

Report from Rio by Silvia Palacios

Itamaraty's anti-Funaro intrigues

Will the Brazilian Foreign Ministry once again sabotage national sovereignty and continental integration?

A faction of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, Itamaraty, represented by Ambassador Rubens Ricupero, an international affairs adviser to President José Sarney, has dreamed up every step of the campaign to dump Finance Minister Dilson Funaro and replace him with an ally of the creditor banks. While President Sarney and his finance minister are vigorously defending the national sovereignty and self-interest of "Brazilian grandeur," resisting enormous international pressures, Ricupero and his band are carrying out guerrilla warfare against them.

For his passion for Marxism and for being one of Itamaraty's experts on U.S. politics, Ricupero could be considered Brazil's "Arbatov"; he is the promoter of the trade and cultural openings to the Soviet Union, a task for which he can count on such allies as Helio Jaguaribe, the only Brazilian in the Club of Rome, and Cândido Mendez.

The latter, a "practicing Catholic" like Ricupero (but pretty distant from the Vatican's formulations on the debt), organized a symposium last year to which he invited jurists from the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., to hear suggestions for the new Constitution being discussed for Brazil.

Besides fomenting the pro-Soviet policy, Ricupero is working to boycott serious efforts at integrating the Ibero-American countries that could lead to creation of a New International Economic Order. He has systematically stated that on the foreign debt question, "the problem is for each

try"; this explains why, at the timid meeting of the eight Ibero-American foreign ministers from the Contadora Group and its Support Group, held in Barioloché, Argentina, the Itamaraty apparat refused to approve holding a continental meeting, as proposed by Mexico and Peru.

For these reasons, the Brazilian press, which is hostile to the debt moratorium Brazil declared on Feb. 20, has been playing up Ricupero. His name was raised to become presidential chief of staff, an important cabinet position, before the current chief, Marcos Maciel, stepped down. The leader of the Liberal Front Party (PFL) in the House of Deputies, the obscure José Lourenzo, publicly asked for Ricupero to be nominated; he also asked for Funaro's head and for Brazil's reentry into the International Monetary Fund.

Interviewed in the magazine *Veja* on April 8, while he was attacking Funaro and demanding his replacement by a minister "with good contacts with the bankers," he lauded Gorbachov and Albania as representing "civilized Marxism."

Before the U.S. State Department, through U.S. Information Agency director Charles Wick and the "O Globo" TV channel which belongs to tycoon Roberto Marinho, launched their international campaign to denigrate Funaro, Ricupero had already moved his domestic pawns. It was he, together with businessman Matias Machline, who owns Sharp of Brazil, who organized the businessmen's meeting in São Paulo with President

Sarney, outside the Government Palace; this started the first wave of rumors about Funaro's imminent demise.

Ricupero's Itamaraty faction has centered its efforts on putting an international financiers' puppet into the Finance Ministry, who will turn the moratorium into a cadaver or a mere bargaining chip with the banks. One of their favorites is Brazil's Ambassador to the United States, banker Marcilio Marques Moreira, a Unibanco shareholder and partner of David Rockefeller, who is very stuck on the globalist financial reorganization schemes of the Trilateral Commission. On March 21 he attended a Trilateral Commission meeting in California, alongside a group of bankers and the Peruvian writer, Mario Vargas Llosa. Helping the ambassador is veteran Itamaraty diplomat Walter Moreira Sales, the top shareholder of Unibanco who has been the connection between the Brazilian oligarchy and the U.S. Eastern Establishment for decades.

In the domestic factional brawl, this crowd has already been denounced. On April 21 an influential columnist of *Jornal do Brasil* revealed that in the remote possibility Funaro were replaced, "under no hypothesis" should he be replaced by a banker—starting "with Ambassador Marcilio Marques."

Yet, the Ricupero faction continues to have full powers, and is pledged to keeping the moratorium from being extended into a continent-wide political action. It remains to be seen whether the intrigues will culminate like the old story of the "ABC" integration accord among Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, signed by Brazil's Getulio Vargas and Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón during the decade of the 1950s. Itamaraty boycotted it, thus causing its failure.