



Julio Silva Colmenares

Philip Ulanovsky/NSIPS

Colombian economist scores Malthusians

by Valerie Rush

A recent public appearance by the eminent Colombian economist Julio Silva Colmenares in New York City, to denounce as genocidalists the neo-Malthusian proponents of Third World population control headquartered at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, demonstrated the degree to which crucial leaders of the developing sector nations consider U.S. support of their growth and development plans to be crucial. Silva Colmenares, who will return to the United States later in August for a lecture tour with the Committee Against Genocide, spoke on July 5 to a mid-year conference of the International Caucus of Labor Committees, which gathered more than 500 participants from four continents to discuss the anti-Malthusian American System of economics and politics.

The Colombian economist is a lecturer at numerous universities and institutes in his country and a member of the Central Committee of the mass-based Colombian Communist Party. He is the author of several books, including *No Más Hijos* and *Verdaderos Dueños del Poder* (*No More Children* and *The Truly Powerful*).

Silva Colmenares explained in his presentation that he became a specialist in demography about a decade ago, when it became apparent to him and other pro-growth leaders in politics, the universities, and the Church, that a concerted effort was being made to revive the discredited theories on population of Thomas Malthus within the developing sector-nations. This "neo-Malthusianism," he explained, asserts that there is a direct causal relationship between poverty and "excess population."

"The country from which I come," said Silva Colmenares, "was chosen as a guinea pig by the World Bank

to develop all of its anti-natal conceptions to justify underdevelopment. . . . The problem of poverty is not a problem of population, nor of resource scarcity, but of social relations, that is, how production occurs and how the surplus is distributed. . . . It was in the interests of the multinationals operating through the World Bank to present an apparently scientific theory to justify what they had already decided on: to impose birth control on the underdeveloped countries as a means of maintaining in their hands, for the immediate future ahead, control over our natural resources."

Silva Colmenares demonstrated the irony of the Malthusian argument that population and resource "shortages" are obstacles to development. He pointed out that while the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations were sponsoring birth-control programs in Colombia in the name of aiding development, the multinationals behind them were looting the country of the very resources whose alleged scarcity was preventing adequate development. "Between 1920 and 1974," he reported, "when Colombia's oil allegedly 'ran out,' Colombia exported some 2 trillion barrels of oil which according to our estimates produced a net profit for the oil multitis, especially the Rockefeller and Mellon groups, of not less than \$4.5 billion, based on an investment of \$450 million. The country was left with no oil, no petrochemical industry, only empty oil wells."

Population equals development

Silva Colmenares stressed that population growth has been historically demonstrated to correlate with expanded growth and per capita income increase. "Population is the most important resource any country can have. There is no doubt that the living labor force is that which creates wealth and all of the surplus of a society." He described institutionalization of population control in the guise of government health care and maternity programs, reading for a shocked audience the recommendations for Colombia of Population Council head Bernard Berelson from Berelson's book *Beyond Family Planning*:

(1) government use of a sterilizing agent in water and food supplies; (2) legal permits to have children, acquired through purchase, inheritance or donation only; (3) reversible sterilization of all women pending government approval for childbearing; (4) obligatory sterilization of all men with three or more living children; (5) obligatory abortion of all illegal pregnancies.

Silva Colmenares, speaking in the name of those forces inside the developing sector who, in his words, are determined "to protect ourselves from such genocidal conceptions" of the anti-natalists, concluded his presentation with an appropriate comment: "As the Pope once said, the solution is not to cut people's heads off if there are not enough hats to go around."