

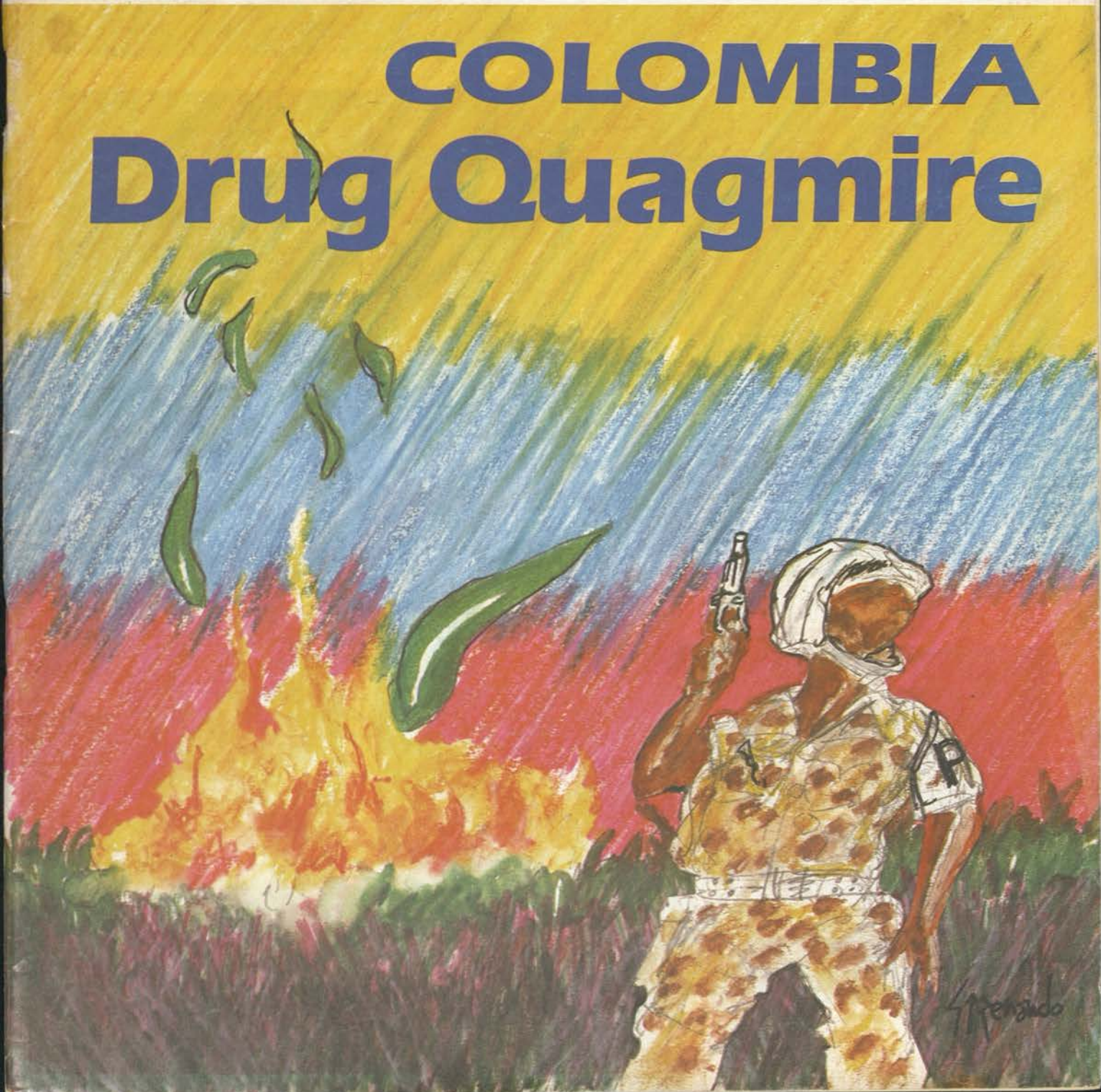


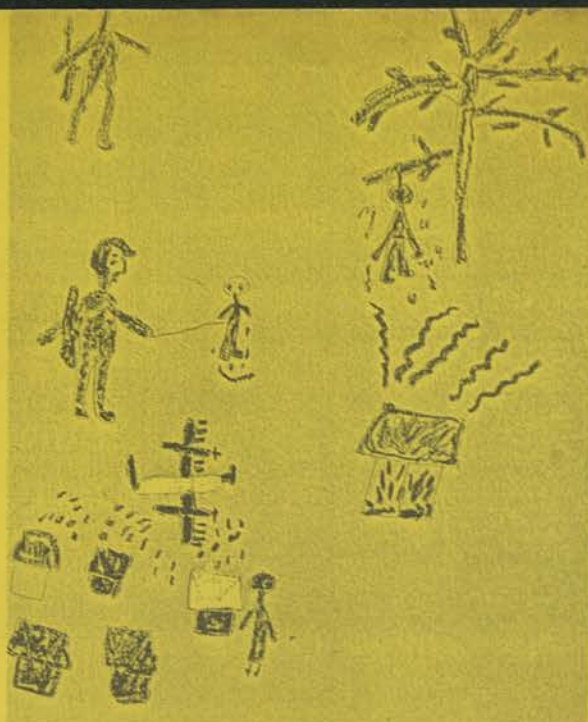
**GUATEMALA:
Renewed
Repression**

third world

Bimonthly • Number 23 • December 1989 • US\$2 • NCr\$ 20,00 • # 5

COLOMBIA Drug Quagmire





Guatemala: Violent Memories

In 1983, social workers with the Guatemalan Refugee Support Committee (CARGUA) in Mexico, asked refugee children to draw what they remembered of their country. The motifs chosen by the artists, between the ages of six and 13, included helicopters and soldiers. The memories live on.



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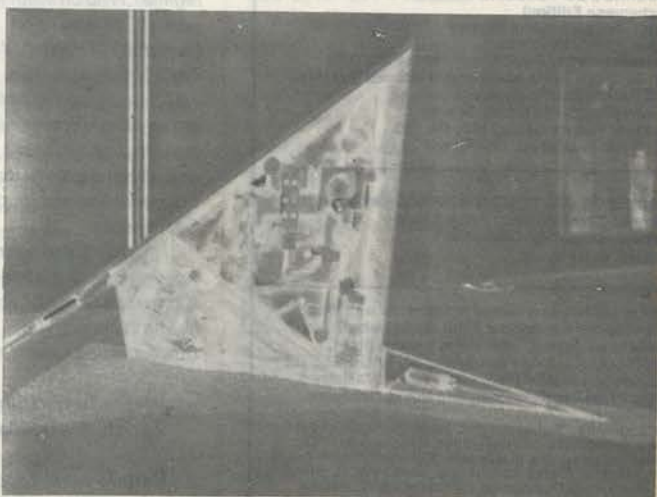
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THIRD WORLD

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third world is published by Editora Terceiro Mundo as a step towards establishing a New International Information Order. It contains information on and analysis of the conditions and aspirations of emerging nations. Separate editions are published in Spanish (Cuadernos del Tercer Mundo) and in Portuguese (Cadernos do Terceiro Mundo).

