

# third world

*The Economy*  
*Brass-Knuckle*  
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*An Encouraging Accord*

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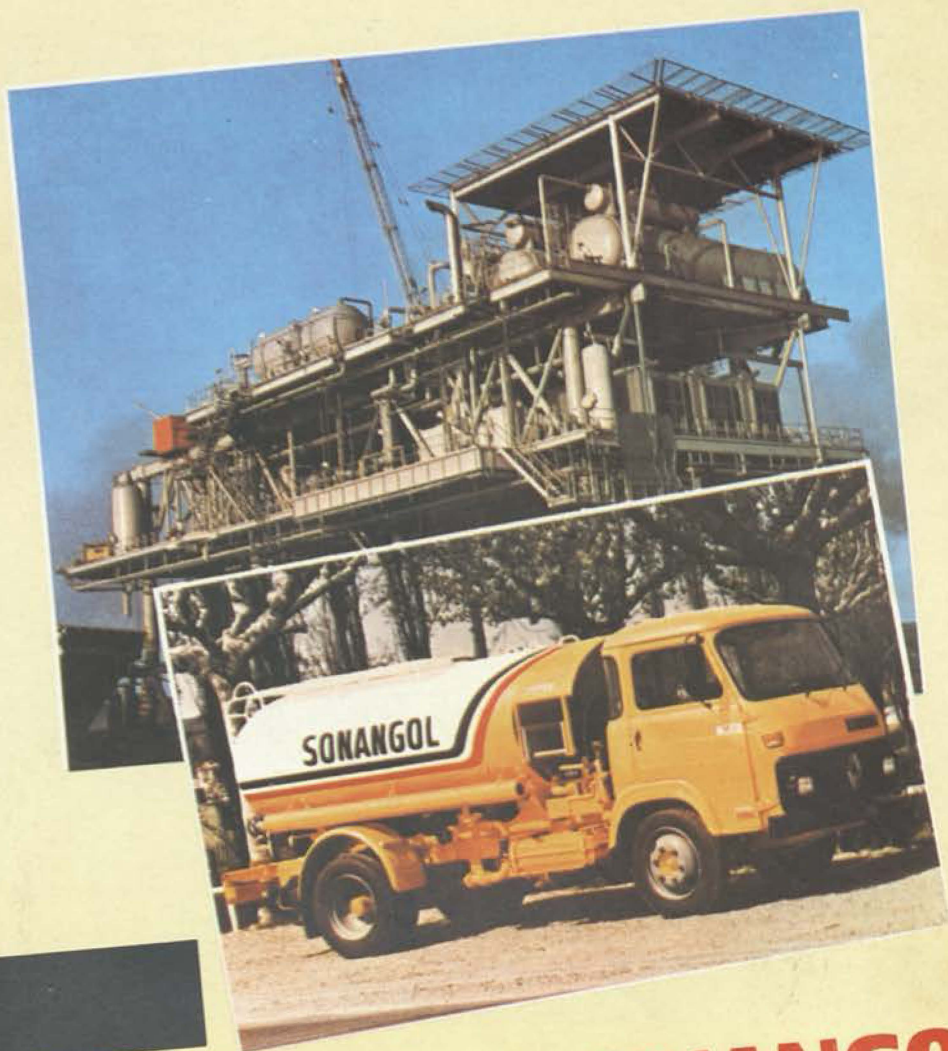


## An Oasis of Hope

## PEACE IN WESTERN SAHARA?



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## TO THE READER

## Some Good News

**G**ood news is sometimes hard to uncover these days. Our most recent cover stories, on Brazilian racism and on post-Duvalier Duvalierism in Haiti, highlight this problem. Our readers may be asking, "Why don't you write about something positive?"

We would like to call these readers' attention to some of our major stories in this issue. At first glance, our cover story, on Western Sahara, may appear to be one of those articles about the uphill battle of an occupied people. Before they had a chance to recover from Spanish colonialism, the people of Western Sahara were sent reeling by the 1976 Moroccan invasion. Refugees fled in droves from the Moroccan bombing raids, and most of them settled in Algerian territory.

After more than a decade, one might expect to find a setting similar to that in the Palestinian refugee camps - sometimes referred to as Middle Eastern Sowetos. However, as two of our reporters point out, Saharan refugee camps are akin to well-oiled mini-states, where an atmosphere of guarded optimism seems to predominate. Saharans' hopes for a return to their homeland were recently fueled by the rapprochement between Algeria and Morocco, which could potentially open doors to negotiations between the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front, representing the Saharan people. Successful talks would be a prelude to a plebiscite called for by both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Meanwhile, more concrete steps are being taken to end another African conflict - that of southern Africa. As our story points out, it may be a coincidence that all four parties to the talks - Angola, South Africa, Cuba and the United States - are willing to sit down at this time. But a preliminary agreement reached in June increases the possibility that the countries will capitalize on this opportunity. The final peace treaty should solve two of the region's most pressing problems: security for Angola, which will among other things allow that country to use more of its resources to address the needs of its population, and independence for Namibia.

We at *third world* take heart in these developments. While not earth-shattering, they are moves in the right direction. We will be pleased if we need to report on similar events in the future.

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## LETTERS

### Credit where credit's not due

In the *third world* magazine of September/October 1987, there was a feature entitled "The Eighth Day of Creation" (on page 55), by Susan George.

I would like to point out that there has been a mistake — the feature was produced by APPEN and not Susan George. We had used a quote from Susan George at the start of the feature, that is why her name was at the top of the first page of the dispatch. In any case, it is not a problem with us at all.

With best wishes.

**Karen Oon**  
for SAHABAT ALAM MALAYSIA

### Contact for African Music I

Black resistance had an important expression in music. Therefore, the *Centro de Estudos da Cultura Negra* de Vitória, Brazil, is organizing a show of music of African origin, from which we intend to select eight songs to be recorded on an LP. In order to make contact with black musical groups doing similar work outside Brazil, we are asking you to publish our address. This support would be very helpful.

**Centro de Estudos da Cultura Negra**  
Caixa Postal 2363  
Vitória, ES  
Brazil

### Contact for African Music II

Please publish my name and address. I

am interested in exchanging records, tapes, books and magazines with your readers in Africa and other parts of the *Third World*. I can send similar material from Brazil.

**Gildo Andrade Simões**  
Brazilian Fan Club of African Music  
Rua C 211  
Jardim Sto. Antonio — Atalaia  
Aracaju, Sergipe — CEP 49000  
Brazil

### East Timor

I would like to suggest that you do a complete report on the current situation in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor. It's been a long time since you've published anything on the topic, about which I became interested when I learned about the heroic and unequal struggle being waged by the Timor National Liberation Front for liberty and autonomy for its people, dominated by the Indonesian imperialists.

**José Salvador A. Neto**  
Brasília, Brazil

Readers, please address your letters to:

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Due to space limitations, we reserve the right to condense letters for publication.

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Savimbi (right) with Ronald Reagan

## ANGOLA:

# Savimbi with His Foot in His Mouth

Uncovered secret documents present damaging evidence regarding the intentions of Jonas Malheiro Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the Angolan counterrevolutionary force.

Although it is true, as Savimbi claims, that UNITA waged a clandestine war during the independence struggle, it was actually doing battle with the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and not with the Portuguese colonialists, according to documents obtained by Western secret service agencies following the military coup that overthrew the dictatorship of Marcelo Caetano in Portugal. Correspondence between Savimbi and Portuguese military authorities indicate that UNITA was effectively allied with Portugal since at least 1972.

The evidence, which contradicts Savimbi's claims that his group is fighting for Angolan independence, was published in the book, *Dirty Work: The CIA in Africa*, published by Zed Press in Lon-

don, United Kingdom. In addition to the revelations about Savimbi, the book provides an in-depth analysis of the Angolan conflict and the intervention of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency between 1974 and 1976.

In a letter dated September 26, 1972, addressed to Luz Cunha, commander-in-chief of the Portuguese forces in Angola, Savimbi referred to the MPLA as "our common enemy." This contradicts recent statements by the UNITA leader, who has said that he played a greater role in the struggle for independence than current Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos. In the 1972 letter, Savimbi informed Luz Cunha that UNITA was not only battling the MPLA in Angola but was also spying on its activities in Zambia.

The lack of military coordination between UNITA and the Portuguese colonial troops led to clashes between the secret allies, which was of great concern to Savimbi, who had ordered his men to never fire on Portuguese troops.

## SOUTH AFRICA:

# Internal Bantustans

After resorting to a state of emergency, arrests and restrictions to silence its opponents, the government of South Africa intends to create Regional Legislative Councils outside the nominally independent black territories, known as Bantustans or homelands. According to apartheid spokespersons, these councils are will grant "self-govern-

ment and persons of mixed-race descent).

President P.W. Botha will determine the number of members on each council and will appoint the president according to his or her support in the legislative council. The term in office of councillors will be five years.

The announcement of the measure was made on the heels of the adoption of a law creating a National Multiracial Council. This council will also be composed of so-called moderates from the Bantustans, the urban municipal councils, and the tricameral parliament.



P.W. Botha

ment" to black South Africans.

The initiative is designed to attract so-called moderate blacks. According to Chris Heunis, minister of Constitutional Affairs, the law will establish legislative councils and executive bodies, giving black South Africans authority over "their own affairs." These affairs include education, local government, housing, city planning and community development, explained the minister. Besides being able to pass their own laws, the bodies will theoretically have the power to amend or revoke legislation passed by the tricameral legislature (consisting of whites, persons of Indian

## MOZAMBIQUE:

# Radiant Milk

Mozambican health authorities decided to suspend the distribution of about 45 tons of powdered milk donated by the European Economic Community (EEC), saying that it contained excessive levels of radioactivity.

A document released by the Mozambican Red Cross contains the results of tests done on the milk, sent to Italy for analysis after several persons complained of intestinal disorders after consuming the product. The Italian laboratories detected a high level of radioactivity in the milk, prompting the ban by health authorities in the southern African country.

EEC experts will be sent to Mozambique to run their own tests on the milk, which will be stored in a secure area away from other food products, according to the Mozambican Health Ministry.



TANZANIA:

# Drought, Debt and Growth

Tanzania's efforts in the last few years to rejuvenate its economy seem to be paying dividends, although further development may be hampered by the weather and external dependence.

Scarce rainfall, with intervals of drought during this year's harvest, will mean a decrease in the amount of grains produced and a drastic reduction in the country's import capacity.

These figures came to light during the approval process for the national budget for the 1988-89 fiscal year, which began in July. During the presentation of the budget to parliament,



Tanzania: advances in the face of adversity

Cleopa Msuya, minister of the Treasury, Economy and Planning, said that long-term Tanzanian economic prosperity will depend on the country's ability to earn foreign exchange by increasing exports.

The minister observed that the economic recovery

program – in its third year – concentrated on food production and cash crops for export, the improvement of infrastructure for productive activities and a more efficient use of the country's industrial potential.

Despite hardships like the drought, the depressed in-

ternational markets for raw materials, the reduction in foreign exchange earned through export, and the increase in the cost of servicing the foreign debt, Tanzania experienced economic growth rates of 3.6 percent in 1986 and 3.9 percent in 1987.

COSTA RICA:

# "And Now Promenade..."

Undaunted by the oppressive heat and the suffocating humidity of the lush Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, black couples perform dances characteristic of the British Court during the Renaissance.

It is not uncommon to find houses in the coastal region that prominently display a picture of the Queen of England and the royal family. The black population of Costa Rica speaks a version of English that retains an Oxford accent, and people's names and surnames have a distinctly British

flavor to them.

When they do the square dance, gentlemen dress in tuxedos or dark suits, while ladies sport long dresses and hats. Preferably, both wear white gloves.

That's how it is in the Atlantic Coast province of Limón. At birthday parties, baptisms, and anniversaries, the call rings out: "Through and through, well, ladies chain, gentlemen chain and promenade..."

The square dance has its roots in the aristocratic English ballroom dances, and after enjoying 200 years

of life under the names Country Dance Round and Country Dance Longways, it began to influence dance steps in 17th century France. On the continent, French dance teachers introduced several of their own modifications.

Slaves of African origin learned the dance from their British masters in Jamaica. The geometric dance with its distinctive cadence was adopted in a process of cultural assimilation. When blacks arrived on the Costa Rican coast at the end of the 19th century, they brought along this rich cultural baggage.

Costa Rican anthropologist Floria Alvarez Mata discovered that the square

dance as practiced on the Caribbean coast has steps described in a work by John Playford, published in 1650 under the title *The English Master or Directions for Country Dance*. The steps include the sociable, the corkscrew, the contradance, the Sir Rogers, British Lancers, the Prince Imperial, Saratoga lancers, the royal lancer and the basket *cotillón*.

"Due to racial prejudice and cultural arrogance, the real tradition of the square dance remains obscure," said the anthropologist. "However, my research has allowed me to demonstrate the process of cultural assimilation that has preserved this distinctive dance over several centuries."



## ARGENTINA:

**"We Want the Airwaves"**

Somewhere between 300 and 600 low-potential FM radio stations are operating illegally inside Argentina – bringing about what some are calling "the democratization of the airwaves."

Following a process similar to that taking place in Italy and, closer to home, in Brazil, small broadcasters have flourished since the end of the military dictatorship in December 1983. A communications law, passed during the military regime in

1980 and still in force, prohibits the operation of what law enforcement officers have called clandestine stations. Owners of legally registered stations are demanding the closing of these clandestine operations and the confiscation of their broadcasting equipment.

The government and political leaders have not shown much interest in enforcing the ban and have moved in only a handful of cases. The Association of

Community Radio Stations defends the legal standing of the broadcasters, arguing that they are not operating illegally but rather are "occupying a space not anticipated by the law."

There is no single reason to explain the upsurge in such radio stations. Some were founded to serve the interests of a particular community – such as rural areas isolated from the rest of the country or stations located in urban neighborhoods that address the needs of an area several blocks wide. There are also overtly political stations, organized and financed by groups or party leaders, including even the major Radical and Peronist

parties.

There is no lack of young amateurs in search of adventure, with dreams of being disc-jockies, who put together a few *australes* and mount, piece by piece, a transmitter. Finally, there are those who are in it for the money, selling advertising like regular commercial stations.

The different motivations show through in the type of programming on these alternative stations. Some vary little from the normal commercial fare. Others, defining themselves as community or popular stations, attempt to use their microphones as instruments in the service of the people.

## SMOKING:

**The Killer Weed**

A growth product in the Third World

Tobacco smoking now kills nearly 2.5 million people each year, according to the Washington, D.C.-based research group Worldwatch. Smoking outranks such notorious killers as AIDS, automobile accidents, famine, war and terrorism.

The victims of tobacco die mostly from heart disease, lung cancer and emphysema. In the United States alone, where the tobacco industry is worth US\$35 billion, between 350,000 and 500,000 die prematurely each year of tobacco-related ailments. This is approximately 1,000 deaths per day – the equivalent of casualties from three jumbo jet crashes daily.

Cigarette smoking has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global epidemic. It is growing at the rate of 2.1 percent per year, faster than the world's population.

For nearly 450 years, tobacco has been part of the world's culture and eco-

nomy. It is now cultivated in 120 countries, but approximately 40 percent of the world's cigarettes are produced by four transnational companies – Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds, British-American Tobacco Industries, and the German Federal Republic's Ruperts/Rothmans, partially owned by Philip Morris. The remaining 60 percent are produced by state monopolies in China, Japan, the Soviet Union, France, Italy and Eastern Europe.

Although a deadly business, tobacco is still one of the world's most profitable industries. Ten years ago it was already earning over US\$40 billion worldwide from annual sales of four trillion cigarettes, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Tragically, the smoking epidemic is on the rise – over a billion people now smoke, consuming almost five trillion cigarettes per



## PANORAMA

year at an average of more than half a pack a day. About 73 percent more tobacco is consumed now than 20 years ago. Without a sudden drop in smoking, lung cancer deaths, for example, will almost certainly increase by 50 percent by the turn of the century. Many of these deaths will occur in nations totally unprepared to deal with them. Most hardhit will be Third World nations, which account for 54 percent of the world's population.

Today, Third World smokers consume about 25 percent of the world's tobacco. Yet, they accounted for nearly one third of the global increase in tobacco consumption over the past 10 years.

Halfdan Mahler, director-general of WHO, said that tobacco consumption was declining by 1.1 percent a year in industrialized nations and increasing by 2.1 percent in the South. "The tobacco promoters seem determined to turn developing countries into their biggest market," he said.

The growing antismoking crusade and strict tobacco control laws in industrialized countries have compelled

tobacco companies to seek new markets, particularly in Asia. They target mainly young people and women—the latter traditionally being nonsmokers in many Asian countries.

"The industry plans to create demand among Oriental females," said Gregory N. Connolly, a WHO adviser. "If you have one billion Oriental females who don't smoke as a market, that would more than replace the quitters in Western Europe and North America."

U.S. tobacco companies first shipped tobacco to the Third World after World War II, under the Food for Peace program. In the first 25 years of the program, the U.S. exported almost US\$1 billion worth of tobacco.

"A real epidemic of lung cancer" will be the result of the rise in smoking in the Third World, according to Dr. Roberto Masironi, coordinator of the WHO program on smoking and health based in Geneva, Switzerland. He fears that the current 600,000 new cases of lung cancer reported worldwide could rise to two million by the year 2000. — **Lourdes B. Abulencia** — TWN/PNF.



Lines at the bank: thanks to the sanctions

## PANAMA:

### "It's Not Your Fight"

"Don't dirty your hands in this conflict which doesn't belong to you." So went the appeal made by hundreds of Panamanian women to Puerto Rican soldiers serving in the United States military.

The plea, signed by women from various professions and social sectors, went on to say: "Puerto Ricans, don't fool yourselves. Here, there are no seeds of communism, nor of drugs. Panama is simply a country that wants to determine its own destiny."

Approximately 50,000 Panamanians have lost their jobs as a result of the economic sanctions applied by the U.S. in March, according

to Mario Rognoni, minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of Labor César Martans. Martans said that there were 18,078 layoffs, but added that the total increase in unemployment since the imposition of the sanctions is 47,294.

These new recruits to the army of unemployed, added to the 89,371 already officially without work at the end of 1987, increased the unemployment rate to 17.2 percent.

Business sources indicate that when the real figure of new unemployed between March and June is calculated, it could reach 75,000—putting the unemployment rate over 20 percent.

posed fraudulent judicial decisions made in favor of individuals sympathetic to ex-dictator Duvalier. The decisions resulted in the diversion of US\$120 million. The ensuing scandal forced Manigat to fire two judges and a public employee.

Christian Democratic leader Sylvio Claude denounced the assassination, saying it demonstrates "that the army feels secure enough to kill opposition leaders."

## HAITI:

### Human Rights Leader Murdered

Haitian human rights leader Lafontant Joseph was murdered in July, allegedly by individuals linked to the government of General

Henri Namphy, who retook power in a June coup that overthrew President Leslie Manigat, who had assumed office four months earlier.

The Haitian Human Rights Center called the assassination "a clear threat to all members of human rights organizations," that "contradicts the promises made by the military government to respect civil rights." Labor and opposition groups condemned the crime, while the government maintained of-

ficial silence.

Joseph, a lawyer, had defended several opposition political figures during the provisional government under Namphy's direction, which ruled following the ouster of dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986. Joseph ran for a Senate seat on the slate of the National Front for Coordinated Action, a leftist coalition, in the aborted November 1987 elections.

In March, Joseph ex-



# OCCUPATION AND EXILE

By Toby Shelley\*

**F**our massive tent camps lie in the inhospitable desert to the west of the southern Algerian town of Tindouf. The 167,000 inhabitants are refugees from one of Africa's smaller and less publicized wars. They are Saharawis, the people of the Western Sahara who fled the Moroccan troops and aircraft which swept into their homeland in 1976, after the withdrawal of Spanish colonial troops.

Handi and Zahra remember their flight. Handi was nine when Moudragga and Amgal were bombed, and he and his parents abandoned their shop in the Atlantic fishing port of Boujadour, fleeing empty-handed, on foot, to a transit camp. When this refuge was bombarded with napalm and phosphorous bombs, they walked and begged rides until they reached a stretch of barren land ceded to the Saharawis by the Algerian government.

On the day Morocco invaded, Zahra was flying to the Canary Islands to take her school-leaving exams. When she heard the news she knew she could not return; she had distributed leaflets for the Polisario Front, the underground movement which opposed Spanish rule and now was taking up arms against the new invaders. The last she heard of her family was that her father had been arrested at the airport, waiting for her arrival. She is now a leading member of the Saharawi women's organization.

What was once a flood of refugees has dwindled to a trickle. The 50,000 Saharawis who remain in Moroccan-occupied territories suffer persecution and discrimination at the hands of the foreign administrators, their security forces and 100,000 Moroccan settlers. Fadli Sa'id was among 16 Saharawis who escaped through enemy lines earlier this year. She left behind four children



**Spanish colonialism was followed by Moroccan occupation. In their homeland and from exile, the traditionally nomadic Saharawi people continue their quest for independence**

in a Moroccan boarding school; in compensation, she was reunited with a brother she had not seen for 12 years and is now free to speak her language and live as a Saharawi.

## In the occupied territories

Fadli described the conditions in the occupied territories: Saharawi houses and livestock stolen by settlers, many of whom are impoverished peasants from southern Morocco, attracted by government grants but without sufficient means to get by in the Western Sahara; Saharawi women afraid that their children will be beaten if left alone in the street; constant surveillance of many Saharawi men and undercover police and informers at family gatherings.

Whilst a U.N. mission to the region in 1975 was met by mass demonstrations, the scheduled visit last year by a joint delegation of representatives of the U.N. and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was preempted by Moroccan forces. A number of activists were detained and the Polisario Front claims that at least one died in prison.

But crude repression is but part of the story for Saharawis who remain in their homeland.

The massive Bou Craa phosphate mines which once employed 3,200 Saharawi workers, now provide jobs for only 500—who receive lower wages than they received under Spanish colonial rule, according to Mohamed Touhammi, deputy leader of the Saharawi trade union federation. He maintains that union members were the first to be sacked and that unemployment and low pay mean that many families in the occupied territories depend on secret



handouts from Saharawi traders.

The stereotype of the demoralized, helpless refugee does not fit in the the Tindouf camps, now the base for the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) – declared by the Polisario Front amid the chaos in 1976. Far from depending on charity, Saharawi refugees have embarked on a path of self-reliance. Drawing on the Beduin skills of their recent past, they use or adapt everything. Camel herds provide transportation and limited amounts of meat, milk, and leather. Metal debris from the war is converted into parts for land rovers or ornate cooking utensils. Schools and hospitals have been built with handmade bricks by women, while

Each camp is well-organized (see the accompanying article, "A Mini-State.").

#### A dynamic culture

There is another factor contributing to cohesion in the refugee camps. The Saharawis are proud of their distinctive culture and do all they can to preserve it. This said, the process of preservation is not one which treats traditions as something to be preserved in a museum. Saharawi culture is seen as something alive and constantly developing, a help rather than a hindrance to social progress. Older Saharawi recount how under Spanish colonial rule their historic freedoms

teach literacy skills to their elders. In so doing, youngsters learn about their social history and maintain usage of the *hassaniya* dialect – which otherwise might be lost since the education system uses standard modern Arabic and Spanish.

The Saharawis recently celebrated the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Polisario Front. The occasion was

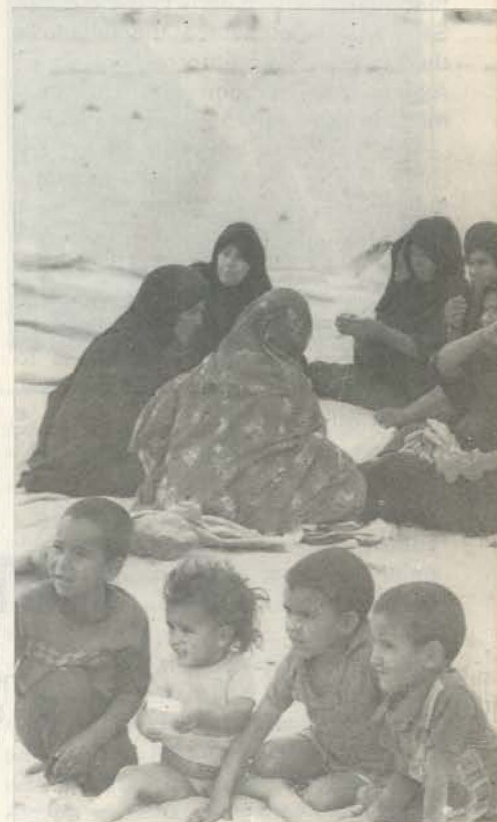


Contradicting the stereotype of the demoralized and helpless refugee

most men are fighting at the front. Workshops manufacture clothing, carpets, sandals and tents. Craftsmen are even able to repair automatic rifles, replacing damaged components with new ones, made without electrically-powered tools. Most impressive of all, in temperatures which reach 50 degrees centigrade, in a barren expanse of sand and rock, are vegetable plots. Currently amounting to some 300 hectares, the gardens provide nutrition for the old, very young, and sick. A new factory-farm, opened this year, produces 60,000 eggs per day.

