

# International VIEWPOINT

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**Erratum**

OUR attention has been drawn to two errors in our obituary of I. B. Tabata, which appeared in IV #194. Firstly, Tabata was the president — for over a quarter of a century — of the Unity Movement, not the New Unity Movement. Secondly, the date of his death was October 13, not October 15, as we stated in the obituary — our apologies.

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## Countdown to war begins

THE WAY for an invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies was cleared by the adoption on November 30 of a UN Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force. If Iraq does not quit Kuwait before January 15. There can now be no doubt about Washington's intentions. The first such resolution provided the cover for the Korean War.

Today, it is the bureaucratic regimes themselves, which speak in the name of socialism and anti-imperialism, that have directly given their endorsement to unleashing a holocaust against Iraq. Washington has the explicit, if hesitant support of Moscow.

Desperate to gain the acceptance of the capitalist powers, and even to assimilate to the capitalist system, the Soviet bureaucrats have cast aside pretences of supporting a struggle for a new world order. The Chinese refusal to vote for the resolution reflected nothing more noble than an interest in showing that it can defy international condemnation of its repressive internal policy. In any case, it gave backhanded support to the imperialist effort, abstaining when it could have vetoed the resolution.

Now, nothing stands in the way of a tragedy, possibly of historic scale, in the Middle East, except the antiwar movements in the imperialist countries and the nationalist ones in the Arab world. The US antiwar movement, drawing on the tradition of the mass mobilizations against the war in Vietnam, has already shown signs of taking off. It has gained

considerable attention, therefore, from the mass media in the other imperialist countries. The polls show that the American people do not want war. It is now essential to step up the antiwar mobilizations. They must, and can, stop the war. ★

# From Thatcher to Euro-Thatcherism



"I'll be glad when we have a classless society - I never could stand the poor."

**T**HATCHER fell crushed between the resistance of the working class on the one side and the attempt to pursue a policy independent of European capital on the other. Her replacement by John Major represents the reorientation of British capital towards Europe, but it does not indicate a softening of the attacks on the working class. Quite the reverse — the rise of what can best be described as "Euro-Thatcherism" means a reorientation toward Europe but the retention of the same policies of mass unemployment and anti-trade unionism that characterized Thatcher herself. This time these attacks will be reinforced by Britain's recent membership in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) of the European Monetary System.

Underlying Thatcher's resignation and the divisions within the Conservative Party and ruling class which it reflects, was the disintegration of the economic project embarked on by the Tories in 1979. This involved an attempt to use the resources created by North Sea oil to impose a profound defeat on the working class while maintaining an economic orientation and political system rooted in Britain's imperial past — the dominance of the City of London, overseas investment and a military apparatus out of all proportion to the real strength of the British economy, all at the expense of undermining the UK's domestic economy.

For two years after 1979, the Thatcher government allowed British domestic manufacturing industry to collapse. Brit-

THE RESIGNATION of Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister and her replacement by John Major is the most dramatic explosion in the Tory [Conservative] party for over a decade. The removal of Thatcher signals the end of a particular project of the bourgeoisie and the beginning of a reorganization of British politics.

JAMES BROOK

ish manufacturing fell by more than 15% — the greatest decline since the aftermath of World War 1. All restrictions on the export of capital were lifted and a net outflow of \$200bn took place over the next decade. The balance of payments was funded through North Sea oil revenues and booming financial services. Unemployment soared to over three million on official figures and four million in real terms.

Simultaneously a major reorganization of the UK's domestic economy was undertaken. A programme of privatization began — including telecommunications, steel, the ports, gas, electricity and water. Trade union laws were tightened, with restrictions on picketing, the outlawing of the closed shop [compulsory trade union membership], and the seizure of assets of unions engaged in industrial struggles. Specific groups of workers — above all the miners, but also the steelworkers, dockers and printers — were singled out for exemplary defeat. On the political front, the Labour Party split in 1981 with the formation of the Social Democratic Party — the majority of which went on to fuse with the Liberals after the 1987 election.

After initial hesitations, the ruling class united behind the government's economic programme. British financial capital gained from the widening of the scope of its international operations. The oil companies — a major sector of British capital — gained from the North Sea oil boom. Major manufacturing sectors began to rapidly diversify investment abroad —

around 50% of the profits of the top 100 UK firms now come from overseas operations. At the same time the government's calculation was that the resulting unemployment would crush the resistance of the working class, and, on that basis, the domestic manufacturing base of British capital would be rebuilt together with the profits of its manufacturing firms.

Initially, this strategy worked brilliantly for capital. The share of GDP accounted for by company profits soared from under 12% in the depth of the recession in 1981 to over 19% in 1984.

At the same time the revenue from North Sea oil allowed a substantial increase in the living standards of a large proportion of the employed working class — real wages rose by 27% in the decade after 1979.

The working class was split between a large section hit by unemployment and its effects, such as low pay, and another part gaining economically from Thatcherism. In both the 1983 and 1987 general elections, substantial sections of high-paid skilled workers swung to vote for the Conservatives, while, on the other hand, riots broke out in the most deprived inner cities in 1981. With Labour devastated by the 1981 split, Thatcher won three consecutive general elections.

### Boom and Thatcher collapse together

But the Thatcher government's economic policy was a product of the rise in commodity prices and the international financial boom after 1979, and it began to collapse with them. The oil price collapse of 1985 severely affected the balance of payments. In the stock market crash of 1987 UK capital lost almost a quarter of its overseas assets.

Sectors of UK capital oriented to oil and international financial operations were no longer able to take the strain of financing the UK balance of payments, which after 1987 has deteriorated into the worst deficit in British peacetime history. Furthermore the huge outflow of capital began to undermine the domestic economy. In 1989 the net outflow of long term capital was \$40bn, 6% of GDP. This required foreign borrowing of \$40bn, attracted by high interest rates which rose to 15%, with a devastating impact both on UK investment and on the Tory Party's electoral support amongst homeowners with mortgages.

Most fundamentally, despite terrible defeats inflicted on particular groups of workers in struggle — with the number of steelworkers cut by over 50%, the number of miners by 60%, and total defeat of the port workers — the working class was not beaten down severely and comprehensively enough to allow the sustained rebuilding of the profits of domestic industry. In 1988 railworkers, and in 1989 local government workers, defeated the govern-

ment. In 1990 most of the major engineering employers were forced to concede a reduction in the working week from 39 to 37 hours after selective strike actions by unions. The working class was able to resist the attempt to cut its living standards and from 1989 on company profits plunged as the working class successfully defended real incomes — company profits fell from 17% of GDP in mid 1988 to 13% by mid 1990.

Government unpopularity deepened as mass opposition to the poll tax developed. By the beginning of 1990, a sharp economic recession was setting in. The UK economy had arrived in an impasse, both domestically and internationally.

But, while the decisive factor which broke Thatcher was her inability to grind down the working class, the immediate occasion for her resignation was the crisis of orientation provoked by this former fact inside the ruling class in its relation to the EEC.

In the period of the oil boom, Britain's North Sea oil reserves were a major asset for the EEC and also allowed the UK to run trade surpluses with almost all EEC countries. The UK was in a relatively strong bargaining position — achieving significant reductions in its payments to the EEC budget. Thatcher was therefore at first able to maintain a relatively strong position for British capital within the EEC hierarchy despite the run down of the domestic economy.

But with the collapse of oil prices, the UK's bargaining position collapsed also, and the already dominant position of Germany and France was further strengthened. Given Britain's weak domestic manufacturing economy, Thatcher understood that the UK could not partici-

pate in the moves towards greater monetary harmonization undertaken by France and Germany without immense economic and political difficulties. The traditional petty bourgeois economic base of the Tory Party would furthermore be destroyed by moves towards European economic union. In the 1989 elections to the European parliament, Thatcher attempted to consolidate the Tory Party around a "Gaullist" attitude to Europe.

But the result was a double debacle. British capital, for which participation in the post-1992 European system is more important than the Tory Party's electoral considerations, found Thatcher's policy unacceptable. Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer [Finance Minister] Lawson, resigned over Britain's delay in joining the ERM. Michael Heseltine, one time defence minister — who had resigned from the government in 1985 because he favoured selling the Westland helicopter company to a European as opposed to a US firm — had steadily built up a pro-EEC leadership challenge within the Tory Party.

### Decisive defeat in Euro-elections

Second, the working class was concerned by the deteriorating economic situation, particularly rising inflation and the effect of high interest rates, rather than Thatcher's grandiose dreams, and was by this time turning decisively against the government. In June 1989, in the European elections, Thatcher suffered her first defeat in a nationwide election.

From autumn 1989 onwards, the writing was on the wall. A token candidate was put up against Thatcher for the Tory Party



leadership in October 1989. A series of Cabinet [the inner-circle of the Government] resignations took place throughout the following year — including that of Thatcherite industry minister Nicholas Ridley following his anti-German outburst. Finally, the resignation of the deputy prime minister, Geoffrey Howe, over Thatcher's refusal to endorse plans for economic and monetary union put forward at the EEC's Rome summit, precipitated Thatcher's downfall.

Confronted with this debacle all three of the challengers for the succession to Thatcher — Chancellor of the Exchequer John Major, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and Michael Heseltine — proposed, in different degrees, to rationalize the government's activities in a common direction — eliminating the most extravagant anti-working class provocations, notably the poll tax, and improving relations with the EEC.

But the removal of Thatcher does not represent a shift towards a new and less severe economic order. On the contrary, the core of the policy will be an even more severe drive to force down wages. This is to be achieved through increased unemployment and closer integration with West European capital. This is clear from the policies proclaimed by all sections of the Tory Party, and most notably the new prime minister, John Major. All propose to "build on the achievements of" Thatcher, not eliminate them. No one has suggested altering the anti-trade union laws — except to further tighten them. No one has talked about reversing the privatizations. No one has proposed to tackle mass unemployment.

The one new policy of the anti-Thatcher camp in the Tory Party was to still further tighten the screw on the working class through ERM membership. This, indeed, will mean stepped up attacks on the working class — leading to a rapid new surge in unemployment and a sustained attempt to reduce real wages.

Thatcher herself was removed because she opposed capital's turn towards Europe and combined this with bourgeois triumphalist attacks on the working class, such as the poll tax, which went beyond what was politically sustainable in the class relation of forces in Britain.

John Major, who was the preferred candidate of both the Thatcherites and big business (he was endorsed by both the *Financial Times* and the *Times*) supports acceptance of the turn towards Europe but, at the same time, wants to negotiate the best position for British capital within it. He is Thatcher's ex-chancellor and will maintain her attacks on the working class.



Major is as hardline as Thatcher on the economy and the market but he does not share Thatcher's ideological opposition to Europe — despite the Thatcherites endorsement of him.

He brings the Tory party into line with the goal of integrating Britain with big European capital whilst pragmatically defending the specific position of British capital within this. Rather than putting forward the messianic British vision of Thatcher, he aims to defend the specific interests of British capital within a European framework.

The same applies on the social level. Major's policy means trying to drive down real wages, but without some of the specifically Thatcherite excesses — for example, he has gone out of his way to declare his commitment to the National Health Service. His opposition to the death penalty is well known and, unlike Thatcher and many of his own Thatcherite backers, he has in the past strongly opposed racism.

### Attack on living standards planned

But despite the short term honeymoon for the Tories that will follow Thatcher's replacement, the fundamental political problem for British capital is that the attack on working class living standards implied by the present state of the UK economy and ERM membership is so severe that no government implementing these policies can hope to be popular. Current economic conditions and ERM membership would also destroy the support of a Labour government carrying them through. The problem for capital, therefore, is how to carry through a policy whose effects will be rejected by an overwhelming majority of the electorate under any government.

The answer for capital is that every party in British politics must be committed to

support for current economic policies and, in particular, membership of the ERM. The latter must be an issue placed by all party leaders above "questioning". The Tories must carry the policies through regardless of the electoral consequences. Labour must be forced to promise to maintain such a policy if in government even though it would eliminate any basis for reforms. Such "Euro-Thatcherism" in reality will require a radical reorganization of the political system.

Thatcher's downfall indicates we are coming to the end of an era in British politics — that of an alternation in government of a dominant Tory party and periodic right wing majority Labour governments.

Such a system had its base in the strength of British imperialism. In foreign policy terms it rested on Britain's "special relationship" with the United States — on whose role in stabilizing the international capitalist system the security of British overseas investment depended. The stable and subservient British Labour Party has existed as a part of this imperialist system. But this economic system has been in steady decline for the entire twentieth century although Thatcher made a last attempt to save it using the bonus of the resource of North Sea oil.

In the end the balance sheet of Thatcher's premiership is clear. She failed on all her own strategic objectives. Despite the North Sea oil and the disarray of Labour she never succeeded in increasing the Tory vote. She failed to make the domestic economy internationally competitive. Her government disintegrated amid the pressure of working class resistance on one side and the new projects of the EEC on the other.

Major will equally fail because, in essence, his economic project amounts to reorienting British capital into Europe, but trying to maintain Britain's imperial edifice in place. This combination, as with Thatcher, is more than the British economy can sustain. British capital is reaching the end of an historic road — the economy is beyond mere tinkering and even to achieve capitalist economic rationality a radical break with the imperialist past is required.

The insoluble problem for Major, and any Conservative leader, is that such a reorientation collides precisely with those sections of capital on which the interests of the Tory Party are most firmly based.

Amid Thatcher's fall the outline of what in the longer term will be a new party political system is therefore shaping itself in Britain. The firmest defenders of the European option in Britain are the Liberal Democrats, the pro-European wing of the Tory party and the right wing of the

Labour Party. The bourgeoisie must now try to create a system of government which gives permanent hegemony to these forces through Tory or Labour governments and finally through Tory-Liberal or Labour-Liberal coalitions. That will require ending the first past the post electoral system based on Tory pre-eminence and a shift to proportional representation and coalition government. This would be a shift to a "European" political system.

Such governments would maintain in place the essential anti-working class policies of Thatcherism while integrating British capitalism into Europe. The interests of capital have and will also make new demands on the Labour Party under Kinnock — to tie Labour into pro-European capital, to bring in proportional representation, to sever the link with the unions, to break the left in the party, to bring Labour to accept coalition with the Liberals.

The other side of the undermining of the traditional political system is that the intensity of the attack on real wages necessary for UK capital to compete in Europe finally threatens the stability of a right-wing Labour government carrying out a "pro-European" policy.

### Continued resistance to Labour right

Resistance to Kinnock in the trade unions and Labour Party, with the left weakened but not eliminated, continues to disturb capital. The latter's goal of eliminating Labour's deep structural links with the unions and reorganizing it as an essentially West European social democratic party has still not been reached.

The differences in the Tory party are not over how much, but merely over by what means, to attack the working class movement. Tactical miscalculations such as the poll tax may or may not go, but the core of Thatcher's policies will continue.

Taken overall, despite the failure of her own project, Thatcher played a decisive role for the bourgeoisie in attacking the working class — she was undoubtedly in this respect the most successful prime minister since the inter-war period. Under the impact of the split in 1981 Labour moved decisively to the right. The trade unions have been weakened. Thatcher's successors aim to build on these achievements for capital by integrating British capital more clearly into Europe while maintaining the scope of her attack on the working class — a policy to be pursued by Tory, Labour or coalition governments.

There is undoubtedly widespread popular satisfaction that Thatcher has bitten the dust. But Euro-Thatcherism will turn out to be more vicious than Thatcherism mark one.

At the same time, Euro-Thatcherism will confront a working class encouraged by the downfall of its most hated enemy.