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Editor-in-Chief: Roberto Remo Bissio
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Montevideo, Uruguay

third world has operational agreements with the
following news agencies: Third World Network
Features (Malaysia), Inter Press Service (Italy),
ANGOP (Angola), AIM (Mozambique), SALPRESS (El
Salvador), SHIHATA (Tanzania), Wafa (Palestine),
Africa Press Clips (Austria), and Nueva Nicaragua
(Nicaragua).
Photographs: Walter Santos, Hélio Santos, Reuters,
Third World Network, the United Nations and FAO.
Other photographs this issue: Bill Hinchberger (page
23), Maruska Freire Rameck (pages 40-42), B. Bissio
(page 44), Iraqi Campaign for Compulsory Literacy
(page 45).

Illustrations: Alvaro Camello (page 18), Juan Pereira
(page 57)

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LETTERS

Kenya

We know that your readers
have genuine concern for
fundamental human rights
(including the right to life),
democracy and protection of the
environment. Kenyans, except
the political leadership, do the
same.

Kenya is endowed with
unique natural resources,
particularly its wild animals,
excellent climatic conditions,
ideal contrasting and complex
geographical features. Kenyans
want to develop, protect and
equitably utilize their heritage.
We also welcome all
peace-loving peoples of the
world to share in these wonders
of nature and human labour.

But Kenya has a government
imposed on the people. It was
not elected in free and fair
elections. It is a repressive

regime and engages in mass
imprisonments and detention of
all and any voices of democratic
dissent. It is famous the world
over for its brutality and torture of
prisoners, and its prisons
overflow with victims of state
terror and repression.

Since last year President
Daniel Arap Moi made an
unconstitutional order that
anyone "suspected" of being a
poacher of wildlife is to be
shot-on-sight by state security
forces. A KAIF document reviews
the chaotic and murderous
situation created by this decree,
which was renewed only August
1989. Many murders have been
carried out under the decrees
and we want to bring this
barbarism to an end. Kenyans
cannot take it any longer
particularly given the fact that
President Moi himself confessed
recently that the real forces
behind the poachers, who also

Romania

Just this morning I received
your Special Edition on
Romania. I think it gives a very
one-sided and distorted picture
about Romania. The human
rights violations and the wide
destruction of Romanian culture
by the Ceausescu regime has
been very well documented.

If this very one-sided view
that you published is what you
mean by a New International
Information Order, I very much
disapprove of it. I wish that you
would correct your gross mistake
in future issues.

Tauno Auer
Helsinki, Finland

Romania II

As a subscriber of *third
world*, I was both amazed and
disgusted when I received your
Special Edition on Romania.

How can you allow
yourselves to be so totally
instrumentalized by a dictatorial
regime? Who on earth wrote this
rubbish, anyway? The
Romanian "Thinking of the
Truth"? Lots of the lies,
inaccuracies and misinformation
are so fittingly communicated
through propagandistic jargon
and official photos of that
wonderful Stalinist couple, the
Ceausescus.

I thought *third world* was
working for a "New International
Information Order." Looks more
like an "International
Disinformation Order" to me!

Walter Bertschinger
Zurich, Switzerland

Editors note: For our
response, please see To the
Reader on this page.

TO THE READER

Romania?

Some of our readers have inquired about the
magazine *Special Edition: Romania* they received in
the mail.

As stated in a disclaimer on page 31 of that
publication, its contents "are the responsibility of the
authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of
the magazine."

The Romania publication was a purely commercial
venture of the publishing company that puts out *third
world*, the Editora Terceiro Mundo. The Editora's
production and art departments were enlisted to put
the magazine together, but the contents were not
produced nor endorsed by the editorial staff.

The Romanian Embassy in Brazil also arranged
with the Editora Terceiro Mundo to have the
publication mailed to *third world* subscribers. But this
does not mean that the publication is an issue of *third
world*.

We regret any confusion that may have resulted
among our readers.

Bill Hinchberger, Editor

LETTERS

kill innocent tourists, are his own very rich friends.

For further information – since the Kenya Anti-imperialist Front (KAIF) is forced into non-legal existence – contact all known solidarity committees for human rights in Kenya which are in Western Europe, Asia and North America. Do not hesitate to contact all known Kenyan democratic and revolutionary organizations in your country/region. You may also contact a member of our organization (temporarily up to end of November 1989) S. Gutto, Box 24, S-615 00 Valdemarsvik, Sweden.

Shadrack Gutto
Member of the KAIF
Central Committee
Valdemarsvik, Sweden

Consuming usefulness

IOCU is a nonprofit, nongovernment organization involved in the promotion of consumer awareness especially in the fields of consumer protection, information and education. It links the activities of 160 consumer organizations in some 60 countries and acts as a liaison office, clearing house and information centre. It also represents consumer interests at the United Nations. CIDOC (Consumer Information and Documentation Centre), serves as IOCU's principal resource center.

We find **third world** very useful for our work in the dissemination of consumer and related information to our members and network associates.

Penelope Husin
Information Officer,
CIDOC
Penang, Malaysia

Shipping in

I bought a copy of your magazine while visiting Rio de Janeiro when our ship was in the harbor. I liked it enough to try a year's worth. Keep up the good work.

ATC Eric R. Johnson
San Diego, California,
U.S.A.

A regular

I want to become a regular reader of your outstanding magazine. Recently, I had the privilege of reading one of your back issues and was totally impressed. The magazine's **Third World** perspective is refreshing in comparison with the usual Western view of the world. As a political science graduate, I feel somewhat embarrassed that I did not subscribe earlier.

Paul G. Karugu
Nellis AFB, Nevada,
U.S.A.

Caribbean coverage

I would like to see **third world** publish an article on the countries of the Caribbean, focusing on economic problems – especially in those countries that have lots of tourism.

I want to take this opportunity to add that I would like to exchange letters with readers in Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago.

Ulisses Tenório
Rua João Dias Vergara,
35-A
Campo Limpo
05765 São Paulo, SP
Brazil

The 1990 world cup

Who will be the champion?

Soon the moment of truth will be upon us. The great names of Europe will be preparing themselves. And what novelties will Brazil bring? Why doesn't **third world** do an interview about or a retrospective on the Brazilian national team?

Alfredo Diris Júlio
Lobito, Angola

Triple exchange

As a reader of your excellent magazine, I would like to ask you to publish my name and address so that I might exchange correspondence with other readers. I am a history teacher and would like to exchange letters with people who read any of the three editions of **third world**: English, Spanish or Portuguese. I am also interested in exchanging stamps, postcards, etc.

Donato Marques
Caixa Postal 134
58001 João Pessoa, PB
Brazil

Gonzalo de Freitas

I would like to notify your readers – especially the Ecuadorian Indians and peasants of the Carchi, Imbabura and Esmeralda provinces (in cantón Eloy Alfaro) – of the death of Gonzalo de-Freitas on September 23, 1989. He died of a weak heart.

