- the state security apparatus was destroyed;
- efforts were launched to dismantle the Armed Forces;
- the "internationalization" of Brazil's strategically key Amazon region was begun, placing Brazilian territorial integrity at risk;
- the country imposed upon itself a devastating "technological apartheid" against ongoing research and development in sensitive high-technology areas;
- the public sector was virtually crushed, leading to the near-bankruptcy of such lucrative companies as Petrosbras;
- private companies were driven into bankruptcy, causing a collapse of one-fourth of all economic activity in the country; and above all,
- the country was thrust into an accelerated moral collapse.

For any one of these crimes, President Collor de Mello would merit conviction in an impartial trial of public responsibility for crimes against the dignity of the presidency, as established by the Brazilian Constitution.

Indeed, the overwhelming majority decision of the Senate following the reading of Collor's resignation message was to proceed with an impeachment trial and to condemn him for these crimes, in light of the fact that it has already been demonstrated that,

as head of state, Collor led a gang of thieves in looting the public treasury while keeping the immense majority of the Brazilian population under the worst conditions of economic austerity.

The final and long-awaited decision of the Senate following its marathon session of Dec. 29 through dawn of the 30th, was to find Collor guilty.

As a result of the Senate trial, Collor loses all political rights in Brazil for eight years. But this is not all. Attorney General Aristides Junqueira is readying criminal charges against Collor, which could take the former President directly to jail, where he may find himself sharing space with such generous colleagues as his former campaign treasurer Paulo César Farias, who was at the center of the corruption scandal that eventually led to Collor's downfall.

Perhaps the most tragic aspect of the Collor de Mello phenomenon has yet to be revealed. But for now, the magazine *Veja* has devoted its mid-December issue to an interview with the former President which paints a devastating portrait of the gloomy mental state of a person destroyed by uncontrolled greed and ambition. At once cold and delirious, Collor makes every effort to hide his guilt, while denying the most overwhelming evidence against him. The portrait is of a ghost of a President still trying to maintain the rites and rituals of power.

Collor de Mello's resignation was received by the entire nation with relief and joy, as well as with hope and expectation that the country may now chart a course diametrically opposed to the suicidal one the former President had imposed upon it. The end of the Collor de Mello farce may now also precipitate the final days of those sibling regimes begotten in the womb of Project Democracy, and suckled by the International Monetary Fund.