

This is the United Nations.”

That's not the way most people in Ibero-America see it. In a recent poll in Colombia, a majority said they opposed the war, 42% said they were for Iraq's Saddam, and only 37% backed the U.S. The results showed that there is a “marked anti-Americanism among Colombians,” said the head of the polling company. Many thought that Bush simply had no moral authority to oppose Saddam, given the U.S. invasion of Panama a little over a year ago.

In Argentina, 80% of the population is against the decision by President Carlos Menem to send warships to serve the Anglo-Americans in the Gulf, said the London *Guardian* Feb. 1. Argentina's Federation of Jewish Cultural Entities, in a statement issued on Jan. 23, said that the war “does not serve any of the interests of the Argentinian people and it endangers the future of the nation.” The Argentinian Jewish organization called on Israel to take a lower profile regarding the war, and “a higher profile in the search for a just political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” Even Menem's estranged wife, Zulema Yoma de Menem, has demanded that he recall the warships from the Gulf. “It is inadmissible to remain indifferent to the massive and indiscriminate bombardments that are affecting unprotected civilians, Jews and Arabs alike,” she said.

Perhaps nowhere in Ibero-America is popular sentiment against the war so strong as in Venezuela. According to firsthand reports, the majority of Venezuelans are vocally in favor of Iraq. Venezuela was one of the founders of OPEC in 1973, and has always maintained extensive and excellent relations with the Arab world—a sentiment which the Venezuelan government has not been able to extirpate.

‘Kissinger Go Home!’

Venezuela is also one of the countries where there is a deep split in the ruling elite over Bush's war. Although the Carlos Andrés Pérez government has given Washington full backing, not so other layers of Venezuela's “Establishment.” When Henry Kissinger visited Caracas in late January at the invitation of the Pérez government, to give them his advice on world economic and political matters, the staid daily *Diario de Caracas* welcomed him with an editorial entitled “Kissinger Go Home!” In it, the daily favorably quoted the comments of former President Rafael Caldera, to the effect that Kissinger's visit “is worrisome, because he has been the most powerful adversary that OPEC has had throughout its existence, which is an organization which must continue to exist and cannot follow the advise of people like Kissinger.”

Another country where there is deep and growing opposition to the Gulf war, is Brazil. The military has led the ranks of those opposed to Bush's insanity from an intelligent strategic standpoint (see *Report from Rio*, page 61). But the hostility to the war is not limited to these circles, as reflected in a column by journalist Mauro Santayana in the Jan. 31 *Gazeta Mercantil*. Santayana, a respected journalist linked

to Brazil's diplomatic corps, suggested that Brazil may well be next after Iraq on Bush's hit-list, and warned that Brazil must reject all outside pressures to dismantle its armed forces. Brazil is “rich and much coveted,” he wrote, and in the past its military labored under the presumption that threats to its national security came from its neighbors, and its neighbors probably feared Brazil, “encouraged by more powerful and distant nations.” But today, the nations of Ibero-America must unite, wrote Santayana, citing former Argentinian President Juan Perón, “who in his oft-cited warning, said that the 21st century will either find us Latin Americans united, or under foreign domination.”

Opposition grows in Italy as war goes on

by Leonardo Servadio

The Persian Gulf war must be stopped immediately, independent of whether or not it be a “just war” or an “unjust war”: This is the message which the Italian Catholic Bishops put out at the end of January. There is no doubt, said Monsignor Tettamanzi, speaking on behalf of the Bishops' Conference during the press conference to prepare for the “Day of Life,” that “even a ‘just’ war is an absolute evil.”

The Day of Life was celebrated Sunday, Feb. 3. On that occasion Pope John Paul II said, “The divine law: ‘thou shall not kill’ regards every man and binds every man, independent of his religious belief, since it is written by the Creator in the conscience as a natural law.” The Pope condemned abortion as the worst of all crimes, since it is perpetrated against the “most defenseless” of all human beings. After denouncing genetic manipulations, euthanasia, the rejection of the weakest, racism, and homicidal violence of any kind, the Pope said: “We must proclaim the untouchability of the right to life . . . against war, against this war, which people keep fighting in the Persian Gulf, with increasing danger for the whole of humanity.”

The statements by the Pope and the Bishops, setting war and abortion on the same plane, have been interpreted by some as a way of distancing themselves from the Communist Party (renamed Democratic Party of the Left-PDS), which has been the most vocal supporter of the papal statements against war, but has used them in an “anti-American” way. Bologna's Cardinal Biffi explicitly criticized the professional “pacifists” who have always used pacifism as an instrument of war against the Atlantic Alliance. But in all the statements, the concern over the global consequences of this conflict

and the conviction that it cannot be stopped by the usual diplomatic means is very evident: A higher moral standard must now be established.