**6**

Britain is entering a period of intense class struggles. ★

# A bad result for the big bourgeois parties

**A NEW shockwave hit the Irish political system with the election of Mary Robinson as President of the 26 County Southern State following a three-way contest on November 7.**

**Robinson, a non-party feminist and civil rights lawyer backed by the Labour Party, Workers' Party, and the Greens, took 38.9% on the first count and then went on to defeat the nominee of the governing Fianna Fail party Brian Lenihan by over 80,000 votes on the second count.**

**Only two weeks before such an outcome would have seemed incredible. Lenihan, Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) in the Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrat (FF/PD) coalition elected in June 1989<sup>1</sup>, was way ahead in the opinion polls with over 50% of the vote. The only point of interest was that Robinson was taking just over 30% of the vote and the candidate of Fine Gael (traditionally the second most popular party in the state), Austin Currie, was trailing a poor third with only 14%.**

JOHN MEEHAN

**F**INE GAEL was desperately trying to regain ground, resorting to "red smear" tactics against Robinson, and suggesting that her views on social issues were too extreme. None of this was having any effect, so they turned their attention to Lenihan. The issue they chose was trivial, almost a joke. Fianna Fáil in February 1982 tried to influence the then-President Patrick Hillery not to grant the request of the Fine Gael Taoiseach (Premier), Garret Fitzgerald, for a dissolution of the Dáil (parliament) and an immediate General Election. Nobody tried very hard to deny this fact. Nobody cared too much about it, except Garret Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald confronted Lenihan on TV. The significance was supposed to be that Hillery had demonstrated his "independence" by rejecting the FF approaches. Lenihan however, according to Fitzgerald, was such a party hack that he would do anything that was asked of him.

To general amazement, Lenihan denied that these events ever took place. The row rolled on for a couple of days and disaster struck the FF candidate. A politics student, Jim Duffy, produced a taped interview — done last May — where Lenihan gave an entirely plausible and detailed account of the events in early 1982. Not two hours later, Lenihan came on TV, turning his face away from the interviewer, towards the camera, and again denied everything.

The Richard Nixon-style tactics failed

lamentably. The affair is derisively nicknamed "Parkgate" after the location of the President's mansion in Phoenix Park.

Lenihan's campaign hit the rocks, and the opposition parties tabled a motion of no confidence in the Dáil. The PDs demanded Lenihan's sacking. At first FF leader Charles Haughey fought tough. But an hour before the crucial vote, he sacked his "old friend of over 30 years" who had stubbornly refused to resign.

### No pity for the amiable bad guy

FF then turned around and asked the voters to elect Lenihan as President. It was hoped that trouble inside FF could then be avoided — after all, Lenihan would have had to resign from the government anyway if he won the election, so what difference would a week make? In the soap operas people feel sorry for the amiable bad guy, so why shouldn't life imitate art?

Lenihan regained some of the ground he had lost, but not enough. His campaign became extremely dirty. One FF TD (MP) suggested Robinson would open an "abortion clinic/abortion information centre" in the Park; a government minister suggested she had a "new found" interest in her family; Haughey tried the red scare tactic with dire warnings of a Communist conspiracy. The finishing touches were added at ground level, with one story about Robinson being a lesbian.

All this was designed to hit a woman who had taken on the Catholic Church for over 20 years on contraception, divorce, and the right to information on abortion. It had particular significance because there were major defeats for the Irish women's movement in the 1980s in two referenda.

In one referendum, right wingers successfully inserted a constitutional clause making the legalization of abortion impossible; in another the Catholic right prevented the removal of a constitutional ban on divorce. In both these campaigns, Robinson was prominently identified with the losing side. But Fianna Fáil's mud did not stick. After the farce of "Parkgate", too many of their very loyal supporters had deserted to Robinson and were not coming back.

### Opposition to reactionary moral code

Without going into hyperbole, that development on its own can be seen as a small source of hope for progressive forces in Ireland. It is the first time that a candidate with a record of opposition to the Catholic Church's reactionary moral teachings has ever taken elective office in a statewide poll. It is the first time ever that FF has lost a presidential election. The winning candidate had been nominated by the weak left reformist parties and the Greens, who between them got only 16% in the 1989 general election. But — and it is a big but — Mary Robinson's victory underlines the extreme fragility of the bourgeois party system in the 26 counties.

The Robinson campaign played cleverly on the weakness of the big parties. It was stressed that the Presidency is largely a ceremonial and powerless office. Thus anyone who had doubts about Robinson's views, could be assured that the contest was less important than a general election. An example of this comes from Galway — students at the University there,

like many others throughout Ireland, are illegally publishing information for women on how to get an abortion outside Ireland. It is the subject of a long drawn out legal battle, and to her credit, Robinson has legally represented the students in court. So, when Robinson was asked would she still support this line when elected President, she said she couldn't because of the restrictions on the office.

On the other hand, in her victory speech, she declared that "Mna na hEireann" (women of Ireland) had stopped rocking the cradle and instead "rocked the system". While she successfully came across in the campaign as an anti-politician, she certainly uses one of the old dubious political tricks — long on rhetoric, short on substance.

The Robinson campaign was carefully constructed to be as inoffensive as possible. While most people knew her record on the controversial issues, they were hardly mentioned in the campaign literature. Early on in the campaign, a woman prominently identified with the struggle against the so-called "pro-life" constitutional amendment was first asked to direct Robinson's campaign and then dumped because of objections by Labour Party leaders and advertising agency representatives. Similarly, because Robinson herself belongs to no party, she consistently denied being a socialist.

Given the abysmal record of Ireland's social democratic left — it has regularly been a coalition partner of Fine Gael in very right-wing administrations — Robinson's denial might not in itself have been open to criticism. But the failure to explicitly reject the rightwing consensus of Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats/Fine Gael tells its own story.

Further, substantial criticisms can be made of her stance on the national question. Robinson resigned from the Labour Party after the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement because she said it was too

## The shadow of the "Heavy Gang"

**EX-IRISH PRIME MINISTER** Garret Fitzgerald, who was instrumental in the downfall of Brian Lenihan (see article) has a record of making a big issue out of arcane constitutional niceties, but blindly accepting any amount of thuggery by state forces. Fitzgerald was a leading minister in the infamous Fine Gael/Labour government of 1973-77 when a police "Heavy Gang" routinely tortured republican suspects. Things got so bad at the end of 1976 that new repressive legislation was blocked by the then President Cearbhall O'Dálaigh, a highly respected ex-judge with a civil rights background.

A minister in this "Heavy Gang" government publicly denounced the President, a flagrant breach of the constitutional rules surrounding the office. When this minister refused to resign and the government refused to sack him, O'Dálaigh walked out in protest. A few months later this decrepit government collapsed to record defeat in a general election. One major reason for this was the shabby treatment of O'Dálaigh.

Throughout this sinister episode, Garret Fitzgerald remained in the government. ★

hard on the Unionists. This was music to the ears of Ian Paisley and other Loyalist dinosaurs, and has earned her the justifiable mistrust of militant nationalists. As against that, she does have a record of opposing repressive legislation, and her election sets up the possibility of a rerun of the Cearbhall O' Dálaigh affair of 1976 (see box).

Lenihan's defeat opens up the race inside FF to succeed Haughey. Haughey, who had come through so many crises, and finally got the security he craved, is weaker than ever. Fine Gael's disastrous showing has already forced Alan Dukes out of the leadership to be replaced by the even more right wing John Bruton. Labour won't get anything like Robinson's level of support in a general election, but has definitely strengthened its position.

Finally the result emphasizes what I said about the 1989 general election, that there is a weak radicalization going on. The key thing for any left wing force is to stay out of coalition with the parties of the right — FF, PDs, and FG. ★



1. See John Meehan: "Irish workers reject austerity", *International Viewpoint*, #168, July 31, 1989.

# The Ukraine against Gorbachev

Speech by nationalist leader

Introduction by Gerry Foley

THE SECOND national congress of the Ukrainian national-democratic movement, Rukh, opened in Kiev on October 25 in the wake of a campaign of mass mobilizations against the still Communist-dominated government of the republic. The Communists gained more than a two-thirds majority in the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet in elections that were largely rigged.

Nonetheless, Rukh and other opposition forces won a strong foothold in the Supreme Soviet and control of local governments in western Ukraine. After the elections, the local Communist Party also started running scared. Thus, the CP-dominated Supreme Soviet voted a declaration of sovereignty going very far toward full independence.

The campaign was a militant one, involving massive rallies in western Ukraine and Kiev, and in particular a hunger strike involving a fifth of all students in the republic. It was also uneven. Nonetheless, it won major victories, finally forcing out the premier, Vitalii Mosol, on October 23.

The Rukh congress was marked by a radicalization, confirmation of the goal of full independence for Ukraine and total rejection of *perestroika*, which the Ukrainian movement, like the Baltic fronts, was supposedly founded to support from below. The new stance of the movement is illustrated by the keynote speech of the chairman, the poet Ivan Drach. The following is a condensation of the speech. In some passages, Drach showed that he identified Stalinism with Bolshevism, but they were only repetitions of his general attacks on the Stalinist system.

**G**ORBACHEV reminded us of Malyskov's words... "My Ukraine, I need nothing in the world but to hear your voice and to keep your kindness." It is very important to listen to the voice of Ukraine — it has been raised in rallies; it has grown harsh and uncompromising. Emotion has often upset cool thinking. But our kindness cooled with the student hunger strikers on the stones of Independence Square.

The wheel of history has skidded in the blood of millions of bodies, right here on one sixth of the planet, precisely because

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a new imperialist reaction, hiding behind

a socialist mask, resurrected all that was blackest, lowest and most savage. Thus, our road to liberation, to a return to the family of peoples, has not been and will not be easy. But we are condemned to pursue it to a victorious conclusion, if we do not want to vanish forever from the face of the earth.

This holds for all the national colonies convoyed in stages into this gigantic gulag. Although the all-Union administration mixed them together in the camps for the sake of international demoralization, it still could not completely destroy their specific features, their individuality. Preserving their deep-seated national

traits and specialness, the peoples did not allow themselves to be ground into a uniform mass of hopeless slaves, into biological robots — zombies.

Thus, any objective historical, political, economic, social and cultural analysis inevitably leads us to one conclusion — only full sovereignty of the Ukrainian people, a completely independent Ukrainian state, corresponds to the development of world civilization today. Any other formula for the historical existence of a people, of a nation, unequivocally and mercilessly consigns Ukrainian society to the rearguard of society, makes it fodder, raw material for the development of other nation-states.

We see that for some reason forces are uniting in opposition to state sovereignty for the Ukrainian people that yesterday, it would seem, were making very different noises. From Gorbachev and the entire Presidential Council to their political opposites and opponents. From the Central Committees of the CPSU and the Ukrainian CP to dozens of Moscow parties and grouplets.

## Yesterday's liberals and humanists

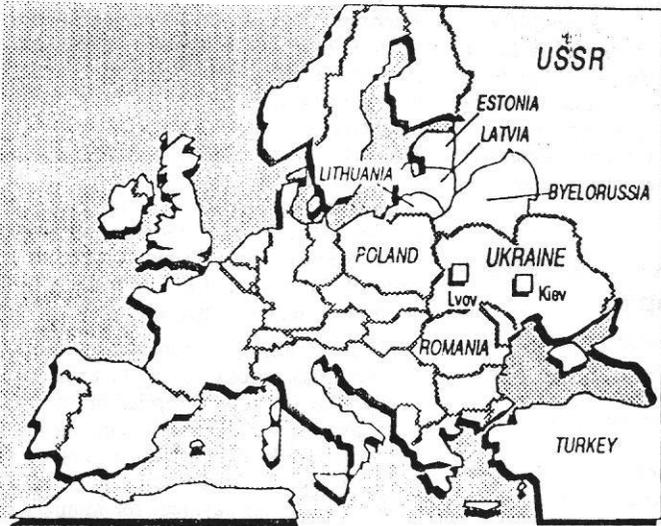
We see how yesterday's liberals and humanists, even recent cultural luminaries, are flocking to the Kremlin's doors in order not to be left behind in condemning "separatism and nationalism." We have felt, and continue to feel, warmth and sympathy for Russian patriots who, in the bad times not so long ago, fought for the resurrection of their country. So, it is with sorrow that we note that the patriotism of many of them, it seems today, still contains such elements as a boastful and arrogant disrespect for the efforts of non-Russian peoples, and above all, Ukrainians, to liberate themselves.

It is strange to see how Russian dissidents, driven abroad not long ago, raise an outcry against us from there in the columns of mouthpieces of the Communist Party. Solzhenitsyn himself has sounded a charge against his concentration camp mates — the Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

Thus, we see the imperial idea in action, at work, as when the defeated Denikin and Shulgin praised their Bolshevik enemies for restoring the "one and indivisible" [Russian state].

We have to be prepared to see the imperial center mount the most furious opposition to the efforts of the Ukrainian people to liberate itself. Ukraine has been and remains the breadbasket of the empire, one of the main providers of living power, of cannon fodder, of military technology for the favored and main institution of rule — the army.

The Donetsk miner; the Luhansk chemical worker; the Dnieper metalworker; the Kiev and Kharkiv machine builders; the Mikolaiv shipyard workers; the



wheat and hay growers; those who live on the shores of the dying Black Sea and along the winding poisoned swamps of the Dnieper; to say nothing of those whose towns have been transformed into atomic leprosoria by cesium and strontium radiation — all of us here, in Ukraine, can no longer hide, close our eyes and not see how mutilation, the loss of national character, degeneration, annihilation are knocking on all our doors. The existing state, which mouths the words of the workers' anthem, does not care about us. It is not ours.

No matter how much the Meat Combine is restructured, it remains the Meat Combine. Improving the technology may lighten the work of the personnel or of their "collective management," take it onto the world market, increase profits. It might even "humanize" the barbaric aspect. But a people that cannot defend its own rights will always remain raw material for this combine.

### The Ukraine's bloody sacrifices

Anyone in the USSR or in the world who might think that this comparison is too crude, should test their gentlemanly or professorial objectivity. Count up the millions of people murdered in the USSR and especially in the Ukrainian SSR and ask themselves how many more. We Ukrainians have paid to God and humanity such a price for our existence, and we have the right not to offer up any more bloody sacrifices on the altar of our independence; we have paid for it a hundred times over.

Are any further proofs needed of the advantage of forming an independent Ukrainian state? Unfortunately, there are. It appears that the colonizers and the native collaborators have intimidated people by saying that Ukraine cannot exist independently of the center for economic reasons. But without important natural resources and located on poor land,

Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and even Albania are capable of an independent existence.

It seems that, since we cannot get an accurate economic service, we have to create a counterintelligence service that can steal full and reliable information about the material resources, finances and all other economic balance sheets from the Kremlin or the Politbureau of the

Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP that concern relations with the imperial center.

To get hold of such clandestine economic accounts of the Central Committee of the CPSU and of the CPU would make it possible to show, for example, that maintaining our own national Ukrainian army would cost the Ukrainian working people considerably less than they spend today for the biggest army in the world, the armed forces of the Soviet Union. The size of the forces deployed in the three Ukrainian military districts is known to the Kremlin, the party-colonial administration of the republic and NATO, but not to the Ukrainian people.

No other member of the UN besides Ukraine maintains so many military bases on its territory that are of no benefit to it and have no permission to exist from its own government. Like Rukh, the [other] democratic forces, are making every effort to reduce the specific weight of military production in the so-called GNP of the Ukrainian SSR.

Those light-minded critics of the leadership of the CP general staff who say that *perestroika* started without a plan, without any clear definition of goals, without a general worked-out conception, are quite wrong. To the contrary! The strategic "general line" has been maintained without deviation.

### Forcing the people to work more

It is to force the people to work more and better, maintaining the level of exploitation already achieved, maintaining the lowest possible labor costs, even for a third-world country. What both right and left consider hesitation, half-measures, irresolution on the part of the top authorities is nothing other than maneuvering, a consistent, stubborn attempt in new conditions not to relinquish any of the products of labor and their distribution from party-state hands.

All this has been focused finally into the hermetic programs, incomprehensible to the masses, of Abalkin and Shatalin, or the hybrid version of them. Thus, it was thought that no one would understand anything and not see the simplest thing under the decorations of semi-scientific verbiage — which is that the rulers want to escape from their bankruptcy, cover up their squandering, and their wicked waste of social product at the expense of the people; they want to coerce the people by so-called economic methods, that is by the threat of hunger and impoverishment, to get the ruling oligarchy and its Siamese twin, the criminal mafia, out of their historical rut.

