

was personally absolved by the second commission of the Chamber of Representatives of "all political and legal responsibility" for Escobar's July "escape" from prison, despite the fact that Gaviria himself had agreed to take political responsibility for that debacle.

Second, according to the Sept. 25 issue of the daily *El Tiempo*, Pereira Bishop Darío Castrillón Hoyos met with Escobar—at the request of various unnamed "Colombian personalities"—on the matter of "avoiding a new bloodbath" and forging a new surrender arrangement. Bishop Castrillón achieved notoriety back in the early 1980s as the "favorite priest" of convicted Medellín Cartel figure Carlos Lehder, and was later to admit having taken money from the cartel, "to give to the poor." Castrillón told the press that the narco-assassin insisted on his Catholic faith and even cried a little during their meeting. The bishop made no mention of the nearly \$4 million in reward money that he might "give to the poor," should he succeed in mediating a new Escobar surrender.

Bishop Castrillón's meeting with Escobar revives the infamous "Notables" arrangement of 1990, when several former Colombian Presidents headed by "godfather" Alfonso López Michelsen collaborated with Escobar's lawyers in helping to forge a deal with the government. They thereby succeeded in derailing President Virgilio Barco's military offensive against the traffickers then, and are now apparently determined to complete the cartel's takeover of the Colombian state.

Parejo's challenge

The opposition to this scenario took a courageous step forward, with the Sept. 20 announcement by former Justice Minister Enrique Parejo González of his bid for the presidency in the 1994 elections. Parejo, one of the few surviving heroes of Colombia's anti-drug wars of the 1980s, has become a pole of resistance to Gaviria's "narco-democracy" and, despite the permanent death sentence against him from Escobar's hit-squads, has offered his leadership to the country.

Parejo has not only challenged the Gaviria government's capitulation to the drug cartels, with the consequent emasculation of such institutions of government as the legislature and the judiciary, but has also begun to criticize the U.S.-sponsored free trade policy, known as "the opening," through which the drug trade has gained a stranglehold on the Colombian economy to the detriment of the nation's productive base: "The national government persists in defending and promoting an economic policy which is, from every standpoint, contrary to the national interest. . . . The government is playing all of the country's cards on the market, confident that it will act as the great regulator of all economic and social phenomena. . . . This is pure illusion. . . . Instead of opening ourselves to the outside, we should first open ourselves from within, simultaneously battling poverty."

East Europe smeared as anti-Semitic

by Our Special Correspondent

From Sept. 21-23, Berlin was the scene of an international conference entitled "Anti-Semitism in Europe." The purpose of this large gathering of academics, sociologists, and other "experts," was not really to discuss why elite Anglo-American circles have been fomenting a rash of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe at this time; rather, the goal was to exploit the threat of the rise of anti-Semitism as a weapon which can be thrown against those countries in eastern Europe and the Community of Independent States attempting to resist the policies of the free trade and shock therapy of the International Monetary Fund.

The conference was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism at the Technical University in Berlin, along with the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism in Jerusalem and the Institute for Jewish Affairs in London.

From the outset, the concern of the conference was not with the safety of the Jewish community in Europe as such. It was in fact pointed out that the community is extremely small. In Czechoslovakia it numbers no more than 3,000, while in Hungary, the second largest Jewish community in all of Europe numbers 80,000.

Yet the discussion went along the lines: "Can anti-Semitism exist without Jews?" or "Should we say that Poland is an anti-Semitic country?" or "Can we trust these east European politicians with fascist backgrounds, when they say they want to be friends with Israel?" and so forth. It thus sought to open a discussion of anti-Semitism at a time when the economic collapse in eastern Europe and the Community of Independent States is leading to profound political instability, and when in many cases authoritarian regimes can be expected to come to power, probably with the blessing of western creditors.

Thus an underlying theme of the conference was for a reassessment of eastern European countries not as victims of Nazi aggression and 40 years of communist repression, but as nations, which in their expression of nationalism are ostensibly developing dangerous anti-Semitic tendencies. Some of the speakers went so far as to say these countries should share responsibility along with Nazi Germany for the Holo-

caust. Many of the papers traced back the growth of fascist regimes in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary in the 1920s and 1930s, and then drew parallels with the situation today. In the case of Poland, the idea of reparations was even raised.

