

The ALBA and Copenhagen

The festivities associated to the 7th ALBA Summit, held in the historic Bolivian region of Cochabamba, showed the rich culture of the Latin American peoples and the joy elicited in children, young people and adults in general by the singing, the dancing, the costumes and rich expressions of the human beings of all ethnic groups, colors and shades: aborigine, black, white and mixed people. We could see there thousands of years of human history and precious culture that explain the determination with which the leaders of various Caribbean, Central and South American peoples convened that summit.

The meeting was a great success. Bolivia was the venue. I recently wrote on the excellent prospects of that country, an heir to the Aymara-Quechua culture. A small group of peoples from that area are bent on proving that a better world is possible. The ALBA –created by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba, inspired by Bolivar’s and Marti’s ideas, as an unprecedented example of revolutionary solidarity—has showed how much could be done in barely five years of peaceful cooperation. This started shortly after Hugo Chavez political and democratic victory. Imperialism underestimated him, and deliberately tried to oust him and remove him. The fact that for a good part of the 20th century Venezuela had been the world’s largest oil-producer, practically owned by the Yankee transnationals, made the chosen path particularly rough to pursue.

The powerful adversary had neoliberalism and the FTAA; two instruments of domination always used after the Cuban Revolution to crush every resistance in the hemisphere.

It is irritating to think of the shameless and disrespectful way in which the US administration imposed the government of millionaire Pedro Carmona and tried to have elected President Hugo Chavez removed, at a time when the USSR had disappeared and the People’s Republic of China was a few years away from becoming the economic and commercial power it is today, after two decades of over 10% growth. The Venezuelan people, like that of Cuba, resisted the brutal thrust. The Sandinistas recovered, and the struggle for sovereignty, independence and socialism gained ground in Bolivia and Ecuador. Honduras, which had joined the ALBA, was the target of a brutal coup d’état inspired by the Yankee ambassador and propelled from the US military base in Palmerola.

Today, there are four Latin American countries that have completely eradicated illiteracy: Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua. The fifth country, Ecuador, is quickly advancing towards that goal. The comprehensive healthcare programs are underway in the five countries at an unprecedented pace in the Third World. The programs of economic development with social justice have become projects of these five states, which already enjoy great prestige in the world for their brave position in the face of the empire’s economic, military and media power. Three English speaking Caribbean countries of black ancestry, determined to fight for their development, have also joined the ALBA.

This alone would be a great political merit if in today’s world that were the only big problem of man’s history.

The economic and political system that in a short historical period has led to the existence of more than one billion hungry people, and many more hundreds of millions whose lives are hardly longer than half the average of those in the wealthy and privileged countries, was until now the main problem for mankind.

But, a new and extremely serious problem was strongly discussed at the ALBA Summit: climate change. A danger of such magnitude had never been known in human history.

As Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales and Daniel Ortega waved the people goodbye in the streets of

Cochabamba yesterday, Sunday, that same day, according to news spread by BBC World, Gordon Brown was chairing in London a session of the Major Economies Forum mostly made up by the highest developed capitalist countries, the main culprits for the carbon dioxide emissions, that is, the gas causing the greenhouse effect.

The significance of Brown's remarks is that they have not been made by a representative of ALBA or one of the 150 emerging or underdeveloped countries on the planet but of Great Britain, the country where industrial development started and one of those which have released more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The British Prime Minister warned that if an agreement is not reached at the UN Summit in Copenhagen, the consequences will be 'devastating.'

Some of the 'catastrophic' consequences would be floods, droughts and lethal heat waves claimed the environmental group Nature World Fund referring to Brown's assertion. "The climate change will be out of control within the next five to ten years if the CO2 emissions are not drastically cut down. There will not be a plan B if Copenhagen fails."

The same news source claims that: "BBC specialist James Landale has explained that not everything is happening as expected."

Newsweek reported that "it seems more unlikely every day that the states will commit to something in Copenhagen."

According to reports from the major American press outlet, the chairman of the session, Gordon Brown, said that "if no agreement is reached, there is no doubt that the damage of the uncontrolled emissions will not be repaired with a future agreement." He then went on to mention such conflicts as "unchecked migration and 1.8 billion people afflicted by water shortage."

Actually, as the Cuban delegation claimed in Bangkok, the United States led the highest industrialized countries most opposed to the necessary reduction of emissions.

At the Cochabamba meeting, a new ALBA Summit was convened. The timetable will be: December 6, elections in Bolivia; December 13, ALBA summit in Havana; December 16, participation in the UN Copenhagen Summit. The small group of ALBA nations will be there. The issue is no longer "Homeland or Death"; it is truly and without exaggeration a matter of "Life or Death" for the human race.

The capitalist system is not only oppressing and plundering our countries; the wealthiest industrial nations wish to impose to the rest of the world the bulk of the burden in the struggle on climate change. Who are they trying to fool with that? In Copenhagen, the ALBA and the Third World countries will be struggling for the survival of the species.

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