

Andean Report by Benjamín Castro

Communists, mafia, bankers converge

The Communists' new-found political strength, thanks to austerity, is a threat to Colombia's military and constitution.

No matter who turns out to have assassinated Jaime Pardo Leal, the head of the Patriotic Union (UP) electoral front in Colombia, the tangible result of his death has been the enthronement of that Communist Party-linked movement as the most popular political force in the country. The murder has launched a process that may end up seeing the Communists, aided by the drug mafia and international financiers, destroy the institutions and nation of Colombia.

As the Oct. 22 edition of *Voz*, the Colombian Communist Party newspaper, stated, "The assassination of Jaime Pardo Leal, rather than producing the retreat of the Patriotic Union, has launched it into the leading role in the current political scene."

The UP and its new leader, Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, have already succeeded in forcing the government to meet its principal demands. For example, during the funeral for the assassinated UP leader, Jaramillo Ossa demanded "immediate dialogue" "without conditions" with the Communist guerrilla group, the FARC. Two weeks later, the Barco government renewed dialogue with the FARC, dropping its conditions of guerrilla disarmament and demobilization. Earlier government dialogue with the FARC had collapsed after a series of bloody FARC ambushes of army personnel in ceasefire zones.

Also during Pardo Leal's funeral, both the UP and Communist Party Secretary General Gilberto Vieira had demanded that the government name

a civilian to the post of defense minister, to replace anti-terrorist hardliner Gen. Rafael Samudio Molina, whom they accused of responsibility for Pardo Leal's murder. On Oct. 29, newspaper columnist Enrique Santos Calderón wrote in a scandalous article—afterwards denied by everyone, including him—that President Barco had suggested to the high military command that they accept a civilian minister.

The UP has also become the standard-bearer for "reform" of the Colombian constitution. Taking advantage of the terror and hysteria among the Colombian population as a whole, especially among labor, political, and intellectual figures who have been targeted by the Communist terrorists for eradication, the "non-terrorist" Communists have strongly promoted the idea of a constitutional reform as a supposed solution to the crisis of violence in the country.

Recently the Bogota city council held a meeting of councilmen from around the country to discuss a possible reform of the constitution. The event heard written presentations from President Barco and Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo, among others. It was organized up front by Bogota City Councilwoman Clara López Obregón, but the man orchestrating behind the scenes was Communist Party Councilman Carlos Romero.

The other promoter of constitutional reform is former President Carlos Lleras Restrepo, the most faithful representative of International Mone-

tary Fund/World Bank colonialism in Colombia.

From inside the government, individuals such as presidential secretary Germán Montoya and Gustavo Vasco, the most important of the presidential advisers, are also pushing a constitutional reform. They would like to turn Colombia into a Hong Kong-style money-laundering machine, as the IMF prescribes. That happens to be just what the drug mafia would like, too.

Perhaps the best example of this "convergence" between Colombia's Communists, the drug mafia, and the agents of the international banks can be seen in their alliance against the armed forces. The Communists' *Voz* on Oct. 22 proudly published a document, by "technicians" of the finance ministry for presentation to the Congress, arguing against the high military command's petition for a budgetary increase for the armed forces. According to the document, the ministry technicians recommend that the deteriorated equipment of the armed forces be "maintained," with no new acquisitions of "sophisticated" and "modern" matériel, so as to "not contribute to an aggravation of exchange problems" and the "balance of payments."

Thus, while the UP, the Communist Party, the drug mafia, and the FARC escalate their campaign against "militarism," the bankers' agents in Colombia assist their campaign by tightening the austerity tourniquet.

This situation is not at all strange. President Barco's main adviser, Gustavo Vasco, is one of those eccentric millionaires who was a member of the Communist Party some years ago, and an intimate of Gilberto Vieira, today the secretary general of the Communist Party. Both are descendants of some of the country's oldest oligarchical families.