

IMF's Camdessus peddles the social doctrine of Satan in Ibero-America

by Robyn Quijano

Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, toured four Ibero-American countries during the last week of May, flaunting the power he exercises for the one-world empire he represents, over the once-sovereign economies of the continent. Trying to appear as a holy and benevolent proconsul, he reviewed the details of the economic strangulation the IMF has dictated to these nations, whose populations are suffering massive unemployment and hunger, while agriculture and industry have been dismantled under the cover of restructuring for the "market economy."

Camdessus arrived in Buenos Aires on May 27 to bolster the Argentine economic model designed by the IMF. In Argentina, one of the most naturally rich agricultural areas in the world, famous for its abundant beef, slum dwellers have been reduced to eating cats and turtles to survive. After the "cat scandal" broke a few weeks ago, the Catholic Church issued harsh attacks on President Carlos Menem's austerity policies. Camdessus met with Menem, leaders of the Catholic Church, trade union leaders, and businessmen, praising to all the great "success story" of the Argentine model.

The IMF chief told the head of the CGT trade union confederation that Argentina must become more competitive to solve the problem of unemployment, demanding "more labor flexibility." CGT Secretary General Gerardo Martínez insisted after the meeting that "the ones who need to show more flexibility are the businessmen and the financial sector, not the workers."

During his press conference in Buenos Aires, Camdessus arrogantly stressed how pleased he was with President Menem's announced "second reform of the state" (which will virtually eliminate the Argentine Armed Forces as an institution), and demanded strict compliance with the reform. When asked by one reporter whether he had discussed privatizing the state-owned Banco de la Nación, in his talks with President Menem, Camdessus said they hadn't talked about it, but added that "there are no sacred cows" in the privatization plan. (Banco de la Nación was founded in 1891 by nationalist President Carlos Pellegrini, to counter British control of Argentine finances.) Another reporter, taken aback by the IMF director's arrogance, asked him with what right he spoke so cavalierly about internal matters affecting Argentine sover-

eignty. Camdessus replied haughtily, "We've lent this country \$9 billion . . . we have a right to express our opinion."

An 'exploiting villain'

Camdessus praised the great "reactivation of the Argentine economy, and savored his total power over the current government, remembering that when he first came to impose supranational dictates on Argentina in 1982, he was treated like an "exploiting villain."

His demeanor was clearly upset by the implication that there might be something morally wrong with the genocidal conditions the IMF has imposed, or that there might be any alternative to the current austerity. Asked during the press conference whether there were "solutions to all economic problems," Camdessus replied, "Thank God, no one has found a solution to all problems. Those who say they have, are lying. What we have discovered is that there is an enormous consensus in the world on how to manage economies." This response was an attack on U.S. Presidential candidate and economist Lyndon LaRouche's program for replacing the IMF and the current usury and speculation-based economic system, with one based on the growth of the physical economy and the well-being of the labor force.

Camdessus seems unhappy with the LaRouche movement's years-long campaign to demonstrate that the IMF is causing the deaths of millions—and that those responsible are as guilty as the Nazis hung in Nuremberg. Camdessus, who professes to be a most holy Roman Catholic, pretends that the policies demanded by the IMF do not conflict with the social doctrine of the church.

But only a month before Camdessus's tour, on April 19, Mexico's Cardinal Juan Sandoval cited Pope John Paul II's Apostolic letter, "Toward the Second Jubilee": "It would be good," the cardinal said, "if the powerful nations and international financial institutions were to relent, and stop strangling the poor countries. Taking as an example what happened in the Old Testament, in this year 2000, which is the Great Jubilee, there should be forgiveness of debts." The same week, the head of the Brazilian Bishops Council, Cardinal Lucas Moreira Neves, reiterated the Holy Father's call for pardon of the poor nations' debts. "Part of these debts are immoral,"

he said, “and should not be paid.”

On April 16, Mexico’s Catholic Bishops presented Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo with a copy of the Catholic Church’s Pastoral Plan 1996-2000. The document describes the impoverishment that has been caused by the neo-liberal, i.e., free trade, economic program—designed by the IMF. “Alternative economic models are needed,” the Pastoral Plan states, “which take into account the inalienable dignity of each person, the ethical values of society.” On May 7, Archbishop Oscar Rodríguez Maradiaga, president of the Latin American Bishops Council (CELAM), reiterated that “it is a scientific error, a hoax, to present the market economy or savage capitalism, as the only development alternative for Latin America.”