Such organization cannot be imported from European relief agencies.

were eroded as the traditionally nomadic people were forced to settle in towns and women had no role outside the home. The equality between men and women today is not something new introduced by the Polisario Front, but an example of a revolution turning to the past for its inspiration. Similarly, Saharawis are conscious that their uncanny ability to navigate in the desert is a not a skill learned from charts and compasses but from their fathers and grandfathers. Herbal medicines continue to be produced and used as an important part of basic health care. The process of blending past into present and so maintaining a distinctive and functional cultural identity is particularly evident in the summer. During those months, older children on vacation



A sewing circle: self-reliance

marked by the customary parades and speeches, dancing and singing, but the ceremonies represented more than a simple morale-boosting bluster. Through guerrilla warfare and diplomacy, the SADR has made much headway. Mauritania, an early adversary, made its peace with the Saharawis; the fledgling state is recognized by 71 countries and is a full member of the OAU. The anniversary celebrations received envoys and messages of support from as far afield as India, Yugoslavia, and Cuba, revealing the extent of its support in the Non-Aligned Movement.

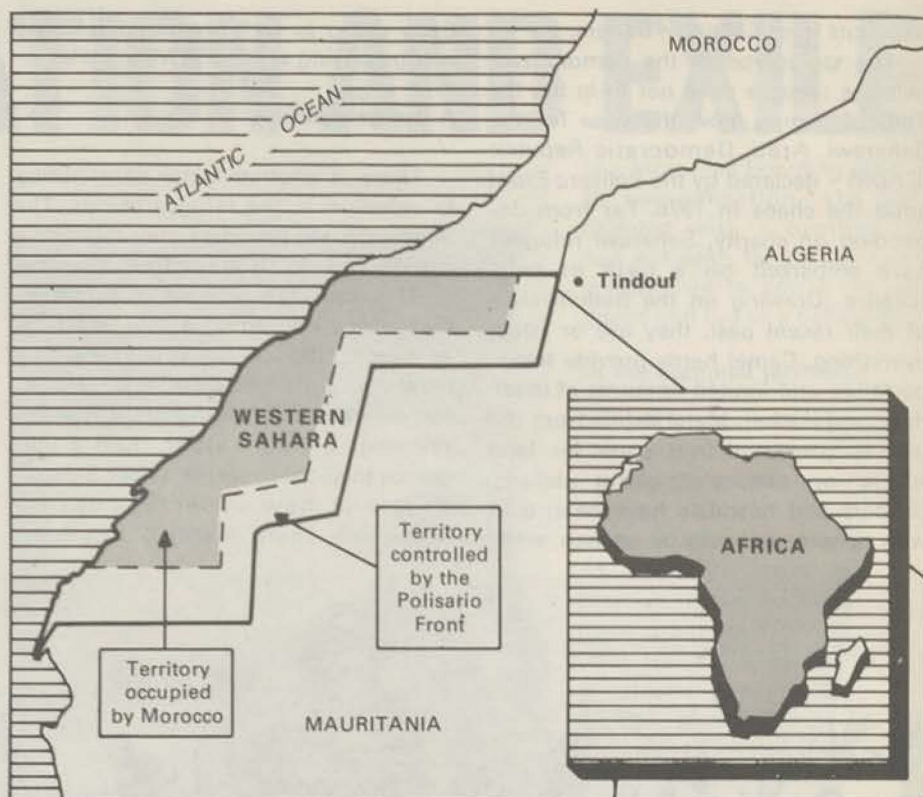
Suggestions that the Algerian-Moroccan rapprochement in May would

\* Toby Shelley is a British journalist who recently visited the Saharawi refugee camps.



spell doom for the SADR are brushed off by Polisario leaders. Mohammed Abdelaziz, president of the republic and secretary-general of the Polisario Front, welcomed the renewal of relations between the two countries, saying that it indicated that Morocco realized it could no longer pretend that the front was simply a band of Algerian bandits but that there is a third party to the Western Saharan conflict, namely the Saharawis themselves. The rapprochement placed Algeria in a position where it could mediate a solution to the war, he said.

But what hope does this offer to the children who know only exile or to old Sidi Mustafa who, mounted on his camel, first fought for Saharawi independence in the 1930s? The U.N. and the OAU support a proposed referendum to determine the future of the Western Sahara, but until Morocco agrees to direct negotiations with the Saharawis, the war will grind on.



## A Time for Negotiating

The reopening of relations between Algeria and Morocco lead to speculation regarding talks to end the conflict in northern Africa

By Cláudia Antunes\*

**T**he resumption of diplomatic relations between Algeria and Morocco in May changed the face of the North African political map and will bear directly on the independence struggle in Western Sahara, invaded by the Moroccan army in 1976. The rapprochement broke nearly 13 years of ice that has built up since the split created by Algeria's recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), founded in 1976 by the Polisario Front.

Echoing statements made by SADR President Mohammed Abdelaziz at the Saharan refugee camps in Tindouf, in southern Algeria, a high-ranking SADR



Mohammed Abdelaziz

official discarded the possibility of the withdrawal of Algerian support for the Polisario Front. He noted that the reopening of relations between Algiers and Rabat may help bring about negotiations between Morocco and the front.

"The next six months will be crucial for the Saharan struggle," added the official. "In the wake of joint efforts by the United Nations and the Organization for African Unity (OAU) - which last year sent a high-level commission to the conflict area - our relations with Morocco may now be defined more clearly. Our aim is to launch a diplomatic and military offensive that will accelerate moves toward a negotiated solution."

He went on to emphasize that "The decision to negotiate lies in the hands of



## COVER STORY

King Hassan II of Morocco. However, the current atmosphere of international détente makes it possible for Morocco to find an honorable solution to the conflict." He noted that an official statement in reaction to the rapprochement made by the United States, the major Moroccan arms supplier, "made specific mention of the need for a negotiated solution to the conflict in Western Sahara."

The first signs of diplomatic moves by the Polisario Front came in early June at the Arab summit in Algiers, when a letter signed by the SADR president was distributed to attending heads of state. While abstaining from any personal attacks on Hassan II, the letter condemned Morocco's "attempt to take over, at any cost, the role played in the past by Spanish colonialism in the region," and invited Arab authorities to reflect upon "the logic of advocating the Palestinians' right to self-government while denying the same right to the Western Saharan people."

### At stake: the plebiscite

As Abdelaziz emphasized in an interview at Tindouf, Morocco can no longer pretend that its conflict in Sahara is actually with Algeria. (Among other things, this argument overlooks the fact that the Saharans hold some 4,000 Moroccan prisoners of war.) Yet, Hassan II has failed to publicly state its willingness to negotiate.

High on the agenda for any talks between the Moroccan government and

Spokespersons for the United Nations announced in late July that U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was putting the final touches on a peace plan for Western Sahara. The plan was expected to be released in August.

According to the U.N. spokespersons, the recent reopening of relations between Morocco and Algeria set the stage for possible cease-fire negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front—as a prelude to a referendum on the future of the region.

The 12-year-old conflict is over a territory with an area of 305,000 square kilometers and just 200,000 inhabitants. It was occupied by Spain between 1884 and 1976, when it briefly won independence before being invaded by Morocco and Mauritania. Mauritania later withdrew from the conflict.

the Polisario Front would certainly be the groundrules of a plebiscite on Western Saharan self-determination, called for by several resolutions passed by both the U.N. and the OAU. Moroccan authorities have agreed in principle to a plebiscite but have refused to withdraw their troops and administrators from the Sahara—a necessary move if the elections are to be held in an atmosphere of freedom. Abdelaziz made clear the Polisario Front position: "There can be no plebiscite unless the Moroccan army, administrative personnel, and colonists withdraw." He added, however, that the front "is willing to turn over the territories to the U.N. and OAU, which

## The U.N. Plan



would set up a transitional administration that will allow for the holding of a free plebiscite."

Abdelaziz, speaking to the international press following a military parade at the Tindouf camps commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Polisario Front's first armed action, noted that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Morocco and Algeria was the result of "a change of attitude on the part of the Moroccan government. It was Morocco that broke relations with Algeria in 1976. Now they want these relations reestablished unconditionally, even though they know about the close relations between the Algerians and the Polisario Front."

"We believe," continued the SADR leader, "that Algeria's support of our struggle is irreversible, since it is based on the principle of the decolonization of Africa." He added, however, that the Moroccan government may be stalling for time. "If Hassan II really wants to solve the conflict, he will have to negotiate with us," he stated, reemphasizing the Polisario Front's intention to resist any Moroccan attempt to strengthen its hold on the Sahara.

Abdelaziz also said that he would



A Polisario victory: showing off a captured Moroccan tank

\* Cláudia Antunes is a reporter for the Brazilian newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* who recently visited northern Africa.



welcome an Algerian initiative to mediate between the Polisario Front and the Moroccans. "Dialogue between the parties is the surest way to achieve peace," he noted. He admitted the possibility of a ceasefire as soon as Hassan II agrees to sit down with SADR officials.

"Our resistance has put the Moroccans in a difficult position," he said. "Morocco has deployed 165,000 troops in Sahara and the war is costing them US\$5 million a day."

Since its founding in 1976, the SADR has scored a number of diplomatic victories and is now recognized by 71 countries. Most member countries of the U.N. are on record as favoring self-determination for Western Sahara. The SADR has been admitted as a full member of the OAU, a move which led to Morocco's withdrawal from the organization in 1984.

In Algeria, news of the rapprochement with Morocco met mixed reactions. The Algerians may have made the move for economic rather than political reasons. They are in the midst of a period of economic reform and privatization. Along with the other ex-colonies of northern African, they are jockeying for position in face of the 1990 changes in trade regulations in the European Economic Community: to maintain their independence the countries of the region must increase trade amongst themselves.

In urban areas, the announcement was generally greeted with approval – in part because many Algerians have relatives in Morocco whom they have been unable to visit. However, some Algerian intellectuals view the move with suspicion. "Only Morocco stands to benefit immediately from the reestablishment of diplomatic relations," said one Algerian journalist. "Hassan II has made no formal commitment in relation to the Polisario Front."

The coming months should reveal more about the chances for peace in the region. For one thing, Hassan II will probably be forced to clarify his position later this year when the United Nations and the OAU announce their recipes for peace based on a report prepared by a commission that visited the region. •

## A Mini-State

Far from a depressing outpost, the Saharawi's refugee camps are well-oiled models of an embryonic Western Saharan state



The camps: Spartan but well-organized

The level of organization achieved by the Polisario Front at the Tindouf refugee camps, with their 167,000 residents, provides a glimpse at what a Western Saharan state might look like.

In the inhospitable *hammada*, one of the most remote parts of the Sahara Desert, a people largely reliant on international aid has managed to create a miniature state in exile – using the principles of equality and participation as cornerstones. Crime is virtually nonexistent in the camps, where the *jaimas* (tents) are left unlocked. Everybody works in this cashless society, where private property is limited to tents, tools and utensils and the small herds of sheep and goats raised by some families.

The camps are divided into four *wilayas* (provinces) bearing the same poetic names of major Western Saharan cities: El Ayún (the Eyes), Smara (Dark Skinned), Djala (Doorway) and Ausserd

(a historic Berber name). Each *wilaya* is divided into five or six *dairas* (groups of tents), organized into five committees, each responsible for a specific area: health, education, production and supply, justice, and administration.

"We hold a People's Congress every year with the participation of the entire population of the camps," boasted Mouloud Lahsen, a 33-year-old combat veteran. "That's when we discuss our problems and elect committee heads and a president for each *daira*. Together with a doctor, a judge, a political commissar, and a representative of the Saharan Crescent (the local Red Cross), these people make up the *daira's* People's Council."

On a higher level of the hierarchy, *daira* presidents, and the regional directors of health, education, the Saharan Crescent and representatives of the mass organizations – women, youth, workers – make up the People's Council at each *wilaya*, which is presided over by





The camps  
are largely  
administered by  
women. Most  
men are off at  
the front



a provincial governor, a member of the Political Bureau of the Polisario Front. The bureau has 27 members, elected along with the Executive Committee at the Polisario Front's General Congress, held every three years.

#### Children: the first priority

The camps are administered largely by women, since most of the men are stationed in the recovered territories of Western Sahara, where a 35,000-strong army engages the Moroccan invaders. "Even before Spanish colonization, Saharawi women played an important social role," noted Maina Chejatu, leader of the Saharawi Women's Union. "Her role was to look after the household and tribal economy whenever

the men left for long trips in search of the means of survival or to trade with other tribes."

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Red Cross provide most of the humanitarian aid. All goods entering from abroad or produced in the camps are distributed by the supply committees, with priority going to children, hospitals, national boarding schools and pregnant women.

Twelve years after settling in the Tindouf area with their famine-stricken children, fleeing the Moroccan bombings, the Saharans have already established the conditions to implement a birth policy, a key if the Saharawi people, whose population barely reaches 500,000, are to continue to put up a re-

sistance. "We are hoping for a political solution to the conflict," explained one teacher. "But we know that it may take many years. This is why children are one of our priorities."

The scarcity of fresh food, which for years affected the nutrition level of children at the camps, is gradually being overcome. Water, available two or three meters below the ground, is the area's only natural wealth. Thanks to the work of agronomists educated in friendly neighboring countries, this water supply is enabling Saharawis to plant five large vegetable gardens covering some 300 hectares - artificial oases in the middle of the *hammada*. Two years ago, with funds and technical assistance from the UNHCR, the Polisario Front mounted in the camps Africa's largest poultry farm



with a daily output of 65,000 eggs.

Each *wilaya* has an elementary school, but when children reach the age of 11, they are sent to national boarding schools. Every three months, they are granted a 10-day vacation to visit their families. These boarding schools are self-administered: Students do nearly all the work, from cleaning their rooms to serving meals at the cafeteria. "At first, there's a lot of confusion," laughed Ahmed Chiaa, director of the 9th of July National School. "But soon the children learn how to share responsibility."

#### Islam: equality and friendship

Despite the lack of educational materials – most books are mimeographed copies and there is a shortage of information about the world that lies beyond the desert – the members of the Polisario Front has its own educational program, established three years ago by the Ministry of Education. Although Saharawis speak an Arab dialect called *hassaniya* they also teach their children the language of the former colonizers – Spanish. "Our decision to teach Spanish is not a cultural one but rather one based on the need to gain access to technical and scientific know-how," explained President Mohammed Abdelaziz of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, the Saharan's governing body recognized by several countries.

The Saharawis are a Muslim people, but unlike other Islamic cultures, theirs allows religious choices to be made individually. There is no mosque in the camps. Yet the sight of people kneeling, praying with their arms extended in the direction of Mecca is not uncommon, even at the battlefield. Members of the Polisario Front have their own interpretation of the Koran. "Islam retains a tradition of equality and friendship among the peoples of the world," said Fatemetu Allaili, a member of the Political Bureau, calling into question the way some of the world's leaders use the religion. "Of course, there are those who use Islam in a divisionist manner in order to retain power or remain on their thrones."

Cláudia Antunes



Mothers and their babies: children are given priority



Inspecting a dud: men tending to the war effort



The Saharawis are Muslims with a tradition of individual choice



# Talking Up Peace



Angolan citizens: at the end of a long wait for peace?

Their reasons may be different, but Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States all seem to want the same thing — peace in southern Africa. An agreement on basic points fuels hope for a peace treaty

The foundations for peace in southern Africa seem to have been laid out during the third round of talks between Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States. A list of 14 points, agreed upon in New York in mid-July, should serve as the basis for a forthcoming peace treaty. The agreement includes wording that would guarantee the sanctity of borders, assure non-interference in the affairs of neighboring countries, and start a process to grant independence to Namibia, now occupied by South Africa, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 435/78.

The New York meeting came on the heels of a June meeting in Cairo between Angola and South Africa after which both sides had expressed "guarded optimism." In the words of a neutral observer, the South Africans seemed initially intent on blocking

the negotiations by making "absurd and impertinent" demands that were promptly rejected by the Angolan delegates.

However, the apartheid regime appears to have come around on the crucial issues of respect for the national integrity of Angola and Namibian independence.

South Africa's position seems to have deteriorated on all fronts. Militarily, its troops have been held at bay and even lost ground in certain areas inside Angola.

South Africa seems to realize that a victory on the battlefield is virtually impossible. At home, the apartheid government is faced with mounting protests by the black majority. Diplomatically, Pretoria risks losing its most important ally, the United States, should Michael Dukakis win the November presidential election.

Meanwhile, Pretoria claims to be at work on a domestic reform package that would

include the creation of a National Council on which the country's black majority would be represented by a white minister. Nevertheless, blacks would still be denied the right to vote because, according to President Pieter Botha, they "don't know how to vote."

Through June, the apartheid regime was continuing to dispatch special commandos for attack and sabotage missions in neighboring countries (two commandos were arrested in Gaberones, the capital of Botswana, that month). As for the U.S., the administration of President Ronald Reagan continues to play its usual ambiguous game. Despite claiming to support peace in southern Africa, Reagan recently welcomed to Washington Jonas Savimbi, head of the counterrevolutionary UNITA guerrilla force, which receives aid from South Africa.





Angolan President dos Santos



U.S. official Chester Crocker with P.W. Botha



Cuba's Fidel Castro

By João Melo

First, Angolans talk with North Americans. Then South Africans, Angolans, Cubans and North Americans sit at a negotiating table in London to discuss the same subject that the Soviet Union and the U.S. have been talking about off and on for years. The Portuguese, who ruled Angola for five centuries, keep an eye on things, but so far have refused to play more than a minor role.

Early this year, however, peace negotiations in southern Africa seemed to pick up momentum, giving rise to cautious hopes about peace in at least one of the world's three major trouble spots – the others being Central America and the Middle East.

At their June summit, Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev went as far as establishing a deadline – September 29 – for a global solution of the southern African problem. The date is not devoid of symbolism: It marks the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435/78 on Namibian independence – which South Africa accepted on paper in 1978 but has so far failed to adhere to.

The focus of the discussions has been a proposal advanced by Angola in August 1986, under which the Angolan government would agree to the withdrawal of Cuban forces from its territory – a long-standing obsession with U.S. and South African authorities – if and when the 12,000 South African troops who invaded Angola are called back home, Namibia becomes independent, and both the U.S. and South Africa stop supporting the UNITA counterrevolutionary guerrillas bent on toppling the government of President José Eduardo dos Santos.

In March, Angola and Cuba presented the U.S. – which has acted as a go-between with South Africa – with a proposed schedule for the withdrawal of Cuban troops. Following an unprecedented meeting in London on May 3 and 4, Angolan, Cuban, U.S. and South African representatives admitted that "some progress" had been made toward an overall agreement on southern Africa.

On May 13, Pretoria's Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha met with Angolan Justice Minister França Van Dunem in Brazzaville, Congo, to examine the Angolan proposal in further detail. Both parties said they were "very pleased" as they left the meeting – setting the stage

for another round of talks between Angolan, Cuban, U.S. and South African officials.

#### Converging interests

The four countries directly involved in the process desire peace for very different reasons. Nevertheless, a rare moment seems to have arrived when a convergence of interests may make an accord possible.

At first, South Africa's readiness to participate in the peace talks caused considerable surprise – and suspicion – among foreign observers. Journalist John Clements, of Inter Press Service, quoted certain Western experts as noting that such willingness was prompted by "serious military setbacks experienced lately by South Africa" in the conflict with Angola. The British magazine *Southscan* reported that South Africa would like to get out of a touchy military situation that doesn't seem to be getting any better. And Tony Banks, a press officer at *Jane's Defence Weekly*, noted that, over the past year, the military situation in Angola has deteriorated for South Africa.

Reports from the battlefield seem to confirm these assessments. According to *Southscan*, South Africa lost 400 men



in the Cuito Cuanavale battle, a figure that the South African peace movement placed perhaps more accurately at 450. Cuito Cuanavale is a small but strategic location in southeastern Angola which 9,000 South African troops, reinforced by thousands of UNITA fighters, had been trying to occupy since September 1987. According to Angolan authorities, Pretoria's objective was to gain a strong foothold in Angolan territory to make UNITA a legitimate party in the peace negotiations. In other words, a victory at Cuito Cuanavale would have given the apartheid regime increased bargaining power in the forthcoming peace talks.

The Angolan army's resistance, however — which independent observers saw as something of a historic feat, since the Angolan troops were the first black army to defeat apartheid soldiers — reversed the situation. The British *Southscan* now sees Angola as hav-

ing the military edge and higher morale. In addition, Angola embarked in May on a number of military maneuvers, with the aid of Cuban troops, aiming to regain control over the Cunene province which has been almost entirely occupied by South Africa for the past 10 years.

South Africa feebly protested against such troop movements, given that they coincided with the opening of the peace talks, but the fact remains that Angola is legitimately defending its territory. Angola's desire to restore peace in southern Africa stems from its need to rebuild the country after centuries of colonial rule and following the devastation brought about by South African attacks over the past 13 years. At present, half of the Angolan public budget is spent on defense.

However, the Luanda government has repeatedly made it clear that it is not seeking peace at any price. "Angola will

never accept a peace treaty unless it ensures the country's security and territorial integrity," pointed out the newspaper *Atualidade Angolana*, published in Brazil by Angop, the Angolan news agency.

The U.S. is interested in accelerating the peace process because it is convinced that this is the only way to get Cuban soldiers out of Angola — and



Namibian youngsters: equal rights

## The 14 Points

☐ The governments of Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States agreed to 14 points that are designed to serve as the basis for a peace treaty in southern Africa. They covered the following aspects of the conflict:

**United Nations Resolution** — The parties agreed to set and recommend a date to begin the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 435/78, which calls for Namibian independence.

**Namibia** — The governments of Angola and South Africa are to cooperate with the U.N. Secretary General to assure Namibian independence through free and just elections.

**Cuban troops** — Cuban troops will be moved in stages from southern to northern Angola.

**Borders** — The signatories agree to respect the sovereignty and inde-

pendence of the other countries as well as their territorial integrity and the sanctity of their borders.

**Non-interference** — The signatories agree to not meddle in the affairs of the other states.

**Use of force** — The signatories agree not to use force to threaten the territorial integrity and independence of the other states.

**Neutrality** — The signatories accept responsibility to assure that their territories are not used for acts of war, aggression or violence against the other states.

**The Namibian people** — The signatories recognize the right of the people of "the region of Southwest Africa" to self-determination, independence and equal rights.

**Monitoring** — Verification and control will be part of the agreement.

**Negotiations** — The parties agree to assume the obligations of the agreement in good faith and to resolve any ensuing differences by negotiation.

**U.N. Security Council** — The permanent members of the U.N. Security Council should play a role in the implementation of the accord.

**Peace** — Each country is guaranteed in principle the right to development and social progress.

**Aid** — International and African cooperation are to play a role in addressing the development problems of southern Africa.

**United States** — The mediating role of the U.S. government was duly noted.



getting the Cubans out of Angola has been a central issue for the Reagan administration for years. The only reason why the U.S. has not achieved this goal is that it has consistently rejected Angola's demands for safeguards against South African invasions.

Now that the Reagan administration is coming to an end, the U.S. seems more willing to respond realistically to the southern African conflict. To be sure, the U.S. government would still like to persuade Angolan authorities to negotiate with UNITA, but it appears that the White House is now convinced that Savimbi's men are not capable of winning the war and that it may be preferable for Washington to negotiate directly with the Angolan authorities.

#### Gratuitous speculation

Peace negotiations in southern Africa have, from the very beginning, been the target of a disinformation campaign appearing in the Western media. Gratuitous speculation, presented as perfectly serious and objective reporting, have helped distort the facts about the peace talks.

Some of these have to do with the role of the Soviet Union in southern

Africa. Peace negotiations, according to this perspective, got moving only because Gorbachev wants to withdraw from the region. News of purported secret meetings between the Soviets and South Africans, and even between the Soviets and UNITA, have also found their way into the Western media. Such speculation stems from the notion that Angola, as a non-aligned country, may fall or has already fallen under the Soviet sphere of influence.

*Atualidade Angolana* noted that "despite aggressions and a fierce misinformation campaign against the country, all peace initiatives to date have come from Angola. Angola did not wait for Gorbachev to come to power in the Soviet Union. Resolution 435/78 on Namibian independence, for example, approved by the United Nations in 1978, was the result of an initiative taken by late Angolan President Agostinho Neto. And since 1982 Angola has agreed to discuss regional problems with the U.S. The country has consistently shown a clear willingness to negotiate solutions for southern Africa."

Soviet leaders have also made their position quite clear. They are willing to contribute to a peaceful solution in southern Africa and have contacted

some of the parties involved in the negotiations, including the leaders of other countries with an interest in the area, such as Portugal. But, unlike the U.S., the USSR is unwilling to play a mediating role, as Vladimir Petrovsky, Soviet vice minister for Foreign Relations, has made clear. He explained that the Soviet Union "has no interests on the subcontinent other than normal diplomatic relations." The Soviets have also added that, as long as South Africa continues to threaten and launch its attacks on Angola, the USSR will continue to extend military support to the dos Santos government.

The position of the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), the Namibian nationalist movement, regarding the negotiations has also been the object of wild speculation in some Western media. A number of newspapers have suggested that Angola has forsaken SWAPO in exchange for a suspension of South African aid to UNITA — although any responsible observer knows that this would be suicidal for Angola, since the country's security is intertwined with the independence of Namibia, now used by South Africa as a base for launching attacks and infiltrating UNITA soldiers into Angolan territory.



South Africans in Namibia: Angola has reassured SWAPO that the agreement will address the independence issue



Commenting on such speculations, SWAPO Information Secretary Hidipo Hamutenya said in Luanda that his organization "trusts that the ongoing negotiations will not run counter to the interests of the Namibian people." He revealed that the Angolan president assured SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma that Angola will never enter into an agreement that may compromise Namibia's independence. President dos Santos reiterated the importance of the Namibian question to a solution of the southern African conflict and said that Angola will continue to demand enforcement of Resolution 435/78.

