

The São Paulo Forum, Castro's shock troops

Name of group: São Paulo Forum.

Headquarters: The Forum is in the process of creating a permanent secretariat. Havana and Managua serve as unofficial command centers; periodic steering committee meetings move from country to country in Ibero-America.

Other major office/outlet locations: *América Libre*, the Forum's magazine, is "outlined in Brazil, edited in Argentina, printed in Chile," and distributed worldwide, in the words of its Brazilian editor-in-chief, Frei Betto.

When founded: July 1-4, 1990.

Locations of operations, areas active: Member organizations, movements, and parties operate in 18 Ibero-American and 11 Caribbean countries, plus Puerto Rico. Member organizations are currently leading active armed insurrections in: Mexico-Guatemala (both the state of Guerrero and the Chiapas/Guatemalan border area); Colombia and several bordering areas in Venezuela; and rapidly developing in that direction in the coca-growing regions of Peru and Bolivia. Pre-insurrectionary preparations are under way in the Chaco region in northern Argentina, and Brazil; significant Forum capabilities for armed action remain intact in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Chile.

Forum member parties run the governments of Cuba and Haiti; hold cabinet posts in the governments of Bolivia and Chile; and control the government of Uruguay's capital and largest city, Montevideo, as well as numerous important state and city governments in Brazil, Venezuela, and Mexico.

Major terrorist actions: See other profiles; ETA.

Trademark terror signatures: Kidnapping for ransom, run as a centralized, regionwide, operation. Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) insurrection in Chiapas, dubbed by *América Libre* "the first post-modern revolution," as "an armed political movement," is held up as model for the continent; chief characteristic being that indigenous and poor local residents are used as cannon fodder—e.g., "armed" with wooden guns—to provide political cover for irregular warfare operations of hard-core terrorist forces, with ethnic-separatist objectives. Similarly, organized mass occupations of farmers' land are being used in Brazil, Chiapas, and elsewhere, as means to seize territory, which is then held through terror, as logistical bases and brainwashing centers for entrapped poor, outside of State control.

Leaders' names and aliases: Fidel Castro. Otherwise, the editorial board of the Forum's magazine, *América Libre*, constitutes its public leadership. Frei Betto of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) is the magazine's editor; managing editor is Argentine Communist Party member Claudia Korol. In

1995, the editorial board consisted of:

- Argentina: Luis Brunati, Popular Encounter (EP); Patricio Echegaray, secretary general, Communist Party; Miguel Monserrat, Southern Front (FS); Bishop Federico Pagura, president of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI); Lisandro Viale, secretary general, Revolutionary Party for Argentine Social Independence (PRISA); Néstor Vicente; David Viñas, member of the literati.

- Brazil: Leonardo Boff, founder of liberation theology (see PT profile); Chico Buarque de Hollanda, protest song writer and friend of Fidel Castro; Antonio Candido, PT; Gilberto Carvalho, PT Secretary of Organization; Roberto Drummond, writer; Paulo Freire, PT (see PT profile); Luis Eduardo Greenhalgh, PT human rights lawyer (now defending Canadian terrorists jailed for 1989 kidnapping of Brazilian businessman Abilio Diniz); Fernando Morais, writer and Castro intimate; Eric Nepomuceno, journalist; Emir Sader, ecologist academic.

- Chile: Manuel Cabieses, editor, *Punto Final* magazine; Volodia Teitelboim, former secretary general, Communist Party.

- Colombia: Gilberto Vieira, secretary general, Communist Party.

- Costa Rica: Daniel Camacho.

- Cuba: Marta Harnecker (see below); Fernando Martínez Heredia; Manuel Piñeiro (see box); Silvio Rodríguez.

- Ecuador: Osvaldo León.

- El Salvador: Schafik Jorge Handal, secretary general, Communist Party. An unrepentant advocate of armed struggle and outspoken supporter of the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala (URNG), Handal is currently a member of the "mediation" commission for Antioquia, Colombia set up by Harvard University's Program on Negotiation.