He was in the aforementioned region around 1972, developing the ECU-28 project. He always remembered and talked about what he called "my Indians." He felt at home with them. It would be nice for everyone if he were not forgotten and his work were continued. That would be the best homage.

Victor Torres
Paysandú, Uruguay

PEN PALS

Readers often contact us asking that we publish their addresses so that they might establish correspondence with their counterparts throughout the world. Due to the volume of these requests, we are following the lead of our sister editions in Spanish and Portuguese and publishing a regular feature listing the names and addresses of those individuals. If you would like to be included, please write.

• **Christo Dimitrov**
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• **Martin Alberto**
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NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT

Tendencies

The Non-Aligned Movement managed to maintain its unity during a four-day summit in September, despite the emergence of factions.

Two basic opposing tendencies have emerged in the group. The so-called "renovators" wanted cooperation with the North and gave an optimistic analysis of the international political situation, while the more cautious "traditionalists" continued to denounce the hegemonic role of the superpowers and their allies.

The main representatives of the first group were Argentina, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Senegal, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia. The second group included Cuba, Ghana, Libya, Nicaragua and North Korea.

Yugoslavia repeatedly stressed that the new international climate, resulting from the superpowers' rapprochement and disarmament talks, allows the movement to shift from what it called a "confrontational" stand to one of cooperation.

The "traditionalists," on the other hand, believe the rapprochement of Moscow and Washington does not necessarily mean political and economic conditions in the Third World will improve. Countries like Cuba and Nicaragua, which are clearly in conflict with the United States, warned against the dangers of the U.S.-Soviet honeymoon and urged non-aligned nations to be alert.



Non-aligned consultation

These fears were shared by Afghanistan, the African frontline states, Panama and Vietnam, who said the closer U.S.-Soviet ties could lead to a backroom agreement that might affect their own sovereignty. In the last decade, the countries of the South have become poorer, the rich have grown richer, the international economic order has benefited the industrialized world, and the North has repeatedly refused dialogue with the South, they stressed.

The Third World's foreign debt crisis, its critical economic situation and the drop in prices of basic raw materials in relation to industrialized products further weaken the countries of the South, making it difficult to adopt demanding positions, some delegations maintained.

But both the "renovators" and the "traditionalists" agree that the Non-Aligned Movement has some master keys that could oblige the North to agree to negotiate a common solution. These include threats presented by the growth in drug trafficking, environmental destruction, regional crises and increased terrorism. The industrialized states cannot solve these problems without cooperation from the South.

Roberto Ampuero Espinoza
(TWNF)

NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENTPermanent
Summit

The establishment of a permanent summit-level Third World group for South-South consultations and cooperation, backed by a secretariat of its own, was perhaps the major concrete outcome of the Ninth Non-Aligned Summit at Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September.

The formation of this 15-member group was carried out on the sidelines of the summit at the initiative of President Alan García of Peru.

Independently, García had been promoting for the last two years the idea of regular permanent summit-level South-South consultations on global economic issues. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India has been pushing for involvement of leaders of the South in concrete measures to promote South-South cooperation.

These initiatives coalesced and resulted in the establishment of a permanent body backed by a secretariat to promote South-South cooperation and South-North dialogue.

The group consists of Al-

García: summit proponent



geria, Argentina, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. Consultations are continuing to bring in two more - Brazil and Mexico.

The group is to serve as a forum for consultation and would formulate and monitor the implementation of specific programs of cooperation among Third World countries. It will be serviced by a small, compact, permanent secretariat.

Chakravarthi Raghavan (TWNF)

ZIMBABWE

Export-Loss
Disease

The ban on Zimbabwe's beef exports to the European Economic Community (EEC), imposed in May, after an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, has been extended because of a resurgence of the disease.

Dr. Stuart Hargreaves, Zimbabwe's veterinary service director, said that before the new outbreak of the disease, negotiations for the resumption of prime beef exports to the EEC were supposed to take place before the end of the year.

"It will not be this year, nor early next year. This new development has seriously affected the beef industry," Hargreaves said.

Zimbabwe in the past earned an estimated US\$45 million in foreign currency from its beef exports.

Hargreaves said that negotiations for exports to the EEC would only resume when the disease was under full control.

Dingaun Mpondah (Panos)



Puerto Rico: Hugo playing dominoes

CARIBBEAN

High-Priced Wind

Antiguan farmer Taz Cole is grim-faced as he looks across his hurricane-devastated land. "Everything has gone down the drain," he says. "The only crop that managed to survive is eggplant."

Cole suffered losses amounting to 75,000 East Caribbean dollars (US\$27,750) after Hugo, the most powerful hurricane to hit the northeastern Caribbean in a decade, swept the island in mid-September.

His four hectare farm is only one of many across the Caribbean which suffered heavy losses when 225-kilometer-per-hour winds carved a trail of death and destruction from St. Lucia to Puerto Rico. Government officials in Antigua estimate the whole country's losses from damage to agriculture at US\$74 million.

In the Caribbean Community alone, insurers estimate they may have to pay out at least US\$2 billion in compensation. This would make the hurricane the most expensive in Caribbean history.

Of the Caribbean Community nations, Montserrat was the hardest hit. Damage estimates range from US\$120-370 million. Governor Christopher Turner said 95 percent of all buildings had been destroyed or damaged.

Dominica's banana growers were among the hardest hit. The hurricane flattened about 80 percent of the plantations in the two main banana-growing areas of the island. Crop insurers estimate the damage to Dominica's main foreign exchange earner at US\$3 million.

Agriculture in three other Caribbean Community nations - St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Montserrat - also suffered losses as the hurricane destroyed or damaged crops, left fields waterlogged and killed livestock.

Hugo also caused heavy damage to houses, buildings and the telephone, water and electricity services in nearly a dozen developing nations, including the Virgin Islands.

In Montserrat, Chief Minister John Osborne believes it might be a decade or two before the islands return to their pre-hurricane development level. For Montserrat and other Caribbean Community nations, the hurricane has brought a sharp halt to economic momentum. Unemployment has worsened, government revenue will be significantly down, and plans to continue trimming food imports might go askew, economic analysts say.

Valerie Yearwood (Panos)

IVORY TRADE BAN

Dissent

Zimbabwe and four other southern African states have united to oppose a ban on trade in ivory.

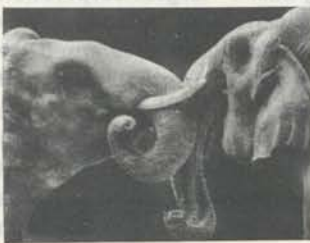
Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe argue that they have healthy, well-managed elephant herds - a result of successful game management policies. A blanket ban - such as that imposed by the United States, the European Community (EC) and Dubai on ivory imports - would increase the price of the product, intensify poaching and drive the trade underground, they say.

They propose instead to establish a tightly-regulated centralized marketing system to channel legally traded raw ivory to an approved manufacturing point, with the proceeds being ploughed back into elephant conservation projects.

The EC and the other countries recently banned ivory imports in response to pressure from Tanzania and Kenya, supported by the London-based Ivory Trade Review Group. According to the group, elephant populations in the two East African countries have been decimated by poachers.