#### The crisis at UNITA

The UNITA counterrevolutionaries stand to lose the most with the new momentum gained by the peace negotiations in southern Africa. The defeat of South African troops at Cuito Cuanavale, where the apartheid regime would like to have deployed Savimbi's men, prevented UNITA from acquiring the pseudo credibility it needed to earn a place at the negotiating table. In April, Savimbi complained to foreign journalists that the Botha government had informed him that it planned to begin negotiations with Angola without insisting – as it had consistently done earlier – on UNITA participation. Indeed, South Africa went to the May meetings alone.

The failure to insert Savimbi as a legitimate party in the negotiations has begun to have disruptive effects within UNITA. According to Philip Nel, director of the South African Institute for Soviet Studies of the University of Stellenbosch, the Angolan *contras* are increasingly divided into countless factions that have begun to question Savimbi's authority. Nel adds that the U.S. has been kept informed about such inner conflicts at UNITA through special observers, mostly university students with links to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Even the conservative Portuguese press, which never made a secret of its sympathies for UNITA, has exposed the organization's internal conflicts. The weekly *Expresso*, for instance, reported



Angolan youths: a generation that has grown up with war

in April that "tensions are very high" in UNITA camps in Jamba, near the border with Namibia, as a result of so-called persecution of several members who oppose Savimbi's leadership. Among those "persecuted," according to the weekly, is Wilson dos Santos, who for years has represented UNITA in Lisbon.

*Expresso* also noted the serious division in the UNITA structures in the Portuguese capital – which is the organization's most important foreign base – especially among the younger members of the counterrevolutionary group. The conflict among Savimbi's followers

was triggered by a number of protests voiced by André Yamba Yamba, who held the UNITA leader "directly responsible for numerous crimes and serious violations of human rights, including the murder of Brigadier Xandovava," one of the best known military leaders of the Angolan *contras*. According to Yamba Yamba, "there is a serious discrepancy between UNITA's image as it is presented abroad and the reality in UNITA-controlled areas."

#### Cautious expectations

"Moderate optimism" is an accurate



description of the atmosphere surrounding the current peace negotiations in southern Africa. At the latest summit of the Organization of African Unity in May in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Angola foreign minister stated that for the first time there is a good chance of an understanding. Earlier, President dos Santos had intimated that "some progress" had been made that might lead to a feasible agreement.

What remains to be seen is what kind of agreement will ultimately be achieved. Angola cannot yield on the original conditions without risking its very existence, and the agreement should include Namibian independence. This seems to be the current position adopted by the U.S. government, if one is to take at face value statements made by Chester Crocker, U.S. undersecretary of state for African Affairs, who was quoted by journalist John Clements as saying that the only way to solve the conflict is for South Africa to give up its hold on Namibia.

Namibian independence "would inevitably put SWAPO in control of the territory," noted the French newspaper *Le Monde*, since the nationalist movement probably would win the elections called for by the U.N. resolution. The question is whether or not South African President Botha is willing or able to persuade his supporters – increasingly weighted toward the right – and military leaders that this would not be so bad. Even if SWAPO were later to agree, as it probably would, to a non-aggression pact with South Africa, Botha's task would still not be simple.

As a result, it is impossible to tell whether Pretoria is actually interested in seriously discussing peace, or whether, as *Southscan* put it, the South African goal is to buy a little time in view of its recent loss of military advantage and the growing pressure from Western allies. At first glance, despite the military defeats in Angola, the political pressure from the ruling white minority and its

irrational willingness to attack black-dominated neighboring countries may gain the upper hand and prevent the restoration of peace in the area.

This fear is further justified by news about another increase in Pretoria's military budget, which will total US\$3.8 billion this year. South African Professor Mike Hough, an expert in strategic studies at the University of Pretoria, has charged that the increase reflects the government's intent to step up its attacks on Angola. *Southscan* adds that the need to pursue destabilization of Angola, the only rival economic and military power in the area, has become an essential element in Pretoria's policy in southern Africa.

President dos Santos has correctly observed that "Peace in southern Africa depends on Pretoria." An agreement will be possible, he said, only "if the interlocutors show a little more flexibility and goodwill" – a remark that is obviously addressed to the men in the apartheid government. ○

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# A Veneer of Law

Military law in the occupied territories is designed to stymie Palestinian political, economic and social activity

**W**hen Israel's troops swept into the West Bank in June 1967, Israeli lawyers and administrators were not far behind. International law permits an occupying force to ensure the security of its personnel and to safeguard the well-being of the inhabitants of an occupied territory. Otherwise, preexisting legislation is paramount. Israeli Military Order (MO) 1 states:

Article 1: the Israeli Defense force which entered the area today has the authority to ensure security and order.

Every one of almost 2,000 subsequent military orders has been prefaced with such a reference to security, thus lending a thin veneer of legitimacy to an administrative process which has little to do with anyone's security or well-being and a great deal to do with weakening the ability of the Palestinians to engage in any form of collective activity: political, economic or social. Underlining this is the fact that Israeli settlers in the occupied territories are not subject to rules drawn up by the military government.

Harking back to the Defense (Emergency) Regulations imposed by the British Mandate in 1945, the Israeli occupation forces maintain a battery of repressive measures for use against political activists. These range from the right of any Israeli soldier to make an arrest or search premises without a warrant (MO 378) and the holding of prisoners for periods of 18 days without access to a lawyer, to the imposition of curfews, town arrest orders, renewable six-month internment orders, demolition of the houses of untried suspects, and deportation without trial. International pressure led to the suspension of internment and deportation in the 1970s, but these sanctions were reintroduced by Israeli Labor Party Prime Minister Shimon Peres in 1985 as part of his "Iron Fist Policy."

Since the *intifada* uprising began in



Israeli troops: exercising "the authority to ensure security and order"

early December 1987, they have been used with ever greater ferocity. By May 1988, some 1,700 Palestinians were interned, among them, trade union activists, student leaders, doctors, and 40 percent of all local journalists. Under article 312 of the 1945 Defense (emergency) regulations, 2,000 Palestinians have been deported since 1967, including 20 through May 1988. In the West Bank village of Beita alone, 14 houses were dynamited by troops in April and six men deported from their homeland, in contravention of the 1949 Geneva Convention. In the last week of the same month, no less than 21 of the 27 refugee camps in the occupied territories were under curfew - affecting some 400,000 people. Under MO 101, all publications of a political nature (including inscriptions on tombstones) require a military permit. The same diktat forbids the displaying of the colors of the Palestinian flag.

Prior to the 1967 invasion, local

courts in the West Bank were administered by the Minister of Justice of Jordan (which then controlled the area). MO 412 handed these powers to an Israeli military official and the courts are prohibited from calling on Israeli personnel to appear, unless military permission is first sought. Even more disturbingly, MO 3 (later updated) has established five military courts which convene in the military headquarters in the major towns of the West Bank. It is the local military governor who decides which cases go before these courts and he appoints military personnel as so-called judges.

Thus, collaborators accused of crimes may be protected by being tried by their masters while children accused of stone-throwing may be sentenced to prison. There is no system of appeal.

Brutal as such repression is, it is only the tip of the iceberg. By 1984, almost half of the 935 military orders applied to



the West Bank were of an economic nature. The most crucial are those which affect rights to land and water. By 1967, only one-third of the land in the West Bank had been registered in the name of individual land users.

Technically, the rest was still under Ottoman land law which fell into disuse after 1917 and which gave the Sultan

further effected by MO 92 which places the transportation, extraction, provision, consumption, sale, distribution, supervision, allocation, and researching of water under military jurisdiction, thus allowing settlers to consume, per capita, 18 times as much water as Palestinians and facilitating the draining of water from the West Bank aquifer inside Is-

rael's 1948 borders. In 1985, Professor Mohamed Shadid of the West Bank University of An-Najah, in Nablus, reported to the United Nations that

1967, plus strict limits on the import of finance (tightened further since the beginning of the uprising), does not only limit autonomous Palestinian investment in the local economy, it also imposes strictures on international aid. Professor Shadid demonstrates that the military authorities use their power to approve or reject projects to skew expenditure away from economic development and towards consumption-oriented works.

Not content with sabotaging the West Bank economy at the point of production, the Israeli occupation authorities also seek to control educational institutions and so prevent teaching



Israelis arrest a Palestinian (left); the banned Palestinian flag waves (right)

ultimate authority over most land which was not held by a religious trust. Cynically manipulating this outdated legal code, the occupation authorities instituted MO 59 under which huge tracts have been declared state land and so seized by Israeli settlers. MO 58 declares that any land belonging to a person who left the area before, during, or after June 1967 is an absentee owner whose property can be seized. Thus, refugees of the 1967 war and even people who happened to be in Jordan during the invasion have been deprived of 40,500 hectares of land. With another 101,000 hectares being declared land closed for military purposes, the occupation authorities have deprived the Palestinians of over 50 percent of the land in the West Bank. This enforced proletarianization of the Palestinian peasantry is

only two permits had been granted for new Palestinian agricultural wells while at least 12 had run dry. Further restrictions on agriculture include MO 1015 which forbids the planting or grafting of fruit trees or the replacement of dead trees. Even ornamental trees require a licence from the military governor. Under MOs 47 and 49, no goods may be exported from or imported into the West Bank without a military license and MO 155 enables the military governor to specify the route to be taken by any produce which is transported. It is, then, hardly surprising that between 1966 and 1980 the area of cultivated land in the West Bank fell by 22 percent and between 1967 and 1983 the number of olive presses in the area declined by one third.

The closure of all Palestinian banks in

oriented towards developing a national consciousness or skills which could assist the survival of a Palestinian economy that is not dependent on Israel for jobs and goods. MO 854 is the most notorious of such orders. It forces educational institutions to apply for a license from the military authorities and allows those authorities to veto both students and teachers. Only 40 of the 160 trade unions and professional associations in the occupied territories have official permits, the rest existing illegally. MO 825 controls those with licences. It allows the military governor to expel any member from a union, to ban ex-prisoners from election to union posts, and to know the names of all nominees for elections.

The Palestinian uprising which began last December has shaken the occupa-





Two forms of resistance: Palestinian youths hurl rocks (above), and a shop closed in protest is forced open by Israeli soldiers (below)

tion to its roots. On the superficial level, the continuation of mass demonstrations has shown that Palestinians armed with nothing more than stones and petrol bombs are quite prepared to take on the most powerful army in the Middle East, irrespective of casualties. The Palestine Liberation Organization estimated that 350 people had been killed by late June 1988, with 3,400 permanently disabled and 22,000 arrested. Yet these figures do not demonstrate the scale of the challenge to the might of the occupation. Certainly the uprising shows Palestinian disdain for bullets, tear gas, military courts and beatings but, perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates a determination to reverse Israel's attempts to turn the occupied territories into an annex of the Zionist economy.

After 20 years of discrimination, the 150,000 legal and illegal migrant workers, mostly dispossessed peasants, who labor in Israeli factories, building sites, and farms, have hit back by staging weekly strikes. So severe have these been that Israeli employers have started importing workers from Lebanon and Portugal. For all of the military orders aimed at crippling the West Bank economy, the uprising, coordinated by popular committees, has united the com-



munity in attempts to lessen its economic dependence on Israel by instigating a campaign of voluntary work on the land, and the donation of industrial and agricultural production to the families of the dead, wounded, and imprisoned. Palestinian employers have been told to take on workers who now refuse to work for the occupation forces. Landlords have been asked to waive rent demands. Sales of Israeli goods in the West Bank

and Gaza Strip may have fallen by as much as 25 percent.

Financially speaking, the *intifada* is bringing the Israeli occupation to its knees. In 1986, Israeli researchers calculated that taxes raised (contrary to international law) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip defrayed the costs of occupation. Since December, Israel has been forced to pay the price of its rule. Refusals to pay taxes have brought to the verge of bankruptcy the so-called Civil Administration, a body under the authority of the military governor, set up under MO 947 to administer local services. The military costs of occupation have risen by US\$55 million per month and the length of service for Israeli reservists has been extended, with repercussions for the Israeli economy. Furthermore, the damage to Israel's reputation in Western Europe has cost it the ratification of trade agreements with the European Community, worth some \$50 million in

loans. The tourist industry is also suffering.

All in all, the self-organization of the Palestinians has proved beyond doubt that neither military repression nor complex, legalistically-phrased attempts to control every aspect of life, can quash a people's desire for national liberation.

Toby Shelley



# A Strange but True Plebiscite

Foreign observers are skeptical, but the Chilean opposition is taking seriously the chance to defeat Pinochet at the polls



Registering to vote: General Pinochet, the first citizen to sign up

By Esteban Tomic \*

Challenging the manner in which authoritarian governments normally operate, the Chilean military is preparing to consult its citizens on the question of who should govern the country as of 1989.

According to the 1980 constitution, a committee composed of the commanders in chief of the three branches of the military and the head of the national police are to name a presidential candidate to be submitted to popular vote. If that candidate wins a majority, he or she will govern for eight years. If not, free and open elections must be held by the end of the year for president and parliament.

Few outside Chile believe that the

plebiscite will end the 15-year personal rule of General Augusto Pinochet. "Dictatorships don't call elections to lose them," goes the argument put forth by European politicians who have met recently with Chilean opposition leaders. Maybe the European politicians are right, but a growing number of Chileans believe that the plebiscite represents a real chance to strip Pinochet of power and send the soldiers back to their barracks. That is why a Chilean columnist wrote: "The coming days will constitute, without doubt, one of the strangest periods in Chilean history."

## Pinochet: feeling his oats

An examination of some basic elements of the Chilean political picture help set the current scene:

— the country's long, 150-year-old, democratic tradition that has forced the military government to offer — besides law and order — a return to democratic forms of government, which are incompatible with the way things have operated over the past 15 years;

— the personality of Pinochet — a simple but astute individual with grandiose notions about the extent of his power, who believes that nothing will happen to decrease his authority;

— an opposition united around the

campaign for a No vote: In February, 15 years of infighting was put aside, and the opposition came together to form a formidable pro-No political bloc — the latest addition being the Communist Party, which will run an independent campaign;

— a significant number of firms that survived the economic liberalism applied by the government and have been able to compete internationally in several product areas. Chile is no longer a *monoexporter*. No government will be able to disregard this sector in the future;

— well-equipped armed forces, educated in the Prussian tradition and proud of having never lost a war. (Chile has

\* The author is a lawyer, a member of the Christian Democratic Party and an ex-diplomat.



fought two wars, in addition to the so-called pacification campaign against the Mapuche Indians.)

#### Dicatorship on the decline

The dynamic interplay of these elements – along with the Catholic Church, which wields a great deal of influence among the people for its clear and firm defense of human rights during the dictatorship – paint an unclear picture from which various different results are possible. And 1988 really is "a strange period" whose events must be scrutinized daily.

But if one looks past the immediate events and examines the evolution of the military regime, one can claim, without fear of being wrong, that no matter what the result of the plebiscite, the control of the military – and therefore Pinochet – over Chilean society is on the decline. Just a year ago, political parties were illegal. As soon as the regime allowed the formation of parties, four opposition groups sprung up. They are active throughout the country and have even gained access to television, a medium that the government had completely controlled until now.

The opening in the country's political and cultural environment is a significant one. Emerging from the existential pessimism and the corresponding demobilization that characterized 1987, a state of feverish organizing has taken over – especially in the preparation of those chosen to monitor the plebiscite for the opposition.

Public opinion polls also indicate an important change in relation to last year. In 1987, Pinochet was considered unbeatable by the majority of those questioned. Today, on the other hand, the proportion of *No* votes would be double that of the *Yes* votes in the cities, while in rural areas the *No* tally would maintain a three or four point advantage. There is nothing to assure that the final transition to democracy will be made without traumas later on, but it can be affirmed that this transition has already begun in the daily lives of Chileans – prior to the plebiscite, independent of Pinochet.

It is strange and hard to understand, but it is happening. •

## A No Campaign

The opposition is united and well-organized in its campaign to defeat Pinochet

The upcoming plebiscite is an instrument of popular consultation mandated by Chile's 1980 constitution – passed at the time by the government over the complaints of the opposition. With time, Chile's democratic forces agreed to accept the ground rules. "The opposition has ended up accepting the rules of the

fact, and the government and its supporters are being carried by the tide of popular mobilization to respect what they have created.

#### Coming together

The political forces that are banding together in the *No* campaign in Chile's



Members of the opposition: finally united after years of infighting

game imposed by the regime," noted a spokesperson for the campaign for a *No* vote. "We demand only that it be open and fair."

The *Yes* supporters claim that a *No* victory would lead the country into chaos. They have also stated that it would represent a step backwards for the country, a return to the days of the Popular Unity government of the late-President Salvador Allende, overthrown by General Augusto Pinochet in the 1973 coup.

Some commentators in Santiago believe that those who wrote the constitution, and those who supported it, assumed that the *No* vote would never win. But now the plebiscite is a political

upcoming plebiscite took another step forward in June when they announced the formation of a Presidents Council and an Executive Committee to oversee the effort.

Patricio Aylwin, president of the Christian Democratic Party (DC), was named spokesperson for the council. He introduced the members of the Executive Committee: Andrés Zaldívar (DC), Enrique Silva Cimma of the Radical Party, Ricardo Lagos of the Party for Democracy, José Tomás Sáenz of the Humanist Party, Lusi Maira of the Christian Left and representatives of the So-

\* Information for this article was taken from the biweekly newsletter *CHILE, Democracia Urgente*, published by the International Commission for a No Vote.



## Set for October



Pinochet waves to supporters

General Augusto Pinochet personally confirmed the scheduling of the plebiscite for this October and called on his supporters to "not take victory for granted."

Speaking to hundreds of youths in the city of Concepción, the 72-year-old general, the only candidate in the referendum, said that Yes forces must "work as if we were in trouble, as if we were tied" to defeat the No campaign.

The official press gave big play to a public opinion poll undertaken by the Chilean branch of the transnational Gallup Poll, according to which Yes votes held a 42.1 percent to 33.4 percent advantage over the No votes. The poll showed that 24.5 percent remained undecided. All of the Gallup polls have shown the Yes forces ahead, contradicting polls by other organizations, which give the lead to the No forces.

cialist Command for a No vote. Political scientist Genaro Arriagada continues as executive secretary.

The movement also announced that some six million have registered to vote and that it has established some 200 regional offices. The 16 parties that make up the movement also reiterated their adherence to a May 10 economic and social agreement and restated their intention to assure secret balloting in the plebiscite.

### The road to unity

The June announcement represented the most recent step in an evolving process of unity among the opposition. In February, the original 13 adherents – now 16 – declared that the No proposal "will entail negotiations between the democratic political parties and the armed forces over the rapid and orderly transition to democracy."

The Communist Party announced in June its support for the No position, even if its campaign will be run inde-



Juan Somavia

pendently of the Command for a No Vote and the 16 political institutions that make up the coalition.

The command has organized an International Commission, including representatives of the political parties that make up the International Parliamentary Assembly for Democracy (APAINDE). The commission is presided over by Juan Somavia. Its objective is to take up substantive issues and operations of an international character related to the No campaign.

The commission is responsible for

publicizing the campaign and its objectives outside the country. At the same time, it will respond to international queries regarding the campaign and serve as the contact for international solidarity groups. Its members believe that one of the most important task will be informing foreign leaders visiting Chile about how the plebiscite is being organized. This will include providing support for APAINDE with respect to the presence of foreign observers.

### A massive presence

Legislators from 45 countries – 217 individuals – had confirmed by late July their intention to serve as observers. The number was expected to increase, possibly topping 300, according to leaders of APAINDE, which is handling the invitations.

The Chilean government has openly criticized the presence of foreign observers. Recently Pinochet labeled the invitees as puppets, warning that his government will "not permit foreign observers for the plebiscite, as established by the Chilean electoral law." Using stronger language, he stated: "I do not accept their coming to watch. The law prohibits their entry into polling places. But (the opposition) is calling on them to come see the fraud, because in the first place, it is a way of getting money. I believe that this has been their best deal: so much for you, so much for me. And then they say that there's fraud."

The president continued: "If they win, there is no fraud. On that we're clear. But if they lose, there is. It is a way of fooling the world. These are traitors and national sellouts!"

APAINDE responded to Pinochet's charges by emphasizing that Pinochet was insulting the opposition "because he is losing and that is keeping him from remaining calm as a man in his position should." The spokesperson reiterated that regardless of Pinochet's objections, international observers "will come here and enter polling places, as permitted by law. The majority of the people will cosign our invitation and Pinochet's threats will have no real effect."



# Manifest Violence

Anyone who raises a voice for human rights or attends a dance in the union hall may fall victim to the country's pervasive violence, says a Colombian labor leader. Finding a solution will not be easy

Interview by Aldo Gamboa



The streets of Bogotá: a march demanding an end to violence

**E**ven dancing can be a dangerous thing to do in Colombia.

At least that's one of the conclusions that can be drawn from *third world's* interview with Colombian labor leader Hector Fajardo Abril during his visit to Rio de Janeiro. Fajardo, a teacher by trade, represents the teachers union in the Unitary Central of Workers (CUT), a federation accounting for 82 percent of the Colombian labor movement.

Anyone who speaks out in defense of human rights becomes a target for right-wing paramilitary groups, Fajardo noted. Their methods vary – from sniper attempts to frontal attacks on rural workers holding a party or a dance. "It has turned into genocide, the massacre of workers," Fajardo lamented.

This violence is escalating within the context of a war that both the opposition guerrillas and the government realize they cannot win. Fajardo stressed that the CUT is intent on helping to negotiate a peaceful solution to the Colombian conflict.

*How does the crisis of violence in Colombia manifest itself?*

The clearest demonstration of the violence is the absolute lack of respect for human life and human rights.

In Colombia, murders take place daily. Not only do they kill revolu-

tionaries, labor leaders and leaders of popular groups, but anyone who dares to raise his or her voice to call for respect for life or human rights.

Many men have fallen in this battle: eminent ones like Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, the minister of justice; men of integrity like Carlos Mauro Hoyos, attorney general; democrats like Guillermo Cano, publisher of the newspaper *El Espectador*, or like Hector Abad Gomez, an activist in the Liberal Party and an eminent professor whose only crime was to dedicate himself for many years to the presidency of the Human Rights Committee in Antioquia. Priests, judges and magistrates are murdered. No political or social sector feels itself excluded from this criminal wave.

We are pained in the CUT by the deaths of our activists, as we are pained by the deaths of the guerrillas, soldiers and police officers who die in combat. We believe that the right to life is not limited to the defense of our activists and leaders, but to all Colombians.

*Has the CUT come under attack by paramilitary groups?*

In almost two years since the CUT was founded, 167 leaders and members have been murdered – including three members of the national directorate. Moreover, the president of the CUT, an



Hector Fajardo

activist in the Liberal Party and the minister of labor in the previous government, has been threatened with death. One of our vice presidents, representing the Colombian Federation of Teachers, has been threatened with death. Plus, comrade Joaquín Saray, a member of the executive board and president of the Workers Union of Caja Agraria. I have also been threatened. The number of CUT members who have received death threats tops 1,000.

*What characteristics has this repression taken on?*

The "dirty war" started with physical eliminations, in a selective and indivi-



dual way, but this period is over. Now, painfully, we must say that it has turned into genocide, the massacre of workers.

In the Urabá region, in the northern part of Antioquia, over 45 persons have died in just three actions carried out by these groups. In the department of Córdoba, on a farm called *La Mejor Esquina* (The Best Corner) – imagine if it had been the worst – 28 peasants were machine gunned during a party. In another department, in a single paramilitary action, they killed 14 peasants.

Recently, large peasant marches have been organized, starting in the countryside and heading toward the cities. The idea is to demand guarantees from the government to undertake the necessary measures so that life will be respected. These marches for respect for life were dealt with militarily. Later it became known that during these marches seven soldiers and 12 peasants died. Earlier, during another march, another 22 peasants were murdered.

In the department of Cesar, a group of African palm workers had gathered in the union headquarters to do what we Colombians do on Sunday -- dance a little. Hired killers arrived and killed three. Minutes later, they went to the homes of the union leaders and machine gunned their houses.

*You have said that the violence is leading to a hardening of the regime. Colombia has a tradition of rotating governments, changing hands between the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Do you foresee a rupture in this order?*

Colombia not only has a tradition of alternating governments between Liberals and Conservatives. It is the Latin American country that historically has had the greatest institutional stability. We have had but three military dictatorships – one at the end of the last century, another at the beginning of this century, and that of General Rojas Pinilla in the 1950s. Putting them all together, they don't amount to more than eight years of military rule. However, this doesn't mean that we have had a democratic regime. Our governments may have been institutionally stable, but they have also been antidemocratic.

*You mean, like the previous dictatorships, they didn't permit any type of participation?*

That's right. We have a democracy without channels of participation for the masses of the workers, who are subject to extraordinary restrictions. Not until this year did we win the right to elect mayors by popular vote, a right that all other Latin American countries already had. This fact is considered the most important democratic reform of this century in Colombia. That should give

ence have its roots?

The origins, in many ways, are rooted precisely in the absence of democracy and the lack of channels of participation, of the possibility to exercise direct democracy. That, for example, induced many political sectors in the 1960s to decide to enter into armed struggle as an alternative.

*You have pointed out that the CUT believes there is a stalemate in the armed struggle in Colombia. What are the potential solutions?*



A CUT demonstration: 1,000 members of the labor federation have received death threats

you some idea of the scope of our democracy.