- Guatemala: Rigoberta Menchú Tum, 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner, self-admitted leader of the Guatemalan URNG since the 1970s, advocate of "revolutionary popular war," and international spokesman for the United Nations' indigenous anti-nation-state movement; Guillermo Torriello Garrido, foreign minister (1950-54) under the Arbenz government, and founder of the Guatemalan Committee of Patriotic Unity (CGUP), established in January 1982 as the political front for the URNG military command.

- Haiti: Gerard Pierre Charles, coordinator of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas movement, long-time Communist Party leader, now one of Aristide's leading strategists.

- Mexico: Alonso Aguilar, professor; Adolfo Gilly, PRD (see PRD profile); Pablo González Casanova, Zapatista National Democratic Convention; Carlos Núñez, president of the Adult Education Council of Latin America (CEAAL), who argues that "popular education" modeled on the programs carried out by José Carlos Mariátegui, César Augusto Sandino, Lázaro Cárdenas, and Paulo Freire is "a strategic and indispensable component of the 'new forms of politics' arising in the continent."

- Nicaragua: Fernando Cardenal, S.J., education minister in the Sandinista government; Mirna Cunningham; Miguel D'Escoto, foreign minister in the Sandinista government.

- Panama: Nils Castro, currently Panama's ambassador to Mexico, a prominent figure in the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America (COPPAL), who at one time claimed to have served as an adviser to Castro's Cuba.

- Paraguay: Joel Cazal.

- Peru: Javier Diez Canseco, former secretary general, Unified Mariateguista Party (PUM).

- Uruguay: Mario Benedetti, member of the literati; Hugo Cores, Congressman of People's Victory Party (PVP); Eleuterio Fernández Huidobro, "historic leader" of the Tupamaros National Liberation Movement.

- Venezuela: Alí Rodríguez, Causa R party.

Groups allied nationally or internationally:

- ETA, Spanish-based Basque separatists.

- Communist parties outside Ibero-America with which the Forum has relations include North Korea, China, United States, Canada, Austria, Britain, France, Germany (both German Communist Party and Democratic Socialist Party), Greece, Italy (Communist Refoundation), and Portugal. French CP Foreign Relations Commission member Pierre Larroche told an August 1995 *América Libre* conference in Buenos Aires, that "an exchange of experiences, analysis, and propositions" between Europe and Ibero-America is needed, and committed his party's solidarity to "the peoples in struggle of this continent, particularly to the people of Chiapas who battle for their dignity, and to Cuba, for its sovereignty."

- Libya. Muammar Qaddafi sent a personal message to the May 1995 Fifth Conference in Montevideo, calling for the formation of "a World Popular Front [of] political and revolutionary forces, parties, and popular organizations." Libya's ambassador to Cuba, Saaid Hafianna, attended the Forum's Fourth and Fifth conferences, as did Ambassador at Large to Latin America Ali Ahmed Agili.

- Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America (COPPAL).

- New Democratic Party, Canada, has sent representatives to various Forum congresses, and provides support for Chiapas insurgency.

- Inter-American Dialogue.

- National Democratic Institute, U.S. National Endowment for Democracy.

- Socialist International.

- Tricontinental Center, University of Louvain, Belgium.

Religious/ideological/ethnic motivating ideology: As a clearinghouse of Ibero-American left and terrorist groups, its ideology is an amalgam of indigenism, theology of liberation, and ecology. Its most significant common thread is the defense of Castro's Cuba. Forum members are mandated to

carry out demonstrations, apply international political pressure, and send financial and material aid to support Castro's regime. Shafik Handal told the May 1995 Montevideo meeting: "Cuba is the hope. . . . There will be Cuban socialism and revolution forever." Bolivian coca leader Evo Morales told an August 1995 Buenos Aires seminar: "If we want to be free, in Latin America there should not be one Cuba, but several Cubas. . . . What do we need for that? Heroic figures. And for me, Fidel Castro is such a figure. I am ready to proclaim him commander of the liberation forces of America, or Latin America."