Catholic Church spokesmen have missed no opportunity to speak out against war. Cardinal Salvatore Pappalardo pointed out that with the force of weapons, one can impose the right of the stronger, but justice must be done through reason and law.

While everybody accepts these statements, what does that mean in terms of political action?

The Catholic youth movement

Roberto Formigoni, vice president of the Christian Democracy and of the European Parliament, proposed at the end of January that a ceasefire be immediately implemented so as to allow peace negotiations. Formigoni is a political representative of the Catholic Movimento Popolare, a broad youth movement (its purely religious branch is called *Comunione e Liberazione*), and, with the Schiller Institute, the only movement which was critical of the "pacifists." It has taken a stand in defense of peace even if that meant marching together with the Communists and assorted pacifists in the streets. The only movement whose political stand has not been influenced by parochial political motivations, Movimento Popolare has put several paid advertisements in the Catholic daily *Avvenire*, denouncing the horrors of the ongoing war. Formigoni has, on several occasions, criticized the economic interests which lay behind Anglo-American ruthlessness in implementing the "U.N. mandate" in defense of "international law," contrasting that ruthlessness to the total lack of interest in defending Lebanon or in implementing the U.N. resolutions concerning the Palestinians.

Movimento Popolare's weekly, *Il Sabato*, denounced the U.N. as "looking more and more like a notary called to ratify decisions taken in Washington and Moscow, rather than a solid mediator 'above parties.'" *Il Sabato* also denounced Henry Kissinger, for having been for years a well-paid adviser to Saddam Hussein, to then become the one who advised the U.S. administration to attack. Prof. Gianfranco Miglio, the former dean of the political science department of Catholic University in Milan, and mentor of the new Lombard League party, denounced the role of Kissinger in setting up the Gulf war as a way of getting control over Europe, by controlling the oil supplies on which the old continent depends.

As even the polls revealed, the vast majority of Italians is against war, and this opinion is obviously reflected in the parties which make up the government coalition. Yet, when it comes to "official" political stands, even people who might be personally in favor of mediation, or of an immediate ceasefire, feel bound not to say so openly, so as not to appear critical toward the U.S.A.

The Socialist Party and the Republican Party are the two most outspoken defenders of Bush's line in Italy. Republican

leader Giorgio La Malfa has denounced Formigoni harshly, to the point that Formigoni announced that he would sue him. Socialist leader Bettino Craxi answered, in an indirect way, the various proposals to work for a cease-fire, by stating that a cease-fire would allow Saddam to regroup his troops and relaunch an offensive.

The case of Admiral Buracchia

The case of Rear Admiral Buracchia, who till the end of January was the commander of the Italian Navy task force in the Gulf, epitomizes the conundrum. Admiral Buracchia gave an interview to the Catholic weekly *Famiglia Cristiana*, published at the end of January, where he said that "with a little more wisdom, with a better evaluation of what one was going to confront," war could have been avoided. "I think," said Buracchia, "that people should have reached a peaceful solution. Who knows, perhaps if we had continued the embargo for a longer time. . . . War is easy, unfortunately, but what is worrisome is the scenario we rebuild afterward, provided we are able to face the unforeseeable." These statements, which have been read by everybody as a sort of "pacifist" declaration, and possibly as a criticism of the "allied" policy, were attacked by all the government political spokesmen. La Malfa called for the immediate resignation of the rear admiral, as did former Defense Undersecretary Ciccardini (from the CD "left"), among other people. After having unsuccessfully denied the content of the interview (the tapes of the interview are available) Admiral Buracchia asked to be replaced in his position as chief of the task force and to return to Italy. In order to silence the scandal and clarify that there was no intention to criticize the Anglo-American policy in the Gulf, Buracchia explained that he meant that it was Saddam who should have reached a peaceful solution. But obviously Buracchia could not say he meant to blame Saddam, when he said: "Who knows, perhaps had we continued the embargo for a longer time." The admiral was replaced Feb. 5.

In Italy, as in all the European countries, people know that since the statements made by CIA chief William Webster in Los Angeles in September 1989, there is a sort of undeclared conflict between the United States and its allies, Europe and Japan. Webster said that, the military confrontation with Moscow having ended, a new "economic" confrontation between the U.S.A. on the one side, and Europe and Japan on the other side, was starting. People also know that the Gulf war is not a Gulf war, but a war for world hegemony waged by a declining Anglo-American "empire" against the rising power of Europe and Japan. But to be able to muster enough determination to impose peace in the Gulf, Europe must achieve that political independence which it now lacks.

The question of world peace depends in a direct way on the capacity of Europe to achieve political independence and unity. Will it do so in time?