*When did the system of alternating governments begin?*

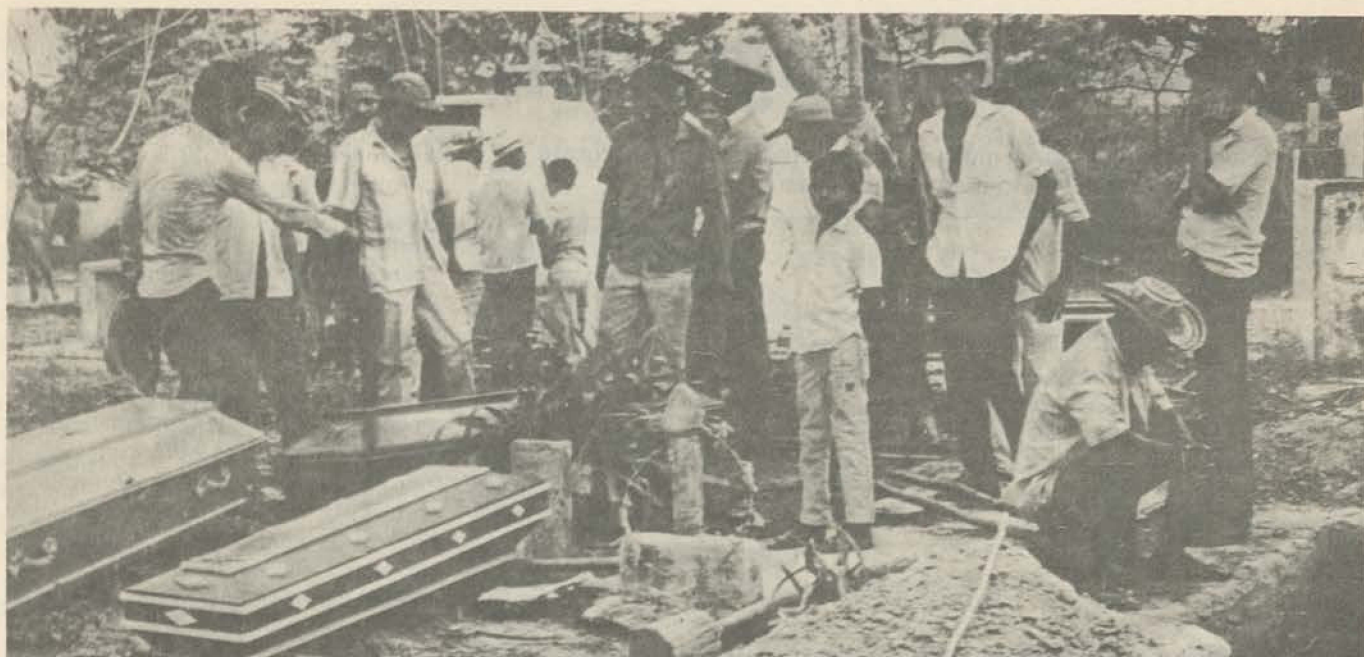
It started in 1957, when the traditional parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, made an agreement, by calling a plebiscite, to impede other forces from governing. They decided, through constitutional reform, that these parties would alternate in power for 16 years – a process known as the National Front. It lasted longer than 16 years. The Virgilio Barco government has implanted another form of government, which he calls a government of opposition. At this time, the Liberal Party is governing, and the Conservative Party is in the opposition.

*Where does the current wave of vio-*

The CUT is a labor federation that since its foundation has proposed to contribute to the search for a political solution to the situation of violence and murder that we're being subjected to.

On May 1, 1987, through our president, comrade Jorge Carrillo Rojas, we launched the proposal to build a widely based National Convergence in search of political solutions. We understand this convergence as a meeting place for the discussion of national problems, with the participation of all Colombians interested in introducing democratic changes and transformations in the regime. Therefore, we believe it must include the government, if it wants to participate; those military officers not involved in the dirty war; the Catholic Church, which represents a large number of people and has a great deal of influence; economic guilds not involved in the dirty war; the guerrilla move-





Burying victims of the *Mejor Esquina* (Best Corner) massacre: "What if it were the Worst Corner?"

ments, if they really want peace; and all of the social and popular sectors.

Together, these groups should propose the search for peace, an end to the violence, and the incorporation of the guerrilla movement into civil life. CUT believes, as I do personally, that now more than ever it is necessary to strengthen civil, democratic society. We are looking for a political solution because 40 years of guerrilla struggle have shown us that the armed movement has not won over the people for the insurrectional project to take power.

There exists among the guerrilla and the army the belief that neither has the capacity to defeat the other, and vice versa. Therefore, to maintain this confrontation for much longer doesn't make much sense, because we are sure that it would be maintained at a high social cost and without much hope for the future.

*In what context is this search for peace developing?*

This task is marked by the confrontation that exists between those in favor of democracy, its survival and growth, and those in favor of fascism. The fascist, reactionary forces are organizing themselves and building the political,

economic and social conditions for the construction of a fascist project.

*Who is taking part in this effort?*

Some sectors of the bourgeoisie that are stale and impermeable to any idea of change; sectors of the landlords and *latifundistas* who are not interested in allowing or supporting land reform, and some sectors of the military.

Obviously, we should add a new element in our society, one which cannot be ignored – the drug industry. The drug traffickers are linked to the dirty war, as are other sectors like the armed forces, the government and the dominant classes.

These are the conditions for the formation of a fascist block in our country. And there is an aggravating factor: They have an economic power that for us is almost inconceivable. It is estimated that just the leader of the Medellín cartel, possibly the world's largest drug trafficker, has a personal fortune of between US\$4 billion and US\$5 billion.

*There exists in the media a tendency to connect guerrilla groups to the drug business, as if they were a single block opposing democracy. What do you think about this?*

Within the CUT, we have always been perplexed by this, but the truth is that some recent events clearly show that this is impossible. It is obvious that the murder of Jaime Pardo Leal, the head of the Patriotic Union, was carried out by the drug traffickers. How is it that a drug trafficker would kill his chief, or close ally? This really never was very clear in Colombia. We believe that this forms part of a large-scale campaign to justify the dirty war.

*You say that the Catholic Church should play a role in the convergence. What role do you think it should have?*

We point out that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church should play an important role in the solution. They are also proposing the National Convergence. What's more, the church is proposing a return to dialogue between the government and the guerrillas, in search of a truce that would lead to a period of negotiations and the incorporation of the guerrillas in the civil struggle. Therefore, church leaders have offered themselves as intermediaries. We support this position. If they invite the CUT to participate in this process of mediation and negotiation, we'll be there.



# Symbiotic Integration

The Hanoi government is making a concerted effort to integrate ethnic tribal minorities into Vietnamese society



By Philip Smucker

**Y**oung people no longer want to use traditional clothing, the cult of the ancestors is losing force, and modern obstetrics is gaining ground. Twelve years after the reunification of the country, the Vietnamese government has successfully taken its political message and concrete economic measures to the most inaccessible and remote villages.

For millennia, these communities — with a combined population of some eight million — held onto their customs and were not integrated into Vietnamese society. But in recent years, a policy directed toward these minorities, some of Chinese origin, has built bridges to future integration.

"I offer incense to my ancestors every year," said an elderly leader of the *Cholon* tribe residing in a mountainous region 250 kilometers northeast of Hanoi. "I maintain the ritual, but I no longer believe. Now I believe in science."

Women hold onto traditional beliefs more firmly than men, partly because they remain at home and have less access to science. But "science" is not only the Marxist theory taught by the Hanoi leaders and their followers. For the *Cholon*, it also means living in cooperatives along with members of the *Kinh* majority, many of whom are emigrating from the nearby low hills near the Chinese border for economic, strategic and security reasons.

Since the 1979 war, the tension between China and Vietnam has reduced the freedom of the tribes to cross the border and rebuild their villages as they once did.

## Land and political rights

"All of the minorities support the state in its struggle against foreign aggression," said Dang Ngoo Tanh, one of the *Dao* minority and a member of the Executive Council of the Provincial Popular Committee. "We have a long tradition of patriotism and unity," he offered. Historically, the ethnic minorities of Vietnam have simply tried to

avoid getting caught in the middle of the clashes between the *Kinh* majority and the Chinese.

Immediately after the victory over the United States in 1975 and the reunification of the country a year later, the Hanoi government tried to integrate these tribes into Vietnamese society. There was resistance among some, such as the *Hmong*, many of whom had fought along with North American troops in Laos.

"There was some disunity," Tahn recognized, "but that disappeared as soon as some things were explained by the comrades (of the Communist Party)." Today there are few apparent signs of tension between the tribes and the state. Unlike other counties of the region, Vietnam has given them land and granted them citizenship.

Some members of ethnic minorities demonstrate a firm knowledge of Marxist theory, although few are up on the new currents of economic thought in the socialist world or the steps that Hanoi is taking towards economic reform. But it is no easy job to convert the minorities.

## Provide more information

"We can't hope that the minorities will easily accept science," noted Le Thi Nam Tuyet, a professor of ethnology and a member of the National Social Science Committee. The focus of most of Tuyet's research is on the role of the woman in the family and labor. An expert on tribal cultures, she believes that some traditions clearly reflect backwardness. "There are good and bad aspects of the cult of ancestors. The state does not interfere in religious matters, but it tries to provide more information so that the minorities will come to their own conclusions," she explained.

One example of backwardness cited by Tuyet was the ignorance among the tribes with regard to the role of medicine. Assistance during birth, for example, was considered a sin by many groups. Women used to go alone into the jungle to give birth. Before leaving they were subjected to a diet of rice and sat. Today, medical attention is still



limited, but at least women can give birth at home. And the minorities no longer limit their efforts to appeals to the spirits but take their sick to the provincial hospital.

During our visit we noticed that family planning projects had already begun in these remote regions. In the past, women were drained physically and many died while giving birth to their seventh or eighth child. Today, the number of children per couple has dropped substantially. Also, with the new family legislation and increased consciousness, less valued and disfigured children receive greater protection. Before they were mistreated and sometimes killed.

#### A new role for women

Poligamy and the sale of wives have been opposed by the state, as has the custom of bequeathing a deceased man's wives to his brothers. Tuyet pointed out that the new marriage law is not directed only toward male-dominated groups but also toward the many matriarchal societies that remain in Vietnam, especially in the central highlands. "In those communities, women can have several husbands and men don't have a say in the work of the society nor in the home," Tuyet pointed out.

Currently, women carry out the majority of the labor in most communities, but leaders hope that this will change as girls receive some type of vocational or technical education.

In both cities and rural areas, more than half of girls receive some form of education, including courses in nursing and teaching. "Not too long ago, most of the tribal women were illiterate," noted Tuyet, emphasizing that although financial resources are scarce, the government is now providing instruction to the minorities in both Vietnamese and in their native languages.

Those minority groups with written languages are encouraged to teach them. But Chinese Mandarin – which many of the tribes know due to their proximity to the border – is discouraged.

Unfortunately, the scarcity of re-

sources for research into the cultures of the minority groups, their languages and histories has limited advances in this area. Without improvements in the study of their cultures, it is difficult to protect tribal interests.

The government is trying to find an equilibrium between traditional cultures and new ideas. "As scientists we suggest that the state improve the general cultural level of the minorities – not just helping them progress in exclusively material terms," Tuyet said.

One example of the type of progress that the anthropologist would like to see is the attitude adopted by a Dao family in the central region. This family of nine maintains its traditional structure, with the grandparents taking care of the

children while the parents work in the rice fields. "These children will be happier than their parents and much happier than their grandparents," said Vang Thi Nic, the grandmother, as she sat with her legs crossed in front of the fire. The house they live in, built on wooden piles over the flooded rice fields, is bigger and more solid than that of the grandmother's youth. Domestic utensils are rudimentary, but the family's attitudes are those of modern Vietnamese life.

It is this symbiosis that is desired: Imposing another culture would never be successful. "The minorities have their history and they will never forget it," explained the anthropologist.

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# Volunteers for North America

Filipino groups charge the U.S. Peace Corps with being a negative cultural influence and claim that some volunteers may be playing intelligence roles



The U.S. Peace Corps is ostensibly designed to promote development: some Filipinos think otherwise

By Cynthia P. Allanigue and  
Maurice B. Malanes\*

**T**he U.S. Peace Corps is under attack by several Filipino organizations that would like to see that country follow in the footsteps of 34 nations that have banned the governmental aid organization.

Raul Segovia, chairman of the militant Alliance of Concerned Teachers and a leader of the anti-Peace Corps drive, stressed that "we are not against the volunteers nor the Peace Corps program per se." He explained that what the groups consider objectionable is the Peace Corps historical role as "an expression of U.S. policies in the Third World to serve U.S. interests." He argued that the program has been used by the U.S. government and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) "to contain resurgent nationalism in the country."

The Peace Corps were established in the 1960s under then-U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Soon thereafter, they set up shop in the Philippines. Early in the program's history, the emphasis was on sending North American youths to Third World countries to provide services and teach skills, which, ac-

cording to the North American perception, the United States could give.

But behind the benevolent façade was a political motive to project the United States as a partner of Third World countries in need of skills only the Western world had. In the mid-60s, some Peace Corps volunteers in the Philippines quit, charging that the program perpetuated "feudal structures," pushing Filipinos further into poverty. According to these ex-volunteers, the Peace Corps, characterized by its closeness to local politicians, has perpetuated the very social structures that must be changed.

The Peace Corps program was also entangled with U.S. intelligence. A Peace Corps report revealed the CIA's use of the program for its own purposes. CIA operatives were sent to the Philippines under Peace Corps cover to gather intelligence.

The program has also been charged with cultivating foreign, specifically North American, consciousness — a major sticking point with current Filipino opponents to the corps.

In 1987, the Philippine Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the United States Embassy signed a new agreement. In July of last year, about 90 Peace Corps volunteers arrived

in the Philippines and were assigned all over the country (except in Mindanao) to teach mathematics, science and English. Under the agreement, the Philippine government finances the volunteers, including housing and transportation expenses.

Segovia said that the foreign instructors are teaching in the elementary grades and "will be in contact with Filipino children who are in their most impressionable years." Moreover, Segovia insists, "our teachers possess the same skills. If they had been given half the amount allotted to the U.S. volunteers, they could probably do better."

Segovia challenged the DECS to analyse the Peace Corps role and achievements since the 1960s, which, he charged, it has failed to do. He maintained that the program tightens the U.S. hold on the Philippines rather than enhancing the country's self-reliance; it is funded by the Philippine government; and it does not help Filipino teachers improve their skills. "We do not need the Peace Corps," Segovia insisted. "For such a program to be effective, it should be on a people's organization to people's organization basis, not on a government-to-government basis."

\* Third World Network Features/Philippine News Features.





Guerrillas: volunteers work in areas considered to be NPA strongholds

Ten other teachers organizations from all over the country put forth a joint document called the Nationalist Agenda for Philippine Education, calling on the Philippine Congress to halt to the Peace Corps program.

One of the strongest protests against the Peace Corps program has come from the northern upland town of Sagada. Four Peace Corps volunteers, one of them a retired U.S. Navy man, have been assigned since July 1987 to communities military authorities consider to be supportive of the New People's Army guerrilla opposition. These *barrios* (villages) include Aguid, Agawa, Kilung and Bangaan.

An elder from Aguid, who asked not to be named, said that almost six months after the arrival of a Peace Corp volunteer to set up a fisheries project, no new varieties of fish nor new fishery techniques have been introduced.

The volunteers' rural development programs could be "mere covers" for "hidden purposes," speculated *lakay* (elder) Manzano Domin-eng, 82, a peace-pact holder and negotiator of Aguid.

He compared the Peace Corps volunteers to a group of Japanese technicians who arrived in Sagada before World War II to teach villagers the rudiments of carpentry, rock-crushing and water works. During the outbreak of the

Second World War, the five volunteers turned out to be officials and engineers who had provided maps to the Japanese Imperial Army, Domin-eng said.

The last batch of Peace Corps volunteers left Sagada in 1982. Some rural folk are grateful for the new variety of "miracle rice" they introduced, the water system they helped put up and other village projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

Sagada was the site of a congress of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF), a member-organization of the clandestine National Democratic Front, held in early 1987 during a 60-day truce with the government. Bangaan, the village where the CPDF held a show of guerrilla force during the congress, is where the alleged retired U.S. Navy man has his Peace Corps mission. •

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# Death and Optimism

Death, torture, the dictatorship – these are recurring themes in the recent fiction of Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti

By Beatriz Bissio

**M**ario Benedetti's 50-odd books have been translated into 23 languages. His novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, movie scripts, humor chronicles and song lyrics have earned him an international following. *La Tregua*, a novel published in 16 countries in 12 languages, has been adapted for the stage, radio, television and cinema. The 1974 movie directed by Sergio Renán was a nominee for an Oscar in Hollywood as best foreign film. A television version, directed in 1980 by David Stivel in Colombia, was named that year's best series.

Among other honors, Benedetti received Amnesty International's Gold Flame in 1987 for his novel *Primavera con una esquina rota*. His stage play *Pedro y el capitán* won the prize of best foreign work in Mexico in 1984.

In an interview with *third world* during a recent visit to Brazil, Benedetti talked about his future projects, his days in exile, life and death, and of the joys and disappointments he has experienced since returning to his native Uruguay after a long and forced absence.

*Death seems to be a recurring theme in your recent book of poetry Yesterday y mañana. Why is that?*

– The topic of death has been a part of my books since I began to write. Not that I devoted too much space to it, but my third collection of short stories is entitled *La muerte y otras sorpresas* (Death and other surprises). And in *La*



Benedetti: "One's state of mind influences what one writes"

*Tregua*, Laura Avellaneda's death is central to the story.

*You must admit that your emphasis on death has increased lately.*

– This is probably because, under a dictatorship, death comes to the foreground. In my case, it has been very near me. For one, my father died in 1971. Actually, we were not yet under a dictatorship at the time, but the situation was already very difficult.

Then other people, close friends of mine, died. Like Zelmar Michelini, who was like a brother to me. (Senator Zelmar Michelini of the Frente Amplio, National Party Deputy Hector Gutiérrez Ruiz and two members of the Tupamaro movement were kidnapped and murdered in 1976. The crime was never solved, but there is evidence linking it to the Uruguayan dictatorship.) When we were both in exile in Buenos Aires, we saw each other practically every day. Prior to 1973, I already maintained good relations with Zelmar, we were both leading members of the Frente Amplio. But it was exile that strengthened our friendship. His death was a terrible blow to me.

From the moment they abducted him, together with Gutiérrez Ruiz and two others, to the time when the bodies

were discovered, I kept listening for news on the radio. For 15 days I didn't even leave my hotel room in Havana. My anguish diminished only after I managed to write a poem dedicated to him.

I suffered too many losses in too short a time. The emotional side was the most important, although I regret what we lost politically with Michelini's death. The same applies to Gutiérrez Ruiz, who was also my friend.

And they didn't die by chance.

*Of course not. Their killers chose their targets well. Their absence is keenly felt, especially in Parliament. Their widows have done their best to make up for the loss and have managed to compensate somewhat.*

– Besides these two, several other fellow activists were murdered or tortured. Torture is, to some extent, a form of death. Some young men had their teeth yanked out; others had their hands smashed, and others were nearly drowned, their heads forced into a water tank for as long as they could stand it.

One regrets all those deaths and tortures. When a person who worked side by side with you is being tortured, it is as though it were happening to you.

*Your tendency to write about death, then, is not due to some sort of existential problem.*

– I am in a phase where I tend to reflect upon the problem of death, which is not surprising, since I am already 67. But I also think about life, which forces me to look back. Yet it is not an excessively individualistic stage, although one's state of mind has a great influence on what one writes, at least in my case. Be it as it may, one can't keep



boring the reader with things that happen only in one's own life.

### Blind alleys

Another striking aspect of some of your recent short stories is the theme of a man or woman who seems to have been caught in a blind alley or trapped by fate. They are bitter stories, and the most striking thing is that there seems to be no way out for your characters.

— I don't think my last two narratives, *Geografías* and *Primavera con una esquina rota*, exactly fit this blind-alley model, although some of the short stories in them are rather brutal.

In one of the stories in *Primavera*, the

again after a separation of many, many years. Those are the facts of life, and there is nothing to prevent either one from hoping to reconstruct his or her life by paying new "installments" on a different kind of happiness.

How have your readers reacted to your choice of topics?

— You would be surprised to see letters I received in response to *Primavera* — a novel I thought I was making up — from people who had similar experiences. So if the stories, in a certain manner, present a reality "without a way out," they also reflect the reality of a given moment.

Some of stories in *Geografías* are

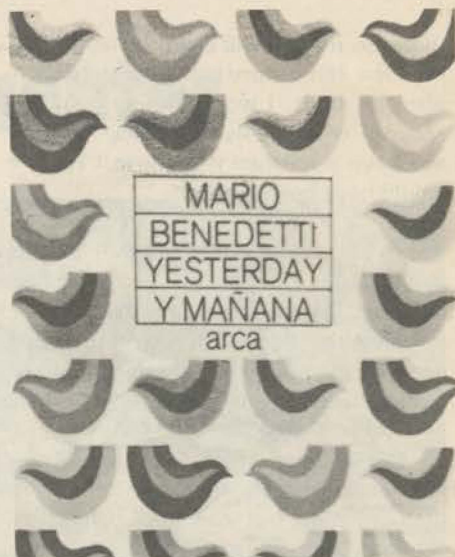
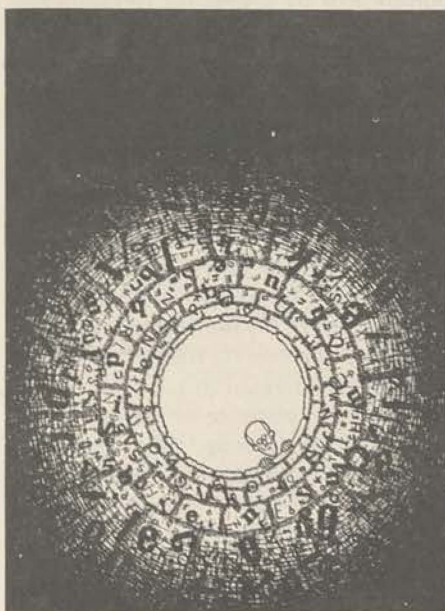


Victims of the dictatorship: Zelmar Michelini (left) and Gutiérrez Ruiz

central character is a political prisoner in a Latin American country who is released from jail after many years and returns to his wife and son. What he meets is very different from what he expected; his wife is living with another man, etc., etc.

In reality, however, those are individual ways in which people emerge from the drama of dictatorship and exile. Dictatorship is such a brutal disruption of society, family and married life, that a person is forced to look for alternatives that will allow him or her to survive. In real life, many couples are separated by dictatorship or exile.

In some cases, only one of them is arrested; in other cases, both are. Sometimes the husband or wife is unable to wait for the other to be released. When they do wait, the couple does not always end up living together



quite shocking, such as the title story and another one called *Balada*. In the latter, a man and his wife realize that, as a result of torture, they cannot have an active sexual life, but decide to remain together. Their frustrated love, however, proves too much for them, and they eventually commit suicide.

### Reflection upon ruins

Can it be said that your more recent novels and short stories portray the reality of Latin America, and especially of Uruguay, in the past decade?

— They are reflections on the devastation, the ruins, the shambles left by the dictatorship inside people and in their relations as human beings. It was dictatorship that blocked the way out for my characters, not I.

Is there no room for optimism among so many ruins?

— Yes. In fact, some of my short stories seem to me to be more optimistic than what I used to write before the dictatorship. An example is *Puentes como liebres*, which tells the story of a man and a woman who have been coming together and breaking up since childhood and, in old age, end up making love on a train in Spain. I was lucky that the story was published before García Márquez's *Love in Times of Cholera*. He probably never read my story, since he seldom reads anything written by other Latin American au-



thors, so no one will claim he borrowed my idea. If my story had been published after his book, I would be immediately accused of plagiarism. In fact, I would not have published it because I know I would have been accused.

*Have you written other stories that deal with hope?*

— Yes. *It Wasn't Dew* tells the story of a man who, during the dictatorship, goes into Uruguay by crossing the Brazilian border. He falls asleep in a field and dreams that he is walking toward his house, from where they are removing a dead man. He can see that he is the dead man, but instead of being discouraged, he thinks, "Yes, that is the man I was and that man is really dead." In other words, he draws a positive conclusion from his dream, no matter how shocking that dream was. There is hope in this story, like in others.

#### The other side

*In some cases, the problem of the executioner sneaks in...*

— Yes. Another story in the book tells about the exile of a torturer, the son of a German survivor of the Graff Spee, who had inherited much of his father's Nazi ideology. (The Graff Spee was a German warship sunk off the Uruguayan coast during World War II. Several surviving crew members settled in Uruguay.) This young man takes up a military career, etc. Years earlier, he had an affair with a woman whose daughter he loved as if she were his own daughter. He separates from this woman, and then the dictatorship sets in. He becomes a torturer. His subordinates usually reserved a special victim for him, often a young girl for him to rape. One day they hand a girl over to him, and he is already raping her when he takes off the hood hiding her face, and discovers that she is his former lover's daughter.

This unforgettable scene keeps recurring in his dreams, until he finally decides to desert and leave the country. He goes to a German town called Uberlingen — close to where Hitler lived. I have been there and know the place well. His dreams continue for another two months, then stop. But when he



thinks his torment is over, the dreams return.

*And what about the remorse of those who weren't strong enough to resist torture?*

— This is the theme of one of my stories in *Geografías*. It is about a man who is in Spain with his wife. Something tragic had happened in his past. When he was in jail, he was brutally tortured and tried to escape further punishment by giving his torturers the address of a house he knew his companions had abandoned long ago. But someone had taken refuge there; he is found and killed. Although the story's main character was not responsible for what happened, he is haunted by remorse, and decides to go to a seaside resort where he intends to kill himself by drowning. He slowly walks into the water, reviewing his life. That's what the story is about — his remembrances as he walks into the sea. He had left a note in his room, addressed to his wife, telling her why he intended to kill himself. He is already in the water up to his neck when he hears the shouts of a child who is drowning. The will to save the child proves stronger than his intention to die. It is as though, by saving that child, he could compensate for the loss of that other life. And then he runs back to his

room, hoping to arrive in time to prevent the maid from reading the note.