In the so-called "regulated socialist market" programs, the government has camouflaged a still crueller exploitation of the working people. There is only one innovation. Today everyone is going to be forced by "economic conditions" to grab their miserable ration away from their neighbors. Treacherously, they [the "party-state"] are planning a war of all against all.

Along with this, the power of the party-state parasitic class over everyone will be maintained. The workers will be incited against the peasants, and both against the intelligentsia. National, inter-ethnic conflicts will be provoked. All of this is to prepare the conditions for a transition, more accurately, a return from the present weak dictatorship to an open dictatorship.

### Gorbachev's truculent perorations

The truculent perorations by the general secretary and his heralds against the republics' declarations of sovereignty, the ponderous pseudo-scientific arguments about "a single economic space" are only a clumsy mask for the centuries-old "one and indivisible" [Russian state].

It is quite clear today, after so many years of the *perestroika* fakers, after verbal sleight-of-hand about new approaches or the "human factor," after the real political problems were shouted down with empty noise and furious attacks on "extremists", "destructive elements," and "separatists", that the *perestroika* government is seeking only to maintain itself in the saddle and put a bridle back on the working people.

After all that, in 1989 a real *perestroika* started, which came as a surprise to the authorities although not to the democratic forces — the emergence on the political arena of such a mighty force as the working class. The miners' strikes, which were highly organized and determined, really shook the party-state power.

We well remember how the highest officials and the party-state press attacked the miners, how they incited against them the workers of related industries, as well as peasants. They accused them of group

egoism. The democratic forces do not have the billions that the CPSU-CPU have. They don't have sausage and shoes, building materials and other resources. We can offer the miners our moral and political support, our solidarity, and we did that. The authorities managed to confuse the miners, to make Rukh a bogeyman for them. Who gained from that? Let the miners answer that one themselves.

We believe that the party-state bureaucracy will not succeed in the end in driving a wedge between the national and social liberation movement in Ukraine and the miners. Just as in the last analysis neither Gierek nor Jaruzelski managed to block the way to unity of the Polish workers' Solidarnosc. Just as the Czarist Okhrana did not manage to form its own workers organization in order to save the autocracy.

However, such historical certainty and optimism do not keep us from seeing today the subjective (by no means objective) causes that obstruct fruitful dialogue between Rukh and the new workers' movement in Ukraine. These causes exist not only in Donbass but in Crimea, partially in Kharkov, Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa — everywhere the so-called Russian-speaking population lives. Deafening, manipulative propaganda for many decades has succeeded in making an imprint on mass consciousness.

### Imposition of a single language

There has been the refrain that people lose their ethnic roots, their nationality, their homeland just because they speak Russian, although speaking English or French does not make Canadians or Congolese respectively English or French. But in the USSR, Ukrainians and Byelorussians, under the pressure of the total imposition of a single language in the empire, started to speak Russian, and were subtracted from their nation and added to the dominant one. That is how the notorious Stalinist "fusion of the nations" and the Brezhnevite "creation of a new historic community — the Soviet people" — took place.

We do not think Ukrainians who speak Russian automatically change their nationality. Even less that they can become enemies of their own people. It grieves us that centuries of bloody and bloodless Russification of Ukraine have forced many of our compatriots to make a hard choice between their own survival and their mother tongue.

We honor the heroes who sacrificed themselves to defend the life of the nation, but it would be inhuman and unjust to condemn all those who have not become heroes. And it would be still more wrong to rally the nation only around one symbol, the language.

I would like the miners to take this fact into consideration. In the morning of

October 17 the Communists in the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR rattled their sabers and demanded in fact a Tbilisi variant of "pacifying" the students and youth. And when a column of workers marched up to the parliament building and shouted only one word "Arsenal!" the hawks suddenly became peace-loving and prudent.

### Kremlin follows imperialist examples

The Kremlin politicians' treacherous plan is to incite as many peoples against each other as it can. We have seen how the imperialist center achieved this in practice in Moldavia. Now they want to spread this Moldavianization to Ukraine. We know about the colonialists in Africa, Asia, Latin America cutting up the territories that were to be freed.

In the same way as the South African racists impose the will of the white minority on the Black population, the CPSU and its special services want to give privileges to the so-called Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic in order to make it into a fifth column in the fight against the national-liberation movement. They are trying to do that in Ukraine as well.

What should be the strategy and tactics of the democratic forces in Ukraine today? Above all, they should declare directly and openly that it is fundamentally and consciously opposed to the strategy of the party-repressive forces that have until now held power in the republic. The strategic aim of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP is to maintain at any cost its power over the people. In this respect, it neglects no means — from psychological warfare, cold war against the democratic forces, to police clubs, tanks, sappers' shovels.

In contrast, our strategy does not aim at seizing power, but is based on the peaceful road of establishing the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people. Unlike the Ukrainian CP, we are not imposing our rule on the people, we are not calling on the working people to advance under our leadership to a shining but never achieved future. We are not fooling anyone with glittering pharasaical promises "to feed the people." This people feeds everyone, including the Ukrainian CP.

We see our strategy and tactics as going to the people, gaining the fullest possible experience of its difficulties and problems, its aspirations, its everyday and historical interest and to turn this experience into political action. The democratic forces can come to power only through the will of the working people, and the future government cannot be other than under the control of the people.

The tactics of our political struggle follow from that. We must exercise all inalienable rights of the people recognized by international law, United Nations treaties,

the Helsinki accords and nonviolent but determined means. In the arsenal of our peaceful means of struggle are the golden treasury of the national-liberation movements, especially various forms of mass disobedience linked with the names of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and other great sons of humanity. We will learn from, and use the experience of the victory of the Polish Solidarnosc and the Czechoslovak Civic Forum, the experience of the patriots of Namibia and the supporters of Nelson Mandela.

Strikes, rallies, demonstrations, pickets, petitions, refusal to pay taxes and to accept the illegal expropriation by the party and the state of socio-economic and industrial production in the guise of state property and the so-called socialist obligations, stopping payment for municipal services — all of these and many other methods are effective weapons for liberating the working people, especially now, when the serf-masters' so-called economic reforms are aimed directly at more and more impoverishing the people.

### In defence of national ownership

In connection with this, we are making every effort to prevent the reform of national ownership, when the party top echelon and its Siamese twin — organized crime — wants to convert it into their own private property.

The real facts and the laws that the party, Komsomol, and economic magnates adopt in the Supreme Soviets in Moscow and Kiev confirm that this legislative process of converting the party-state-feudal socialists into the first social-capitalists, industrialists and bankers has already started. 90% of the working people have still not gotten any ownership, and the president has already issued an order [*ukaz*] declaring the inviolability of property in order to defend the property of the party mafia.

We have nothing to fear — neither the unleashing of a civil war nor even the already perceptible steps by the party-state leaders with their dictatorial pretensions, nor of parliamentary trickery. Likewise, we do not need to worry about the slow growth of national and social consciousness of any layers of Ukrainian society nor about their passivity. Today, in Ukraine, as in other peoples of the empire, powerful democratic forces have not arisen in order quickly to renounce their struggle.

And when spontaneous protests and the natural and inalienable human aspirations for freedom and happiness come together with organized political forces, the advance of history is not so cruel, not so pitiless, although it remains historically irreversible. ★

# Georgia moves towards independence

**IN ELECTIONS** to the republic's Supreme Soviet on October 28, Georgia became the fourth republic, after the three Baltic ones, to install a national-democratic government pledged to achieving total independence from Moscow. The Round-Table bloc, headed by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, won 54% of the vote and 114 seats in the Supreme Soviet, while the Communist party got about 30% and 61 seats.

In 56 districts, candidates ran as individuals and not representatives of parties. In these, members or supporters of the Round Table took 34 seats, while CP members or supporters took 16. Four seats were taken by independents, and one each by the Popular Front of Georgia and the Democratic Georgia bloc. The elections were conducted on a mixed proportional and first-past-the-post system. The electoral law excluded parties not running on a republic-wide basis, hence minority nationalist groups. There was a high rate of abstention in the autonomous republic of Abkhazia and the Southern Ossetian autonomous region.

GERRY FOLEY

**F**ROM THE START of its first session, the new Georgian Supreme Soviet began taking radical steps in the direction of asserting state sovereignty. On November 14 it adopted a declaration of a "transitional period" in Georgia, which asserted that the country's incorporation into the Soviet Union was an illegal annexation, and that the main goal of the national-liberation movement was to achieve "real bases for full state independence of Georgia."

The name "Soviet Socialist Republic" was dropped, and references to socialism, communism and the constitution of the USSR were removed from the Georgian constitution. The flag and crest of the republic were changed. The "Transitional Period" declaration was adopted unanimously. Thus, the Communist Party deputies also voted for it, indicating that the Georgian CP is now breaking its back in order to avoid being tarred as a Unionist party.

On November 15, the Supreme Soviet suspended the USSR conscription law on the republic's territory. This resolution also called for forming a local force under the Georgian Ministry of the Interior made up of men liable to the draft. On November 25, at the initiative of a group of reserve officers, a corps of officers was set up to help the new government form a national army.

On November 22, the Georgian

Supreme Soviet adopted a statement on the question of the new Treaty of Union proposed by Gorbachev. It noted the declarations of principle regarding the status of Georgia in the "Transitional Period" resolution, and went on to state:

"In these conditions, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia cannot sign a new Treaty of Union and assume any obligations. Only when the Republic of Georgia achieves real independence, when it becomes the real master of its fate in state and economic life and a full subject of international law, can Georgia sign any treaty of collaboration with the people of another country.

## Collaboration with other countries

"Such an approach does not mean, however, rejecting collaboration in economic, scientific-technical, cultural and other fields with other countries, with most of which Georgia has centuries-long ties and today also maintains fruitful collaboration. In the new political conditions, this collaboration undoubtedly must be based on a qualitatively new basis, presupposing full equality and mutual benefit."

The Georgian national-democrats gaining control of the republic Supreme Soviet does not represent a sudden upsurge but rather a political-organizational advance on the part of the Georgian national-democratic organiza-

tions.

Georgia had been the negative example of the inability of the various national-democratic forces to unite in a common front to achieve self-government, in contrast to the positive examples of unity in the Baltic republics. They were fragmented into a large number of parties, most of which had a line of boycotting all Soviet institutions.

The Round-Table emerged from a split in late April from the National Forum of radical nationalist organizations. The majority of the latter organization adopted a line of alternative elections, aiming to elect a Georgian National Congress at the end of September. A similar division of principle exists in Latvia and most of all in Estonia, but there it has not led to a practical division. The advocates of an Estonian Congress also participated in the elections for the Estonian Supreme Soviet, and the forces in favor of working within Soviet institutions, the People's Front (Rahvarinne), also participate in the Congress.

## Mutual accusations of KGB connections

In Georgia, however, this division has taken the form of a total confrontation, with the leaders of the two camps — Gamsakhurdia and Giorgi Chanturia of the National Forum — accusing each other of being KGB agents.

As a result of this confrontation, only slightly more than 50% of Georgian voters cast ballots in the alternative elections held on September 29, whereas nearly all ethnically Estonian voters participated in the elections to the Estonian Congress. According to the Georgian electoral law, the vote in the alternative elections was just enough to give them legitimacy. But even in Estonia, the radical nationalists who dominate the Congress have not been able to assert its authority against the official bodies. They have not really tried. Past experience, however, indicates that the Georgian radicals may not be so obliging.

It also remains to be seen how the Abkhazian and Ossetian movements will react to a Georgian parliament, in particular whether a Moldavian-type development is possible. The two peoples represent quite different problems. The Abkhazians are a very small people, artificially regrouped in their present territory, where they form only 17% of the population. The abstention rate there was 60%, and thus obviously involved other parts of the population, for reasons still unclear. The Ossetians, on the other hand, are a larger people, artificially divided between the Russian Federation and Georgia. But in both cases, the Georgian government cannot solve these problems by repression or undemocratic laws. ★

# Did she fall or was she pushed?

**SOON after the President of Pakistan, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, sacked the elected government of Benazir Bhutto, a "Nambardar" convention was held in Lahore, the capital of Punjab, Pakistan's largest province.**

**AHMAD SHUJA**

**A** "NAMBARDAR" or a village chief, along with the "Patwari" — the lowest level of the bureaucracy — is the most important person in a village in this part of the world, and there is a popular saying that a Punjabi votes as his or her Nambardar or Patwari tells them. In this case, the right-wing caretaker government in Punjab rewarded each of the Nambardars with twelve and a half acres of fertile land as an advance payment for helping the government in the forthcoming elections.

This was only one of the measures taken by the army-backed non-elected government to win the elections called by President Khan after Bhutto's government was dismissed on August 6. Bhutto was accused of among other things, corruption and nepotism.

## Pious and honest dictators

Almost all the civilian prime ministers in Pakistan, from Khawja Nazimuddin to Benazir, including the hand-picked puppet of dictator Zia-ul-Haq, Mohamad Khan Jajejo, were dismissed on similar charges. Army dictators, on the other hand, being so pious and honest, die peacefully in retirement if they are not blown to pieces. The army remains above any sort of criticism.

Just 23 months ago, Benazir Bhutto swept into power as a heroine, the daughter undoing the wrong done to her father and her family. She had seen her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the country's only democratically elected prime minister, deposed by an army general, Zia-ul-Haq, and then imprisoned and executed. She spent a lot of time in prison or under

house arrest and years in exile. One of her brothers died in mysterious circumstances in France, probably poisoned by Zia's agents, and another lives in exile in Syria, accused of being the leader of a so-called terrorist organization — Al-Zufiqar.

After Zia's death in a plane crash, Benazir won the elections to become the youngest head of state in the world, and the only woman in a Muslim country to hold such an office. To many it looked like the fairy-tale ending. But soon it became clear that she was caught in the vicious circle of Pakistani politics. The fairy tale turned into Greek tragedy.

First there were the religious leaders, the Mullahs. For them the election of a woman as head of state was "unIslamic". The fact is that they, along with big business, had done well under Zia's dictatorship, and their dream of making Pakistan an "Islamic" country had nearly come true. For them Benazir represented the forces of secularism, the Devil himself.

Pakistan, like Ulster, has a fundamental problem, the reason or unreason for its very existence. Created out of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, at the end of the British raj, it is a living proof of a false idea — that religious ideology can be the foundation of a state and can overcome all other problems.

The rationale for Pakistan's existence was that Muslims could not survive in

Hindu dominated India, so they should have their own state. Pakistan was created with two parts — East and West, separated by 1000 miles of Indian territory. In 1971, when the Eastern part broke away to form Bangladesh, the whole ideological basis of Pakistan disintegrated. Religion could not unite the people and indeed, if anything, the sectarian differences among the Muslims of Pakistan have sharpened.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to provide Pakistan with a different ideology — namely Islamic Socialism. The Mullahs thought this a contradiction in terms, "socialism being secular and having thus no relation to Islam". Zia tried to realize the fundamentalist dream by imposing strict Islamic laws on the people of Pakistan. Barbaric punishments were inflicted on common criminals as well as thousands of political opponents. This period was surely the darkest in Pakistan's hardly radiant history.

## Benazir Bhutto's terrible mistakes

After coming to power, Benazir made some terrible mistakes. The list is long. A few examples will do.

One of her biggest and most fatal mistakes was to expect the army to change its behaviour. She went so far as to award the army generals medals for being the "saviours of democracy".

She let Zia's thugs go unpunished. They continued to thrive on the loot they had accumulated during the tyrant's years in power. They had the resources and power of Pakistan's largest province, Punjab, at hand to destabilize the central government.

On the other hand, the ordinary people of her own Pakistan People's Party (PPP), who had suffered imprisonment and torture in Zia's jails, were left to rot. She called it the "no revenge" policy. It proved to be the politics of suicide. Now, she regrets that the criminals were allowed to go unpunished.

She made many promises which she knew she would not keep. On the positive side, she released all political prisoners, commuted thousands of death sentences to life imprisonment, lifted the ban on trade unions and student activities, increased the education budget by 70% and guaranteed the right of self-expression, freedom of speech and so on.