In Tanzania, there are now 75,000 elephants compared with 204,000 in 1981. In Kenya, the number has

Endangered or not?



dropped to 18,000 from 65,000 in 1981.

But Southern African countries, led by Zimbabwe, say that they were not consulted about the ban. Zimbabwean biologists say that herds in Southern Africa, particularly in Botswana and Zimbabwe, are growing at 5 percent a year.

Ivan Farai (Panos)

TANZANIA

Cockroach Power

Two microorganisms which live in productive harmony in the hind-gut of cockroaches are exciting microbiologists at the University of Dar-es-Salaam.

Commenting on the creatures, Dr. Huub Gijzen of the microbiology unit says they are "a complete machinery for the conversion of plant matter (biomass) into fuel."

The organism, *Nyctotherus ovalis*, a type of ciliate or protozoan - a minute acellular organism - and the methane-producing bacteria which live within it, are being cultivated in fermentors to convert organic matter into fuel. Thousands of bacteria are found within a single ciliate cell.

Researchers were alerted to the potential of the bacteria inhabiting cockroaches because it had been observed that these omnivorous creatures could eat and digest almost any organic material, including cellulose, which makes up most of the mass of plant material and is in abundant supply. Research results are 30 to 100 times those reported for conventional methane digesters.

Christopher Mwalubandu (Panos)

In the Beginning

A boom town in the 1970s mushroomed into one of the world's most prosperous industries



Medellin drug wars: waiting to advance (left) and terrorized innocent victims (right)

By José Louzeiro

Until the 1970s, relative peace reigned in United States intelligence agencies – particularly the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Essentially, they dealt with external enemies like spies, terrorist organizations, or occasional thugs from an Italian-based gang of lawbreakers called Mafia.

But in the 1980s the U.S. drug business grew so fast that first President Ronald Reagan and now his successor George Bush got tangled up in a new kind of war. The war against cocaine traders is now "a matter of national security," in the words of Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, who asked the Pentagon to draw up a military plan to

combat the drug traffic within U.S. borders.

The U.S. drug market, with 23 million users, consumes some 60 percent of the total production of the two Colombian drug empires – the cartels of Medellín and Cali. The drug traffic has been growing at the rate of 27 percent a year, despite the efforts of the Colombian army and police.

Last year *Fortune* magazine – a leading U.S. business publication – ranked the US\$10 billion-a-year drug business of Colombian-born José Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha among the world's 50 largest corporations. In Argentina, Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel warned that drugs "are the greatest threat to democratic stability in Latin America." He added that "it is no exaggeration to speak of a parallel state" of drug dealers in such countries as Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

One of the first manifestations of this

power was the offer made by Bolivian drug trafficker Roberto Suárez (now in jail) in 1982 to liquidate his country's foreign debt, then standing at US\$4 billion, in exchange for full amnesty and exemption from extradition for drug dealers. In 1988, the Medellín cartel made a similarly generous offer to the Colombian government: US\$11 billion in exchange for general amnesty and a guarantee against extradition.

Both offers were rejected, but Senator Javier Ruete, of Peru's ruling party, the American People's Revolutionary Alliance (APRA), admitted that "this kind of proposal may become irresistible if the Latin American crisis deteriorates any further."

In La Paz, Undersecretary of State for Social Defense Jorge Alderete recognized that most of his advisers in the antidrug campaign can no longer be trusted, much less the Bolivian justice

system. Alderete noted that a corrupt police and judicial system limited coca paste seizures to but eight of the 50,000 tons produced over a recent 12-month period.

The marijuana boom — In the early 1960s, the town of Barranquilla, Colombia, enjoyed a development boom thanks to marijuana cultivation and exportation, especially to the United States. Heading the new business was a former whiskey-and-cigarette smuggler named Lucho Benavente, who made a fortune overnight and eventually became a sort of godfather to the region's poor.

The town prospered. New shops opened, buildings sprouted up, the unemployed found work, and peasants planted marijuana. Each hectare raked in over three times what they could make growing corn. Benavente thus became the first *capo*, as the ring leaders are known, of Colombian organized crime.

New plantations thrived in La Guajira, and clandestine airports were built near the town. When government authorities began to move, it was too late. Benavente's mafia had taken over and

established a sophisticated domestic and international network.

Eventually, Benavente himself lost control. His group collapsed and suffered splits. Internal feuds flared, crops were commandeered by force, mysterious murders were reported.

Barranquilla police officials were at a loss. Sufficient assistance was not always forthcoming from the central government in Bogota.

The number of *capi* and their personal fortunes multiplied. The new rich were uneducated thugs who used dollars and weapons to acquire and protect their holdings. It was like an old western movie set in the 20th century.

In 1976, during a dispute over prime marijuana land, hired gunmen assassinated Benavente. Barranquilla's poor went into mourning. Fearing a gang war, police authorities turned to the U.S. Narcotics Department, the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committees (NNICC), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

With strong backing from Washington, the Colombian government militarized La Guajira in 1979. The U.S. had argued that the corrupt local police

should be replaced by the army.

Under military control, the wholesale burning of marijuana plantations began. As a result, consumption declined and so did interest in the business. Meanwhile, marijuana plantations began to pop up in the U.S. for domestic consumption.

In the early 1980s, the remaining *capi* joined hands. Among them were two women: Griselda Blanco de Trujillo, the Godmother, and Verónica Rivera de Vargas, who was later to become known as the Coca Queen. There were also José Antonio (Pepe) Cabrera Sarmiento, Santiago Ocampo (El Crespo) Zuluaga, and Griselda's lover Alberto Bravo Agudelo, who was murdered in 1974. This small group eventually laid the foundations of the Medellín cartel, the largest drug empire of all time.

According to *Fortune*, approximately a half a trillion dollars exchange hands every year between drug producers, traffickers and consumers worldwide. This is more than twice the value of the cash in dollars that exists in the world and nearly 25 percent more than the annual military budget of the world's largest military power, the U.S. •

Countering the Brazil Move

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents in Brazil as "attachés" or under false names were hardly surprised a year ago when a ton of cocaine was found aboard a Varig airliner headed for Miami. They know of similar cases in which airlines are innocently duped into taking cargo dispatched by the drug mafia.

DEA agents, like the Brazilian police, know that pressure in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia is forcing drug traffickers to transfer their laboratories to the Brazilian Amazon, far from the reach of local and federal authorities. They also know that the accused, Jamil Tavares, had been instructed by higher-ups in the drug industry when he proclaimed his innocence in the Varig affair. They believe that Tavares



DEA on duty

must have been responsible for other shipments over the past few years.

Quietly headquartered in an office at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, the DEA men are reviewing a number of old cases that have a bearing on more recent ones. Their attention is currently focused on the results of the action mounted last May by Narcotics District Chief of Police Roberto Precioso Jr., of the São Paulo Superintendency of Federal Police. Operation Condor, as it was named, led to the arrest of a gang of laboratory owners, the seizure of 5,000 drums of ether and acetone, plus weapons, ammunition and 12 airplanes used in the transportation of chemicals.