*In this case, your character found a way out.*

— I don't object against my characters finding a way out of their plight. But sometimes it's impossible.

#### The trajectory of exile

*You left Uruguay to go to Argentina, then went to Peru, and later to Cuba and Spain. What was your experience in exile?*

— I believe I was in greater danger in Argentina than in Uruguay. My name was included in the "Triple A" (Argentinian Anti-communist Alliance) blacklist, even though I practically did not carry out any political activities there, coming as we were from a defeat in Uruguay.

After I arrived in Peru, I was arrested and later deported to Argentina. I returned to Peru at the invitation of General Leonidas Rodríguez, a top official in the Velasco Alvarado administration, but a few days later I was back on the "wanted" list.

So I decided to go to Cuba, where I remained for nearly four years, working at the Casa de las Américas. I had been in Cuba before, but not as an exile; I had been hired to found and direct the Literary Research Center at Casa de las Américas, and I was a member of their management council on both occasions. It was an important experience for me to participate in the direction of an entity run by the Revolution, to get to know its inner working.

*After you left Cuba, there was speculation that you disagreed with the Revolution.*

— I did not go to Spain because I disagreed with the Cuban Revolution, as people claimed in several countries. On the contrary, I have kept my links with Cuba, and I go back there almost every year. I left Cuba because we, the exiles, felt that the Cuban people already knew that the Uruguayan dictatorship was rotten. On the other hand, there was still much to do in Spain. In fact, I was able to do much work against the Uruguayan dictatorship in Spain, and remained there until I was able to return to Uruguay in 1985.



# Another Bloody Chapter

**A recent incident highlights the continuing murderous encroachment by whites on Indian lands**

*By Memélia Moreira*



**A brutal but not uncommon picture in Brazilian history**

It is a familiar story in Brazilian history. A band of hired gunmen advance on a group of unarmed Indians, attacking them indiscriminately.

The most recent incident took place March 28, when 14 were killed and 21 wounded by men hired by loggers operating in the city of Benjamin Constant, in the state of Amazonas. In the five months prior to the massacre, some 10 Indians had been murdered in Benjamin Constant. Authorities blamed the incidents on the "drunkenness of the Indians."

The truth, however, is that the problem of Indian massacres in Brazil stems from landownership issues and will not be solved until there is a nationwide land reform that addresses the particular needs of Indian minorities.

Indian massacres date as far back as Portuguese colonization in the 16th century. At first, there was a certain balance of power: The weapons used by early Portuguese settlers were not much more sophisticated than the bows, arrows, clubs and blow guns wielded by Tupi, Guarani or Carib tribes. In time, however, the white man's weapons improved considerably, while most Indians continue to use the same war implements as their ancestors. They know nothing about chemical warfare, yet they had a bitter taste of it the early 1970s; they know nothing about air bombings – except to be subjected to them at least twice in the last two decades.

The March 28 slaughter was only a routine, though bloody, replay of this horror show. The following day, the

body of a Pataxó Indian named Djalma Lima was found in the premises of a farm owned by Pedro Leite, one of many whites who have settled on Pataxó Indian land. His head was scalped, his nails had been yanked off, his genitals had been sliced with a knife.

The massacre of Tikuna Indians brought quick action by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the government body responsible for Indian affairs, but for reasons unrelated to the real causes of the problem. FUNAI is a party to contracts with logging companies in the Tikuna areas, and such a scandalous incident might place in jeopardy a stock worth millions of dollars in mahogany and cherry wood extracted from Indian land.

The Tikunas will retaliate, and FUNAI knows it. FUNAI President Romero Jucá Filho has therefore tried to identify the culprits. Although they are heavily armed, the lumberjacks fear the Tikunas who, unlike Roraima's Macuxi Indians, are a warrior tribe – and there is evidence that their reaction has already begun. On April 10, a 16-year-old boy remotely linked to the loggers was found dead. Other bodies are expected to appear on the streets of Benjamin Constant or in the forests of the Tikuna territory.

The land question, which lies at the

bottom of all this carnage, is usually sidestepped by FUNAI and the media. FUNAI's reluctance to demarcate Indian areas – awaiting a final decision of the Brazilian National Security Council – and the decision of the Brazilian Settlement and Agrarian Reform Institute (INCRA) to implement new settlement projects on Tikuna territory were the real reasons for the massacre.

FUNAI has had a total of 13 presidents since it was created in 1967 – some of whom were dismissed under charges of corruption. Organizational malfunction, continuous policy changes and the country's unruly landowning structures give little hope for Brazilian Indian tribes. Meanwhile, the Indian population continues to dwindle due to forced displacement, famine and outright murder. An Indian population that stood at five million Indians when the first 1,200 Portuguese colonists set foot in Brazil has dwindled to about 220,000.

## A sinister horror story

Massacres on Indian reservations usually result from pent-up tension from decades-old land disputes. Indians have been slaughtered in Roraima, Mato Grosso do Sul and the northeast, in encounters with loggers, gold prospectors, squatters, Brazilian companies



## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

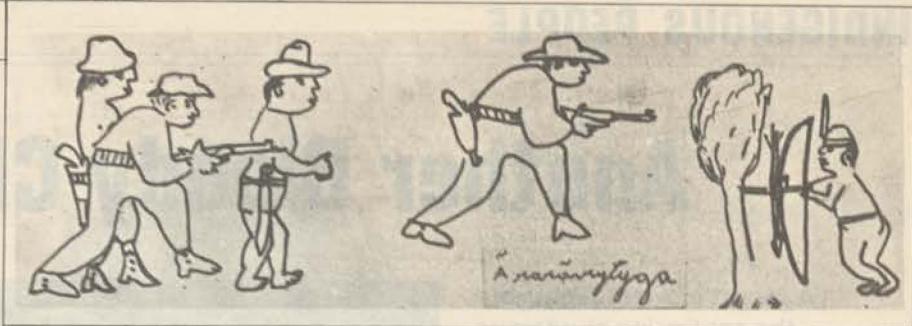
and transnational corporations. Farmers and miners are among the Indians' worst enemies.

Two potential areas of conflict exist in the far northwestern territory of Roraima – the Yanomami and Makuxi areas. The Yanomami are known as the world's largest remaining primitive group. Some 18,000 are scattered in Roraima, Amazonas and neighboring Venezuela. Under their soil lies an astounding wealth of mineral ores, including gold, cassiterite, uranium, bauxite and tungsten.

Free of control by the Brazilian agency charged with monitoring their activities, 5,000 miners have settled on Yanomami land. The only two organizations that protested against such intrusion have been expelled from the area: the Missionary Indigenist Council (CIMI), with links to the Brazilian Conference of Bishops (CNBB), and the Committee for Creation of a Yanomami Park (CCPY). Both were evicted last year by FUNAI President Jucá Filho.

In the savannah section of Roraima, the Makuxi are under pressure by FUNAI and local authorities – among them the territory's Security Secretary, Colonel Mena Barreto – to relinquish part of their reservation. Resisting Indians can be arrested, although no charges can be leveled against them. While the Yanomami try to keep their land free from gold miners, things are more serious for the Makuxi, faced as they are with powerful landowners – both farmers and representatives of business groups from the developed southern part of the country. Other areas of potential conflict with prospectors are the Gorotire and Munduruku, in Pará, the Uru-eu-Wau-Wau, in Rondônia, and the Waiana-Apalai, in Amapá.

Mining enterprises also contribute to conflict between Indians and whites. The most active companies are Paranapanema and Brumadinho. They operate in the territory inhabited by a confederate indigenous group known as Waimiri-Atroari along the limits between the state of Amazonas and the territory of Roraima. Over 200,000 hectares of Waimiri land have been occupied by Paranapena mines, and since 1982 the



### A child's representation of the land conflict

area has been tense. The Brumadinho mining group has been operating since 1975 in Suruí and Arara Indian territory.

### Conflicts and casualties

In the southern state of Paraná, the country's last large reserve of pine trees, located in Kaingang territory, has been the scene of permanent conflicts and murder. Land grabbing seems to be a tradition in the state, one that recently found a new adherent in the state government itself. Back in 1940, then Paraná Governor Moisés Lupion granted the Forte-Khourí group the title of extensive estates in Kaingang territory, inaugurating the devastation of pine trees. The Forte-Khourí group later transferred the land titles to the Italian Slaviero logging group. The Kaingang reaction was to attempt to peacefully reoccupy their land. Many were killed, including their leader Angelo Kretã. The coldblooded killing of Kretã in 1980 shook public opinion. Yet his replacement was murdered a year later, and the Kaingang's land claims are still pending in the Supreme Court.

State-owned companies have also created conflicts with Brazilian Indians. Petrobrás and Vale do Rio Doce have clashed with Indians several times, but since both are considered to be of paramount importance in their respective areas of activity – oil and iron mining – the government has attempted to make them live peacefully with Indians by improving Indian facilities, allowing Indians to preserve their cultural traditions, building schools, infirmaries and, at times, attenuating the harm that they cause to the environment.

Petrobrás has clashed with the Mura, Katurina, Kananari and Kurubo tribes in the Amazon, and some of the compa-

ny's camps have been attacked by Kurubo Indians in far-western Amazonia. As for Vale, its Carajás Project has already brought about endless tension with the Guajajara Indians in the state of Maranhão and Gavião Indians in Pará. And in the northeast, the transnational Rio Zinc faces potential conflict with the Potiguara Indians in the state of Paraíba. Conflicts could break out at any time.

## Bloody figures

From the massacre of 10,000 Tupi-nambá Indians in the state of Maranhão two centuries ago to the Tikuna massacre in March, a continuous, systematic war of extinction has been waged against Indians in Brazil. One of the most shocking occurred in 1966, when the Arruda Junqueira construction company played a central role in what became known as the Massacre of Parallel 11. Bags of sugar mixed with arsenic were dumped over Indian territory by company airplanes. Over the next few days, Indians died by the hundreds. But when reconnaissance flights revealed that many had survived, two-engine airplanes flew over the area and machine-gunned another 100. Not content with this carnage, Arruda Junqueira men landed in the village, hanged Indian women from trees and cut their bodies in pieces with machetes.

In 1971, Brazilian government airplanes sprayed 42 Waimiri-Atroari Indians with defoliant during construction of the Manaus-Caracari highway. Those 42 were demonstrating against the building of a road through their lands by the Brazilian army. Since then, the community's population of 3,600 has been reduced to 376.

Shocking as they are, these episodes are representative of the treatment that Indians have received in Brazil. ●



# Standing Guard Over Mother Earth



Charting destruction: a Brazilian Indian points out major development projects

By Essma Ben Hamida

**W**e are inextricably linked to our land, we belong to it and cannot survive if we are forcibly removed from it." This was the dramatic message delivered recently in Milan, Italy, by a delegate of the North American Navajo Indians to the International Meeting of American Indigenous Peoples organized by the Luigi Negro Foundation and other European non-governmental organizations dedicated to the study of ethnic cultures.

Also attending the meeting were representatives of Ecuadoran Shuars, Chilean Mapuches, Argentinian Collas, Panamanian Kunas and Brazilian Kregaks. All delivered the same message to European peoples: "We, the Indians, are Mother Earth's best guardians."

## Respect for Nature

"For thousands years, the indigenous peoples of the three Americas have lived in perfect harmony with nature. Our relationship with the earth is a deep and dynamic one. Our social and spiritual roots stem from the *uhiri* ('earth' in Yanomami)," said Thereza Shiki, an elderly representative of the Shuars.

Críspulo Pukso Igualikinya, a representative of the Panamanian Kuna Indians, added that respect for the natural

environment is one of the fundamentals of indigenous cultures. "We hunt and fish for food, not for fun as white people do. Our territory has become a unique place on earth where animals seek refuge against the threats of destruction brought upon them by the white man's civilization," he said.

Ramón Gil Barros, representing the Colombian Koguis, eloquently explained how man's relationship with nature is viewed by his community. For the past 500 years the Koguis have lived in Sierra Nevada, 5,000 meters above sea level, in a place, he said, "where we are the trees and the trees are living beings; where we are water and the water is we; where we are air, and if we damage the atmosphere, we will quickly die."

"The white man comes to our land, takes advantage of it, exploits its resources, and then leaves," said Roberto Cruz, of the Canadian Kwakiuti group and a member of the International Council on the Indigenous Treaty. "Now, when the earth's natural resources are threatened with extinction, the white civilization is seeking ways to reach the moon and the planets."

## Hope lies with the young

Douglas George, representing the U.S. Mohawks, charged that Indo-Europeans "show no respect for nature or for indigenous peoples. No natural disaster," he pointed out, "has brought as much devastation upon earth as Western civilization." He added that

over 140 species of birds were exterminated in the U.S. by the early European settlers.

In turn, elderly Wallace Black Elk, who witnessed the massacre of Indians at Wounded Knee and is a grandson of a legendary Sioux chief, said that the white man "has not only destroyed our land and rivers and robbed the treasures left by our ancestors, but is now turning our graveyards into disposal sites for their toxic radioactive wastes."

As has been the case with the Brazilian Yanomami, entire indigenous communities in several countries are being displaced to make room for huge dams, hydroelectric plants and railways financed by the World Bank, the European Economic Community and transnational corporations.

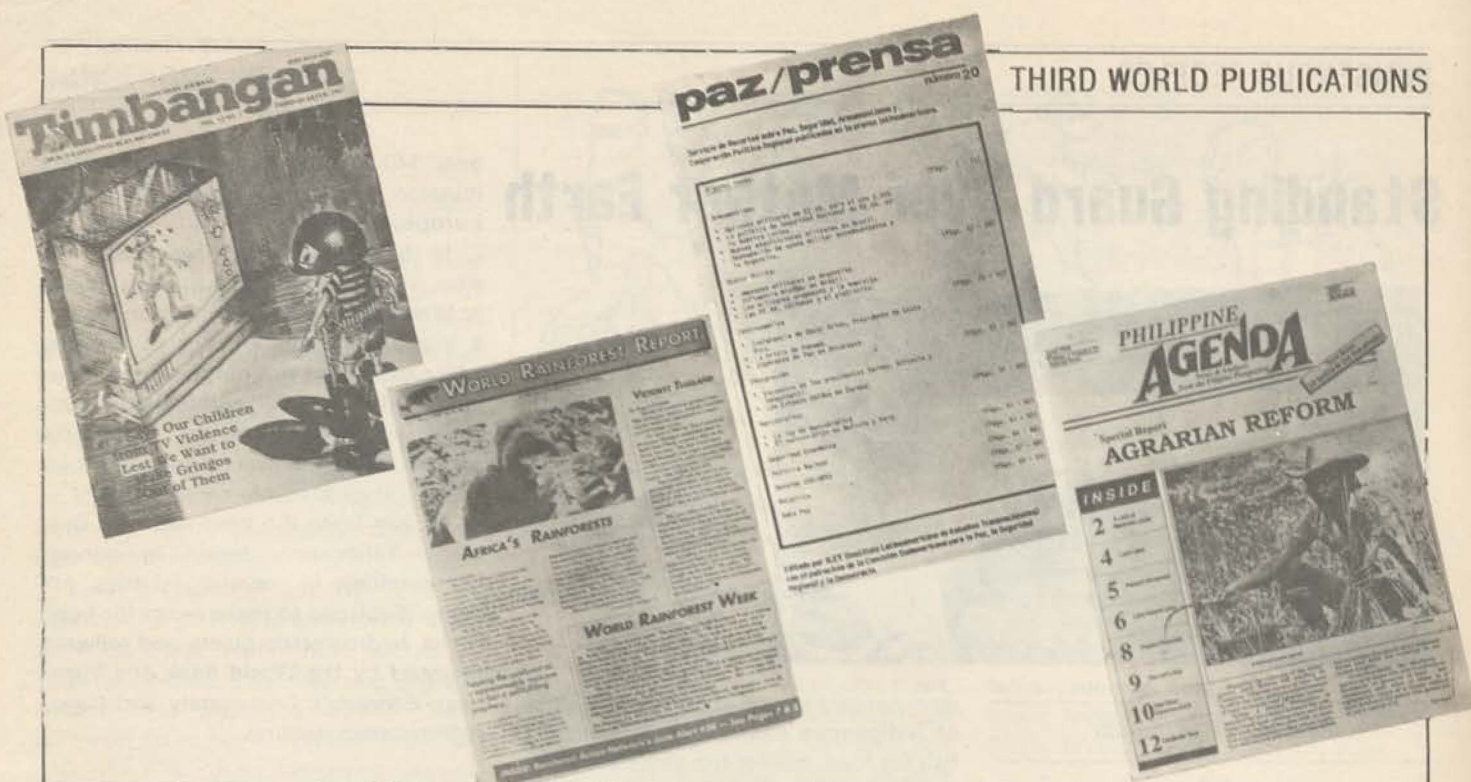
## The pitfalls of paternalism

Several of the speakers at the Milan meeting argued that the solidarity of Western youth – increasingly aware that what is at stake is the future of our planet – is one of their main hopes of survival. Airtón Krenak, a Yanomami representative, appealed to the conscience of European peoples: "You can put pressure on your governments to make them stop financing such projects. Destruction of the Amazonian environment will mean the extermination of our people and cause additional ecological disasters on the rest of the planet."

As for what Northern countries can do to ensure the survival of indigenous peoples, Colla delegate Jorge Valiente Quipildor addressed the following appeal to the International Foundation for Agricultural Development (IFAD): "To achieve economic and cultural well-being, we need only a few, simple technological resources. We do not need to be developed by other people."

According to IFAD official Roberto Haudry de Soucy, indigenous peoples can promote their own development because, "although they are still poor and face a complete lack of investment funds, they have a deep insight into nature and the environment, and such knowledge will allow them to develop their own resources without destroying them."





**INDONESIA NEWS SERVICE** – A digested translation into English of Indonesian sources like *Jawa Pos*, *Kompas*, *Suara Pembaruan*, *Tempo*, *Jakarta Post*, *Newsgrid*, and *Northern Territory News* – fleshed out by material gleaned from the major wire services. INS is a principal source of information on Indonesia for human rights monitors in governments and non-governmental organizations. Each bi-weekly issue contains six pages of detailed news and analysis. Indonesia News Service, Indonesia Publications, 7538 Newberry Lane, Sanham-Seabrook, Maryland, 20706, USA.

**TIMBANGAN** – The quarterly journal of a church-based consumers movement is one of several lively publications coming out of the Philippines in the post-Marcos era. Its focus is on the political implications of consumer issues. An opening editorial in a recent issue seems to sum up the magazine's approach: "True, nothing has been done yet to protect us from manipulations and abuses, not under a supposedly 'new' government with its technocrat-dominated cabinet and landlord class-dominated Congress. But we, the consumers, can generate power for our own protection through the rich experience and lessons we gained from our

struggle even before the EDSA revolution and our relentless fight to uphold our welfare, even beyond it." NCCP Ecumenical Center, 879 Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines.

**PHILIPPINE AGENDA** – A weekly publication which claims to provide the real story behind the news of Philippine affairs. It covers the week's top stories, provides in-depth interviews and analysis – focusing on politics and the economy – and provides coverage of the various regions of the country. Sometimes it devotes extra space to a special report on issues like agrarian reform or U.S. bases in the Philippines. Crossroads Publications, 1353 Leon Guinto, Ermita, Manila, Philippines.

**PAZ/PRENSA** – A service providing newspaper cuttings on peace, security, arms and political-regional issues published in the Latin American press. Most of the articles come from Chilean, Brazilian, Mexican, Argentine and Uruguayan papers. It is published by the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies with the sponsorship of the South American Commission for Peace, Regional Security and Democracy. (Most articles in Spanish, some in

Portuguese). Casilla 16-637, Correo 9, Santiago, Chile.

*We recently came across two important publications that happen to be published under the same name, focus on the same problem, but which have distinctive styles.*

**WORLD RAINFOREST REPORT** – Published quarterly by the World Rainforest Movement, which includes organizations in Malaysia, Kenya, India, Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. It includes articles on the struggle to save the world's rainforests, book reviews, and alerts designed to help activists respond to global events. Rainforest Action Network, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, CA, 94133, USA.

**WORLD RAINFOREST REPORT** – A periodic publication of the Rainforest Information Centre in Lismore, Australia, this report circulates in over 80 countries. It is a good source on the state of forest destruction and the various campaigns to halt it. Biologist and author Paul Erlich said, "A lot of scientists like me depend on *World Rainforest Report*." Rainforest Information Centre, P.O. Box 368, Lismore 2480, Australia.





The culprit (left) and the victims (right) in Bhopal: other plants kill more quietly

# A Slow-Motion Bhopal

A quiet but widespread disaster is brewing due to pesticide production and use in the Third World

By David Weir\*

In the tropical hill country south of Jakarta, Indonesia, a thin column of smoke rising above the palm trees signals the arrival of a new day. From the first kitchen fires come smells of tea and rice, as the yard animals start to stamp and bleat, breaking the silence of the cool night air. Several village women set out, wearing large straw hats, flowered sarongs, and plastic zorries, and carrying large knives and baskets for collecting firewood.

The names of most of the villages in this district start with *ci* (pronounced "chi"), a prefix which means water. Fast-moving streams wash down from the nearby Gede and Pongrango moun-

tains, and incessant rains draw a lush growth out of weak orange soils, making agriculture possible. Bamboo grows everywhere, as do bananas, papayas, palms, and many other plants. Crops in the fields include cabbage, corn, carrots, onions, and the tomatoes which are served, fresh cut, with spiced *nasi* (fried rice) at breakfast to visitors.

It is difficult here, at first glance, to detect the warning signs of danger from Western-style high technology. Everything seems too rural and *quiet* to be threatened by the kind of holocaust which enveloped Bhopal, India, in December 1984. There, 170,000 pounds of toxic gas erupted from a storage tank at a pesticide manufacturing plant, killing thousands of people and injuring hundreds of thousands of others living nearby in what was the worst industrial

disaster in history.

Yet here in a village called Cicadas, villagers say that they have suffered from a sort of "slow-motion Bhopal" over the past few years, with a few deaths at a time caused by gases released from a nearby pesticide formulating plant. In the middle of Cicadas, a small sign shaped like an arrow points the way down a red dirt road to the site of the controversy — a clearing where two low, nondescript buildings stand

\* Copyright 1987, Center for Investigative Reporting (CIR). David Weir is executive director of CIR, in San Francisco, California, U.S.A., a non-profit organization that produces articles, books, and television and radio reports. He is co-author of *Circle of Poison* (Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1981); and author of *The Bhopal Syndrome: Pesticide Manufacturing and the Third World* (Sierra Club Books, 1987) from which this article was adapted.



## ENVIRONMENT

behind a chainlink fence with gates manned by guards.

One of these buildings houses the DDT formulation plant of P.T. Mantrose Pestindo Nusantara, a joint venture between Indonesian and North American interests, which supplies most of the world's water dispersible DDT powder. Though the use of DDT has been banned in most developed countries for many years, it is still used in many parts of the Third World, mainly against malaria-bearing mosquitos.

### Burning waste products

Starting in mid-August 1984, the company began burning its waste products at night from time to time, producing smoke and dust which blanketed the area. Soon after, the villagers say they started to suffer from the symptoms of chemical poisoning, including choking, vomiting, foaming at the mouth, and constricted breathing. Domestic animals, including goats and cows, died; then some of the villagers themselves started to die. By June 1985,



India: shantytowns alongside factories



Different conditions in the Third World: poverty, malnutrition, illness

25 were reported to have died at Cicadas.

At that point, investigators from two citizens' groups learned of the DDT poisonings and called a press conference in Jakarta, demanding that authorities shut down the Mantrose plant. The call coincided with the launch of a campaign against the so-called Dirty Dozen pesticides (including DDT) identified by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) as severe threats to human health and the environment in Third World countries. PAN is a global coalition of groups and individuals opposed to the use of pesticides wherever local conditions preclude safe use.

In the wake of the tragedy at Bhopal, governments all over the world are taking the threat of technological disaster more seriously, and Indonesia is no exception. President Suharto himself responded to the news of DDT poisonings at Cicadas by ordering an immediate investigation.

"The government formed a high-caliber commission that came in and stayed at our plant site for five to seven days and reviewed the entire operation, and made recommendations," said Gleb Barsky, president of U.S.-based Barsky Sales, which is closely affiliated with P.T. Mantrose. "They said, 'get a better incinerator,' which I had been saying for years, and then they gave the plant a clean bill of health."

Barsky disputes the villagers' contention that the plant caused anyone to die. "I don't see the connection. It was only waste bags that had contained DDT that were being burned. There is not enough DDT in those waste bags to get a mosquito to sneeze."

"Now, if you burn DDT, you can release phosgene (a nerve gas infamous from its use in World War I) unless it's done right," Barsky explained. "But as long as the temperature is high enough, there's no problem. Was there visible smoke? Yes. Was there a bad odor? Yes, no question about that. I insisted they clean up their act, get a better incinerator and a higher chimney."

The deaths at Cicadas, if due to DDT, are part of a growing problem throughout the Third World. With the markets for agricultural use of pesticides largely





Pesticides in Africa: banned products sold through "funny purchasing agents"

saturated in the industrialized countries, companies with international connections are moving into the Third World at an unprecedented pace. In Africa, for instance, pesticide use was projected to have *quintupled* during the past decade, and overall growth in the South is probably twice that in the U.S.