On the other hand, she did nothing to abolish the so-called "Islamic laws" that discriminate against women, hence losing the one constituency that should have been behind her 100%. Hundreds of thousands of people who voted for Benazir out of respect for her courage noticed a change in their



"princess". Beautifully dressed, confident, with a touch of arrogance, she began to look the feudal lady, treating the country as a family estate, rather than the representative of the poor masses she had seemed to be. This, along with the dirty tricks of her numerous enemies, was to play a significant part in the forthcoming events.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, an army-backed bureaucrat, cleverly picked his moment to dismiss her. The world was busy with the Gulf crisis. The Pakistani army had lost much of its strategic importance because of the stalemate in Afghanistan, and America's warmer relations with the Soviet Union's traditional ally, India. But the Gulf crisis has given the army mafia back their self-confidence. Pakistan has dutifully supplied a few thousand soldiers for Saudi Arabia.

Benazir had refused to help the Afghanistani Mujahedin as the army — and the

CIA — wanted, seeking instead a political, negotiated settlement. She also refused to get too deeply involved in the Kashmir conflict (see *IV* 192). Furthermore she refused to give the army the powers it wanted in her home province of Sind, where bloody sectarian conflicts have cost hundreds of lives. To her credit, although she accepted power with "her hands tied behind her back", she refused to be the poodle of the army and bureaucracy represented by Ishaq Khan.

When Benazir was dismissed and the election date announced, there was no doubt in anybody's mind that the establishment had decided to dump Benazir and destroy the PPP. As Madiha Lodhi, a prominent Pakistani journalist, observed, "they haven't got rid of her to hand over the power to her once again". To make sure that the election went according to plan, the opposition leader, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi — once a colleague of

Benazir's father and now one of her bitter enemies — was appointed caretaker prime minister.

Parliament and the provincial assemblies were dissolved and Benazir's enemies, old and new, were given power in all provinces. Ministers were appointed for their skills in manipulating and terrorizing the electorate. Benazir was unpopular and only a little rigging would have been enough. But as the campaign gathered momentum, the tide began to turn in her favour.

She is undoubtedly a great fighter, more dangerous in opposition than effective in office. So much so that a special team appointed by the president predicted a neck-and-neck result. The army Central Intelligence Agency reached the same conclusion.

Then a reign of terror began in Sind. Hundreds of PPP activists were arrested, tortured and even killed. Now the dirty tricks department of the main opposition party, the Islami Jamhuri Ithad (IJI — the Islamic Democratic Alliance) a joint front of eight of the most reactionary parties, who longed for the good old days of Zia's dictatorship, got into full swing. Newspapers were already, by and large, in their pocket. Those who dared to challenge were severely dealt with. Benazir's "friends" were sacked from the TV.

### Some examples of the dirty tricks:

- An IJI leader claimed and was widely quoted that "Benazir has conspired with the Zionists and India to destroy the Pakistani Atomic energy plant."

- She was said to have sent a message through Mazhar Ali Khan, a prominent left wing Pakistani journalist, urging the Indian government to "attack Pakistan to save her government".

- When Madiha Lodhi, the editor of a prominent English language paper "Muslim" refused to publish news about Benazir Bhutto that she claimed was a lie, she was asked to resign. She obliged along with some other members of her editorial staff.

- In a public meeting in Lahore some speakers made remarks about her which, according to the London *Independent*, were so shocking and filthy that "even the trashiest of newspapers will not print them." It was also being said that she was "pregnant all the time" and had a lover in every port and capital of the world.

The election results came as a shock to everyone. Even her opponents, according to press reports, were embarrassed by their "great success". Although their vote was nearly equal to that of the IJI, at 33%, the PPP only gained 45 seats against the IJI's 105.

There was a surprising thing about this election. It was reported that the turnout was a lot less than in 1988, but the total number of votes counted came to a lot

## The land of generals and bureaucrats

PRESIDENT Ishaq used the eighth amendment to the Pakistani constitution to sack Benazir Bhutto. The amendment was fashioned by the late dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq, in order to invest in his own hands as much power as possible to use against the people's elected representatives.

- Some 41% of Pakistan's budget is eaten up by the armed forces — in total, the country spends more than 80% of its money on defence, with administration and servicing debts of some \$17bn. It spends 0.57% on health and 1.7% on education (increased by 70% by the recent PPP government). The literacy rate is 7%.

- Pakistan is the third in line for US aid, behind Israel and Egypt — receiving around \$300m a year. The aid was recently suspended on the grounds that Pakistan has not come clean on its atomic bomb plans. Pakistan has almost no foreign reserves left. Like other banana republics, Pakistan has a massive army that it cannot afford. Hence its dependence on US aid, International Monetary Fund loans and *bakshish* (charity) from Saudi Arabia.

- Throughout the period of the "caretaker" government, the central and provincial governments insisted that "no one has been arrested for political reasons." Compare this claim with the statement issued by the "caretaker" and now elected Chief Minister of Sind, Jam Sadiq Ail, in the first week of September, after he had been installed in office: "All political prisoners will be released within three days and those held on trumped up charges will be released in seven days."

- Under the caption "Broken Bones, Burned Bodies", Pakistan's leading daily, *Jang*, reported on September 13 that 28 members of the Pakistani Students Federation who had been arrested some time ago for membership in the "al-Zufiqar" organization had been released. Some of them had broken bones and parts of their bodies carried burn marks. They had been tortured by interrogators in different cells. All were PPP activists of between 15 and 25 years of age. Of 100 students arrested in Sind, three were tortured to death.

- According to the London *Guardian*, some persons suspected of being associated with the drugs mafia have been elected to the new Pakistani parliament. The report claims that the drug barons used to finance politicians to look after their interests in the national parliament and provincial assemblies. Now some of them have decided to get elected themselves. This is likely to be a source of tension between the American administration and the new Pakistani government. ★

more than in the previous election. The origins of these hundreds of thousands of extra votes remains a mystery.

According to the London *Guardian* of October 31, 1990: "After three international reports which gave last week's elections in Pakistan a clean bill of health, a Paris-based human rights group has partly endorsed claims of large-scale rigging made by the PPP leader, Benazir Bhutto.

"The report, by Justice Serge Petit and Justice Olivier de Baynast of the International Federation of Human Rights reinforces Ms. Bhutto's claims that the election rigging was highly sophisticated and that turnout was exaggerated.

"The two justices and two barristers assisting them were the only monitoring teams which appeared to have stayed for the vote counting....

"...in one constituency (the team found that) the number of votes for the winning candidate exceeded the total number of voters.

"The French team also found the delay in the announcement of the results suspicious....

"[Benazir's] claims of mass rigging appear to be widely believed in Pakistan on both sides of the political fence, largely because the III victory was so big. However, few believe that the rigging would have changed the overall result."

### President distributes the seats

More interesting was a statement by the Chief Minister of Sind, Jam Sadiq Ali that "Benazir should thank the President for allowing her to win (in her home town) of Larkana."

Thus, it was the President and his henchmen who were "distributing" the seats, and not the people electing their representatives.

Millions of ordinary Pakistanis feel cheated. These elections were an exercise by the Pakistani ruling classes and their American backers to establish a reactionary regime backed by the military and the bureaucracy — a different formula from the naked military dictatorships of the past.

But will the people accept this travesty lying down? For the first time in the country's history we have a Punjabi President; an "elected" Punjabi Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, a protégé of Zia's; and the hated Muhajir Qomi movement (the neo-fascist and openly racist party), detested by Sindhis, is part of the government.

With a bankrupt economy, the intensifying conflict in Kashmir, the weariness of the US administration and the uncertain political climate in India, the sectarian and regional conflicts in Pakistan will intensify to an alarming extent. ★

**THE COMING WEEKS could turn out to be crucial for the two countries that share the island the Indians used to call Kiskeya — Haiti and the Dominican**

**Republic. On November 19, 1990 a general strike in the Dominican Republic challenged the very existence of the Balaguer regime.**

**In Haiti, US imperialism faces a different challenge: the possible, not to say probable, victory of the priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the elections scheduled for December 16 — at least if the elections are allowed to take place and there is no massive fraud.**

**ANDY BROCK AND ARTHUR MAHON**

## One island, two crises

### General strikes confront Balaguer

**B**ALAGUER'S new electoral term began on August 16, 1990, two days after a 48 hour general strike called by union and popular organizations had paralyzed the country. The government had just announced a series of austerity measures designed to open the way to the signing of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The army violently suppressed the movement — twelve people were killed, more than 100 wounded and there were about 5,000 arrests.

Only one head of state, Venezuela's president, Carlos Andres Perez, took the trouble of attending Balaguer's inauguration, this latter having won by fraud against his opponent Juan Bosch on May 16. Balaguer resorted to ferocious repression once again in response to a three day general strike on September 26-28. A strike leader in the town of Salude was tortured and then shot by the army. There were at least three deaths and dozens of people wounded by gunshots. If one leaves out the massacre of 200 people during the riots of 1984 — during the presidency of the social democrat Jorge Blanco — the present wave of repression is the most violent since Balaguer's first dictatorial term in power (1966-1978).

The September strike was less successful than that in August, but it was not a complete failure. Almost all urban and rural social layers were affected, surprising most observers. The strike was called by a small minority current, the Collective of Popular Organizations (CPO), which is supported by a front bringing together the small — and for a long time

untypical — Dominican Communist Party and some other far left organizations.

The movement's relative success is explained by the massive rejection of the austerity measures of summer 1990, which have sharpened the country's deep economic, political and social crisis. For several months, Balaguer's regime has been effectively levying the poor by means of inflation.

The money is needed for the big financial and export bourgeoisie, active above all in tourism and the free trade zones (see article on p. 9), for the ruling camarilla and grandiose construction projects. These latter are being undertaken with a view to the arrival of the Pope and a quantity of heads of state in 1992 coming to celebrate the "fifth centenary of the discovery and evangelization of the Americas (sic)".

The government's policy has meant a cruel drop in purchasing power to a level not experienced for decades, the collapse of social services (a few hours of electricity each day, abandoned hospitals, chaos in public transport), a decline in agricultural production and periodic interruptions in supplies of goods as essential as bread, noodles, sugar and fuel.

The crisis took a new turn for the worse in August with the devaluation of the peso, a doubling of petrol prices and a surge in inflation. The Red Cross no longer has the means to carry out tests for Hepatitis B or AIDS, since Balaguer will not give them the funds. Since the start of October nobody dares to admit to having voted for Balaguer and his party, and in the public transport talk is of one thing only — how to get rid of Balaguer.

The regime is only able to hang on for two reasons: the support of the military following orders from Washington — which is at the moment opposed to a coup d'état — and the treachery of the major opposition parties. In exchange for a cata-

logue of promises from Balaguer, on September 9 these parties withdrew their support for the general strike called for the following three days by all the union and popular organizations. The General Workers' Confederation (CGT) and National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP) of Virtudes Alvarez refused to sign the accord with Balaguer, but also did not support the appeal of the CPO for the September 26-28 strike.

Its manoeuvre having succeeded, the government broke its promises regarding wage rises and buried its other undertakings in exploratory commissions. Even so, it is everyone for themselves in Balaguer's entourage now, as they loot the treasury.

The November 19 strike came in response to two different appeals. The

organizations that signed the pact with Balaguer called for a work stoppage of three days to demand that the government keep its promises. For the CGT and the COP, the strike was to last the whole week with the aim of toppling Balaguer. This orientation is supported by eight small political parties, including the Communist Party, and, despite public dissensions on the subject, the People's Liberation Movement (MPL), which brings together most of the cadres — and notably the CGT's secretary general — who left the Socialist Bloc (which is supporting the first option) three years ago. The CNOP meanwhile has taken up a midway position — it is demanding the organization of a referendum by the popular movement. ★

name of 'Pé Titid' for them to pour into the electoral registration offices." Aristide's first miracle has been to get electoral registration up to 85%.

After General Avril was forced out of power a multitude of individuals, groups and parties believed that a page was being turned, and thought they could get their hands on the levers of state. Ertha Pascale Trouillot, whose Duvalierist past was overlooked, was lauded, and hymns of praise were sung to General Abraham, commander in chief of the armed forces.

Disenchantment was not far behind. The army continued to massacre peasants and remained unable to stop the activities of the "zenglendos" — many of them military personnel — who continued to sow terror, to kill and to rob. Things reached the point when a section of the population began to look back nostalgically on the time of the Duvaliers. Madame la présidente quickly freed herself from the irritations of the State Council, an organ specially created to control the executive. Little by little her Duvalierist friends were brought back in.

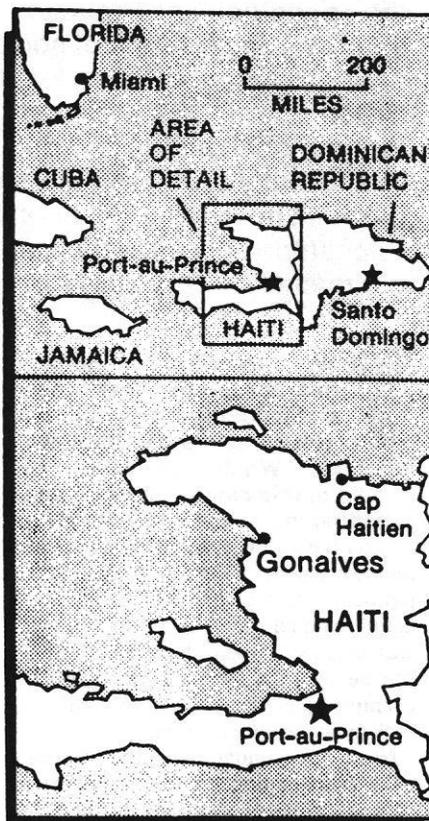
## A mortal sin

“STOP persecuting priests that are with the people”, said some of the banners carried by the thousands of demonstrators who thronged Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince in August 1988. They were opposing the decision of the Salesian Fathers to send Father Aristide to Canada. The protest movement took on such breadth — even the reactionary political parties came along — that airline companies refused to deliver the flight ticket to Jean-Bertrand Aristide, for fear that the crowd might attack the airport.

In the end the church gave in. But two months later, Aristide found out that he had been expelled from the Salesian order. Thus the Vatican had decided to silence a man who the supporters of the ex-dictator Duvalier had tried several times to kill. His expulsion came three months after a band of thugs had set fire to his Church, killing twenty beggars and believers, and wounding many more. The Apostolic Nuncio was in the vicinity but refrained from intervening.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide comes from the crossroads of two worlds: on the one hand the impoverished quarters of Port-au-Prince and their “barrow drivers, tragic Sisyphean figurers, condemned to eternally carry the weight of a world of sorrows on their shoulders” as he put it in a homily of 1982, and on the other, that of Jesus, chasing the moneychangers from the temple, and the prophets of Israel castigating the powerful in the name of the oppressed and voiceless. He refers to the first Christian communities, qualifies capitalism as “mortal sin” and speaks in favour of socialism.

While he is by no means the closest of the liberation theologians to Marxism, few among them have taken such an



uncompromising stand at the side of the dispossessed. Aristide in his words and deeds has come to personally embody the struggle against the dictatorship, imperialism and Vatican policy. He has also given Haitians back a sense of dignity — a sentiment which has been held up to ridicule since the proclamation of the first Black republic in 1804.

For these reasons, as *Haiti Progrès* commented, when the radio announced his candidacy for president on October 18, “it was enough for all the oppressed and miserable, for all those people with little political education, but overwhelmed with suffering, to hear the

## The irreversible Duvalier

Determined to govern as soon as possible and believing that Duvalierism was an “irreversible” reality, the parties directly tied to imperialism — the MIDH of Marc Bazin and the PANPRA of Serge Gilles, an emanation of the French Socialist Party — supported Ertha Trouillot against the State Council. After a series of small advances, the Duvalierists concluded that the hour had come to openly regain power.

Thus Roger Lafontant, who led the repression under Duvalier, returned to Port-au-Prince in July 1990, founded a party in October and is now standing for the presidency. The Duvalierists are coming out of their hiding-places.