Precioso concluded from his investigations that the same group had been supplying ether and acetone to several cocaine refineries throughout South America.

Several of the group's "businessmen" have been arrested and are awaiting trial. Operation Condor authorities are searching for 19 others suspected of complicity with drug dealers. Since the beginning of Precioso's investigations, in early 1986, Brazilian police has completed 11,200-page dossiers indicting a total of 43 individuals. Of these, Precioso has carefully selected the 19 most dangerous and is trying to prevent them from leaving the country.

Plata or
plombo: mafia
or casket



“A Ticket to Hell”

Law enforcement attempts to stem the drug tide have led to an increase in efforts by drug traffickers to bribe or kill those in influential positions

In an impoverished country like Colombia, money can buy almost anything, and corruption soon becomes the main weapon of drug traffickers. And when *plata* (money) no longer works, *plombo* (lead) takes over.

As the United States began to pressure the Colombian government to liquidate cocaine gangs, the *capi*—the leaders of the drug mafia—demonstrated that they are no naive Barranquilla bandits.

When repression against the drug traffic was on the rise in Medellín in the 1980s, *Capo* Pablo Escobar, the Godfather, warned about how he and his partners would react: “Anyone who refuses to make money with us is buying a ticket to hell.”

Experienced agents from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) went into action along with the brutal but persistent officers of the Colombia army, especially those of the 7th Brigade, with significant air force support. The war had begun.

Capi were indicted as drug dealers, taken to court and exposed. Those who remained at large feared for their lives. They knew that the DEA agents meant business.

Two influential *capi* were dethroned in the early 1980s: Gilberto Rodríguez (the Chessplayer) Orejuela and Evaristo

Porras Ardila. Then came money-laundering expert Hernán Botero Moreno, who is currently serving a 30-year sentence in a U.S. penitentiary.

A number of drug dealers decided to cooperate with the police while others were arrested, and the Medellín gang began to feel the pressure. The most influential *capi* devised a counterstrategy to deal with the local forces, the DEA and the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC), a sort of narcotics Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Among the bosses who helped put the plan together were Pablo (Godfather) Escobar, Ochoa Vásquez, Gonzalo Rodríguez (El Mejicano) Bacha, and Juan (Coyote) Blanco de Trujillo.

Part of the strategy was to escalate efforts to breed corruption in the U.S. and in Colombian official circles, especially in the armed forces and justice system, and to create death squads domestically and abroad, using hired gunmen to protect drug suppliers in Bolivia and Peru. Riding powerful motorcycles and attacking by surprise, the gunmen were called *matadores en motocicletas* (motorcycle-riding killers).

Growing Violence—In the past few years, 220 Colombian officials, most of them members of the country’s legal apparatus, rejected the offer of *plata* and

fell victim to the *plombo* which spewed from the machine guns of the motorcycle killers. Among the victims were Medellín High Court Justices Gustavo Zaluaga and Álvaro Medina Uchoa.

Meanwhile, the *capi* urged their *Cáli* partners to adopt the same methods. They knew that, with the arrest of several *Cáli* bosses, the DEA would eventually lay its hands on precious information that could indict traffickers in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

Despite their efficient strategy, however, the Medellín bosses experienced a second major defeat in 1984. First, police destroyed their laboratories in Truquilandia, in southwest Colombia. Then, outside Doradal, some 200 kilometers from Bogota, a joint force of police and army troops stumbled upon a well-equipped coca processing plant while on a manhunt for trafficker Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria. Related facilities included a power plant which supplied energy for 3,000 residences, and an airport under construction with a runway long enough to accommodate a Jumbo. Three tons of pure cocaine and 1,000 drums of chemicals were apprehended.

Despite these setbacks, however, the Colombian traffickers have continued to prosper and their sales to the U.S. go on unabated.

The Faceless Coyote

The so-called Big Three of the Medellín cartel are actually four: Jorge Luis Ochoa Vásquez, Pablo Emilio (The Godfather) Escobar Gaviria, José Gonzalo Rodríguez (El Mejicano) Gacha, and the relatively unknown and seldom mentioned Juan (El Coyote) Blanco de Trujillo.

A *faceless* man, according U.S. agents, Blanco de Trujillo has apparently replaced Carlos Enrique Lehder Rivas since the latter began to have run-ins with Colombian law enforcement officials. Hundreds of agents from Colombia, France, Italy, Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil are trying to track down Blanco de Trujillo. Little is known of him except that he may be the son of Griselda Blanco de Trujillo, the Godmother, who was arrested and extradited to the United States in 1985.

He is also presumably related to Osvaldo Trujillo Blanco, a major Los Angeles, California, cocaine dealer. This relationship, however, is as cloudy as everything else about El Coyote.

To make things more difficult for the police, El Coyote never let himself be photographed, as his buddies did before the repression escalated. And no one knows how his money is laundered or how he invests it.

Police informers operating in bars, restaurants and dives around Cali and Medellín believe El Coyote handles a huge fortune in dollars, travels often abroad – including to Europe – to expand his markets, but always with absolute discretion and under the protection of self-effacing bodyguards who, some agents suspect, might be women.

One thing is certain about this sly character: since he stepped in for Carlos Rivas, business with the U.S., which stood at 62.6 tons in 1987 according to the DEA, jumped to

86.8 tons in 1988, despite the repression unleashed by the U.S. under ex-President Ronald Reagan.

According to inside information, one of El Coyote's favorite ways to confuse the police is to send a cargo of low-grade cocaine "dust" to a given location. While the police are busy apprehending the goods, he safely dispatches the real stuff – tons of top-quality cocaine – to his customers abroad via a different route.

El Coyote is responsible for creating the so-called cocaine kamikaze. They are individuals who carry cocaine for the sole purpose of being arrested. The cartel rewards their families richly, and they are guaranteed good lawyers. When released, these fake-drug traffickers undergo plastic surgery and return to the job. Thus, in the manner of Hollywood producers, the Medellín *capi* spend a lot of money in scenery and make-up.

Legendary for his genius, El Coyote is also known for his daring. Last year, he managed to send a sizable amount of cocaine to the U.S. using oil tankers going through the Panama Canal. Reportedly the "merchandise" was contained in waterproof bags that were fastened onto the hull of the ships and were collected by divers in Los Angeles.

In addition, El Coyote has helped undermine smaller cartels in Colombia and Bolivia by quietly denouncing his competitors to anti-drug agents. Whenever a *capo* from Cali, for instance, is on a sales promotion trip abroad, El Coyote has his men make anonymous calls to tip police on the whereabouts of the absentee's facilities and workforce. Apparently he disapproves of some of the clumsy moves made by his Cali competitors, which tend to jeopardize the end fitable drug business.

Operation Haiti – A few years ago, in order to escape pressure or ensure the dollars necessary to resist it, the Medellín *capi* embarked on what the DEA calls Operation Haiti, an alliance with Haitian Colonel Jean-Claude Paul.