#### Different conditions

But conditions in the Third World are quite unlike those in Europe and the U.S., as multinational corporations like Union Carbide, which owned the plant at Bhopal, have begun to discover. Malnutrition, illiteracy, illness, short life expectancy, and unrelenting poverty are the norm. Worker protection, unions, and environmental regulations are virtually nonexistent.

As soon as a plant opens, shantytowns and squatter settlements begin to appear nearby, filled with people hoping for jobs or at least the chance to sell goods to those lucky enough to be employed there. At Cicadas, for example, villagers are living literally next door to the Mantrose DDT plant and its companion facility, a formulation plant jointly

owned by the U.K.-based multinational ICI, and an Indonesian national company, Agrico.

ICI Work Manager M.A. Nasution acknowledges the problem. "Yes there are slums all around our plant," said Nasution. "The people live even between the fences of our plant and the one operated by Mantrose. Some of the poor sit in front of the factory as vendors, hoping to sell little things to the workers when they come and go."

ICI's plant formulates a number of products, the best-known of which is the herbicide paraquat, another of PAN's Dirty Dozen. Throughout Southeast Asia, studies have shown that paraquat, which has no known antidote, has become a major cause of death, both accidental and suicidal.

Another of ICI's products illustrates the tragic disparity between the high-technology world of the global corporations and the desperate poverty in the fields of Indonesia. The company's rat-killer, *Klerat*, is a lump of rice coated with poison, intended for use in fields and storage areas where rodents cause damage. During a drought in 1983, however, starving villagers in several

parts of the country gathered *Klerat* and tried to use it for food. Knowing it was a poison, they washed it repeatedly before cooking and eating it. Nevertheless, in Lampung, Sumatra, 20 people died; in Musi Banju, three more succumbed; in Kemcamatan, West Kalimantan, two others. Now the company is trying a new method - coating the rodenticide in wax - in order to keep its product on the market.

Taken as a whole, the estimates of pesticide poisoning victims around the world are staggering. According to the World Health Organization, about one million people are poisoned by pesticides every year, around 20,000 of them fatally. A disproportionate percentage of the victims live in the South. And with the explosion in pesticide sales now taking place all over the Third World, the number of victims can only grow.

It is to be closer to the booming agrochemical markets that multinationals like Union Carbide and ICI have opened plants in places like Bhopal and Cicadas. But they are hardly alone. The Agricultural Chemicals Division of Bayer, which is the world's largest pesticide company, sells its products through 50 overseas subsidiaries in over 100 countries. Sixty percent of the 125 countries where Union Carbide does business have smaller economies than does the corporation. While Carbide was able to achieve sales averaging over US\$86,000 per employee in a recent year, the per capita gross national product of India, where Carbide had 14 plants, is only US\$260.

#### Poison Rice

But the Third World pesticide explosion is not simply a case of global corporations profiting at the expense of poor, illiterate peasants. There are many other factors at work, some of which do not fit quite so neatly into common stereotypes or preconceptions. The stated rationale for increasing pesticide use is, of course, to kill pests in order to grow more food. A simple look at world population trends underscores the importance of that goal.

Partly hoping to stimulate increased food production, many Third World gov-



ernments heavily subsidize pesticide sales to farmers. In Indonesia, the government serves as intermediary between producers and farmers, absorbing much of the cost – as much as 80 percent for some pesticides. A recent study found that other governments have similar policies throughout Africa, Asia, and South America.

Under the rubric of foreign aid, many industrialized countries are subsidizing pesticide shipments to Third World markets, as well. Since being sued by environmental groups, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) has stopped its controversial practice of openly sending as aid pesticides which had been banned for use in the U.S., though Gleb Barsky of Mantrose said that AID continues to use "funny African purchasing agents" to buy DDT from Mantrose for use in Africa.

In Third World countries, furthermore, government officials often profit directly from pesticide sales. The former minister of agriculture in one Central American country was also a major pesticide importer; and in Indonesia, according to Barsky, involvement in the agrochemical business reaches into the ruling family. "One of the partners (in the Mantrose DDT operations) is the son of the president of the republic," Barsky explained.

In addition to conflicts-of-interest,

Third World regulators often seem ignorant of the hazards presented by pesticide plants surrounded by slums. "Environmental safeguards are irrelevant," India's late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi once stated, "Poverty is our greatest environmental hazard."

"In the developing countries, and this is my own opinion, we don't have such good safety consciousness," said M.S. Sitanggang, ICI's marketing manager in Indonesia. It is problems like poor safety measures, suicides, chronic misuse, weak regulations, and hungry people eating rat poison that causes PAN and others to question whether pesticides are an appropriate technology for Third World societies.

#### The bottom line

The "bottom line" of all such debates, however, revolves around food production. In that light, it is important to examine more closely the crops responsible for most of the Third World's pesticide consumption. The list is a revealing one: cotton (especially in Central America), coffee, tea, winter fruits and vegetables (in places like northern Mexico), rubber plantations (in Southeast Asia), and other estate crops like cocoa and oil palm. All of these crops, food and non-food alike, are destined mainly for the export markets of

Europe, Japan, Australia, and the U.S.

Studies of imported food at U.S. ports have shown how what has been labeled a circle of poison now shadows the international food supply system. Pesticides banned or heavily restricted inside the U.S. are exported to, or produced by local subsidiaries of multinationals in many Third World countries for use on crops grown for North American consumers. Residues of these same pesticides can be measured in imported coffee, tea, meat, fruits, vegetables, and so on. Nobody can say what the long-term health effects of consuming contaminated food will be, but laboratory animals suffer cancer, birth defects, genetic damage, and other central nervous system or reproductive problems when exposed to residues in their food.

The irony of the Third World's pesticide problem, then, is that consumers in the developed countries may turn out to be among its victims. The world's food supply system has become so interwoven that the preferences of consumers in New York, Paris, or Sydney have major repercussions for farmworkers and chemical plant neighbors in Bhopal, Jakarta, or Rio de Janeiro.

In the process, the whole world bears some responsibility for the increasing likelihood of future Bhopal-type catastrophes. Jan Huismans, an official with the United Nations Environment Program in Geneva, Switzerland, said he has seen hazardous pesticide plants all over the Third World. "In Africa, for example, they start with a little planning and try to locate these plants outside a populated area. But in no time, these cities grow and the industrial areas are engulfed by population settlement, surrounded by shantytowns. Also, there are no adequate waste disposal facilities for these plants. There is a lack of awareness generally about how dangerous pesticides are. There's a lack of skilled regulatory personnel and controls. There is, in sum, a whole syndrome of problems."

"The Bhopal Syndrome," it might be called – a disease of the modern world, and one which touches everybody, through contaminated food or water, all over the planet.



Heavy spraying: residues appear in coffee, tea, meat, fruit, vegetables



# Poison Milk, Contaminated Bread

Scandals involving the ingestion of pesticides have rocked Zambia and strengthened a movement calling for stricter controls

By Sam Sikazwe\*

Zambia's environmental experts have expressed increasing concern about the mounting danger of chemical and gas poisoning and urged the government to effect tough measures to combat the problem. Various groups, including the Entomological Association of Zambia, are calling for the establishment of a public board to monitor the importation and control of pesticides.

Several scandals have rocked the country, causing environmentalists to step up their efforts for more government control. In 1987, the country's major supplier of dairy products, the Dairy Produce Board (DPB), sold milk contaminated with dieldrin, a dangerous pesticide known to cause cancer. Scores of people in Lusaka and on the north-western copperbelt were admitted to hospitals and treated for food poisoning. The Zambian government was forced to ban some farmers in a southern province who had supplied the milk laced with aldrin and dieldrin to the DPB.

Also last year, more than 1,000 people were admitted to hospitals for suspected food poisoning after eating contaminated bread. The frequency of such incidents compelled the Ministry of Health to direct urban councils to closely monitor bakeries. This directive came in the wake of an analysis of flour samples after 350 people, including children, were overcome with drowsiness and hysteria after eating baked goods.

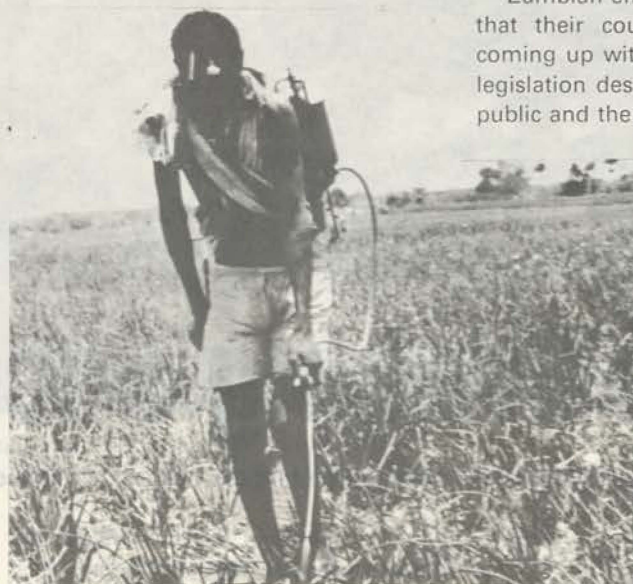
Fish and wildlife have been killed by pesticides and chemicals, which find their way into the country's lakes and rivers.

John Hudson, executive director of the influential Commercial Farmers Bureau, said that pesticides like dieldrin – widely used to control termites on

maize – may have been washed from fields into streams and dams. Hudson has called for boreholes and dam water on farms to be tested for dieldrin.

The exact number of Zambians who have been exposed to chemical hazards is not known. Sources at the Ministry of Health confirmed that neither its central statistical offices nor any government office keeps specific records on the victims of chemical poisoning.

Farm laborers who spray chemicals



on commercial farms face the greatest chemical risks, owing to illiteracy, lack of knowledge on how to handle dangerous chemicals and the lack of protective clothing.

Over the past few years, there has been worldwide concern over the West's dumping of dangerous agrochemicals on Third World countries. Reports by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Health Organization say that although Third World countries use only 20 percent of the world's pesticides, they have the lion's share of chemical poisonings. Each year, some 400,000 people in the South suffer serious accidental poi-

soning and of these, about 100,000 die. A report by the International Organization of Consumers Unions shows that six pesticides, restricted in the United States, are finding their way to some Third World countries.

Frequent incidents of chemical poisoning have prompted several African governments to seriously look for ways to protect their people and environments. In September 1987, delegates from 23 African countries, including Zambia, met for the first time in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, to review and assess their capabilities of tackling the growing chemical hazards.

Zambian environmentalists complain that their country has been slow in coming up with a plan of action. While legislation designed to protect both the public and the environment exists, there is no enforcement mechanism.

Kenneth Mapni, chief inspector of factories, said that authorities could not crush the dangers of pesticides, because they have no effective equipment to determine the toxicity of substances used in industry. Former Conservator of Natural Resources Emmanuel Chikumayo noted that

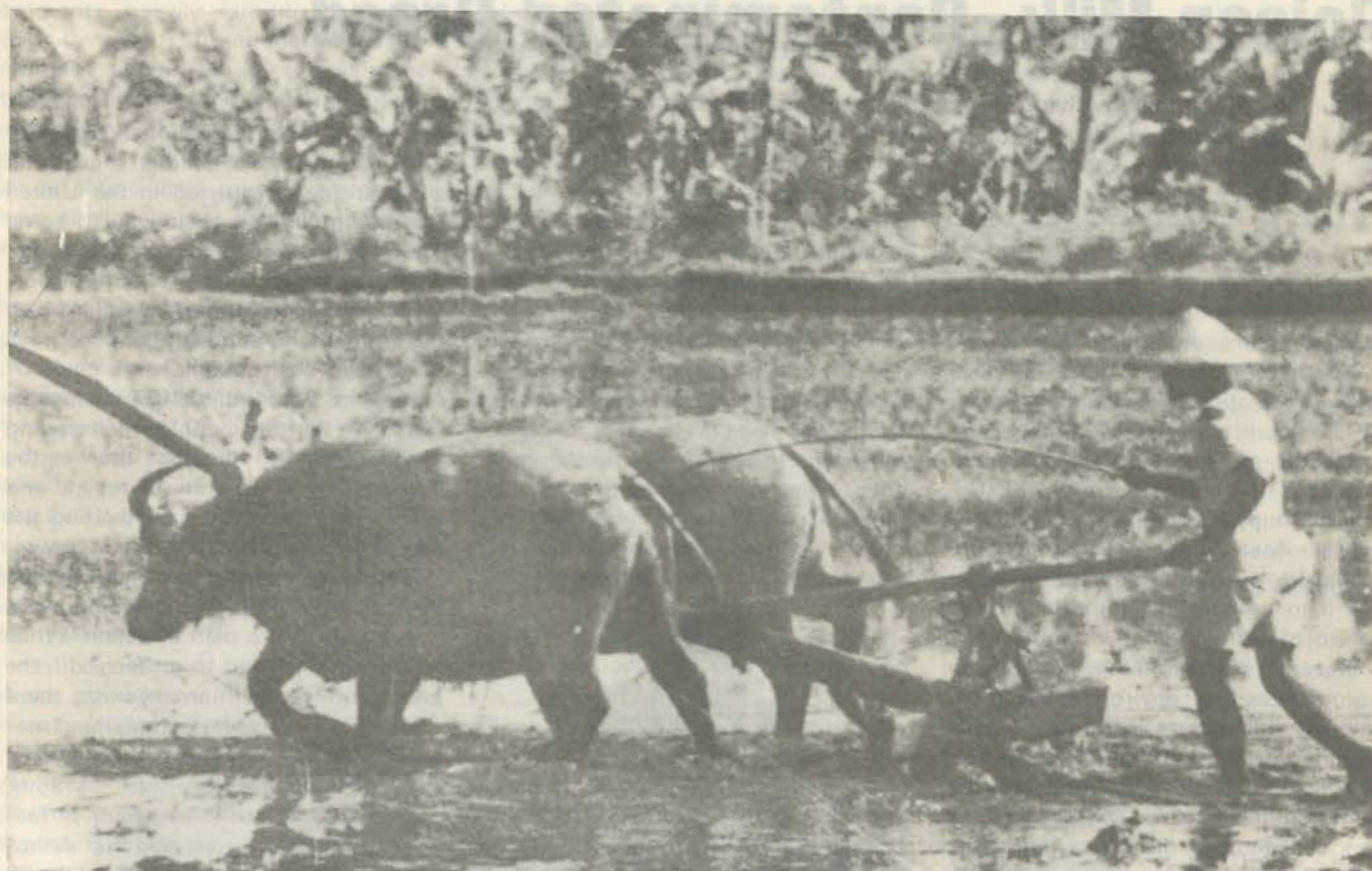
owing to the lack of an effective pollution control agency, industries have stopped monitoring their effluents.

Environmental experts at the Zambia National Council for Scientific Research have drafted an anti-pollution bill, which will come before parliament this year. The bill is expected to impose tougher measures on importation and use of pesticides and other chemicals.

But even if passed, the control measures will not be put into effect immediately, owing to the government's limited financial resources.

\* Third World Network Features/IPS. Sam Sikazwe is a correspondent for the Inter-Press Service, with whose permission this article is reproduced.





# A Banning Success

A pesticide ban is helping rice farmers control the dreaded brown hopper

By Halinah Todd\*

**I**ndonesia prohibited the use of 57 pesticides in its rice fields more than a year ago. Only 10 pesticides escaped the ban. Agrochemical companies howled and tried to apply pressure by laying off workers. There was initial resistance from farmers who feared being overrun by pests.

But the ban is working. Farmers got the same yields in 1987 using only half as much insecticide as they used before. And the brown hopper population, which has wiped out thousands of hectares of rice in the past, seems to be declining. "It is too early to come to any definite conclusions, but the information

we have collected so far shows a decrease in the number of hoppers," said Dr. Soejitro, an entomologist with the Bogor Research Institute for Food Crops (BORIF).

The pesticide ban went into effect in November 1986, as part of an integrated pest management program for rice. It is a revolutionary new strategy in the ongoing war with the brown hopper, based on the discovery that pesticides were simply breeding bigger and better super-pests.

A statement made by the Minister of National Development in January 1987 outlines the new strategy: "The broad use of pesticides, a part of agriculture in Indonesia for some 20 years, does more harm than good because it does more to eliminate the natural enemies of

pests than the pests themselves."

The program is described by Dr. Peter Kenmore, United Nations specialist attached to the International Rice Research Institute in Manila, Philippines, as "the most modern, flexible and scientifically-sound field pest management system in the developing world." Its implementation is possible because pesticides for rice farmers are subsidized by the government and therefore their distribution is controlled through government agencies.

The motive behind the ban is concern about maintaining self-sufficiency in rice, Indonesia's most political crop. But

\* Third World Network Features. Halinah Todd is a freelance journalist, formerly features editor of the New Straits Times (Malaysia) and was voted Malaysia's Journalist of the Year in 1982.



the impact on the health of rice farmers and their environment is also likely to be considerable.

The brown plant hopper, which sucks the sap from the rice shoot and destroys it, is the major pest in Java's wet rice fields.

The Green Revolution package, combining irrigation and high-yielding rice strains, allowed continuous cropping - creating a year-round playground for the hoppers to proliferate. The Green Revolution transformed an occasional pest into a scourge.

In 1977, shortly after the high-yielding varieties spread through Java,

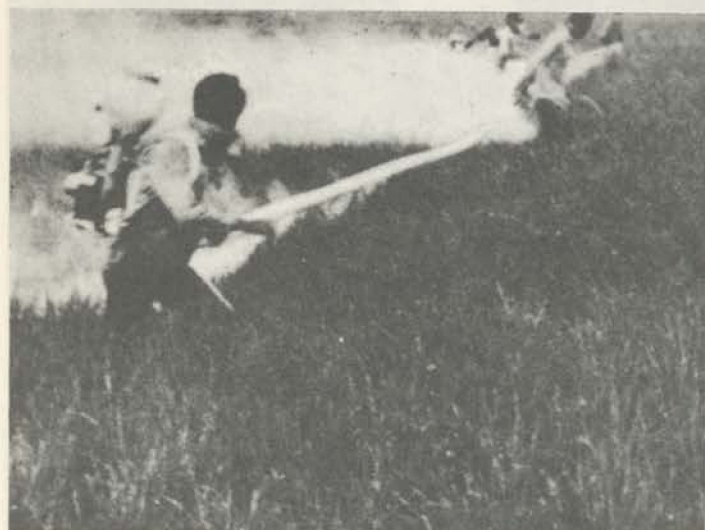
strain as well. As a result there was an upsurge of hopper attacks in 1983 and again in 1986.

Integrated pest management replaces this losing struggle with another mix of weapons, mainly natural. They include controlling planting patterns so that all fields in one area are cleared - and left foodless for hoppers - at the same time, planting resistant varieties, and using insecticides only when the hopper population rises above an "economic threshold," where the extent of the damage becomes unacceptable.

According to Soejitro, the 10 insecticides

are being released into experimental fields where their effects on the hopper population are being monitored. Soejitro estimated that it will be another year before they are ready for general release to farmers. If this method of natural control is successful, it could lead to a further reduction in the use of pesticides and an extension of the ban to additional crops.

It cannot come too soon for the health of Indonesia's farmers. For years Indonesia has been a prime target for the export of pesticides banned or restricted in the West. Seventy percent of



Spraying to the hilt: Prior to the ban, in 1984, Indonesia was using 40,000 tons of pesticides a year

the hopper wiped out more than 700,000 hectares of rice. Farmers responded by applying more and more insecticides, all subsidized by the government. By 1984, Indonesia was using 40,000 tons of pesticides a year on all crops, more than four times the amount used in 1979.

At the same time, Indonesia's scientists raced to develop rice strains resistant to the hopper. But research at BORIF showed that the hoppers which survived the insecticides actually laid more eggs than before, while their natural enemies were killed off, leading to an upsurge of super-hoppers the following season. And as soon as the scientists came up with a rice strain resistant to hopper attacks, the hoppers would produce a new biotype which delighted in munching through that

pesticides farmers are still allowed to use "were selected because they kill the hopper at the right doses but do not kill its natural enemies."

They are also less likely to kill the farmer. Most of the 10 are carbamate insecticides, which although toxic do not have a cumulative effect and are seldom life-threatening. Among those banned are organophosphates, which are rapidly absorbed through the skin and cause the highest number of global pesticide deaths.

BORIF has now turned its research energies to cultivating the hopper's natural enemies. A team of entomologists are breeding three varieties of insects and one fungus which can put the hopper out of action.

This two-year-old research project has reached the stage where the pre-

the country's pesticide production comes from plants owned by four multinationals: Bayer, ICI, Dow Chemical and Chevron.

A recent survey by the International Organization of Consumers Unions found glaring violations of the pesticides code in Indonesia. They found toxic insecticides routinely repackaged and marketed to farmers in unmarked bags or bottles with no warning or directions for use.

The report also noted the unethical promotion of pesticides through lotteries and advertisements which gave no warning of the dangers of pesticide spraying. One glaring example was a Du Pont calendar depicting a pretty model spraying a tobacco crop wearing no more protection than a tight sarung and a sexy smile.



# A GATT for the Third World

A recently concluded ground-breaking agreement on economic cooperation could prove as important as the founding of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

By Chakravarthi Raghvan\*

**A**n abstract concept for Third World collective self-reliance through trade, proposed by a handful of economists and diplomats for more than a decade, took shape with the signing this year of an agreement on a global system of trade preferences (GSTP) among 48 member countries of the Group of 77.

The journey toward the accord ended in Belgrade in April – having come from Mexico City in 1976, through Arusha in 1979, Caracas in 1981, New York in 1982, and, with technical work in between at Geneva, to New Delhi in 1985, and Brasilia in 1986. The road was long, arduous, and occasionally tortuous.

Finally, ignoring neo-classical economic pundits, Third World countries have concluded their first-ever operational inter-regional agreement, with contractual rights and obligations, for their own preferential trading system. The main provisions of the GSTP agreement were adopted at Brasilia in 1986, and the first round of negotiations was launched there, with the agreement to serve as the provisional legal framework, pending exchange of concessions and signing of the agreement with the schedules of concessions annexed.

Of the 72 countries that gave notice of their intention to participate in the first round, 48 concluded bilateral exchange of concessions, and their consolidated schedule of concessions was annexed to the agreement and were made multilateral at Belgrade.

Of the 48 countries at the conclusion of the ministerial meeting at Belgrade, 44 signed the agreement, subject to ratification. Two (Sri Lanka and North



GATT: that agreement had a modest beginning similar to the new trade pact

Korea) appended their signatures: definitively, while two more (Benin and Cameroon) are expected to sign in the near future.

To take force, the GSTP required the definitive signature or ratification of 15 countries drawn from the three Group of 77 regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Those numbers were reached in March during intensive negotiations in Geneva, but the process was kept open to enable others to join.

At Belgrade, 26 more countries exchanged concessions, bringing the total to 48 – 16 from each of the three regions. The 48 include the most politically and economically significant Third World countries in those regions. For example, the five countries that form

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – all signed on.

Some participants criticized the role of the ASEAN nations as weak given the capacities of their economies, while others noted that this is probably the first time that ASEAN is cooperating in a preferential trading arrangement with other Third World countries outside its subregion. The ASEAN countries, for example, are not parties to the Bangkok Agreement, involving preferential trade and payment arrangements within Asia. Signatories to the agreement are South Korea, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Thailand, though it signed the agreement, never ratified it.



The only economically significant Group of 77 countries not in GSTP are those of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Qatar is the lone GCC country to sign on, while its partners like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates held back. According to Gulf country diplomats, many of these countries are expected to join.

In pure economic terms, the immediate impact of the preferential tariff concessions will probably be minimal.

Without more detailed statistical data than are available now in the United Nations statistical office, and its four-digit single alphabet Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), it is difficult to estimate the agreement's potential. For products under SITC, the annual imports of items included in the accords is estimated at US\$10 billion by economists at the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development, who admit that this figure is probably inflated. Since only a portion of any product classification has been provided with a preferential margin, a more realistic figure is probably in the range of

US\$3-5 billion.

To put this in perspective, the total imports of Group of 77 countries in 1985 was estimated at US\$345 billion. The total imports of Group of 77 countries from other Group of 77 countries was estimated to have reached US\$78.9 billion, of which intra-regional trade was US\$52.3 billion and inter-regional trade US\$26.6 billion.

Thus in hard terms, the outcome at Belgrade is modest.

But so was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) when it was first established in 1947 with 23 signatories, three of whom dropped out. And the initial range of concessions exchanged was quite modest too. Only through subsequent multilateral trade negotiations did GATT expand its coverage and increase its membership.

At Belgrade, the ministerial meeting not only established the GSTP, but also sought to maintain the dynamism of the process - setting in motion the preparatory processes for a second round of negotiations, to encompass all components of the GSTP.

As time passes and the GSTP grows, the achievement at Belgrade could be considered as important as the 1961 founding of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. That summit, as Yugoslavian President Lazar Mojsov put it, heralded "the appearance on the international scene of a new, alternative policy and philosophy in addressing world relations".

The Belgrade ministerial session of the Third World, and the GSTP agreement concluded there, mark a new approach to international economic relations.

As the Indian minister, Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, stated at the opening of the Belgrade ministerial meeting, "The real significance of GSTP lies not so much in the arithmetic of preferences exchanged or the extent of trade covered in the first round of negotiations. Rather, it constitutes a major contribution towards preserving and strengthening the multilateral trading system."

\* Third World Network Features/IFDA. Chakravarthi Raghavan is chief editor of IFDA/IPS Special United Nations Service (SUNS) based in Geneva, Switzerland.