Aristide put forward his candidacy the day after Lafontant, and by doing so has brought down the whole scaffolding constructed by imperialism. As he said: “the big bosses are preparing the election with pseudo-democrats and with the (tonton) macoutes of Lafontant; now they are stunned because this is an event which they were in no way expecting.” The stated aim of this “people's candidate” is to “provide a means of mobilization that can bring on the tidal wave” and block the road for the Duvalierists.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide does not want to lead his people to the slaughter. He remembers the 1987 elections. The candidates sent the electors to the ballot-box while the army and the Duvalierists put the country to the sword to prevent the elections. There was a terrible massacre. For this reason Father Aristide has clearly stated: “the voting slip that we take up is an active non-violent weapon in our hands.... We are going forward, but that does not mean that if we have to stop fur-

ther on, we will not do it. This is up to the people to decide. The tidal wave has not yet swept forward. Perhaps this will happen during the elections, perhaps afterwards" He has also warned that if there is any "dirty business" on December 16, this will be like "putting the petrol into the motor of the popular mobilization to turn it into a popular revolution."

Father Aristide is well aware that "to turn the elections into 'operation tidal wave' organization is indispensable — the revolutionary energy unleashed by this social phenomenon must be converted into organizational energy so that we can keep hold of our movement."

Here lies the big difficulty. The popular organizations which are the only existing forms that can provide a framework for the movement are weaker than they were in 1987.

### The labours of the Church

This is notably the result of the labours of the Catholic Church which has withdrawn its support from numerous base organizations that originated within it. In these conditions it is hard to see what "operation tidal wave" could lead to apart from an electoral landslide — if imperialism and the Duvalierists, who have been ruled out of the race by the State Council, allow it — or an explosion without any future of the type seen several times in Haiti since 1986.

In 1987, as a warning of the imminent massacre, Aristide issued a slogan taken up by a number of popular organizations — it was necessary to "balewouze", that is to say to totally sweep aside the Duvalierists.

Some (minority) sectors of the bourgeoisie are supporting Aristide's candidacy. The reason is doubtless that "operation tidal wave" would give them an advantage against the Duvalierists. They are also hoping to worm their way into power in Aristide's wake, and use his popularity to stabilize the country.

He himself supports a "tactical alliance" with them in order to "block the way for the tonton macoutes" and carry through what he calls a "democratic transition".

He cites the example of the "tactical alliance" of the Nicaraguan FSLN to assist in the overthrow of Somoza. However, the differences are, unfortunately, significant. The FSLN had built a network of mass organizations and had an armed force. It was thus in a position to impose its conditions on the bourgeoisie, break the Somozist state apparatus and reject the mediation of the US.

It is to be feared here that the fate of the elections depends on the United States, and that, if he succeeds in entering the National Palace, Father Aristide will be tragically alone; a prisoner of a government and a National Assembly (mostly elected on December 16) led by the bour-

geoisie, in the hands of a Duvalierist army supposedly protecting him, unable to keep the promises made in his sermons, and trapped between the task of accomplishing his prophetic mission and the need to avoid premature clashes. At least unless an electoral victory leads to a

massive popular mobilization that disrupts everyone's plans. But already the US embassy has warned the voters that, as the créole proverb has it, "after the ball, the drums sound loudly", and Washington has asked American citizens to put off their trips to Haiti. ★

## The empty shop-window of African democracy

THE massive fraud employed by the ruling Senegal Socialist Party (SSP) to win the 1988 elections severely damaged the regime's credibility. Since then a test of strength between the opposition and President Abdou Diouf has continued against a background of social and economic crisis. *IV* spoke to Amadou Guiro, leader of the Socialist Workers' Organization (OST — Senegal section of the Fourth International) about the situation in his country. Amadou has recently been arrested again, during a demonstration called in the capital Dakar on November 14 to demand opposition access to the media (see box). The interview was conducted on October 19 by Claude Gabriel.

**T**HE opposition in Senegal has for some years been campaigning against the government's electoral malpractices. What have been the results of this campaign? And what is happening on the social front?

After the February 1988 elections<sup>1</sup> and the well-supported demonstrations by the political parties against the frauds, the situation calmed down and the opposition was unable to make the regime retreat. The Senegal Democratic Party (SDP), for example, announced that it was going to seek dialogue with the regime.

Now, the economic situation in Senegal is deteriorating due to the application of the IMF and World Bank dictated austerity plans. These involve job cutting in public enterprises that are to be privatized. Employees are being paid a few months wages to leave the public sector. But there is no effective union organization in this sector and thus no organized response.

■ Thus the political turmoil since 1988 has not crystallized into an independent workers' movement or in struggles in the enterprises.

The main struggles took place in the banking sector due to the reorganization of this sector throughout Africa. Some establishments have closed and others been taken over by French banks, notably

the Banque Nationale de Paris, and many employees have been thrown out in the street. The mobilizations, however, were restricted to this sector and were fragmented and were not able to prevent this happening.

Teachers, especially in higher education, have also taken actions, and won some victories. A Teachers' Federation has been set up with the autonomous university teachers' unions, the Democratic Union of Senegal National Education (UDEN — a split from the previously existing teachers' union), some other groups and unorganized teachers. One can see a perspective of independent unions in strategic sectors — teachers, electricity workers, workers in health, posts and telecommunications — coming together. This would pose the question of an alternative union confederation to the CNTS. But these struggles are not centralized.

■ What role can the revolutionary left play in the developments in the unions?

It must encourage this process, explaining that the steps towards unity will come to nothing if they are not based on mobilizations. At the moment, the unions are discussing demands for strikes concerning a reduction in taxes, and specifically against a new tax that implies a wage cut. The political parties have also tried to take up this issue, but insofar as they have wanted

to build a political movement, with little connection to the trade unions, these latter have rejected the initiative.

■ **Despite the 1988 crisis, the Diouf regime does not appear to be on the point of collapsing.**

After 1988, it would, in my opinion have been possible to bring down the regime, but some of the parties preferred to launch a dialogue with Diouf and headed off the movement. If the parties decide seriously to mobilize, this will encourage the unions and unorganized sectors of the population. But people are not going to move for any old reason. They have already been dragged out on too many mobilizations that led nowhere.

On February 24, 1990, the opposition adopted a common platform, which could allow it to bring together the Senegalese people and get rid of Diouf, or at least enforce negotiations from a position of strength.

■ **Legal opposition parties have existed in Senegal for more than 15 years. Thus Senegal might appear to have led the way for other African countries in this respect. What is the reality of Senegalese multipartyism?**

Real multipartyism only appeared after the departure of Leopold Senghor and Diouf's arrival, after a limited experiment with four currents. But it did not come as the result of popular struggles.

Our multipartyism is very formal and Senegalese democracy has strict limits.

### **Multipartyism in action**

THE Senegalese government demonstrated its interpretation of multipartyism on November 14, 1990. A joint delegation of all the opposition went to the Communications' Minister in Dakar to demand access to the media. A public meeting also took place. The police attacked with extreme violence, wounding dozens and arresting 28 people, including nine opposition leaders, among them Amadou Guiro. The leaders were released later that night, but 19 people were still being held. Similar meetings took place in Senegal's main towns and the police response was the same.

The government did not dare to prohibit these meetings, but the interior minister had warned the organizers that their plans endangered the country's "territorial integrity" and that there existed at this moment the "threat of terrorist activities" against Senegal, due to its government's line on the Gulf Crisis (total support for the American-led intervention). ★

The political parties exist. They have a press and issue their propaganda, but none of them have access to the mass media. Furthermore, the electoral law favours the regime. For these reasons, the parties are calling together for a boycott of the next municipal elections.

■ **There is a serious crisis in the south of the country, in Casamance, where an independence movement has arisen.**

Casamance was previously a French protectorate, separate from Senegal, destined for independence. It is inhabited by different peoples, and was divided into two regions by an administrative reform — Kolda, where you find the majority peoples (the Peuls and Mandings) and Ziguinchor, in Lower Casamance, inhabited by the Diolas. It is in the latter that the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) has arisen. The MFDC raised demands concerning the whole of Casamance, responding to the frustration aroused by the unequal development of this abandoned region. This situation has been aggravated by the fact that Gambia separates this region from the rest of Senegal. To get there involves all kinds of bureaucratic trouble.

At the root of the movement lies the population's discontent with its economic and social conditions, to which the MFDC has tried to give a pro-independence content. In my opinion, the population does not aspire so much to independence from Senegal as to social justice and the possibility to choose its line of development. But even if the population does not support the taking up of arms by the independence movement, it feels strong sympathy for this movement.

When the trouble in this region started, people demonstrated without arms and there were clashes with the forces of order.

Instead of seeking dialogue, the government has been trying to play down the whole business, trying to show that only a few isolated individuals were involved, although in fact the movement was a broad one. Now when people demonstrate they are armed.

Furthermore, Dakar tried to torture the pro-independence forces into giving in, and hides the truth about the situation in Casamance from the rest of the country.

We are calling for the demilitarization of the region, the freeing of all political prisoners, above all the movement's leaders, Mamadou Sané and the priest Diamoacoune Senghor, and the opening of direct negotiations with the independence movement, with the participation of Senegalese political forces. Otherwise the armed struggle will continue and will spread throughout the country.

■ **France is omnipresent in Senegal.**

### **The Senegalese model**

THE Senegalese "model" has been dented by the crisis. The figures speak for themselves:

● The rate of infant mortality was 14 per thousand in 1985. Life expectancy is about 44 years for men and 47 years for women.

● Senegal's foreign debt was \$3,109m in 1987, representing 69% of the gross national product (GNP). Servicing of the long-term debt takes about 6.4% of the GNP.

● GNP per inhabitant grew by an estimated 0.1% between 1980 and 1987.

● Officially, 47.1% of the population is economically active. In the capital Dakar, again according to government figures, the unemployment rate is 12.8%.

● 68% of the population are illiterate, 13% have had some secondary education. ★

Sources: *Atlas Statistique de 1990* and *L'Etat du Monde, 1989-1990*.

gal. It plays an important economic role and has a vital military base there, for use in its interventions in Africa. In France Senegal is presented as the democratic shop window of the continent and the ruling party is a respected member of the Socialist International, under the patronage of the French Socialist Party. What is the outlook of the Senegalese opposition and union movement on the issue of the country's dependence on France?

The first signs of rejection of the link are showing up on the jobs front. A lot of firms here are French and they employ expatriate workers, despite a Senegalese law which, on paper, limits the number of foreign workers that French firms can employ.

A French employee gets at least ten times as much as a Senegalese for the same work, apart from numerous other material advantages. Obviously Senegalese workers are aware of this.

The military base on Senegalese territory is the scene every year of joint exercises between the French and Senegalese armies, against supposed "foreign invaders". The demand for the withdrawal of French troops is popular, but is chiefly put forward by the left, who do not want direct intervention by French military

1. Abu Diouf was reelected in February 1988, officially with 73.2% of the votes. The result was vigorously contested by the opposition. Riots broke out when the result was announced, and the leader of the Senegalese Democratic Party, Abdoulaye Wadé, was imprisoned along with a hundred others. However, in July, the bourgeois opposition accepted a dialogue with the regime (See IV 153).

forces in internal affairs.

■ **Over past months many African countries — such as the Ivory Coast, Gabon, Kenya and Benin — have experienced social and political upheavals. What lies behind this?**

First of all in all these countries people are feeling fed up with the IMF's "adjustment" regime. The local ruling classes are short of crumbs to distribute, there is rapid population growth, while very few jobs are being created.

Finally, there is the impact of recent East European events. People are saying: "if walls are coming down in those countries, why not here?" The international context is encouraging democratic movements.

Finally, the Western countries have been making noises, sometimes sincerely, but mostly for demagogic reasons, about the African dictatorships — which the West have been supporting for decades. Now they are becoming an obstacle to imperialist projects. This too is fuelling the popular movements.

Movements demanding more democracy — rights to organization, association, the separation of the party and the state, against corruption — have been emerging. At the same time border problems between states have reared their head — for example, between Senegal and Guinea-Bissau or Senegal and Gambia, Rwanda, Sudan and so on — the fruit of colonial divisions that ignored social and ethnic realities.

■ **What direction will these struggles take? Could they foster the appearance of revolutionary forces and an independent workers' movement that could challenge capitalist rule?**

In all these countries the left must understand that the youth and the population as a whole want democracy and enough to eat. Democratic demands are essential in all these countries, as is the struggle against corruption. Indeed, this latter issue goes beyond strictly democratic questions to call into question the very fundamentals of the system. The movements pose a whole series of economic demands — there can be no real democracy if people have empty stomachs.

Whether or not a workers' movement or a revolutionary movement emerges depends to a large extent on the existing level of organization and traditions of struggle in the particular country. There will be no miracles. People hope that their day-to-day demands will become a part of the democratic battle.

In a country like Senegal, it is hardly possible to speak about democracy when 60% of the people are illiterate, nearly 34% of children suffer from malnutrition and the overwhelming majority of the population has no proper job. Along with

the enjoyment of basic freedoms there must be education, healthcare and work.

■ **An agreement on a unification project has been signed between different groups of the Senegalese left. What has been happening here?**

This project involves our organization, the OST, And-Jéf, the Union for People's Democracy (UDP) and the Suxuba readers circles. Its basis was the belief that we are approaching the national situation from a similar point of view and are working on similar lines.

We have started off with common actions, at the same time discussing the type of organization we want to build and broad perspectives on the African and world revolution. Each had drawn their own balance-sheet. We had all had a clear project for the construction of a revolutionary organization without being able to carry it through.

The Senegalese left has been unable to build a mass organization that could appear as a credible alternative. We had no other choice than to come together.

Such a process is always complicated and slow. Each group has its own traditions, ways of working and weight, but the debate has been opened.

We have even planned the construction of joint grassroots committees with people outside our organizations. We think we will be able to put this into practise in the near future.

■ **What was the balance-sheet drawn by the Senegalese left of its activity?**

The background to the balance-sheet includes such things as: a long-established dictatorial regime, affecting our opportunities for work; the fact that the left took time to really understand the importance of democratic questions in a country such as ours, leaving the field open to bourgeois forces such as the PDS; the Stalinist background of the oldest organizations, which meant they operated in a way which stifled the development of a genuinely independent mass movement; the ruling Socialist Party's control over the unions, and the fact that the left has been unable to establish itself outside the teaching sector.

We have often worked in a way that was poorly adapted to our national reality. Furthermore we have been faced with the task of at once building ourselves and a broader workers' movement, since what exists is highly unstable and there is a lack of class consciousness.

It is clear that the building of a revolutionary force in Africa is a different matter from the Western countries where a developed working class and traditions of struggle and organization exist.

Without an independent workers' movement, all the democratic struggles to come will miss the mark. ★

## A new model of under-development

FREE Trade Zones (FTZs) are territorial enclaves exempt from the common laws of a state with the objective of attracting investors. Their rapid development is directly due to the economic crisis striking regions or entire countries, particularly in the third world. This crisis allows capital to put numerous potential "host" countries in competition with each other and to haggle for the best price for its new locations.

CLAUDE GABRIEL

In the dominated countries, the FTZs increasingly tend to grant total exoneration from taxes and custom duties on the import of products transformed or assembled in the host country — rights at work and notably trade union rights are non-existent or ignored totally or partially, wages are kept as low as possible. The enterprises installing themselves in FTZs are not so much industries, as simple assembly or at best subcontracting workshops.

FTZs, under various names, are spreading, as much in the imperialist as in the dominated countries. They are even present in certain countries with planned economies, such as China where they are called special economic zones. The USSR also envisages opening up FTZs as a part of the economic reform programme. In 1982, around 90 FTZs employed less than a million people around the world. In 1989, there were nearly 200, employing nearly 2.5 million workers.

The multiplication of FTZs illustrates the breadth of the structural crisis affecting the countries of the third world and the manner in which under-development reproduces itself. The FTZs have often been presented as remedies for the crisis of those economies subjected to a division of labour inherited from colonialism. The industrial jobs thus created are supposed to lead these countries out of dependence on the less and less remunerative market in primary materials. But in fact, the FTZs

aggravate unequal development. They confirm the traditional character of capitalism in the third world — its violence and its rapid and brutal changes under the diktat of the world market.