At present, Haiti is a cocaine paradise. Over 1,000 Colombians have set up shop in the Caribbean island, using dollars to buy hotels, bars, theaters, real-estate firms, small airlines and even schools. In the opinion of DEA officials, Haiti is an important outpost for the *capi* because it is there that vacationing U.S. businesspeople are recruited to join the traffic, using a strategy similar to the *plata o plombo*.

Last July, the Cuban official newspa-

per, *Granma*, revealed a major scandal in Havana. General Arnaldo Ochoa Sánchez and six other army officers were involved in corruption and the international trade of cocaine, acting jointly with the Medellín cartel. Cubans were understandingly shocked: Ochoa, decorated as a Cuban hero, had performed important missions abroad and had commanded the Cuban forces in Angola. He had also been among Castro's *compañeros* in the Sierra Maestra guerrilla struggle.

The seven were arrested, tried and sentenced to death by a special military court. Ochoa was found guilty of high treason and executed by a firing squad, together with his former associates,

Captain Jorge Martínez, Colonel Antonio de la Guardia and Major Amado Padrón. Another 13 officers and Interior Ministry officials were found guilty of involvement in the drug traffic and sent to prison.

In Washington, DEA Director William Bennett made a grisly suggestion, arguing that drug dealers should receive the same punishment as they do in Saudi Arabia – beheading. The anti-drug czar, as he is sometimes called, said that "If you ask U.S. citizens what kind of penalty they would like to see applied to those caught selling drugs to their children, most will answer that they should be both beheaded and quartered."

• José Louzeiro

Coffee vs. Cocaine

Colombia's drug war may have less to do with drugs than with a fierce struggle for power and social class.

On the one side are the old landowning oligarchies whose wealth is based on coffee; on the other is a rising cocaine bourgeoisie

By Nelson P. Valdes*

What the United States is plunging into in Colombia is arguably less a drug war than a fierce power struggle between an old coffee-based oligarchy and a rising cocaine bourgeoisie now trying to shoot its way into power and respectability.

The narco-traffickers who form the core of this new class have achieved enormous economic clout and even enjoy some social prestige. They control significant portions of the mass media, the entertainment industry, and professional sports (they own, for example, the most important soccer team in Colombia, the *Atlantico del Norte*). They also exercise influence over municipal and local governments; "own" judges, politicians and journalists; and have their interests defended by lawyers and businessmen. Like "good citizens" they build hospitals and homes for the poor and donate money to the Catholic Church.

Only one thing is denied the leading narco-traffickers and that is direct political power at the national level — the necessary instrument to make themselves respectable and their wealth legitimate.

The narco-traffickers achieved their current level of power through a blood-bath that cost the lives of 11,000 Colombians — mostly leftists. While the news media paid much attention to the recent



Coffee targets: students examine an explosion crater and a bombed-out bank

assassination of Liberal Party member Luis Carlos Galán, in fact the Liberal Party is a new target of the recent violence. Most victims of the narco-traffickers have been prominent members of the Patriotic Union (UP), a left-wing coalition that opted for electoral politics over guerrilla warfare in the early 1980s.

The reasons are not surprising. The UP had long accused both Liberal and Conservative administrations — whose leaders both came from the old oligarchies — of turning a blind eye to the drug trade. Politically isolated, coalition members were cut down by a loose coalition of narco-traffickers, right-wing death squads and the military.

The situation has changed now. The

Medellín cartel, having wiped out the electoral left as a viable political force, wants to move to center stage of national politics. But to do so the cartel must challenge the vested interests of the traditional landowning class tied to coffee exports.

Pablo Escobar, the chief of the Medellín cartel, at one point was himself a Liberal Party senator. He later broke with those interests to make himself the richest man in Latin America. Now he is determined to make a political comeback.

Less than a month ago, with the aid

* Copyright Pacific News Service (PNS). PNS contributing editor Nelson P. Valdes is a sociologist specializing in Latin America at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, in the United States.

of right-wing groups and some military personnel, the Medellín cartel launched a far-right political coalition, the National Reconstruction Movement (MORENA). MORENA's central aim is to run as many candidates as possible in the 1990 elections. With millions of dollars at the command of the drug lords, it is no wonder that the traditional Liberal and Conservative Party leaders are alarmed. The alarm was sounded by none other than Liberal Party candidate Galán just before he was murdered.

The original base of MORENA is in the Magdalena Valley, an area closely tied to the cocaine economy. At a recent rally about 5,000 supporters heard the leaders of MORENA announce they would run for 42 mayoralities as well as for legislative seats. No one dares to run against the economic resources and strong-arm tactics of such a movement.

This is the backdrop for the present confrontation. Soon after the government began seizing the properties of members of the Medellín cartel, the traffickers responded by bombing the banks owned by the National Association of Coffee Growers.

The violence is not random. Each side is trying to harm the economic inte-



Galan: assassination victim

rests of the other. Liquor stores owned by members of the traditional oligarchy or the state have been blown up, and in late August one of the most luxurious social clubs (that had denied membership to some Medellín traffickers) was attacked with grenades.

The question is where the violence will end.

On August 29, Pablo Escobar, in an interview with the Paris-based newspaper *Libération*, said the cartel was ready to negotiate its position in society or, failing that, to defend its interests by launching a civil war.

Civil wars are not new to Colombia: from 1948 to 1958 Conservatives and Liberals battled one another resulting in a million casualties. The Liberals were finally permitted to enter national politics, becoming in time part of the establishment.

It remains to be seen whether history will repeat itself. The Bogota newspaper *El Tiempo* reported on August 31 that 60 percent of Colombians surveyed believed that the Colombian government could not win a war against the drug traffickers.

Both Liberal and Conservative Parties alike are eager for the U.S. to come in to help preserve their control of national politics. But even the entry of the United States into the conflict is unlikely to change the long-term picture.

Not only in Colombia but throughout much of Latin America old oligarchies are desperately holding on to their power, unwilling to share it either with the left or with rising bourgeoisies whose wealth often comes from the drug economy.

The grim prognosis is that more civil wars – with or without U.S. intervention – may be inescapable for a good part of the region. ●

An Unholy Alliance

Aided by sectors of the armed forces and right-wing extremists, drug traffickers have adopted a far-reaching strategy to wipe out Colombia's popular movement. The aim of the alliance is to win geopolitical control of the center of the country, and to assassinate democratic leaders and all those who oppose the interests of the drug trade and the political and military front being consolidated among the regular armed forces, the drug mafia and extreme right-wing militants.

This information from Colombia's Security Police Department (DAS), partly corroborates long-standing reports from human rights organizations.

The narco-paramilitary alliance – as it was described by the DAS chief, General Miguel Maza, after emerging unscathed from a murder attempt – became possible when the groups' political interests began to converge in 1985. The front has turned the region of Magdalena Medio, traditional stamping ground of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), into an anti-communist strong-

hold. Working through the fictitious Magdalena Medio Rancher's Association (ACDEGAM), the drug mafia financed social projects to win over the local population and formed "self-defense" groups. Paid assassins and training camps with foreign instructors complete the alliance's strategy for the region.