Mont Pelerin fascists

The strength of the Catholic Church’s calls to end the genocidal policies of the IMF are being diluted inside the church, particularly by the Mont Pelerin Society.

Gary Becker, the 1992 Nobel Prize winner in Economics and a longtime member of the fascist Mont Pelerin Society, managed to wrangle an invitation as a speaker at the Third International Forum on “The Dignity of Life and the Family in the Politics and Legislation of America.” Held in Mexico City on June 6-9, the conference was sponsored by the Vatican’s Pontifical Commission on the Family.

Becker’s infiltration into the Catholic Church is dangerous. Like other pseudo-Catholics, such as Michael Novak or Camdessus, Becker uses his “Roman Catholicism” as a cover to promote the policies of free-market usury, more appropriately known as the social doctrine of Satan. Camdessus, for example, frequently boasts of his close friendship with Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Vatican’s Justice and Peace Commission.

Becker has spent almost his entire career at the University of Chicago, alma mater of many of the other fascists of the Mont Pelerin Society. Like another economic quack, Milton Friedman, Becker also proposes drug legalization, and opposes the minimum wage.

Becker: Mexico needs more usury

Speaking at a Mexico City press conference on June 9, Becker took pains to explain that economic liberalism “has not caused poverty in Mexico.” Rather, he said, increased poverty is the result of “misguided policies,” such as a strong state role in economic policy. In an interview with *El Financiero* on June 10, Becker argued that for Mexico to get out of its current crisis, it must “maintain a free float [of the peso] without interference from the Central Bank, or peg the peso to a strong currency, such as the dollar, as Argentina has done successfully in establishing a currency board.” Mexico’s state oil firm, Pemex, and other state-owned companies should be privatized as part of a broader liberalization plan, Becker said.

Becker also said that he found no “basic conflict between the teachings of the church and economic liberalism.” Such statements are similar to ones made by Camdessus and Novak. They serve a double purpose: first, to impose a genocidal economic policy; and, second, to try to make people believe that there is no difference between the British colonial doctrine of free trade, based on the bestial philosophy of Anglo-Dutch oligarch Bernard de Mandeville, and the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, whose fundamental premise is that man is created in the image of God.

Camdessus on the defensive

Camdessus refused to take a question from *EIR* correspondent Gerardo Terán in Buenos Aires, but in Lima, Peru, he was not so lucky.

During a May 31 news conference there to announce the terms of the IMF letter of intent negotiated with Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, *EIR* correspondent Sara Madaueño asked the first question about the devastation Russia is facing as a result of the IMF’s reforms. “Does this not call into question all the prescriptions made by the IMF?” she asked.

“The beginning of any reform phenomena starts with disorder,” Camdessus claimed. He insisted that questions focus on Peru, but the next journalist asked: “You sent a letter to President Fujimori demanding that Peru pay its debt to Russia. What gives you the right to engage in that sort of pressuring?”

“You have friends, and you can write letters to your friends, is that not true?” Camdessus retorted.

Questions followed on why the IMF is insisting that Peru pay to Russia, in dollars, the debts it incurred in rubles with the former Soviet Union. Distracted and flustered, Camdessus forgot where he was. “Well, here in Mexico. . . . Excuse me, in Peru.” The colonies all look alike?

Venezuela bows

To great fanfare, and with national radio and television coverage, Camdessus descended on Caracas to receive a “memo of understanding” from Venezuelan President Rafael Caldera, who had unsuccessfully battled IMF dictates for two years. Although the memo is just an agreement with the IMF that Venezuela will sign a “letter of intent” with the Fund by month’s end, the ceremony was conducted with great pomp in a room of the Presidential Palace usually reserved for visiting heads of state. Camdessus’s trip to Caracas to receive the memo from Finance Minister Matos Azócar was highly unusual, and left Caldera standing at the ceremony as a witness to the act of submission.

Camdessus told reporters, “There will be no backpeddling” in applying the IMF program. “That is something that the international community is going to support.”

Answering a question on the legacy of poverty left by “orthodox adjustments,” Camdessus insisted that the IMF’s program was not neo-liberal in any way. “I don’t see inhumanity in the IMF model,” he concluded.