This conception of third world industrialization recalls the dawn of capitalism. It combines the oppression of women and anti-worker repression. A brochure for investment in a Sri Lankan FTZ claims, underneath a photo of a young girl, that here is "the highest rate of competitiveness of labour in Asia". Similar publicity from the Malaysian government affirms: "The dexterity of the Oriental woman is known the world over. Her hands are fine and she works rapidly with an extreme care. Who, then, could be better qualified to contribute to the efficiency of an assembly line than Oriental girls?"<sup>1</sup>.

Often employed very young, rapidly worn out by the rhythms of work, the young girls must give place to others who can perform better. The rotation of the labour force is very high and, taking account of the agrarian and urban crisis, these women have sometimes no other solution, afterwards, than to become prostitutes. Thus, the FTZs pose serious social and strategic problems for the local workers' movements. How to organize this population? How to defend it?

In Mauritius, for example, traditionally an exporter of sugar, it required only a few years for the FTZs to become the principal component of the GNP. This has rapidly transformed the situation for the local labour movement — from a trade union movement traditionally centered on the sugar economy (cutting, processing, transport and docks) to a situation where it is necessary to find a new point of equilibrium, centered on industry, with a largely female workforce. The brutal transformation effected by capitalism combines with a slow and difficult reconstruction of the working class organizations.

The FTZs solve none of the problems of local development. The creation of jobs and the improvement of qualifications rapidly provokes an inevitable pressure on wages. They have to be increased to stabilize a part of the workforce and to avoid labour unrest. Then some of the employers look elsewhere, to another FTZ, to lower their costs of production. After ten years of existence, the FTZs in Mauritius are experiencing this and employers speak of "delocalizing" some of the factories and production to Madagascar.

The British magazine *International Labour Reports* has reported on the long saga of the Californian firm Mattel, which produces Barbie dolls; installing themselves first in Mexico at the end of the 1960s, they moved to South Korea, after two victorious strikes. In the middle of the 1970s, the same process took place in Korea and Mattel moved production to the FTZ of Bataan in the Philippines! Such is the inevitable contradiction of a "delocalized" and segmented production, in search

of low wages. The FTZs have mainly involved assembly factories with a particular emphasis on textiles and clothing. Subcontracting and partial displacements of production allow lowering of costs, without coming up against the protectionism of the big buyer countries.

Thus the world multifibre agreement which is, in principle, an agreement for protection of the industry of the industrialized countries, could be distorted by this same industry thanks to the limited displacement of production towards the FTZs<sup>2</sup>. The consequences of this little capitalist game are borne entirely by the

workers of the FTZs.

The governments which open the FTZs are making themselves a party to a virtual slave trade. The almost total absence of rights for the workers concerned must generally go hand in hand with strong states, so as to maintain social peace and guarantee the violence of the exploitation. ★

1. Cited in "L'industrialisation du sous-développement", Pierre Salama and Patrick Tissier, éditions Maspéro, Paris 1982.

2. The partial delocalization of production concerns, in general, the intermediary stages of production (assembly, and so on) and allows these products to keep the label *Made in France* or *Made in Germany*. This type of organization of the production process allows firms to produce at least cost and sell at the highest price.

## In the misery zone

**THE Caribbean region has become an important assembly point in the course of the 1980s, thanks to a succession of devaluations and the implementation in 1984 of the "Reagan Plan" (Caribbean Basin Initiative). Since that time, the number of Free Trade Zones in this region has almost doubled to more than 60. They employed less than 100,000 people in 1984, half of them in Haiti — in 1989 they employed nearly 200,000, less than a fifth of them in Haiti.**



### ROBERT HELDER

**T**HIS spectacular growth is essentially due to the success of the Free Trade Zones (FTZs) in the Dominican Republic. Between 1984 to 1989, their number has passed from four to seventeen and the number of people employed has grown from 25,000 to 110,000. This last figure is bigger than that of industries manufacturing for the local market or that of the sugar industry, both stagnant since the beginning of the 1980s. It represents 5% of total employment in the country. In 1988, value added in the FTZs reached 15% of value added by the whole of the manufacturing sector. Exports from the FTZs reached \$517 million, more than a third of commodity exports.

The reasons for this growth are many; proximity to the United States; exemption from US customs duties for many

products under the Reagan Plan; relative political stability; total freedom from taxes; and above all, as the promotion brochures boast, "cheap and abundant labour".

The Dominican FTZs attract investors above all because of a very high rate of exploitation of labour. The minimum salary applicable in the zones is currently 650 pesos a month, that is around £50/\$100. The working week is at least 44 hours. Conditions of work are in general very bad, the rhythms imposed by piece work very high. Despite the recognition of trade union rights in the rest of the country, in the FTZs repression of trade union activities is absolute. Workers are recruited after police surveillance of any previous trade union or political activity. The slightest attempt at organization and collective action is followed by immediate

*The share of Free Zones in Dominican exports*

dismissal without any right of appeal.

Three quarters of jobs in the zones are held by women. The factory bosses particularly appreciate their dexterity in assembly tasks (mainly garments, shoes and electronics) and their relative docility, a consequence of their dominated situation in a particularly patriarchal society. The majority of these women are young — between 16 and 24 — and remain only for some years in the workshops, whether because of maternity or the attrition of work. In brief, the FTZs are areas of intense repression and exploitation<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, the development of the FTZs does not constitute a path to capitalist development, contrary to the claims of the ruling class and the bourgeois economists<sup>2</sup>.

One of their chief claims is that enterprises in the FTZs have created jobs. In fact they have wasted the labour force in tasks which could be automated according to existing technical knowledge. The rapid turnover of the workforce is a proof of this waste — their labour power is used up in a few years.

Moreover, these jobs are very precarious. Any change in the social or political climate can lead to the foreign enterprises, or the mother companies transferring their orders to another competing country, or moving their workshops from the FTZs at little cost. This is what Haiti has experienced since the fall of Duvalier in 1986, despite the efforts of the military, Washington and Paris to preserve the social order.

**Wave of departures**

Also, it is enough for one or several of the competing countries on the FTZ market to devalue their currency sufficiently to provoke a wave of departures. The electronics exports of Barbados, which reached \$150 million in 1984, have thus been reduced to nothing in three years. Finally, progress in automation of industrial production can render these jobs no longer profitable, at least without a further lowering of real salaries. Since 1970, when the first Dominican FTZ was created, the minimum real monthly salary has fallen from \$58 to \$23.

The FTZs were supposed to generate an inflow of foreign currency. In fact, the net revenues of foreign currency from this activity, that is to say the added value in the Dominican FTZs, rose to only \$129 million in 1988. For an average of 80,000 jobs in the course of the year 1988, this represented only \$1612 a year per job.

Again, the FTZs were supposed to facilitate the transfer of technology favourable to the industrialization of the country. In fact, the transfer is insignificant. By definition, industries with a high intensity of labour do not tend to integrate modern technologies. The weakness of investment indicates clearly that the Free Trade Zone enterprises are sweatshops and not indus-

National exports

Sugar products  
Coffee  
Tobacco  
Cocoa  
Minerals  
Others

FTZ exports

Total exports

	1975		1980		1988	
	In Millions of \$	%	In Millions of \$	%	In Millions of \$	%
National exports	887	97	960	89	901	64
Sugar products	594	65	330	31	178	12
Coffee	34	4	52	5	64	5
Tobacco	34	4	35	3	18	1
Cocoa	25	3	51	5	64	5
Minerals	149	16	380	35	408	29
Others	50	5	111	10	169	12
FTZ exports	27	3	117	11	517	36
Total exports	914	100	1077	100	1411	100

tries; \$3318 per worker in the shoe industries, \$5379 in clothes manufacture, \$9057 in electronics<sup>3</sup>.

The average investment in the industries of the United States is at least ten times higher than this figure. The time devoted to genuine training of workers is in general not more than a few weeks. The attitude of the Dominican state is moreover in line with the adoption of this mode of "under-development" — it is progressively abandoning its responsibility for education, the standard of which has been in spectacular decline for nearly ten years.

The FTZs, it was claimed, would stimulate economic activity in the rest of the country through the purchase of goods and services.

In fact, purchases from the local economy by the FTZs are practically nil. Pieces for assembly, like, for example, fabrics or electronics components, are produced at least cost and with least risks in the more advanced countries. Even the enterprises which have been installed for 15 years or more in the Dominican Republic have not begun to integrate themselves in the local economy.

To sum up, the expansion of the FTZs in the Dominican Republic took place only because the country has, through its

policy of repression and superexploitation of the workers, placed itself on the lowest rung of the hierarchy in the international division of labour. This does not mean that the country might not one day drop out of the hierarchy, due to competition from the other dominated countries, or from the conjuncture of protectionism, deregulation and automation of the labour force in the imperialist countries.

The only positive gain of the growth of the FTZ in the Dominican Republic is the development of a new sector of the working class. This sector is concentrated — two of the FTZs each employ more than 30,000 workers (San Pedro de Macoris and Santiago).

It is also young in the majority and essentially female. The development of feminist and class struggles will allow it to organize itself and become conscious of its strength. The FTZs thus hold the promise of a renewal of social and political struggles. ★

1. See Isis Duarte, "Trabajadores Urbanos en RD", Editora UASD, Santo Domingo, 1986.

2. See A. Abreu et al, "Las Zonas Francas Industriales", Centro de Orientacion Economica, Santo Domingo.

3. Francisco Moya Espinal, "Zonas Francas Industriales y Empresas Multinacionales RD", Working Paper no. 46, project OIT.



# Debacle in the Philippines

**EXPORT-oriented industrialization (EOI) in Asia was introduced in two main succeeding periods or waves: countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore were the first countries that adopted the strategy in the mid 60s; while the Philippines, Malaysia and Sri Lanka started only about a decade later.**

SONIA RUPON

**C**OMPARATIVE studies of how the strategy has contributed to the economic development of these so-called developing countries reported more successful results from the first wave experience. Those countries which adopted the strategy much later had greater difficulties in achieving success.

The Philippine experience has been a very disappointing one. The strategy has failed to provide the country with a better economic and long-term solution and today the situation continues to deteriorate.

The free trade zones (FTZs) or export processing zones (EPZs) were central in the EOI strategy in the Philippines. EPZs are enclosed territories administered by a separate government body. All customs duties on imports and exports are free from payment, with no nationality restrictions on ownership of enterprises. In addition subsidised infrastructure and services are provided.

The Bataan EPZ (BEPZ) started operations in 1972. Two other zones were established afterwards and plans to build 12 to 15 more were made but never executed. Instead, zone incentives were simply extended to investors outside the existing zones.

## Initial positive effects on economy

Ten years after the BEPZ started to function, while there were initial positive effects on the economy, assessments done by the Philippine government itself and private institutions accepted that the policy was not taking the economy anywhere.

According to then Labor Minister Blas Ople, "EPZs have been successful only in countries where conditions already existed for economic growth, such as Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. But, in countries whose economies are not yet so dynamic, EPZs play a minimal role, their contribution being psychological, if any-

thing else"<sup>1</sup>.

The World Bank's hand in the worsening economic crisis in the Philippines cannot be left unmentioned. "Its primary intention in pushing EOI in the Philippines and the Third World was not to promote industrial growth. It was to satisfy the multinational firms' need for cheap labor and the advanced metropolitan economies' craving for cheap light manufactured goods by pitting one Third World country's working class against the others in a race toward the bottomline of survival"<sup>2</sup>.

In the early 80s, it had become clear that the FTZ policy had not met its objectives in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the WB continued to encourage other Asian countries like Indonesia and the People's Republic of China to adopt the EOI strategy. It is thus important to return to an evaluation of the FTZ experience in the Philippines and its failure, which had largely been done as long ago as 1983.

## Colonialism and the Philippine Economy

The effects of colonialism and the economic legacy inherited from the US were important factors in the struggle of the Philippine State to develop a more self-sustaining economy in the years after the Second World War.

Although more than 300 years under Spanish rule from the 16th to 19th centuries brought about important and lasting consequences for the land structure, it was colonization by the United States which had profounder effects on the contemporary economy. American interests have continued to control the economy and trade, even after formal independence.

As early as 1909 with the Payne-Aldrich Act, US exports were allowed into the Philippines duty-free without quota limitations, although quotas were imposed on Philippine sugar and tobacco

exports to the US. While it served as a market for American manufactured goods, the Philippines became a source of raw materials. This encouraged an agricultural economy to develop and as a result agricultural lands for export crops trebled in area during the first half of the 20th century.

In 1934 the Tydings-McDuffie Law, among other things, defined the steps towards Philippine independence which was eventually granted in 1946. It was clear that it did not mean full independence; the law provided for parity rights for Americans; a 10-year adjustment period for local US investors; unrestrained entry of American imports into the Philippines and restrictions on Philippine exports of sugar, coconut oil and abaca to the US.

The tying of Philippine trade to the American market continued. "Despite the granting of Philippine independence, the US secured the right to maintain over 20 bases and military installations. US citizens likewise acquired — through the Parity Amendment to the Philippine Constitution and the Bell Trade Act — equal rights with Filipinos to exploit the country's natural resources. The Quirino-Foster Agreement (1950) gave the US a key role in Philippine policy-making through its aid programmes and the Laurel-Langley Trade Agreement (1954) perpetuated the 'free trade' relationship which tied Philippine exports to the American market"<sup>3</sup>.

## Philippine Industrialization

To get away from colonial dependence, Philippine officials saw industrialization as the means towards an economic breakthrough. More specifically, protected industrialization for the domestic market was taken to be a first step in this process.

The basic elements of an import substitution industrialising strategy (ISI) were then put in place in the 50s. "Import substitution flourished in such product lines as beverages, textiles, paper and rubber products, products of coal and petroleum, basic metal and metallic products, machinery and transportation equipment"<sup>4</sup>. Supplemented by a tariff system in 1957, the controls spurred a rate of industrial growth that averaged 12% annually between 1950 and 1957. By 1960 almost 20% of the country's net national product

1. *Business Day*, February 3, 1983, Manila. Quoted by Ibon Data Bank, Phils. "What crisis? Highlights of the Philippine Economy 1983", Manila, 1984, p.96.

2. Walden Bello, David Kinley and Elaine Elinson, "Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines", California, 1982, p. 162.

3. Dennis Shoemith (ed): "Export processing Zones in Five Countries: The Economic and Human Consequences", APHD, 1986, p.15.

4. Vicente Valepenas, Jr and Gemelino Bautista, "The Emergence of the Philippine Economy," Manila, 1977, pp 173-174.

5. World Bank, "The Philippines: Priorities and prospects for development," Vol. 1, Confidential draft, Washington DC, 1976, Statistical appendix, Table B3. Cited by Bello, op. cit. p.128.



originated in manufacturing"<sup>5</sup>.

However, industrial growth was linked to the agricultural economy. The country continued to depend on agricultural exports as a source of capital accumulation. But because of the 'free' trade agreements with the US, the Philippines found itself in a situation where its agricultural exports could not cope with the high cost of machinery and capital goods. This led to a trade deficit which rapidly widened through the years.

Neither did the domestic market expand. Land reform had not been carried out, and neither the rural poor nor the new urban poor had the purchasing power to sustain an expanding manufacturing sector. Local manufacturers were therefore unable to move into the production of technologically complex goods beyond the more basic consumer products. Where they were able to make the move, import bills steeply rose as capital goods, fuel and materials flowed into the country to sustain industrial production. After a decade, the economy was suffering from stagnation and rising debt.

"In the 1960s, the Philippines moved into a deepening economic crisis. In 1962, in response to acute balance of payments problems and under pressure from the IMF, the new Macapagal administration abolished import and exchange controls and devalued the peso by almost 100%. Import costs doubled as did peso repayments on foreign loans. An estimated 1500 Filipino entrepreneurs were driven into bankruptcy. Other firms were forced to accept foreign control in joint ventures. Average annual growth in the industrial sector dropped to an all-time low of 4.5%. Real wages dropped by 10 percent"<sup>6</sup>.