Known controllers/mentors/theoreticians:

Controllers: Fidel Castro; former Sandinista Interior Minister Tomás Borge; founder of Cuban intelligence, Manuel Piñeiro; Cuban and Nicaraguan intelligence services.

Mentors and theoreticians: Marta Harnecker, Chile/Cuba. Wife of Cuban intelligence's Manuel Piñeiro. Her best-seller, *Elementary Concepts of Historical Materialism*, in the 1970s served as a catechism for the Left in the region. She is the director of the Center for the Recovery and Promotion of the Historical Memory of the Latin American Popular Movement in Havana, through which various activities of the Ibero-American Left are coordinated.

Frei Betto.

Argentine-Cuban Ernesto "Che" Guevara is claimed as inspiration for the Forum; *América Libre* was founded at a conference celebrating the 65th anniversary of his birth.

Number of cadre: Some 107 parties, groups, and sectlets are members of the Forum. *EIR* estimates that the Forum may have upwards of 250,000 deployable cadre and followers under their command, perhaps 20-30,000 of them armed.

Known drug connections: The prominent role of the "Third Cartel" of Colombia—the FARC—in the Forum structure exemplifies the integral relationship of the São Paulo Forum with the drug trade. Cuban officials are reported, by intelligence officials in the region, to have advised other groups in the Forum at the time of its founding, that, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of financing from the Socialist International, parties should adopt "the M-19 model"; that is, assure self-reliance through the drug trade. The announcement by Bolivian leader Evo Morales at Aug. 18-20, 1995, *América Libre* conference in Buenos Aires, of a strategy for continental resistance to eradication of coca, and international coordination of coca-legalization campaign, signals a new phase of Forum warfare to defend the drug trade. A new Puerto Rican member organization, New Puerto Rican Independence Movement (NMIP), is bringing that battle to the United States itself, threatening terrorism against installation of anti-drug radar.

Known arms suppliers/routes: Arms are bought primarily on the international and regional black market, which is interlocked with the drug trade. Since 1992, Central America has become a major source of weapons for the conti-

Manuel Piñeiro, Castro's hit-man

The surfacing of Manuel Piñeiro as a leader of the São Paulo Forum constitutes, in and of itself, grounds for firing any U.S. intelligence or national security official who has argued that Fidel Castro and his Forum are no longer a threat to the security of the United States or its hemispheric allies.

For 35 years, "Redbeard" Piñeiro has served as Castro's dirty operations man for the Western Hemisphere, personally setting up and directing Cuba's assassination, kidnapping, and terror international in the region. Piñeiro founded Cuba's General Intelligence Directorate (DGI), after Castro seized power in 1959, maintaining his ties with it as deputy interior minister (1961-74). In 1974, he left the Interior Ministry to take charge of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee's newly established Americas Department, a unit created to centralize Cuba's operations in Ibero-America under the personal control of Castro, to whom Piñeiro reported.

Throughout, Piñeiro has worked on one operation: deploying a centralized terrorist international, along the lines of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's instructions to the 1966 Tricontinental Congress, that "the armed groups . . . form . . . coordinating committees to make more difficult the repressive task of the Yanqui imperialism and to facilitate

our own cause." In 1967, the Latin American Solidarity Organization (OLAS) was formed, a sort of first-generation São Paulo Forum.

During the early 1970s, Piñeiro lived in Chile for several months, directing the estimated 14,000 "internationalists"—which included members of the Cuban Interior Ministry's Special Troops—deployed into Chile by Cuba to secure the Salvador Allende government. After the overthrow of Allende in September 1973, Piñeiro's Americas Department helped set up the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee (JCR) in 1974 as the successor to OLAS, assigned to provide a unified command for "just and necessary revolutionary violence" on the continent. It was led by Uruguay's Tupamaros, Chile's Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Gorriarán Merlo's People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) of Argentina, and Bolivia's National Liberation Army.