J.S. Bach slandered

These themes were explicitly developed in the opening presentation by Yehuda Bauer, director of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism. Bauer identified the source of anti-Semitism with the beginning of Greco-Roman western civilization, but most particularly with the advent of Christianity. He went so far as to absurdly claim that the European Renaissance, in that it used Christian themes, particularly in its works of art, reflected anti-Semitic tendencies, whether the artist intended it or not. He cited the great composer J.S. Bach as one such unwitting anti-Semite. Bauer concluded, "Anti-Semitism has become a code in western civilization, not a genetic code—people are not born with anti-Semitic genes—but a cultural code. Thus anti-Semitism has become part, not only of destructive processes in what we term western civilization, but also of its great achievements."

Dismissing the Russian fascist Pamyat and other neo-Nazi groups as "by definition, marginal," Bauer declared that the real danger "lies in developing intellectual structures tending towards the right, and seeking to answer current political and social needs, these have the propensity to use the code that exists in the civilization, even unconsciously, and turn anti-Semitism into a major component of new chauvinistic and romantic ideologies."

He claimed that the two principal ways anti-Semitism will express itself are:

1) the spread of the "world Jewish banking conspiracy" thesis as the reason for the economic and political collapse of eastern European countries; and

2) anti-Israel foreign policies.

Bauer asserted that "criticism of the right of the Jews and no one else to exercise their right of self-determination in Israel [is a] clear indication of anti-Semitic tendencies"—i.e., any support for self-determination for Palestinians is by definition anti-Semitic.

Although the conference was on anti-Semitism in Europe, Bauer devoted a considerable amount of his presentation denouncing Islamic fundamentalism as being "by definition" anti-Semitic. This was a clear warning to the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union which might choose to forge closer ties with Middle Eastern states, especially Iran.

Other documents presented at the conference blatantly falsified history, claiming that anti-Semitism was unleashed in Germany as a result of the Prussian reformers' liberation wars against Napoleon's occupation. The same was asserted for Austria as a result of the 1848 Revolution, which at-

tempted to bring republicanism to the Prussian and Austro-Hungarian empires. One paper even asserted that the new threat is "philo-Semitism," which is the expression of love for Jews but is actually an expression of anti-Semitism!

Some notes of sanity

These ravings aside, the academic nature of the conference did bring many serious historians who chose to go beyond the "belief" and "feeling" aspect of anti-Semitism to approach the politics of the issue. One document, entitled "The Tradition of Russian Anti-Semitism," was authored by Heinz-Dietrich Loewe of St. Anthony's College, Oxford. This well-researched document develops the relationship of the Russian Jewish community to the fight for the modernization and industrialization of Russia. He points out how Count Sergei Witte supported the emancipation of the Jews as a crucial part of his industrialization policy. It was the Jewish community, one of the only strata in the population which was not locked into the aristocracy's "estate" system of serfs, guilds, and the army, which played a crucial role in the establishment of modern financial, industrial, and commercial institutions. Loewe demonstrates that anti-Semitism was created and manipulated by the reactionary aristocracy, through the Okhrana secret police and Interior Ministry against Witte and his successor Piotr Stolypin. It was Interior Minister Plehve, a tool of the landed aristocracy, who organized the 1905 pogrom with the object of ousting Witte.

Another document, "Anti-Semitism in Twentieth-Century Hungary," by Victor Karady of Paris, traces a similar development in the movement to reform the Hungarian monarchy in the late 19th century, when the large Jewish community allied with the liberal reformers.

Some of the presentations and private discussions also revealed several valid points, especially in regard to eastern Europe and the former German Democratic Republic. The old Communist Party apparatus and secret services they control were identified as the manipulators, if not the creators of many of the anti-Semitic groups. In the case of Germany, it was pointed out that the neo-Nazis who have been conducting atrocities against foreign refugees are in fact controlled by former agents of the communist East German secret services, the Stasi, and American agents in the guise of the Ku Klux Klan and British skinheads.

Indeed, it was evident at the conference that many of the institutions and organizations which claim to be fighting anti-Semitism are tools of the same forces. For example, Vera Ebels-Dolanova of the Anne Frank Foundation based in Amsterdam and the United States began her presentation quoting a Czech politician attacking the International Monetary Fund, and said his statement had anti-Semitic overtones. She supported this claim by saying that since the pro-IMF Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus has a name which not only sounds Jewish but also, since the largest synagogue in Prague is the Klaus Synagogue, it is an anti-Semitic act to attack him!