### Export-oriented Industrialization

The response of the Marcos administration from 1965 was to borrow massively for a huge public infrastructure program. In 1967, the government passed the Investment Incentives Act which allowed 100% foreign equity in pioneer industries.

Foreign investors were given strong guarantees of unrestricted profit remittance. An Export Incentives act was adopted two years later. Plans for the Bataan Export Processing Zone were announced.

The Philippine elite felt

threatened by export-led industrialization and the removal of protection. The opening of the economy was also met by big mass actions, particularly by the student movement in the late 60s, denouncing US control of the economy.

The deteriorating economic climate as well as this national opposition and political unrest worried the World Bank and the IMF. Through American-trained technocrats in high government positions, they were able to force the government towards an open EOI strategy by using the loan credits as leverage. On September 21, 1972, martial law was imposed and this provided the political framework for the implementation of the EOI strategy.

A three-year development plan was laid out for 1974-77 catering to the World Bank's policies. The diversification and expansion of exports was the central goal, and to ensure the creation of a favorable climate for foreign investors there were full guarantees on capital repatriation, profit remittances, fiscal and financial incentives. To assure that industrial operations would run smoothly, strikes were banned.

During this time Filipino entrepreneurs were still able to make the government maintain a certain degree of protection, much against IMF-WB wishes. But the Bank insisted on a fundamental restructuring of the economy by removing the "dualism between labour-intensive export-oriented industries operated under free trade arrangements, and the remainder of the sector which is oriented to the protected domestic market"<sup>7</sup>.

Under threat of losing IMF and WB loans, the Marcos government capitulated: "We are in agreement with the findings of the Bank that Philippine industry has suffered because of an overprotected system. We are determined to take the difficult and often painful decisions to dismantle some of the protective devices and thus to promote a free and competitive system"<sup>8</sup>. Continuous succumbing to the IMF-WB led to fierce political infighting in 1983 between powerful business cro-

nies of Marcos and government free trade technocrats, with the former blaming the IMF and World Bank for the economic crisis.

### Disappointing results from EPZs

The establishment of EPZs was considered essential in the new economic policy adopted by the government under IMF-WB pressure. Promoters of the policy argued that the zones would stimulate the national economy by bringing in more foreign investments, accelerating the transfer of modern technology, and by creating new employment. All these sounded very promising; but assessments made have revealed results far from these hopes.

The experience of the Bataan Export Processing Zone has been summed up thus:

Because of its poor location, the BEPZ incurred a total cost of \$120 million for its construction, more than twice that allowed for. The choice of location was due to political circumstances more than anything else, and the zone was extravagantly equipped to attract investors. The establishment of the zone had a high social cost, forcibly relocating huge numbers of families who had been residing in the area for more than 15 to 20 years.

Despite the aim of stimulating foreign investment, in fact the bulk of investments came from local sources. In the BEPZ, 91% of the total capital invested in the BEPZ came from within the Philippines. And of these locally raised funds, 95% came from the local capital market<sup>9</sup>.

Occupancy as estimated by the government was very much less. "From an estimated total of 113 firms to be located in the BEPZ by 1979-1980, only 56 companies were established in the zone by 1980. Of the 41 companies remaining in 1983, seventeen were engaged in light manufacture (footwear, plastic and rubber products, packing materials, toys, food, etc.), thirteen in garments, five in electronics, four in heavy metal fabrication and two in shipbuilding."<sup>10</sup>

Most of the work is done on the assembly-line, and even if a number of workers were sent to other countries for training, the transfer of technology has proved minimal.

Shutdowns occurred when less raw materials came in, and firms had to stop operations. Other firms transferred to other countries where labor was even cheaper. This led to a significant drop in employment. Taking again the BEPZ

6. Bello, op. cit. pp. 131-132. Cited by Shoesmith, op. cit. p.16.

7. World Bank, "Meeting of the Consultative Group for the Philippines, December 13 and 14, 1979", Annex VI, p. 5. Quoted by Bello, op. cit. p.149.

8. Roberto Ongpin, "Statement" in World Bank, *ibid*, quoted in Bello, op. cit. p. 149.

9. Shoesmith, op. cit. p. 44.

10. *Ibid*.

case, 2,178 workers lost their jobs in 1983, representing 14% of the 16,507 workers employed in the same year<sup>11</sup>.

### Zone Workers and their struggle

Workers in the EPZs are generally young, 21 years old on the average, with a majority of single women with secondary education. The greatest concentrations of women workers are in electronics and the garment industries, the reasons being that young, single women are more precise in this type of assembly work, more docile, and are likely to accept lower wages.

At the BEPZ, 72% of the workers were born to poor peasant families. Almost all (97%) of the workers were migrants coming mostly from nearby provinces where employment opportunities are bleak<sup>12</sup>.

The government's cheap labor policy has kept workers in poor living conditions. In 1982, most regular workers earned a daily wage of P31 (\$1=P9 in 1982), which was raised to P42 in 1983 where the dollar exchange had become \$1=P14. In the zone area prices of goods were 30 percent higher than in Metro-Manila<sup>13</sup>. A significant number of workers were not even regularly employed; as casuals, they could be fired anytime and had no access to benefits. Workers have also been made to work overtime and exposed to very unhealthy and unprotected working conditions. Fringe benefits are few: many have not enjoyed social security, housing, transportation and medical benefits. Cases of sexual harassment of women workers are numerous.

Despite the ban on strikes, mass actions have been carried out either as strikes or other protest actions. Up to 1983, 41 unions had been organized in the zone covering 87% of all firms and around 30 strikes and 20 other forms of mass actions occurred.<sup>14</sup> Most dramatic was a sympathy strike of 20,000 workers who walked out of their jobs in 21 firms, to protest police brutality in what could have been a peaceful strike of electronic workers in one company. This event paralyzed the whole zone.

### Regional Industrial Centers

1983 was a crucial year, as workers' militancy developed and the political and economic condition of the country sank into deeper crisis. In 1986 Marcos had to leave the presidency, also under US pressure. The initial years of the presidency of Cory Aquino, due to a better political climate, encouraged foreign investment and trade balances showed positive results. EPZs also showed a positive performance unlike in the previous years.

Part of the plan for economic recovery was to set up regional industrial centers



and make an economic turnaround outside Manila. These centers were to take three major forms: an industrial estate, an export processing zone, or the so-called mini-estates. Cebu province led this move and in 1988 government officials were proud of the economic boom that Cebu brought about. The Mactan export processing zone, after years of stagnation, began to attract more foreign tenants. As of 1986, only 6 companies operated there, 4 more operated in 1987, and another 6 arrived in 1988<sup>15</sup>.

Despite the positive mood however, many problems still continued to exist which were seen to influence the success of MEPZ operations. Only two subsidiaries account for 80% of the approximately 5,000 workers employed in the zone. There has been chronic lack of water, electric power, transportation and communication services, which are likely to affect future expansion. There has also been much criticism over red tape and very high shipping rates, while sea-navigation infrastructure has deteriorated. The housing problem is an added shortcoming, squatter communities having developed with the poor and landless moving into the urban center to search for work<sup>16</sup>.

The establishment of EPZs in the Philippines has obviously been beneficial to transnational companies from traditional imperialist powers but also from regional economic centers. Investments came

from the US and Japan initially, but the more recent flow has come from the newly industrialised Asian countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The commitments from these four "NICs" in Southeast Asian countries in 1988 "rocketed 334% compared with a 125% increase for Japan"<sup>17</sup>. But the country's national economy has not reaped durable advantages from the free trade zones; increases in employment, foreign investment, and technology transfer have not been stabilized.

The reason is clear. From the point of view of the transnational corporations, the FTZs must contribute to lowering their costs, facilitate the relocation of their investments and multiply options and deepen the competition between Third World countries, and so increase the flexibility of their own international strategies. Instead of becoming a factor of steady development, the FTZ policy has thus added an element of structural instability to the national Philippine economy, and has never been designed to confront the roots of poverty. ★

11. EPZA Corporate Plan, 1983-1987, p. 72. Cited by Ibon Data Bank, op. cit. p. 94.

12. Shoesmith, op. cit. p. 212.

13. Ibon Data Bank P. 99.

14. Shoesmith, op. cit. p. 217.

15. James Clad, "Cebu sets the pace," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 10, 1988, p. 82.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

17. Nigel Holloway, "The Numbers Game," *FEER*, November 16, 1989, P. 71.

# Maquila madness in Mexico

**T**HIS "differential" has naturally led to movement between the two zones. The first major wave was that of the so-called *braceros*, going to work in Texas or California, principally in agriculture. This movement was at its height in the 1940s, because of the labour shortage brought about by the United States' entry into the Second World War. It continued until the end of the 1960s, during the period of the so-called "Mexican miracle". This wave was co-managed by the governments of the United States and of Mexico, through the "Bracero Plan" establishing immigration quotas.

A US law of 1952 had regulated the flow of immigration, in a suitably hypocritical manner — the favouring of such immigration was considered a crime, whilst the employment of a foreigner in an irregular situation was not! The Simpson-Rodino law, which came into force on November 6, 1986, apparently changed this state of affairs. But it did not succeed in noticeably reducing the number of clandestines, and its principal effect has been ever growing insecurity for the *indocumentados* (those without papers). Its real function moreover is to serve as a means of pressure on the Mexican government so as to obtain more enthusiastic participation in the struggle against the drug traffic.

## Half illegals of Mexican origin

Although estimates fluctuate widely, it is believed that around 20 million Hispanics live in the United States, of whom 8-9 million are citizens of Mexican origin. As for illegals, estimates vary between 3 and 6 million, of whom half would be of Mexican origin.

Starting from 1965, the US put an end to the Bracero plan, and the Mexican government launched the PIF (Programa de Industrialización Fronteriza). The *maquiladora* industry benefitted from a specific regime defined thus by the International Trade Commission: "The *maquiladora* is an enterprise which imports goods temporarily with a view to developing exports. These goods must be judged necessary to the operation and, finally, they must be reexported as a component of the finished product after a specific period of time".

It added up then initially to a relatively well controlled shock to Mexican commercial legislation, which remained in other respects very protectionist. But this sector of the economy was to develop very rapidly, accelerating further after the financial crisis of 1982. In 1966, 57 facto-

**IN Spanish, the word *maquila* denotes the act of carrying grain to the mill to be ground. By extension, this term is employed to refer to the factories where the *gringo* capitalists bring primary materials and semi-finished products to be assembled into finished products. Such free trade zones do not exist only in Mexico, but the immense frontier (nearly 3,000 kilometers) that this country shares with the United States represents a phenomenon almost without comparison. There are certainly few frontiers where the gulf separating the standard of living on either side is so wide.**

**MAXIME DURAND**

ries, all situated on the frontier, employed 4,257 workers. In 1975, there were 454 establishments employing 67,000 people<sup>1</sup>. Since the end of the oil boom, *maquiladora* industry has experienced an extremely rapid evolution — the number of establishments involved has more than doubled, going from 600 to 1,400.

## Majority of industry in twin cities

The majority of *maquiladora* industry is concentrated on the frontier, in what are known as the twin cities, which in fact form a single agglomeration on both sides of the frontier. The most active are El Paso to the north and Ciudad Juárez, San Diego-San Isidro and Tijuana, Brownsville and Matamoros, Calexico and Mexicali, and so on. But the past decade has seen a tendency to increasing implantations inside the country, beyond the frontier zone — from 72 such establishments in 1981, the figure had reached 256 in 1988.

The growth of the numbers employed in the *maquiladora* sector has been equally spectacular, going from 131,000 to

370,000 between 1981 to 1988, and this in a context of stagnating employment at the national level; over the same period jobs in the "formal" sector increased only from 21.6 to 22.1 millions. In other words, one job out of every two created during this period was in the *maquilas*. Here again, the dynamism was more pronounced in the interior of the country where jobs increased fivefold, to reach 70,000 in 1988 — today, *maquiladora* industry in the interior represents about 25% of that in the frontier zone. Of course, on the national scale, there has been a massive increase in "jobs" in the informal sector, where employment went from 400,000 to 4 million, according to the estimates of the Wharton Institute, which moreover constitute nothing more than an indication of the tendency.

## Massive increase in total value added

The total value added of *maquiladora* industry has gone from 24 billion pesos in 1981 to 5,264 billion in 1988. Taking account of inflation, this represents a progression of the order of 17% a year. The sectoral implantation is essentially in industry, and more particularly in two subsets, automobiles and equipment industry, notably the assembly of electronics components.

The weight of value added from *maquiladora* industry has regularly grown, whether in relation to GNP (which was virtually at the same level as 1981 in 1988) or in relation to exports. In 1989, net exports from the *maquila* (after "transformation services" are subtracted from the balance of payments) represented a little more than \$3 billion, or around 12% of Mexican exports of goods and services apart from crude oil. It is then a considerable source of foreign currency, even if it is obviously not enough to cover interest on the foreign debt which represented \$9.4 billion.

The essential secret of the success of *maquiladora* industry resides in low wages: "the economic crisis in Mexico has lowered wages in the frontier zone to the equivalent of less than a dollar an hour, well below the rate of the worker in Korea, Taiwan or Brazil... Inasmuch as these low wages attract employers towards *maquila* production, the low wages must be kept low to conserve jobs"<sup>2</sup>. Such is the infer-

1. INEGI (Institut National de Statistique), Estadística de la Industria Maquiladora de exportación, Mexico, 1986 and 1989.

nal logic of this mode of industrialization — it rests on the incredible wage disparities between the two sides of the border which separates Mexico from the United States. Moreover the proximity of the United States, which reduces the costs of transport, is an additional incentive (see table opposite, which shows the relationship between wage rates in the United States and those in the *maquilas*).

These wage disparities have fluctuated strongly over time. From 1965 to 1975, wages increased significantly — the minimum wage in Ciudad Juarez went from \$2.14 per hour to \$5.68. The 1976 devaluation reversed the process, then the oil boom allowed a new improvement of the minimum, which reached \$6.97 a day in 1980. The financial crisis of 1982, the devaluation of the peso, and then a brutal austerity policy made the minimum drop to \$4.9 in 1985, and to \$2.86 in the month of July 1987. Since then, the minimum wage has gone back up and today represents the equivalent of \$3.2 per day.

### Growing fracturing of Mexican economy

Compared to interior Mexican salaries, the average wage paid in the *maquilas* represents around three times the minimum, but is still inferior by nearly 40% to the average industrial wage. The wage in the *maquila* has maintained its purchasing power since 1985, whereas that of the minimum wage is falling constantly. This disproportion between the minimum wage and that in the export sectors indicates a growing fracturing of the Mexican economy, the dynamism of the export sector having for its counterpart a decline in



internal demand.

The wage disparities between *maquilas* and the rest of industry is explained in part by the strong proportion of women (and of young women) who, in 1988, represented 63% of the workforce employed in the *maquiladoras*.

This proportion has however fallen noticeably, from 78% ten years ago. Finally, nearly two thirds of the workers in the *maquiladoras* come from the Mexican states situated further to the south.

But these diverse factors do not entirely explain the differences noted — it is the very logic of the *maquilas* that implies that wages are constantly squeezed.

This accounts for the paradox that in the automobile industry, wages are two times higher in the old zone of Mexican industrialization, for example the Ford factory of Cuautitlan, than in the more recent and modern factories like Ford of Hermosillo. This brings out one of the great perverse effects of this form of industrialization — the growth that it permits is not based on a positive logic where rising wages and development of the interior market mutually reinforce each other.

In the formula of the American trade unions, the AFL/CIO, the wages of the workers of the *maquiladoras* do not permit them to buy what they have produced. In more sophisticated terms, *maquiladora* industry leads to neither a "peripheral Fordism", nor the consolidation of performing national industries, as in the case of Korea.