Piñeiro's most successful operation was the 1979 Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. His Americas Department provided the Sandinistas intelligence, communications, arms, and even exiled Chilean Army officers, who had earlier been incorporated into the Cuban Armed Forces. Cuba's first public narco-terrorist operation—the arms-for-drugs deal with Colombia's M-19 movement, revealed with the 1981 arrest of Jaime Guillot Lara—was also a Piñeiro job. Cuba's ambassador at the time, Fernando Ravelo, was pulled out of Colombia after the scandal, and reassigned as Piñeiro's deputy at the Americas Department.

mental terror-drugs nexus. In the words of a former Salvadoran guerrilla: "Nicaragua was a large arms fair, a sort of huge gray market. You could get anything."

Known political supporters/advocates: Under the administration of George Bush, the U.S. State Department provided political support for members of the Forum steering committee, in the name of "peace negotiations." Coordination with the FMLN of El Salvador was notorious: the State Department reviewed and approved FMLN proposals for reducing El Salvador's Armed Forces; the U.S. ambassador and military attaché visited FMLN camps; Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson met with the top five FMLN commanders on Jan. 1, 1992, to tell them that "we wanted to make peace." Subsequently, Sandinista and FMLN leaders were invited, by the State Department, to speak at U.S. college campuses.

Thumbnail historical profile: The Cuban Communist Party (CP) initiated the founding of the São Paulo Forum, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall made it clear that the coming disintegration of the Soviet bloc threatened to bring with it the disintegration of all Soviet-allied and socialist

movements internationally. In July 1990, Brazil's Workers Party (PT) sponsored the first conference, where representatives of 40 organizations and parties, from 13 Ibero-American and Caribbean countries, met in São Paulo, with Cuban officials, to discuss how to revise revolutionary strategy in the midst of the crisis of socialism worldwide.

Initially founded as a loose, political umbrella organization with a mandate to propose common actions, over the past five years the Cuban CP has directed the systematic transformation of the Forum into a centralized political command structure, led by the principal narco-terrorist insurgencies in the Americas. Their objective has been to rebuild the old Communist International in the Western Hemisphere under Cuban control, as originally laid out in the January 1966 Tricontinental Congress.

In 1991, formal by-laws were drawn up, and a steering committee chosen. Its members: the Cuban CP, Brazil's Workers Party (PT), Mexico's Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD), El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Nicaragua's Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN), Aristide's Haitian Lavalas, Bolivia's Free

Bolivia Movement (MBL), and member parties from Peru's United Left and the Uruguayan CP- and Tupamaro-led Broad Front (FA). In 1992, the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala (URNG), the terrorist force most closely modeled on Peru's Shining Path in modus operandi, was added to the steering committee. By May 1995, the Forum's central command also included Colombia's narco-terrorist groups (Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinator, FARC, ELN, M-19), Dominica's Labor Party, Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), and the member organizations from Guadeloupe (CP, Resistance Union Group [GUR], and Union for the Liberation of Guadeloupe).

In 1992, the Forum launched a magazine, *América Libre*, to strengthen its political presence in the continent and give it centralized direction. Seven issues have since been published, including exclusive interviews with FARC commander Manuel Marulanda Vélez from his hideouts in "the mountains of Colombia," URNG communiqués, and instructions for peasant organizing from the Brazilian Landless Movement (MST).

In 1993, Uruguay's Broad Front (FA) was charged with establishing a computerized electronic-mail system among member organizations. Standing commissions, on such issues as human rights, were created to direct specific campaigns. By May 1995, the Forum command felt ready to announce their intent to set up a permanent secretariat.

The five plenary conferences have charted the growth, and shifts in political focus, of the Forum. Documents from every clandestine terrorist group on the continent circulate at these events, whether "official" members or not (e.g., Shining Path, Argentina's All for the Fatherland (MTP), Chile's Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front).