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# Oil Shock II: The Recession

Lower oil prices  
are leading to  
recession in the  
Arab world

By Ismail-Sabri Abdalla\*

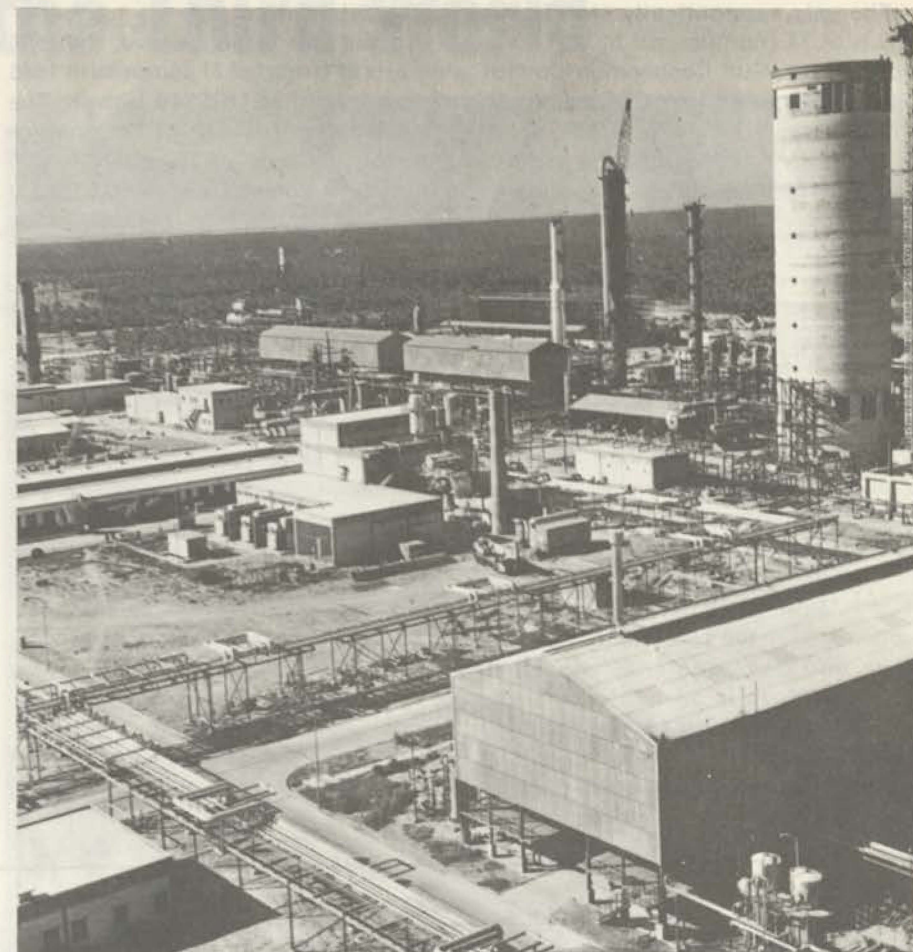
**T**he first oil shock was when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided in March 1983 on price cuts in the range of 15 percent and a cut in output of nearly 50 percent. The second reverse shock in 1985 came when Saudi Arabia began increasing output. The price went down to less than US\$10 a barrel, which meant in real terms a return to the pre-1974 prices.

Now OPEC countries are trying again to stabilize the price of oil at US\$18 a barrel, almost half the 1979 price. But the production cuts required mean less revenue.

The oil revenues of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates together dwindled from US\$186 billion in 1982 to US\$51 billion in 1983 and US\$6 billion in 1985, and when the official 1986 figures are compiled, no increase is expected.

One of first results was to throw minor exporters out of the market. Exports from Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia never exceeded modest levels, but high prices gave them great importance in domestic economics: Oil exports became the principal source of foreign currency in the early 1980s, with oil sales representing up to 50 percent of export income. This source of foreign exchange has now almost disappeared, and Syria and Egypt can barely supply their own domestic oil needs.

The slump in energy prices should be a blessing to non-oil producing Arab



states. But through financial flows and labor migration, every non-oil exporting Arab country has at least a small share of the oil revenue pie.

Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Libya and Iraq imported millions of migrant workers during the so-called oil rush, at least half of whom came from Egypt, North Yemen, South Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. The waves of post-1974 departures were soon followed by a stream of remittances pouring into the economies of labor-exporting countries.

The extreme case in this respect is the Arab Republic of Yemen (North Yemen), where remittances reached US\$1,084 million in 1981 while the total value of domestic exports stood at only US\$176 million. In 1981, Somalia got remittances of about US\$64 million compared to total exports of US\$114 million. In Sudan in the fiscal year 1982-83 remittances amounted to

US\$415 million while total exports did not exceed US\$733 million. In Egypt, remittances peaked at US\$3,931 million in fiscal year 1983-84, more than oil exports (US\$2,964) and about equal the value of all other exports.

Unfortunately, the climate of "easy money" and the illusion of prosperity pushed many relatively poor countries to break the rules of sound financial management. They borrowed massively and now face horrendous debt service. Egypt had to pay for an accumulated debt of US\$38 billion, the dazzling amount of US\$4.2 billion in debt service. Sudan, struggling against the threat of famine in major parts of its territory (aggravated by civil war), faces a US\$5.7 billion debt while being forced to accommodate nationals returning from Gulf countries.

\* Third World Network Features/IFDA Dossier. Ismail-Abdalla is a distinguished economist, and chairman of the Third World Forum based in Cairo, Egypt.



Algeria, because of its large population and relatively limited oil resources, has never known the abundance that prevailed in the Gulf countries. However, its debt service was safely met by oil and gas revenues. Its problem now is servicing this debt from other resources. It recently introduced policy measures which include more room for private enterprises and cuts in public expenditures.

Other major oil exporters avoid the word "recession." But their so-called adjustment measures wear the familiar face of austerity. Cuts in public investment expenditures, wage and salary cuts, and drastic reductions in imports have virtually imposed recessions on their economies.

The private sector in the Gulf countries has historically experienced growth in the tertiary sector: trade, finance, real estate and construction contracts. Governments were the major clients in all these areas. Shrinking public expenditures hurt business people in these areas. Hard times make fatal their shortcomings in organization and management.

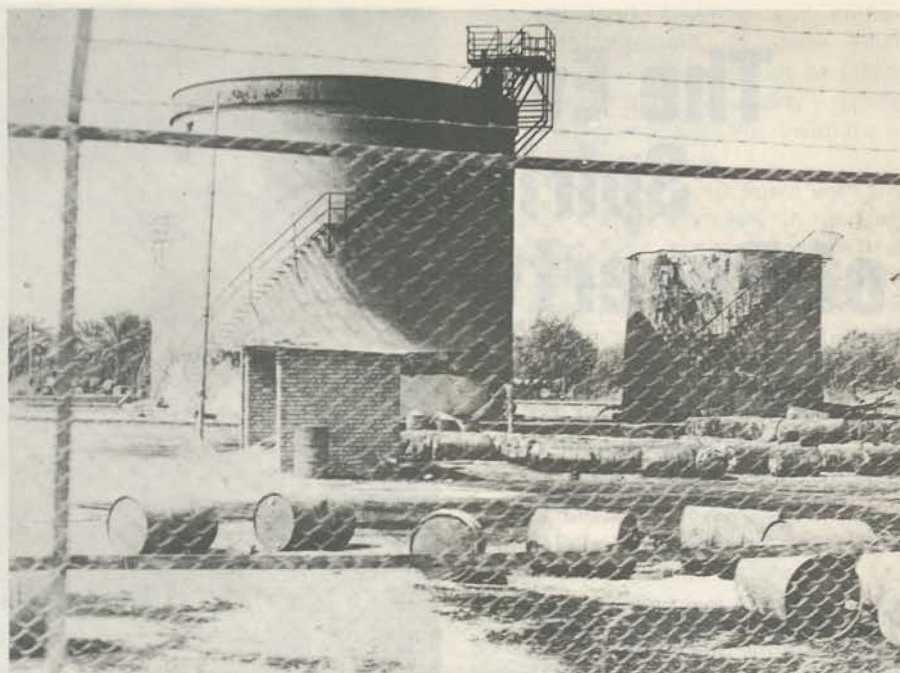
Big names have been forced out of business. In several countries, the banking system is facing a decline and the departure of off-shore banks. The exodus of non-national workers decreased the demand for housing and hurt retail trade.

The recession is there. No solid evidence allows hope for better times before 1990-92, according to forecasts by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The threat of social unrest and political tension is strongest in the middle-income countries with large populations and fewer oil reserves. Egypt is worst off with the drop in remittances, in Suez Canal royalties, in oil export income – all compounded by debt service amounting to 42 percent of export revenue.

Several countries are negotiating to reschedule their debts. Morocco has gone as far as to have signed a stabilization program with the International Monetary Fund.

The social impact of these adjustment policies should be assessed



The climate of easy money and the illusion of prosperity have ended



The Iranian and Iraqi oil ministers at an OPEC meeting

against the poverty profile of each country. According to the World Bank's Social Indicators of Development, in Tunisia 20 percent of the urban population and 15 percent of the rural population live in absolute poverty. The corresponding figures, respectively, for both Egypt and Morocco are 20 percent and 25 percent. There are no indications that things are getting better.

Affected most acutely are the poorest countries – those with per capita Gross

National Products below US\$500. Some are famine stricken, all are debt ridden, and all are affected by cuts in aid from the Gulf states.

Finally, the financial squeeze and its potential socio-economic and political tensions have boosted the outflow of local capital. Business people complain of shrinking investment opportunities at home, tight credit and political uncertainties. Consequently, they prefer investing abroad.



# The Evil Spirit of Poverty

Undertaking a project in community health, an Indian doctor is given a rude lesson on poverty

*This article is adapted from a chapter in the book When the Search Began, published by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Sevagram, India.*

By U.N. Jajoo\*

**M**ost people providing primary health care to the needy nurture a naïve notion that what ails community health is ignorance and that if there are sincere attempts to provide scientific know-how, most community health problems will find a solution.

But ignorance is far from being the cause. The following examples from our field work in the Sevagram area of the Wardha district of India make this quite clear.

Since government policies give priority to restricting family size, we thought it our duty to promote the idea of a small family, using all the means at our disposal. A film show was arranged, posters were distributed, and the target group was visited: We guaranteed transport to and from the hospital, personal attention during hospitalization, and nothing to pay.

Our expectations crumbled when we found no one turned up in spite of our persuasion. We tried to understand why the villagers did not seek our advice.



Hygiene class: ignorance is but one of the ills afflicting the poor

A mother of six children – all girls – asked us bluntly, "Will you support us when we get old?" An ideal candidate for surgery, a woman with a son and daughter, put it this way: "Doctor, have you seen a bullock cart with only one bullock? You need at least a pair, then if one succumbs the other will drag the cart alone." A farmer said, "We must have more children, doctor. Labor is too costly these days, and I need dependable manpower to help me."

The entire exercise taught us that unless mortality of children under five is reduced, unless security for old age is provided, and unless agriculture becomes profitable, no amount of propaganda or incentives will convince poor village people about the benefits of a small family.

Malnutrition is the greatest killer among children under five. The rural folk consider it the curse of an evil spirit, Satavi, for which there is no remedy in modern science, only in worship.

A house-to-house survey revealed that almost all infants were below their expected weight and those severely malnourished were girls. We embarked on an education campaign, using a slide show to demonstrate the various

signs of malnutrition.

We emphasized that poor nutrition was to be blamed and not the evil spirit, explaining that a child should have a balanced diet. We recommended milk as the best food, not forgetting green vegetables, fruit and eggs. We told the mothers to use oil freely, as a high energy source, and to see that a child was fed at least five times a day.

To make our point more vividly we selected five infants, all girls from landless families, and started on-the-spot feeding with a supplementary food providing 300-400 calories every day as recommended by the Indian Council for Medical Research.

The children did not show a weight gain as expected. It was a rude shock. We went again from house to house, inquiring carefully the amount of food the child was receiving at home prior to the supplementary feeding program. Does she receive the same amount now?

The answer explained everything: Ours was not a supplementary food but a substitute for whatever the child had

\* Third World Network Features/World Health Forum. Dr. U.N. Jajoo is a reader in the Department of Medicine at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Sevagram, India.





The argument against family planning: You need at least a pair of bullocks

been getting at home. With the assurance that the child would be fed under our program, the mother preferred to divert her share of home food resources to others.

We did our best to convince the mothers that they still had to ensure adequate food for the malnourished child. Here the education campaign took a different turn, and we found ourselves at the receiving end.

The women had a lot to teach us: "We do not own cattle, and milk sold in the village is diluted and sold at an exorbitant cost that we cannot afford. The same goes for eggs, oil, sugar, vegetables and fruit. Do you know, doctor, oil costs 20 rupees (about US\$1.40) a liter and sugar 6 rupees (US\$0.40) a kilo?"

It seems that the villagers were not so far wrong when they attributed malnutrition to the work of an evil spirit – the evil spirit of poverty.

Poverty is the greatest sin. To live, and even to die, with dignity is a luxury permitted to few. The root cause of two major killer diseases in children – diarrhea and respiratory infections – is the underlying malnutrition, an illness that cannot be treated by drugs but only by



The dairy industry: not an option

adequate food. Untiring and enthusiastic management of these killer diseases in hospitals without an attack on the social cause – poverty – is like attempting to mop up a flood with the water tap full on above.

We took pains to sit down with the farmers, individually and in groups, calculating their income over the last three years. We found the majority of them incurring perpetual losses and barely five percent of the families owning economic land (that is, more than 18 acres for a family of five in this area.)

Water resources are scarce, and the farmers are at the mercy of monsoons at least once every three years. Irrigated land requires heavy investment, which a farmer finds difficult to make as the banks will not lend him money while he has outstanding debts. Government-subsidized prices for his produce bring little profit, and he is dependent on the fluctuating market.

What can be done to provide additional sources of income? Cottage industry would appear to be the answer, yet our attempt to establish a spinning center lasted only two years, because it did not provide even three rupees (US\$0.20) a day as wages, apart from problems of getting the cloth woven and marketed. The cost analysis of this and other possible cottage industries revealed that they cannot survive in the competitive market without government protection.

We thought the dairy industry might subsist because the government assures a ready market through its milk scheme. But the huge initial investment involved, the cost of veterinary services and the necessity of green fodder all put it beyond the reach of a poor villager.

Strange though it may seem, the only employment we could see flourishing in some villages was the distilling of illicit liquor. Obviously we could not boost this business!

We reluctantly came to the conclusion that until there is government protection for cottage industry, and a political will to serve the interest of the poor, attempts to raise the economic standard of the rural poor through such schemes will not get far.



# Intoxicated by Poverty

Poor farmers receive loans from the "illegal World Bank" to plant their cash crops

By Essma Ben Hamida\*

**S**ome Latin American countries spend more money on repressing drug dealing than on promoting rural development," says Arturo Warman, a Mexican economist and anthropologist. "But this is a bad investment: they're attacking the symptom and not the cause."

A major reason why drug production and trafficking are rife in some parts of Latin America is the neglect of the rural sector by governments and even by international development institutions, according to Warman.

Pressed by the absolute need to make a living, and finding no support from their governments, peasants have no reason to refuse the tempting offers of the drug dealers. "They have no alternative, the vacuum created by the absence of official support has been increasingly filled by drug dealers," says Warman.

The links between drugs and rural livelihood have become so strong in some parts of the region that drug dealers have become known as "the illegal World Bank." They provide peasants with unbureaucratic interest free credit paid in hard currency, a secure market and good prices for their "cash crop."

Warman recalls what a Mexican



Peasants harvest cocaine in Bolivia

farmer once told him: "I was cultivating cotton for years until someone came and proposed to me to cultivate marijuana. It's fine. For me, there's no difference between cotton and marijuana. They are just two different cash crops."

There are no exact figures on the extent of drug cultivation in Latin America. But suffice it to note that U.S. drug consumption is expected to be higher than the combined total exports of the three largest Latin American producers: Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. "Undoubtedly, this will give a further boost to poor farmers' drug production," Warman points out.

"Governments and international development institutions can provide an alternative for these farmers: they need to invest in the rural sector and provide small farmers with adequate

incentives to produce food crops," argues Warman.

Farmers know drug cultivation is illegal and has social and economic implications for their families and their children, who become stigmatized. They would therefore be willing to give up drug cultivation provided they had a reasonable alternative and adequate support.

Confronting the drug mafia will require "a strong alliance between governments and small farmers, an economic but also a political alliance," Warman suggests. The government of Colombia is increasingly aware of this and has recently decided to promote agrarian reform as a means of confronting the guerrillas and the drug problems in the country.

"We have reached such a degree of moral shame, and fear of the drug mafia, that political movements and academic institutions are unable to express their views," deplores Warman. "It is high time to speak out publicly about this link between rural development and drug cultivation in Latin America," he claims.

The social scientist contends that the proliferation of drug cultivation in Latin America is one manifestation – and perhaps the most striking one – of an agricultural and rural crisis of unsuspected dimensions which is besetting all of Latin America.

Slow agricultural growth, increasing food dependency (three-quarters of the Latin American countries are no longer self-sufficient in food), fast-growing populations and flagrant inequalities within the rural sector are the basic elements of this crisis.

Warman believes that international development agencies, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, are ignoring these facts and their future implications. "The structural adjustment policies and neo-liberal approach currently in vogue within most of the United Nations system are by-passing the real problems of the rural sector."

\* Third World Network Features/IFDA. Essma Ben Hamida is a journalist attached to the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA). Her articles appear in the Special United Nations Service (SUNS).



## The Road from Tunis

Educated Tunisians are jamming the exits to Europe and North America

By Moncef Mahroug\*



Prospective emigrants glance at the international press

I just couldn't take it anymore," explained a Tunisian specialist in library science who did his undergraduate studies in England. "With no career prospects in sight, I explored possibilities with the (North) American Embassy and was lucky enough to qualify for a scholarship to study for my Ph.D. in the United States. I don't count on returning here (to Tunisia) after my degree."

Until his graduate studies begin, the librarian is stuck in a dead-end position at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs – in a job for which he is overqualified.

Although Tunisia is not as badly affected by the brain drain as some of its Arab neighbors, it loses many of its senior level professionals to France, the United States, and Canada every year.

From 1945 to 1975, over 150,000 Arab scientists and other professionals from the region emigrated to industrialized countries. The United States attracted the lion's share of this brain pool. Between 1966 and 1977, for example, 5,794 scholars mainly from Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria emigrated to the United States. In the same period over 500 Tunisian professionals left for North America.

A recent study carried out by Youssef Alouane of the Tunisian National Institute of Labor and Social Services indicated that many of the university graduates who leave the country complete their studies abroad. The study asked Tunisians who have settled in Europe, North America, and the Middle East to anonymously explain their reasons for leaving.

Tunisians who return with university degrees from abroad often find life at home difficult and disappointing, according to the study. Hamadi Lâajimi is a typical example. Having succeeded in becoming a sports commentator with the British Broadcasting Corporation, he returned to Tunisia several years ago to try and carve out a future for himself in radio. He left again recently – this time saying he will not come back.

Most returning Tunisians make the decision to emigrate again before the shock of the return home wears off. "I could not afford to be unemployed for long, so as soon as I saw there were no job opportunities, I left," confided a physics lecturer. "I have few regrets."

Others do not even try to find jobs because they realize that Tunisia has no

requirement for their field of expertise. Such is the case for a nuclear physicist now living in Vienna, Austria, and also for an aerospace expert who worked on the Apollo 12 project.

The brain drain from Tunisia is perhaps best described by a specialist in kidney diseases who has studied and worked abroad: "There is no coordination between the needs of Tunisia and the education system, which is too slanted toward the requirements of a developed country. To put it in a nutshell, we produce too many engineers and too few specialized tradesmen."

Sometimes, of course, returning graduates have no trouble finding work and fitting in. Despite their initial positive attitude, however, they often become discouraged. The scarcity of research facilities in Tunisia, the lack of equipment, and the shortage of properly trained staff have driven many scientists and other researchers out of the country.

One professor, invited to join the

\* Moncef Mahroug is a Tunisian freelance journalist. This article was originally published in the January 1988 edition of *IDRC Reports*.



staff of the Pasteur Institute in Tunis, declined the invitation and instead took a senior position with the Pasteur Institute in Paris. "I don't need a villa or a chauffeur-driven car," he said. "What I do require is a well equipped laboratory in a stimulating university environment."

In Tunisia, people sometimes emigrate for political reasons. Says a Tunisian theater personality: "To leave is to regain the ability to speak freely. It means abandoning a ghetto where speech must be approved by a censorship committee." A teacher of sociology confirms the importance of political affiliation: "Government people have a general tendency to look at the political stripe of a person rather than at his education or technical ability."

It is rare that a graduate is swayed by financial offers to leave Tunisia. However, just the opposite is true of Tunisians posted by their government to work in Arab or African countries for two-or-three-year terms. The majority of such cooperants, who now total near-



Will he leave to earn more abroad?

ly 1,600, chose to be posted in order to be able to get married or buy a car or housing.

Although there is little doubt that the brain drain in Tunisia lowers the quality of the country's human resources, it is not surprising that the government plays a role in this phenomenon by encouraging graduates to leave on temporary cooperative assignments. The fact is that the number of graduates in a variety of fields exceeds the avail-

able positions. Ironically, however, encouraging graduates to leave the country can sometimes backfire and create a shortage of personnel in certain professions. Last year, X-ray technicians were prohibited from leaving the country due to a lack of such specialists.

In the meantime, the permanent emigration of other individuals in search of a better life removes the equivalent of more than US\$3.3 million every year from Tunisia's economy.

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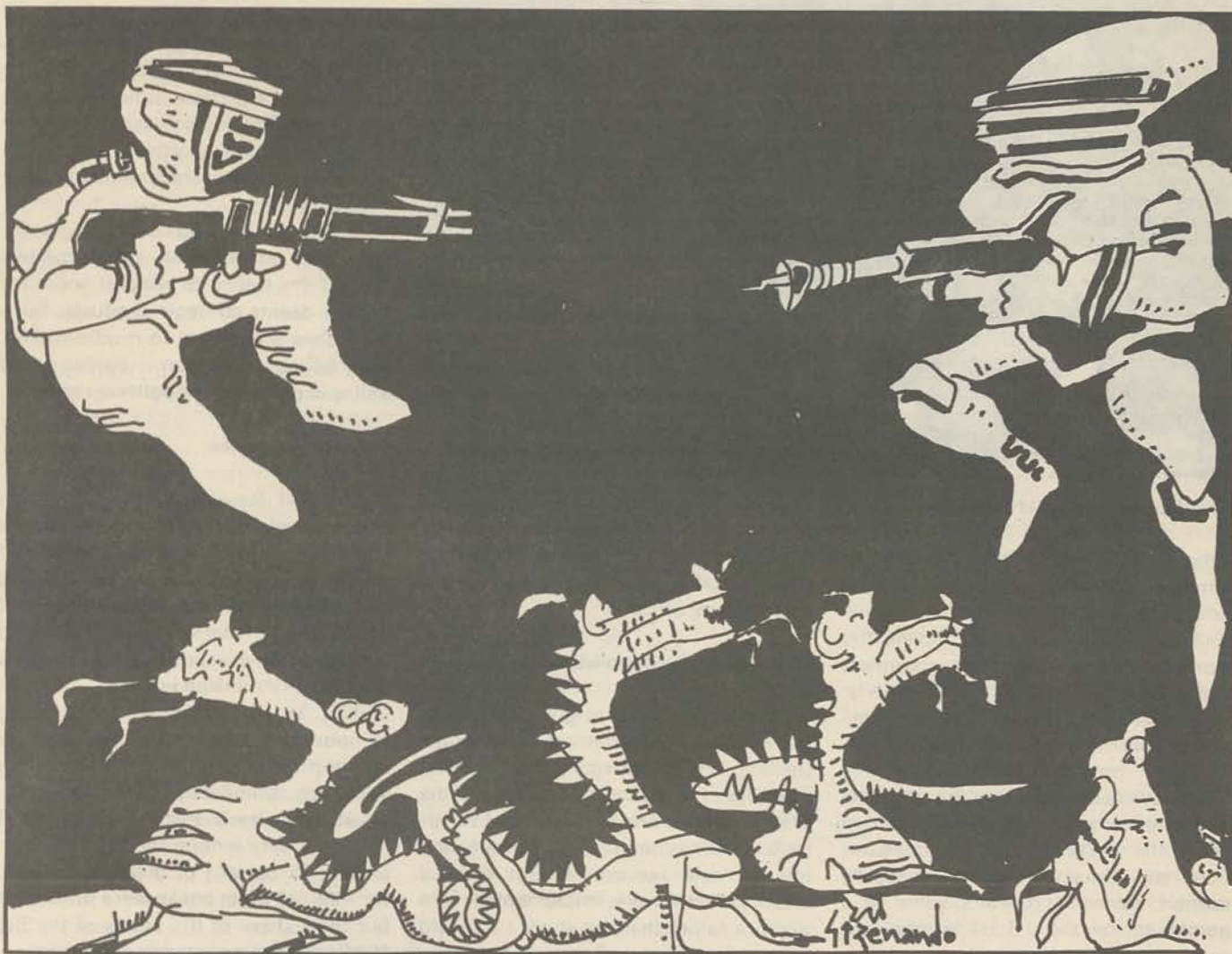
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# Economy Wars



In a setting of stagnating world trade, countries and corporations are gearing up for the battle to protect or increase their shares of a shrinking global market

By Frederick Clairmonte and  
John Cavanagh\*

**B**lack Monday was a watershed in postwar international relations as it smashed the delusion that stock markets could soar infinitely. In so doing, it savagely proclaimed the end of four decades of more or less shaky growth in the leading capitalist economies.