The group has set up a network by which it can transport teams of hired hitmen to various points around the country. These have carried out a number of murders and massacres with the collaboration of military units, in what is known as the "dirty war." After "purifying" several areas of the country by blood and fire, and either taking over the lands abandoned by fearful countryfolk or exacting their support, the "bosses" decided to launch the National Restoration Movement (MORENA).

President Virgilio Barco Vargas took steps to prevent MORENA from acting publicly, after warnings from security services of the dangers that would otherwise ensue. Meanwhile, the anti-drug response provoked by the assassination of liberal presidential candidate, Luis Carlos Galán, has reached into this area which, until recently, was considered impenetrable.

J.L.



Decade of Disaster

El Salvador has "developed backwards" in the 1980s — a decade marked by civil war, death squads, refugees and U.S. intervention

By Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag*

From a makeshift hut overlooking El Salvador's largest cemetery, Gloria Marina Cortez looked out on her bleak future. She had been driven from her rural village in the south by army attacks. Now, the same army had picked her oldest son off the street on his way to work, and Gloria was left to make her way from one army garrison to another, hoping that the boy had been press-ganged into service and not simply "disappeared."

For Gloria and her neighbors, like nearly two million other Salvadoran refugees, the years of civil war and failed U.S. policy that have torn El Salvador apart have been a decade of flight.

Today, over 1.6 million Salvadorans — more than a quarter of the country's citizens — have abandoned their homes, fleeing the U.S.-backed counterinsurgency war, political repression, and grinding poverty. Less than five million Salvadorans are left in the country itself, the smallest and most densely populated nation in Central America. Of these, about 600,000 are "internally displaced," driven from their home villages and rural hamlets. Many have resettled in shantytowns like Gloria's in the capital, sheltering their families in cardboard shacks that line railroad tracks and sewage ditches.

But a growing number have fled the country altogether. An estimated one million Salvadoran refugees live in the United States alone, where many are "undocumented" aliens, subject to

arrest and deportation by U.S. immigration authorities.

The irony is symbolic of the last decade of Washington's confused and tragic policy: as the war directed by the U.S. Army drives the poor out of El Salvador, U.S. immigration forces try to pick them up at the border and send them back.

The social catastrophe wrought by this policy goes far beyond the refugees. Some 70,000 people have been killed in the 10-year war, most of them civilians. Thousands more have "disappeared," largely at the hands of death squads run by military officers and leaders of the ultra-right National Republican Alliance (ARENA) party.

And now ARENA, the party of the death squads, has come to power,

* Copyright Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First).

winning elections that the United States designed to make El Salvador more democratic.

The roots of crisis – Rebellions of hungry peasants, or *campesinos*, against the ruling elite have been endemic to El Salvador. In 1932 an uprising led by *campesinos* forced from their lands by coffee barons – symbolically known as the “14 families” – was brutally suppressed with the massacre of 30,000 civilians. The further development of export crops such as coffee, cotton, and sugar in the 1950s and 1960s concentrated land ownership even more, and led to a new round of forced evictions. By 1975, 40 percent of *campesino* families were left with no land at all; six families owned more land than 133,000 farmers. By the end of the 1970s, another rebellion was in the making. A broad “popular movement” of *campesinos*, urban workers, students, women, church people, and the unemployed was challenging the oligarchy and the government with militant demands for justice.

Until the 1970s El Salvador had been largely ignored by Washington. It had few natural resources to catch the eye of U.S. entrepreneurs, and its location gave it little strategic importance. While the U.S. Marines mounted a series of invasions in nearby Nicaragua, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the United Fruit Company overthrew a democratic government in neighboring Guatemala, El Salvador languished as a backwater of U.S. foreign policy.

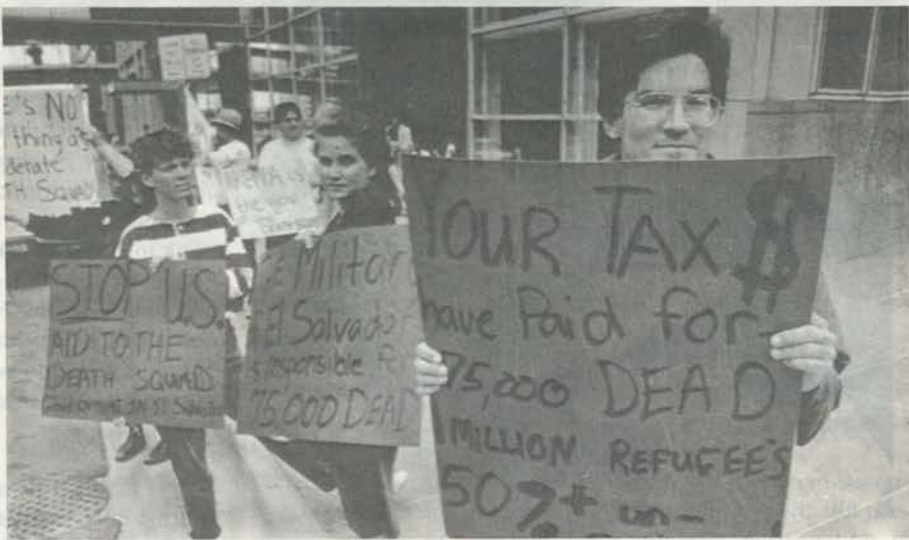
In 1980, however, Ronald Reagan came to power alarmed by the recent triumph of revolutionary movements in Nicaragua and the Caribbean nation of Grenada. In response, it promised to “draw the line against communism in our own backyard.” A Salvadoran rebel army, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) had grown out of the protest movements of earlier years and had just begun its armed struggle in earnest. It was poorly armed and internally divided. The administration thought that defeating the guerrillas would be, in the worlds of a former official, like “rolling a drunk,” and U.S.

intervention in El Salvador leapt into full swing.

U.S. military advisors were dispatched to retrain the army and direct the war effort. The Salvadoran military soon tripled in size, from 16,000 in 1980 to more than 55,000 troops five years later. An air force was created from virtually nothing, and equipped with more than 50 Vietnam War-vintage “Huey” helicopters. Elite counterinsurgency battalions were sent to the United States for training at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Meanwhile, vigilante death squads closely linked to the Salvadoran Armed Forces launched a wave of political as-

mism was in step with the U.S. program. Under U.S. pressure, El Salvador's banking system and foreign trade were nationalized, and a limited land reform was begun. The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) opened a huge mission to distribute the rain of dollars that flowed into the country.

Each year the aid escalated. What began with less than US\$ 100 million a year in the early 1980s topped US\$ 800 million a year by the end of the decade. Yet all three elements in Washington's policy – the counterinsurgency war, the economic reforms, and the Duarte gov-



Deadly help: U.S. citizens protest aid to El Salvador

sassinations against the urban popular movement, killing as many as 200 people a week in the early 1980s.