June 12-15, 1991: Mexico's PRD sponsored the "Second Conference of the Movements and Political Parties of the São Paulo Forum," in Mexico City. Sixty-eight organizations from 22 countries of Ibero-America and the Caribbean were represented; observers from the United States, Canada, Spain, France, Italy, and Russia attended. Two initiatives were adopted here. The Forum mandated its members to support the "500 Years of Resistance" campaign, the United Nations-spawned mobilization against the Christian evangelization of Ibero-America, and its resulting nation-states. Under the "500 years" banner, a continent-wide ethnic separatist structure was being built, uniting the myriad of anthropologist-run "indigenous" organizations into a centralized force, functioning parallel to, but in coordination with, the São Paulo Forum.

The Forum also ordered organizing in Europe and the United States expanded. The latter task was directed by Bolivia's MBL party, which sent a team to visit the United States, China, North Korea, and six countries in Europe, from February to April 1992, to establish "fraternal ties" for the Forum steering committee.

July 16-19, 1992: The Sandinistas took charge of the

Third Conference, held to coincide with celebrations of the anniversary of the 1979 Sandinista seizure of power. The agenda here centered on 1) upgrading the Forum's profile in the region as "a viable option for power," and 2) increasing dialogue with other "equivalent coordination efforts of progressive forces which are being carried out on other continents."

Oct. 16-18, 1992: The steering committee met in Montevideo, announcing at its conclusion that support for the "struggle of the Guatemalan peoples" and for indigenous resistance in the Americas, must be a central campaign of the organization. "Peruvian political persecution" was condemned, effectively a statement of support for Shining Path, whose top leadership had been arrested just weeks before.

July 21-24, 1993: The Fourth Conference, held in Havana, Cuba, coincided with celebrations of 40th anniversary of Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada barracks, and was used to emphasize the need to defend the Castro regime. One hundred and twelve member organizations and 25 observer groups from the region, attended this plenary, along with observers from 44 political institutions and forces of North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Thirty-one new organizations had joined the Forum by its conclusion, 21 of them from the Caribbean.

A distinct change in morale was evident. Demoralized analyses of the "defeat" of socialism in the Soviet Union, were replaced by plans to seize the opportunities opened by "the rupture of the neo-liberal project." Forum leaders Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Luís Inacio da Silva ("Lula") outlined a strategy of sweeping to power in six countries over the next 24 months, targeting upcoming national elections in Venezuela, El Salvador, Mexico, Brazil, and Nicaragua.

December 1993: A centralized organizing thrust into the militaries of the region was set into motion. Venezuela's Lt. Col. Hugo Chávez (ret.) was given the responsibility for coordinating the military flank, during his visit to Cuba.

No plenary was held in 1994, reportedly in order not to weaken the electoral chances of the designated host, Uruguay's Broad Front. By 1995, it was clear, however, that the strategy outlined in Havana, of gaining national power through elections, had failed.

March 1995: A core group of the editorial board of *América Libre* was called to Havana, to resolve "difficulties," including financial, which had arisen. The meeting was run by two heavies of Cuban intelligence, Manuel Piñeiro and his wife, Marta Harnecker, both now members of the editorial board. Frei Betto later reported that "a new profile" for the magazine had been decided upon there, including financial quotas for member organizations, plans for recruiting "militants" around the magazine, and the delineation of organizing campaigns.

May 25-28, 1995: Discussion at the Fifth Plenary Conference, held in Montevideo, Uruguay, centered on the question of power, in the wake of the members' manifest inability to

win national elections. The Cuban delegation, led by Communist Party Central Committee member Abel Prieto, argued that the Forum must be strengthened, to confront the “deepening geopolitical crisis,” and U.S. success in rebuilding hemispheric relations. Gains had been made, they argued, calculating that between the Fourth and Fifth Plenaries, the Forum had elected 291 deputies, 57 senators, 10 governors, hundreds of mayors, and obtained 29 million votes, or 24.01%—almost one-quarter—of the valid votes cast in that electoral period.