Between August 1987, when stock prices reached their postwar zenith, and the cataclysm of Monday, October 19, 1987, worldwide stock markets lost as much as one-third of the value of shares traded. Translated into purchasing power, this free fall wiped out US\$1,500 billion in consumer wealth, equaling three-quarters of world corporate production of goods and services. This escalating economic warfare threatens to plunge the world market into another depression.

## Protectionism and Currency Warfare

The first arena of conflict, also the most visible, is trade. Already by the end of 1986, quantitative and other non-tariff barriers had increased to encompass over half of world trade. To these restrictions were added tens of

\* Third World Network Features: Dr. Frederick Clairmonte was formerly senior researcher at the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, Switzerland. John Cavanagh is a staff member of the Institute for Policy Studies, United States.





**Black Monday: the end of an illusion**

billions of dollars in state subsidies to farm and industrial exporters. Agricultural subsidies and handouts of various kinds within the Group of Seven, the world's richest capitalist countries, easily outstrip US\$135 billion yearly, notwithstanding their proclaimed championing of "the magic of the market."

These protectionist trade policies have now been joined by the weapons of monetary policy. Over the past two years, the North American administration of Ronald Reagan frantically pushed down the dollar's value in a gamble to alter the U.S. trade imbalance and reduce its foreign indebtedness, now outstripping US\$400 billion. It is also a move to pay back good money with a slush fund of devalued paper dollars.

In contrast, many of the world's leading central banks have intervened massively in currency markets to brake the dollar's fall, as it imperils their position in the U.S. market. Many leading corporations exporting to the U.S. have reacted to the tumbling dollar not by boosting prices, but by slashing profit margins to sustain their U.S. market shares.

The U.S. government has reviled such practices since the falling dollar

has not been matched by significantly higher import prices and a reduction in the consumption of foreign goods.

Despite the economic conflict abetted by the dollar's rise and fall, it would be a fallacy to assume that governments are the ultimate arbiters on currency and exchange markets. Big-scale financial institutions, through their speculative activities on securities, futures, real estate and a wide range of other financial markets, make thousands of billions of dollars of transactions daily across national frontiers. In so doing, they have become prime determinants of

what transpires on currency markets, often in cahoots with finance ministry and treasury officials.

#### **The clash in fiscal policies**

Another area where governments of the industrial countries are increasingly clashing is over divergent fiscal policies. The U.S. has successfully pressed the West Germans and the Japanese to stimulate their economies via tax cuts and interest rate reductions. But even if these policies were implemented – in practice rather than for show – it would have little impact on Reagan's economy, muddling through as it is on borrowed time and borrowed money.

These fiscal policies are designed so that Japan and West Germany will absorb more U.S. goods and consume in their domestic markets more of the goods they are currently exporting.

This simplistic approach overlooks the fact that U.S. exporters will not be the prime beneficiaries of such a policy. Rather, the "four dragons" of the Pacific rim (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong), armed with massive state subsidies and cheap labor, are already moving into the breach, and they are by no means alone.

The battlefield of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a prestigious North American university, is illustrative of the escalating war between the world's two leading economies. In late 1987, MIT selected a Japanese supercomputer over all U.S. competitors on the grounds that it represented the best ratio of selling price to technological capability. The U.S. Commerce Department vetoed the purchase in the sacred name of "Buy America First."

This is not the end of the drama, for the U.S. government also prohibits Japan from selling to socialist countries what it deems strategic products. Such skirmishes are certain to multiply. And, what began as economic battles could well spill over into the political realm.

#### **Corporate rivalries**

The war for retention and aggrandizement of market shares by transnational conglomerates is another facet of this war. In recent years, Japanese and European transnational banks and corporations have gouged out huge chunks of international markets from their North American enemies.

This is evidenced in the shifting composition of the world's top 100 banks and top 200 corporations. In banking, Japanese ascendancy was already manifest in the early 1980s. In 1982, 24 of its banks were among the top 100, controlling 26 percent of their total assets. By 1986, 26 of its banks were on the list but their share of the assets of the Big 100 Banks had rocketed to 40 percent.

Meanwhile, the number of U.S. banks slipped from 15 to 14 on the list and their share of assets from 17 percent to 12 percent. This shifting configuration of financial power relations will spark even greater conflict between a prodigiously enriched creditor (Japan) and a mendicant debtor (the U.S.).

A similar shift is apparent among the world's top 200 private-sector firms. In just one year, between 1985 and 1986, the number of U.S. firms in the top 200 skidded from 104 to 90; their sales plunged from 53 percent to 42 percent. The major beneficiaries were European



firms, stemming in part from the dollar's fall and a resurgence of privatization in France and the United Kingdom.

The interplay of these numbers brings out not only the shifting fortunes of gainers and losers on a national scale, but also the accelerating concentration of corporate capital globally and the social inequalities that accompany this trend. The accumulation of economic power is shown in the fact that the combined sales of just these 200 top firms accounted for 28 percent of world gross national product in 1985. The further growth of this power is seen in its share rising to 29.4 percent in 1986, an expansion of 1.4 percentage points in a single year. This share would have risen to over one-third if both public and private sector firms were added together.

These bank and corporate rankings reflect the mounting economic power of Western Europe and Japan and the wobbly fortunes of the U.S., but it should be emphasized that national interests are by no means synonymous with corporate interests.

The largest exporter from Taiwan to the U.S. is the North American conglomerate General Electric (GE). Along with dozens of other transnationals, GE has chosen Taiwan as an export base to penetrate the U.S. market because of its cheap labor force, generous tax breaks and other incentives. Not surprisingly, Taiwan has built up an enormous trade surplus of US\$16 billion in 1986 with the U.S., representing 10 percent of the U.S.



A meeting of GATT: brewing friction despite the rhetoric

trade deficit.

Here is a clear example of U.S. corporations abetting the erosion of both the U.S. trade position and the dollar in pursuit of maximizing corporate profitability. But Taiwan is not the only foreign base used by U.S. corporations. Their operations are spread across the globe, from the Mexican border to Haiti to the Philippines.

#### All-out economic war

Economic warfare among the world's major industrial powers is gearing up within the context of the worsening international economy. Each country and each corporation is devising policies to protect or grab greater shares of a shrinking global market. Between 1980 and 1986, world exports hardly rose from US\$2,000 billion to US\$2,100 billion. Adjusted for inflation, world

trade actually fell.

Despite proclaimed intentions for greater free trade under the current General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations, the industrial countries have enlarged their "trade friction" into fast-developing economic warfare. This war is fought at the levels of governments and corporations, and on many fronts — including trade, finance, fiscal policies, and export-import policies.

According to estimates of Shearson Lehman, the plunge in U.S. consumer wealth could clip consumer spending by US\$90 billion in 1988; Japan's Nomura Research Institute predicts that the U.S. automobile market will slide by 20 percent in 1988 as compared to 1986. The stock market crash will exercise a huge deflationary impact on both industrialized and Third World economies via decreased consumption in, and imports to, the United States.

Black Monday also compelled the U.S. government to take desperate action to slash the federal budget deficit, interpreted by certain myopic analysts as the major cause of the crash. By the end of November 1987, a deal of sorts was patched up between the White House and the U.S. Congress that would slice deficits by US\$76 billion over the next two years. These cuts exacerbate the loss in consumer wealth via two mechanisms: tax increases which further trim consumer spending, and curbs in government outlays which wipe out jobs and, with them, wages



The Japanese currency exchange: Japan is the new financial power





Conspicuous crash victims: a driving Thatcher (top), Reagan (above) and Chirac (right)



and salaries.

There is yet another mechanism by which the October 1987 crash spells big trouble for the leading economies. A buckling of stock market prices exercises a powerful ripple effect: Major dealers on U.S. stock markets are not consumers but a coterie of operators ranging from banks to transnational corporations, from arbitrageurs to corporate raiders, from pension fund managers to speculators and swindlers.

What all these financial activists have in common is that they have bankrolled their operations by unrestrained borrowing. In the U.S. alone, corporate debt hit a staggering US\$1,900 billion by the end of 1986. One of the most dangerous components of this debt was the US\$120 billion in low-rated, high-yield junk bonds that financed corporate annexationism through leveraged buyouts.

This kind of borrowing becomes lethal in the context of a crash since in

any leveraged buyout, funds borrowed for the annexation of a company are secured on that company's assets. If that company's assets plunge by one-third in value, then the buyer is in dire straits as the bank briskly moves to demand further collateral.

Pushed to the wall, the buyer is compelled to sell off other assets, such as real estate, to meet the bank's obligations. When multiplied by thousands of operators, such sales conspire to push down the value of real estate and other assets not traded on stock markets.

In this way, some will be able to save their skins by selling their assets. The most highly indebted will be unable to meet the banks' demands and face bankruptcy. The banks will be left holding the bag. This body blow threatens the entire financial system, first and foremost the small and medium-sized institutions.

The junk bond pathology reached its highest pitch in the U.S., but the multi-

plier effect of the crash also affects other leading economies. The grim numbers speak for themselves: combined corporate debt in the leading seven economies topped US\$5,900 billion in 1986.

If one adds these three aftershocks of the crash (the tumble in consumer wealth, the deflationary reverberations of U.S. budget cuts, and the ripple effect on other assets) to the already calamitous effects of the Third World debt and sustained high levels of joblessness, the picture for the global economy in the next few years leaves no ground for optimism. The stock market, as one vital market barometer, is almost certain to plunge still further.

Another conspicuous victim of the crash was the magic formula of privatization, pushed so hard by U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Reagan. On the eve of the great crash, the *Financial Times* of London euphorically declared: "Rarely in history has an innovation in economic and financial policy caught on as quickly in as many different countries as privatization."

In France, the government of Premier Jacques Chirac privatized public sector companies prior to the crash, proclaiming that six million proletarians would be transformed into bourgeois shareholders in the name of the "popular capitalism." When the French financial market collapsed by almost a third in October 1987, the fad of popular capitalism turned sour. Could one expect this new mass of shareholders, rudely burnt, to be enthusiastic participants in future privatizations?

The overall impact of the stock market crash has been to decelerate economic activity drastically, shrinking the global market on which economic wars are fought. Yet the crash must also be seen in the context of seven years of world trade stagnation: world exports barely rose in nominal dollar terms from US\$2,000 billion to US\$2,100 billion between 1980 and 1986. In real dollar terms, it actually declined over these seven years. Consequently, the crash and its aftershocks will compound the devastation of close to a decade of stagnation on global markets. ●



# A Standing Eight Count

The North American position in the world economy is declining, but it remains the world's largest market. The U.S. continues to wield influence as a depository for the world's savings, from the use of the dollar as the basic unit for international transactions, and through its military strength



U.S. soldiers in West Germany: the falling dollar puts cars out of their price range

In the aftermath of the Wall Street crash in October 1987, it has become a part of accepted wisdom, both liberal and conservative, that the United States is losing its paramount position in the world economy. Its infrastructure is crumbling, its exports eroding, its productivity dwindling, its savings evaporating and all its manifold debts soaring.

As a general proposition all this is true, and these disintegrative forces are traceable to 1946, when the U.S. emerged from World War II unscathed and immensely enriched, in contrast to the other major powers.

It was war and preparation for it that pulled the North American economy out of the abyss of depression. After an-

other major recession struck in 1938, U.S. output bounced back in 1946 to 150 percent of its 1937, and exports to 191 percent. In contrast, output plunged over this period to 20 percent of pre-war levels in Japan, and 28 percent in Germany.

Over the same period (1937-46), U.S. farm output jumped by over a third, and its share of global grain output shot up from 27 to 39 percent. No less indicative of U.S. power and supremacy is that between July 1945 and September 1947, it granted US\$13.4 billion in loans and grants to foreign governments.

The Marshall Plan had nothing to do with altruism. Rather, it laid the groundwork for the relentless big-scale penetration of U.S. corporate capital

into Western Europe and its colonies. It was matched by the remilitarization of Europe via the Truman Doctrine. The Marshall Plan trumpeted the birth of U.S. economic dominance and military adventurism, of which the wars in Indochina were outstanding examples.

In the annals of North American economic history, the years 1938-46 will be remembered as the golden years of growth: Its share of global industrial output soared from 30 percent in 1938 to 53 percent in 1946. Not since the height of the U.K.'s industrial supremacy in the 1840s had one nation so dominated the global market.

Four decades later, stemming from an expansionist foreign policy of which the arms race was but one component,





North American warships in the Persian Gulf

its initial headstart in the economic race was substantially chiselled away. Two indicators tell a good part of the story. Between 1946 and 1986, the U.S. share of world exports dived from 36 percent to 10 percent, and its share of industrial output collapsed from 53 percent to less than 20 percent.

#### The U.S. market: its strenght

Despite this battering, it would appear that there are still several vital elements that will continue to sustain the U.S., at least in the near future, at center stage of the global market.

Perhaps the most important sustaining economic element is the sheer size of the U.S. consumer market. This amounts to US\$2,000 billion, a number equal to almost half of the total consumer market of the leading seven capitalist nations. While historically colossal by any criteria, the U.S. consumer market grew by a brisk 23 percent over the first six Reagan years.

A comparison with West Germany and Japan demonstrates the enormous gravitational pull of the U.S. market. Private consumption in Japan grew by 18 percent over the same years; in West

Germany, by eight percent.

The implications of this disparity is that over the next few years non-North American firms in both developed and Third World countries will remain hooked on the U.S. market. For example, the U.S. currently pulls in two-fifths of Japan's exports and a third from the eight leading economies of the South.

Not only does the U.S. market still suck in enormous volumes of foreign goods, but it has also been transformed into an immense reservoir for the world's savings. In the first five years of the Reagan administration (1980-85),

foreign assets in the U.S. doubled from US\$500 billion to over US\$1,000 billion. More astounding is that by the end of 1986, this shot up to well over US\$1,300 billion, the equivalent of one-third of the nation's gross national product (GNP).

These assets not only financed a large share of the U.S. budget deficit, but provided a major impetus behind the boom in stock, bond and real estate markets. Owing to the depressed global economic market and notwithstanding the disastrous repercussions of the October 1987 crash, much of this money will continue to find a haven in the U.S. because it has precious few other places to go.

Another source of continuing U.S. strength is the dollar's universality. No doubt, the dollar has been bruised and bled after two years of steady depreciation vis-a-vis the world's other major currencies. Undeniably the rot has set in. Yet, the U.S. dollar remains the basic unit of international transactions for almost all goods and services and, in the short run, it has no challengers.

Possessing the world's dominant currency continues to confer a great degree of flexibility and leverage akin to

that enjoyed by the British pound sterling during the century from the end of the Napoleonic wars up to the onset of World War I.

U.S. strength resides equally in its prodigious military machine. As long as a massive U.S. military presence – with dozens of bases and hundreds of thousands of troops – continues in Western Europe, Asia and the world over, the U.S. is positioned to exercise considerable leverage over its major economic rivals.

This military presence is translated into effective pressure when the U.S. wants something from Western Europe or Japan: a fall in interest rates, minesweepers in the Persian Gulf, cutbacks in aid to Nicaragua and Vietnam, and so on. Despite inevitable reductions in military spending to face up to the yawning budget deficits, this clout is not likely to vanish overnight.

#### The psychology of supremacy

Four decades of supremacy on world markets have left deep psychological imprints on both the North American government and its people. To a very large extent, U.S. officialdom sets the international economic agenda. Conversely, after four decades in a supporting role, the West Europeans and Japanese continue to think and act as second-rate powers, despite their economic upsurge in recent years. But that, too, is changing.

The North American imperial state of mind is akin to that of the British in the aftermath of World War II. Notwithstanding the loss of their empire, it was not until the Suez debacle (1956) that the belief in imperial supremacy was largely laid to rest. Thatcher's war in the Malvinas merely served to poke the bones whose flesh had long left the imperial skeleton.

#### Debt and the casino society

In sum, the U.S. economy and its still prevailing imperial state of mind are almost certain to enter the 1990s vastly diminished but still at the head of the pack. But for how long can this continue? The very nature of Reagan's poli-



cies contains the seeds of the erosion of imperial power on a global scale.

The practices of Reaganism and Thatcherism were anchored in policies of transferring wealth from poor to rich and from future generations to current consumers. The major device deployed by Reagan was debt.

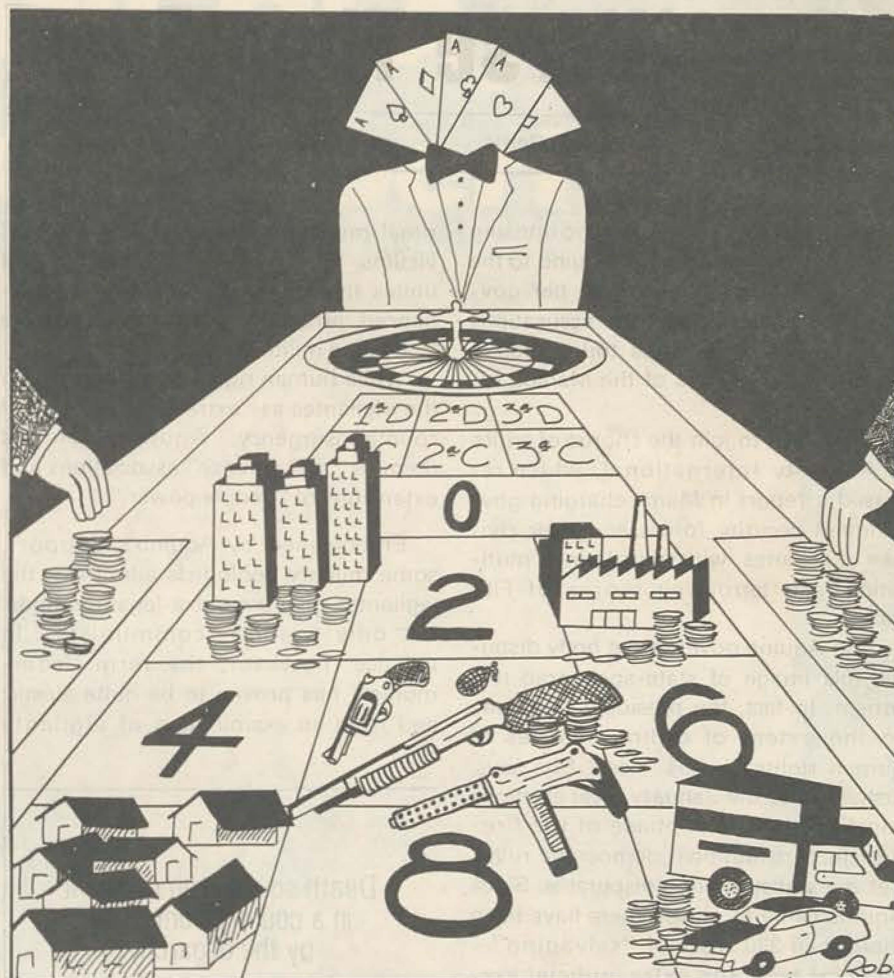
The consumer bonanza which boosted real personal consumption by US\$300 per worker yearly was not rooted in increased investment and output in the U.S. economy. The 23 percent rise in personal consumption over the first six Reagan years was matched by only a 17 percent rise in GNP. The difference was covered by imports and a consumer debt orgy that has no precedent in North American history or that of any other country.

Consumer debt now tops US\$2,700 billion, over 65 percent the level of GNP. Even prior to the crash the debt level was critical. Consumer debt under Reagan rocketed from 53 percent of GNP in 1981 to the current 65 percent.

In the wake of Black Monday, the fall in consumer debt is bound to accelerate, since close to a quarter of consumer financial assets were in the stock market. As much as a third of the value of those stocks was wiped out in a single week. Hence, those who gamble on the U.S. consumer market to continue to be the driving force of the world market in the medium-term will be sizzled.

The other legacy of tax cuts coupled with astronomical military expenditures (now topping US\$300 billion yearly) was that the Reagan caste oligarchy consistently spent beyond its means. The growing disparity between receipts and expenditures meant larger and larger budget deficits, financed by non-North Americans, and which will be repaid – if at all – with worthless greenbacks.

Whereas foreigners owed North Americans US\$141 billion more than they did in 1981, by 1987 a tragic reversal gripped the nation. The U.S. had plunged into a quagmire of a US\$400 billion foreign debt – moving on a trajectory that will push it past US\$1,000 billion in the early 1990s. It is worth pondering the significance of this awesome figure since it is not far removed from the Third World's



current debt holocaust.

If borrowing was one pillar of Reaganomics, the casino society was another. "Casino society" means the large-scale diversion of the nation's productive resources into short-term, highly speculative investments – the logical emanation of Reagan's supply-side economics coupled with the deregulation of financial markets, one in which swindles and embezzlements of all varieties received a legal benediction.

According to the proponents of supply-side economics, the massive tax cuts that Reagan bestowed on corporate North America in 1981 were blueprinted to spur productive investment that would generate jobs, incomes and new tax revenues. In principle, a grand idea.

In practice, however, the nation's corporations shoveled these tax handouts into a mighty array of proliferating speculative financial instruments such

as futures markets, stock options, leveraged buyouts, mergers and acquisitions. To finance these wholly unproductive operations, U.S. corporations have sprouted a debt of US\$1,900 billion in 1986, a figure growing at more than 10 percent yearly.

The upshot of this enormous cash flow pouring into this speculative maelstrom was that productivity growth slipped from an already low 0.6 percent yearly in the 1970s to 0.4 percent from 1979 to 1986. Viewed from another angle, Japanese auto manufacturers required only 80-100 hours to make a car; U.S. firms needed 150-160 hours.

For an industrialized North America, as it lumbers into the last decade of the century, these numbers spell nothing short of catastrophe. •

Third World Network Features





## OPENPAGE

THE PHILIPPINES

# Worse Than Ever

By Walden Bello\*

**T**wo years after a historic uprising propelled Corazon Aquino to the Philippine presidency, her government is besieged with accusations that repression is worse today than it was in the last years of the Marcos regime.

The latest to join the chorus of critics is Amnesty International, which released a report in March charging government security forces and their civilian auxiliaries with murdering, mutilating, and terrorizing scores of Filipinos.

The Aquino government hotly disputes this image of state-sponsored terrorism. In fact, the president has gone to the extent of calling charges of human rights abuses "lies." She says, instead, that the January local elections constituted the final phase of the "return to constitutional democratic rule." Yet the statistics are indisputable: Since Aquino came to power, there have been more than 330 cases of "salvaging" — the local term for extra-judicial execution.

Labor leader Rolando Olalia and student activist Leandro Alejandro, two outstanding opponents of the ousted dictator, survived 14 years of Marcos, only to be assassinated in the first months of the Aquino era. Living in exile is a key leader of the Christian left, Father Edicio de la Torre. And throughout the Philippines, activists associated with the KMU labor federation and other progressive and leftist mass organizations have been forced underground.

Largely responsible for driving the left from the arena of open political competition are the vigilante groups which now number 200 and continue to spread. The vigilantes are diverse in composition, encompassing local toughs and extortionists, deserters from the guerrilla New People's Army, anti-Muslim Christian fanatics, and members of the religious sects that engage in

ritual mutilations of their "communist" victims. But there is one thing that unites this motley crew: They are financed, armed, and coordinated by the Philippine military.

While human rights groups condemn the vigilantes as "extra-legal" means of counterinsurgency, Aquino defends them as "self-defense" associations and extensions of "people power."

Emboldened by Aquino's support, some military apologists admit that the vigilantes may use extra-legal methods, but only against "communists". In practice, however, the term "communist" has proven to be quite elastic; and from an examination of vigilante

### Death squads run rampant in a country controlled by the oligarchy

victims, it apparently covers peasants demanding land reform, human rights activists, and priests and nuns who preach social justice.

During the January local elections, hardly any candidates dared to run as standard bearers of the leftist *Partido ng Bayan* (People's Party) for fear that this was tantamount to signing one's own death warrant. By driving anti-establishment candidates from the electoral arena, vigilante activity has subverted the democratic process. Elections take place, but they have reverted to their traditional role: containing conflicts within the Philippine elite by allowing rival factions of a fractious upper class to compete, relatively peacefully, for political office. Voters are presented with a choice of rival upper-class

personalities, not competing political programs.

This system reinforces the social and economic status quo. Land reform — the most vital issue for the impoverished 70 percent of Filipinos that live in the countryside — will not come from a Congress where 23 out of 24 senators are millionaires and 90 percent of 200 elected members of the lower house are big landlords. The old upper class, of which Aquino is a member, is back in the saddle, though it must now share political power with the bloated military establishment that she inherited from Marcos.

As the vigilantes drive the left from the electoral arena, violent revolution increasingly becomes the only option for groups seeking fundamental change in a country that is trapped by what the World Bank has described as the worst structures of social inequality in Southeast Asia.

The resulting polarization is a tragic betrayal of the promise of the February revolution.

In the eyes of many Filipinos, the United States is compromised in the Philippine government's vigilante strategy. They point bitterly to endorsement of the vigilante policy by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz during a visit to Manila in June 1987. They also assert that part of the \$110 million in military aid that now goes annually to the Philippine Armed Forces finds its way to the vigilante gangs.

Yet, in some quarters in Washington, there are doubts about the wisdom of a policy of backing vigilantes. Many of these apprehensions stem from the experience of counterinsurgency in El Salvador, where right-wing death squad activity in the early 1980s helped to spread rather than contain the insurgency. As retired General Richard Stilwell, an influential adviser to the Pentagon, recently told a North American congressional committee, the Filipino vigilantes are "in the longer term, a potential source of problems as they are generally not responsive to duly constituted authority."

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