The growth of the *maquila* sector rests on low wages, the stagnation of the interior market, and the restructuring of national industry in accordance with a single logic, that of the multinationals of the north. Several statistical indicators confirm this — thus, between 1981 and 1988, the rate of integration, that is the part of value added locally in total reexports tended to fall, going from 30% in 1980 to 22% in 1988.

The share accounted for by wages stabilized itself after a significant fallback in 1983, immediately after the financial crisis. The rate of profit is obviously very high, even if Mexican workers are less productive, one car assembled in the *maquila* selling on the US market at the same price as a comparable Japanese car.

### Labour supply in north exhausted

The northern states of Mexico are, in their great majority, the domain of agro-export and cattle rearing. What remained of the small peasantry furnished an easily available source of labour. Some 55% of the population of the state of Chihuahua worked in the agricultural sector in 1950 — at the beginning of the 1980s, this proportion had fallen to 2%.

The *maquiladoras* must then look to a labour force coming from further south or move on towards areas where labour is

### Average hourly salary in industry (in \$US)

Maquiladora	0.88
Taiwan	2.71
South Korea	2.46
Singapore	2.67
Hong Kong	2.43
Japan	13.14
United States	13.90

Source; *Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 1989.

still available, including regions as inaccessible and backward as the Sierra Tarahumara. This need for labour, in a country where it is, in principle, abundant, is explained by an extraordinarily high rate of turnover — a figure of 16% per month is cited in the case of Ciudad Juarez. This is also why the average age of the workforce is so low — 25 years at Ciudad Juarez (75% women), and 22 years at Chihuahua (85% women).

This model of industrialization based on low wages is all the more perverse when such a low level of wages provides no incentive for the capitalist to develop productivity — even if a Mexican worker is five times less productive than the equivalent in the United States, she remains three times more profitable when her salary is fifteen times lower.

There is then no incentive to raise qualifications, and modern technologies are only imported when they are absolutely necessary to meet quality norms. The technological level is an intermediary average between the out of date equipment of the old regions of industrialization, and the thrusting automation of the high wage zones. That is why the *maquila* cannot generate a process of fundamental modernization which could spread throughout the Mexican economy. If it spreads anything, it is the logic of wage austerity.

The most withering criticism of the *maquila* has come from the AFL/CIO, and for a reason. The attraction of the *maquilas* has been responsible for large-scale job losses north of the border.

In his testimony before the International Trade Commission in August 1987, Victor Munoz, a trade union leader from El Paso, explained how companies move out, "retaining only the management, the accounts and the commercial services". Thus the Zenith Electronic Corporation

2. Resolution number 137, AFL/CIO congress, November 1989.

3. Manuel Aguilar Mora, "Lejos de Dios; reflexiones sobre una tragedia nacional", *La Batalla* number 19, October-November 1987.

has replaced its factory in Eransville, Indiana, which employed 1400 workers paid \$6-7 per hour, for a *maquiladora* employing 5,000 workers, realizing a saving of \$300 million a year in the process. At El Paso, 1,400 industrial jobs have been lost since 1980.

The AFL-CIO also stresses the impact of the *maquila* on the health of the workers and the environment.

A report by Leslie Kochan, entitled "*Maquiladoras*; the hidden costs of production south of the border" underlines several aspects — the risks of accidents because of toxic materials, the absence of adequate treatment of waste, the pollution of water and the dangers to the ecosystem by the accumulation of industrial refuse.

Despite the superexploitation, the organization of workers is little developed in the *maquilas*. There are numerous reasons for this, of which the proximity of the United States is not the least.

As Manuel Aguilar Mora notes<sup>3</sup>, in an article in the review of the PRT (Revolutionary Workers' Party — Mexican section of the Fourth International) the frontier zone produces "a polarization of the specific differences between the imperialist nations and the oppressed nations".

The division of labour which is introduced is brutal — on the Mexican side, poverty, low wages, prostitution, marginalization, and so on... in short a social context which is hardly helpful to the organization of workers.

The very high rate of turnover of the workforce, the repression, the regional weight of PAN (the right opposition party), all combine to reduce the scope for working class action.

### Zenith strike example to workers

The example of the Zenith strike shows how workers who do take action are dealt with. Towards the end of 1983, the workers at Zenith in Reynosa entered into struggle to increase their wages, which were \$3.40 per day, and, thanks to the participation of 8,000 workers in the strike, apparently obtained some results — a wage increase, the right to freely organize a trade union, and to freely choose their own leaders.

But the wage increase was suppressed two months after the return to work. As to the new trade union leadership, it could never begin to function — its members were arrested by the local police, then dismissed by Zenith and placed on a blacklist by several other *maquiladoras*.

This strike became famous because of TV reporting in the course of which two US journalists were arrested and brutally



beaten by the local Mexican police.

A similar scenario took place during the strike at Ford Hermosillo in March 1987 — even if this was a partial success, the bosses and the local authorities did not give way on what is essential to them, namely the constitution of independent trade unions, genuinely representative of the interests of the workers.

Here, still more than in the rest of Mexico, the authorities and the trade unions linked to the regime function hand in hand. After all, social peace is, along with low wages, one of the principal arguments used to attract international investment.

### Status of maquiladora dependent on protectionism

The special status of the *maquiladora* made sense only in the context of a protectionist commercial policy. They existed as free trade zones, benefitting from an exceptional status. Things have changed profoundly today.

With the adhesion to GATT (the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) in 1986, then the progressive suppression of all import duties, Mexico has made a fundamental turnaround. In a coherent manner, legislation on international investment has been remodelled and softened in the extreme.

In cars, for example, a fairly binding regulation obliged the multinationals to realize a certain percentage of value added in Mexico, and forbade massive exports. Today, the differences between *maquiladora* industry and the implantation of any kind of multinational firm is blurred.

That is why it is possible to speak of the *maquiladorization* of the whole of Mexican industry, to the extent that the orientation of the government's economic policy accords an absolute priority to industrial exports. These have grown considerably since the oil shock, passing from \$5.4 billion in 1983 to \$12.2 billion in 1988 — their share of total exports is now 60%, this progression resulting in part from the lowering of oil receipts.

### Opportunities in internal market abandoned

But this increase in industrial exports has been obtained according to a logic strictly linked to that of the *maquila*. On the one hand, there is an abandonment of the openings offered by the internal market — certain exports of intermediate goods like cement, glass, steel were inflated almost automatically by the lowering of internal sales. And above all, this industrialization is disarticulated, because it is determined essentially by the logic of the multinationals. Thus, in the most dynamic sectors, those of cars and detached parts, 93% of exports were realized in 1987 by General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, Volkswagen and Renault — in the same way, IBM and Hewlett-Packard were responsible for 80% of exports of computer material.

The development of *maquiladora* industry has been a prelude to the growing integration of the Mexican economy with that of the United States, an integration dominated by the interests of the multinationals and the Mexican bourgeoisie, and whose logic implies a continued pressure on wages and the standard of living of Mexican workers. ★

# AROUND THE WORLD



## GERMANY

### Violence against squatters

ONE of the clearest messages from the German political establishment that it is not willing to tolerate any form of radical opposition was the recent military style action against squatters in East Berlin.

There is a severe housing shortage in Berlin. In the eastern part of the city it is estimated that there are around 25,000 empty flats. Even before the official unification, some people, desperate for accommodation, had begun to move into these run-down empty houses and make them habitable. Many of these were young homeless people from West Berlin. The political priority given to housing the massive influx of refugees to the city meant that hopes of getting housed were almost nil.

In Mainzer Street in East Berlin's Friedrichshain, there were thirteen such empty houses which have been an eyesore for more than ten years. About four hundred young people occupied these houses in May this year. Most were women and many of them were gay. They began to

clean up the houses, established a second-hand bookshop, an "info-Café", a Gay Bar, a communal restaurant (hot meal for £1) and a playground. They played an important role in the squatters' movement in Berlin and the hope was that, as in West Berlin in the seventies, there would eventually be a negotiated settlement whereby the situation would be legalized.

The life-style of the young squatters may have been exotic by conservative East Berlin standards. Opinions were sharply divided among the "ordinary residents" in the rest of the street.

But on November 12 and 14, 1990 a massive military style operation was undertaken against the squatters which surpassed anything ever seen in this city. The shocks from what happened are still reverberating and not just in Berlin.

The Berlin government is a "red-green coalition" between the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Green Alternative List. But, without informing their coalition partners, the SPD government brought in 3,000 police, mostly from the SPD-controlled states of North-Rhine Westphalia and Lower Saxony, reinforced by special border troops and equipped with armoured cars and water cannons.

A square mile of the city in Friedrichshain was cordoned off. During the previous twenty four hours, fearing an attack, the residents built barricades in the street. At 6 o'clock on Wednesday morning the police launched a massive assault with water cannon, armoured cars, tear gas, stones and in at least one case, live ammunition. The residents responded with paving stones and petrol bombs. The battle lasted three hours. The brutality of the police shocked the local residents, even those who didn't feel friendly towards the squatters. Around 20 of the squatters were seriously wounded, one of them had a bullet removed.

Over four hundred, mostly women, were arrested. The arrested, according to reports, were beaten up at police stations and women were sexually abused by the police.

On the following day there was a demonstration of over 10,000 people in Berlin protesting against the

police violence and demanding that those arrested be released, that the houses be returned to their occupiers and that there should be a political rather than a military-police solution to the pressing problem of homelessness.

The SPD leader of the Berlin city government, Momper, has defended the action of the government and police, describing the young people who occupied the houses as "criminal chaotics". In the light of the right-wing CDU victory at the time of the state elections in October, the SPD wants to establish its right-wing credentials in the run-up to the national elections in December. The Alternative List has withdrawn from the coalition in protest against the state-police violence against the homeless in East Berlin. The prospects for a red-green coalition in Berlin after December are slim.

These attacks on the homeless — along with those on the PDS — are part of a concerted action by the bourgeois political establishment to head off any development of radical political protest in the ex-GDR. In the Mainzer Street attack they have shown that they will not hesitate to use extreme violence to deal with any groups that act to defend themselves. — Gus Fagan ★

## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

### The Czech left greets George Bush

GEORGE BUSH's triumphant visit to Prague on November 17, the anniversary of last year's "Velvet Revolution", did not go unchallenged. Two Prague anarchist groups organized a 250 strong demonstration, chanting "Yankee go home." Their leaflet argued that "We didn't go out into the streets on November 17, or before... (for) the political and economic power of owners, employers and 50 thousand multi-millionaires."

Another gathering of 100 people was organized by the Left Alternative grouping, while at a rally attended by 70 people, a Campaign for the Rights of Youth launched an 11-point charter. The first issue of the campaign's journal, *Budoucnost* (Future), comments: "Government promises that every citizen will have the same chance in the privatization process are ridiculous...."

"The only people who can contemplate buying are the top figures of the black market, ex-and current bureaucrats and foreigners....The economy will be governed by a smaller and smaller number of monopolies.

"Artificially high prices will become common practice. Volkswagen wants to buy 75% of Skoda, Tomas Bata wants to be given back the Svit shoe factories in Zlin. The result of this kind of privatization will be that Czechoslovakia becomes an economic colony of Germany and other countries." ★

### Berlin — open city

ON NOVEMBER 3, 1990, a year after the start of the massive popular mobilization that led to the fall of the Honecker regime, some 10,000 people took part in a demonstration in Berlin's Alexanderplatz, to mark their ideological rejection of Chancellor Kohl's "Greater Germany". The majority of the participants on this demonstration, which had been called by a wide range of organizations, came from Berlin's strong autonomist movement. At the end of the march there was a Fourth International contingent with comrades from France, Germany, and Denmark.

The organizers had hoped for a turnout of 20,000, so there was some disappointment. Nonetheless the dialogue between the different organizations will continue, notably around the issues of German unification and the "united Europe" plans for 1993. It should be possible for the left to undertake joint initiatives on a European scale in the future — and it is certainly necessary.

★

BRITAIN

Conference launches debt campaign

THE fourth conference of the Socialist Movement, entitled "Freedom, Socialism and Democracy — an International Debate" — sponsored by, among others, the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Women for Socialism, Labour Party Black Sections, The National Left of Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalists), the Indian Workers' Association GB, Red-Green Network and a number of far-left groups — took place November 17/18, 1990 in Manchester.

About a thousand people attended a series of plenums, workshops (over 40) and fringe meetings. One of the largest of these, with some 200 people, — was organized by the journal, *Socialist Outlook*. There were many speakers present at the conference from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The Socialist Movement is planning to produce a popular fortnightly paper, entitled *socialist*, a pilot issue of which was available.

A very successful workshop was held around the campaign for the cancellation of the Third World debt. Plans are afoot for a massive demonstration in London in July 1991 at the time of the forthcoming Group of 7 meeting. It is hoped to bring substantial contingents from other European countries to this protest — in July 1989 a big demonstration took place in France on the same issue. ★

ISRAEL

Warsawsky freed

ON November 9, 1990, the director of the Israeli Alternative Information Centre and IV correspondent, Michel Warsawsky, was freed from the prison at Ma'asiyahu, where he had been held since July 1. Accused of having "looked the other way" over the origin of a booklet dealing with torture — attributed to militants of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) — he was sentenced by the Supreme Court to eight months in jail and a further year suspended. Some 100 Israeli and Palestinian activists greeted him at the AIC when he was released. In response to this warm greeting, Michel emphasized his increased determination to fight against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. ★

Belgian teachers' strike

SINCE Spring of this year, the French speaking area of Belgium has been shaken by a teachers strike which has united a workforce traditionally divided between private and public schools. Nearly half of all teaching takes place in private schools, and traditionally the lack of combativity of teachers in this sector (where the regimes tend to be much more arbitrary than in the public sector) has held back the capacity of teachers as a whole to resist government austerity policies. There are 98,500 teachers in French speaking Belgium.

Since 1989, the administration of teaching has been "decentralized" between the Flemish and the French speaking communities (the former are concentrated in the north of the country, the latter in the south and the major part of Brussels, the bilingual capital).

Through the 1980s teachers in the public sector engaged in repeated and sometimes very bitter strike actions. But all these movements came up against the impossibility of joint action with the teachers in the private sector, where the bourgeois Social Christian Party exerted a strong influence.

This began to change from 1986 onwards, and in May 1990 a common trade union front was established. Hopes that the situation in education would improve with the coming to power of a Socialist/Social Christian coalition government in 1988 were swiftly dashed. The detonator for the current conflict was the desire of the Ministry of Education to pass the costs of a 2% wage increase for the teachers onto the students and their parents, as well as the teachers through new attacks on working conditions. During the second half of May 1990 and the first days of June all the schools were out solid over several weeks. A tactic of "alternating picketing" allowed a greater solidarity to develop between private and public sectors. High school students have taken action in support of the teachers, and rank and file coordinations have spread as the conflict intensified.

Since the beginning of October the teachers have been on strike, and this has been supported by 90% of the workforce. The government is reluctant to make concessions for fear of the knock-on effect in the rest of the public sector. On November 18 100,000 teachers, parents and students, marched through Brussels in support of the strike — this was the biggest demonstration seen in the capital since the anti-missile mobilizations of the early 1980s. — Eric Toussaint ★

ALGERIA

GOLFE  
DEHORS L'IMPERIALISME !

De... (Arabic text from the newspaper)



Après les élections du 12 juin...

garantir des élections démocratiques

L... (Arabic text from the newspaper)

Etat de droit sans les travailleurs

9... (Arabic text from the newspaper)

... (Arabic text from the newspaper)

THE first number of the monthly journal of the Algerian Socialist Workers Party (PST), *El Khatwa*, appeared in September 1990. A total of 50,000 copies in Arabic and French editions of the 16 page paper were produced. The paper has the ambition to give a voice to all those in Algeria who reject both the ruling FLN and the Islamic fundamentalists of the FIS.

*El Khatwa* means "the step", and hopes to express in its pages the experiences of militants involved in strikes, the women's and student movements, and the supporters of the Berber cultural movement. Copies can be obtained for 6 French francs or the equivalent, plus post, from 2, rue Richard Lenoir, 93108, Montreuil, France. Cheques should be made payable to Derbal. ★