Self-criticism sessions, run by Harnecker, concluded that where Forum members had lost, they had made pragmatic concessions to electoral alliances, instead of staking their strategy on “social action.” They determined that they now must change the rules of the game, through “electoral reform” and by establishing “provisional governments” and “Constituent Assemblies,” as demanded by member parties in Mexico, Venezuela, and elsewhere.

The Final Resolution from the plenary endorsed the Zapatista insurgency in Chiapas, calling it representative of the “new forms of expression, democracy, and people’s power” developing in the region. The EZLN’s Sub-Commander Marcos had addressed the plenary, through a video brought by Mexico’s PRD delegation.

July 1995: *América Libre #7* outlined the parameters of the “Chiapas strategy”—combining armed uprising, mass land seizures, and a campaign for constituent assemblies to reform national constitutions—which has been adopted throughout the continent. Wrote Managing Editor Korol: “In how many regions of Latin America could a portrait be made, similar to that which capitalism has made of Chiapas? What could the Bolivian or Peruvian Indians tell? What would the people of Northeastern Argentina write, declared unviable by successive military and civilian governments? What would the forgotten of Brazil, Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Haiti, tell? Or will it be that Chiapas speaks for all of them; and that it is, at the same time, an invitation to add new voices of denunciation?” Chiapas, she adds, provides “the keys to future movements.”

Spain’s ETA sets up ‘Kidnappers, Inc.’

For more than a decade, the Basque terrorist-separatist ETA (as we will elaborate fully in week’s *EIR*) has been operating in Ibero-America, where it has established a broad funding network (through collection of revolutionary taxes, assaults and kidnappings, and its own businesses, particularly restaurants). In recent years, ETA (Euskadi and Freedom) has

fully integrated itself into the São Paulo Forum’s continental narco-terrorist apparatus, of which it now constitutes an essential element. Although some ETA members have played leadership roles in El Salvador’s Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and other groups, its specialty is in the “kidnapping industry”; and it has trained the Forum’s continent-wide machinery in this “art.” This was proven conclusively in May 1993, when a secret arms cache in Managua exploded (see below).

The ETA is present above all in Mexico, considered an important international base second to France, and in Venezuela, although it also maintains an important presence in Uruguay, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Brazil. Its presence in Cuba and in Nicaragua is of a special nature.

On April 30, 1992, in a visit to Buenos Aires, Spanish Interior Minister José Luis Corcuera said that “Ibero-America is the preferred location for ETA members.” Many of them left Spain under the government of Francisco Franco, claiming to be persecuted politically, and alleging that their terrorism was “revolutionary war.” There are apparently secret, semi-official agreements to grant them refuge in Mexico and Venezuela, as long as they don’t interfere in internal politics.

Nicaragua’s arms bunker

During the 1980s, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas became a key base of ETA operations. ETA members obtained false passports, they were incorporated into Interior Minister Tomás Borge’s security apparatus, and they used Nicaragua as a base to expand their continental operations. ETA leader Eusebio Arzallus Tapia, alias *El Patitoro*, traveled to Managua in the early 1980s to establish ties to the Sandinistas and El Salvador’s FMLN, and to organize an international network of 35 kidnappers. He became a naturalized Nicaraguan in 1990.

On May 23, 1993, a secret vault containing weapons and documents exploded in Managua, in a store belonging to one Miguel Antonio Larios Moreno, “a false identity behind which Eusebio Arzallus Tapia was hiding,” according to the Spanish magazine *Cambio 16*. The arsenal, built with hydraulic doors and tunnels, contained several tons of weapons, explosives, 19 surface-to-air missiles, 310 passports from 21 countries, many of them blank—one of these was found in the possession of Ibrahim Elgabrownny, who was arrested as a suspect in the February 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York—as well as false identification papers and documents belonging to a kidnap ring. According to Interpol sources, among the documents found was a list of 77 “kidnappable” Ibero-American businessmen, 65 of whom were Brazilian, as well as pictures and other documents relating to the 1989 kidnapping of Brazilian supermarket magnate Abilio Diniz. Other sources confirmed that there were hundreds of names on the list.

Weeks after the Managua explosion, according to the