At the same time, the United States was attempting to reform the lopsided economy and curtail the power of the landed elite in order to win the population away from the guerrillas. Jose Napoleon Duarte and his Christian Democratic Party were brought to power, first in 1980 through a deal U.S. diplomats brokered with the army, and again in 1984 through elections in which the CIA supplied the Duarte campaign with millions of dollars. Duarte's party was equally disliked by both the popular movement and the oligarchy, which was adamantly opposed to even cosmetic reforms, but its anti-communist refor-

ernment – have ended up in catastrophe.

Policy failure on all fronts – Each escalation of the war by the Salvadoran military has been successfully countered by the FMLN, which has outmaneuvered the army by using tactics based on its close links with a population that sees the government soldiers as goons of the landlords. The independent opposition groups that eventually joined forces to form the FMLN were originally based in San Salvador and other urban areas. When they were practically decimated by paramilitary death squads, many unionists, teachers, students, and others left the cities and set up rural “zones of control” in which they built up a rebel army. Washington sent helicopters and

planes to bombard these rural strongholds, but the rebels dispersed throughout the country in units too small for the air force to track. Then, as the firepower of the army was steadily increased, the rebels countered with the large-scale use of homemade mines which had devastating results throughout the countryside.

As the war has escalated it also became more bitter. When the army mushroomed in size, the guerrillas began a relentless sabotage campaign that kept government soldiers tied down defending economic targets. And when the

government tried to supplement its forces by organizing paramilitary "civil defense" squads out of local mayors' offices, the rebels demanded that the mayors resign and began assassinating those who refused.

The escalation of the war wreaked havoc on Salvadoran society. The death squads and the bombing started the flood of refugees. Then the tripling of the size of the military took thousands of able-bodied young men from productive work, with boys as young as 14 abducted from street corners and bus stops. Salvadoran families have been

shattered: single women head most households, and these underpaid or unemployed women often cannot feed their children.

Added to the terrible human toll is the looming ecological crisis. With over 97 percent of the land deforested, the military continues to burn and defoliate the countryside. Over 3,000 tons of U.S.-made bombs have been dropped leaving huge craters and setting off devastating fires.

Washington's economic program for El Salvador has fared no better than its war. Today's income levels have sunk to



Brutal Bob

Roberto D'Aubuisson is a legendary figure in El Salvador's recent - and brutal - history. Among other things he's been a death squad leader, the mastermind behind the 1980 assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and now he's the power-behind-the-throne in the administration of President Alfredo Cristiani. The charismatic chieftain of the National Republican Alliance (ARENA) party is a former member of the officer corps of the El Salvadoran Armed Forces and many still call him "the Major."

His political style earned him celluloid immortality in Oliver Stone's film *Salvador*. He is still in the spotlight, always at center stage during ARENA rallies - including Cristiani's inauguration last June. D'Aubuisson had to give the "calm down" sign before his foot-stamping, cheering followers would let the new president give his inauguration address.

His ideas appeal to many on the Salvadoran right. His current of right-wing nationalism runs diametrically op-

posed to the trend toward a politically negotiated solution to the conflict in his country.

Do you think the talks in Mexico are the start of a negotiated solution between the ARENA government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)?

I'm really pleased that the Farabundo Martí is interested. This confirms for us that now there's no support from any socialist country for these groups that have taken up arms in order to take power. It was with this in mind that President Cristiani offered a national proposal for peace and liberty to the Farabundo Martí in his campaign. And now a peace commission has been formed that will hold an ongoing dialogue with the Farabundo Martí. Dialogue has been held with other forces, that's to say with the political and union forces.

The dialogue between the Sandinista government and the contras in Nicaragua is an example for many outside the region. Is it conceivable that there be a similar dialogue between the Salvadoran government, ARENA, and the FMLN?

I only want to leave them with one thought: the contras are fighting for democracy and liberty in Nicaragua, whereas the Farabundos carry out their terrorism in order to impose a totalitarian plan, to break down democracy. I tell them this because it's inconceivable that they would want to compare the contras in Nicaragua to the Farabundos.

However, as the ARENA party, we proposed that the contras have an option, that they store their arms - not surrender them, but store them with the United Nations forces, the "Blue Helmets." And if Nicaraguan President (Daniel) Ortega, the good Marxist that he is, doesn't comply, they could regroup, get their weapons, and continue applying armed pressure. In the same way, we offered that the Farabundos store their arms, with a Sandinista commission if they like, and that they begin to fit themselves into what President Cristiani is offering.

*Leo Gabriel**

* APIA. This interview was first published in the Nicaraguan daily "El Nuevo Diario."

those of 1960. In other words, during a decade in which the United States had provided more than US\$3 billion in aid for El Salvador – approximately one million dollars each day – the country has “developed backwards” by 30 years.

Even the limited land reform was halted in midstream. Due to violent opposition from landowners, the reform cooperatives were denied access to adequate credit, seed and fertilizer, and most are now bankrupt. The combination of government corruption, capital flight, and rebel sabotage has brought the economy to the point of collapse. One-third of the workforce is unemployed, and another 40 percent have no steady work, leaving less than three out of 10 Salvadoran workers with a regular income. Ninety-six percent of the rural population lives at or below the absolute poverty line. The real wage has declined throughout the 1980s, and today amounts to only 92 U.S. cents a day for urban workers, and 52 U.S. cents for those in the countryside.

Washington’s political project – the Duarte government – has also backfired. Unable to move the economy forward or defeat the guerrillas of the FMLN, the Duarte government came to rely on rampant corruption as its principal tool for maintaining the allegiance of its supporters. As the main conduit for the billions of dollars arriving from Washington, it had plenty of money to pass around. But finally this largesse became its downfall when, in 1987, Duarte’s party split in an internal power struggle over division of the loot.

Local movements strengthened – In contrast to the failed U.S. policies, those social and political forces with real roots in Salvadoran society – on both the left and the right – have grown and consolidated amidst the chaos of Washington’s “counterinsurgency with reform.”

While the rebels of the FMLN have adapted their military tactics to meet the government’s increased war efforts, the unarmed poor have also adapted to difficult and challenging circumstances. After bombardment from the air force caused many to flee to neighboring Honduras, the refugees organized, demanding the right to return to their



Student protest: popular movements have grown, as has the right

homes. By attracting international attention to their plight, they have spearheaded a movement to repatriate war refugees to their places of origin. Those who fled to the shantytowns of the cities, on the other hand, have begun to organize there, demanding access to land, water, and electricity. At the same time, many grassroots organizations have become increasingly open in their support for the guerrillas, and militant in their criticism of the government. And El Salvador’s union movement, after being driven underground by death-squad repression in the early 1980s, reappeared in 1985 and has now attained a powerful presence in the capital, carrying out strikes and political activities in defiance of the army.

The oligarchy, too, has held its own. When Washington pushed its leaders aside in 1980 to install the Duarte government, the Salvadoran far right organized the ARENA party in order to fight back on a political footing. As Washington’s programs failed to rescue the economy and the war dragged on, ARENA consolidated its support among

the business community and began to build a base using the paramilitary vigilante networks established by previous military regimes.

With the split of the Christian Democrats in 1987, and with the left still prevented from effective participation in electoral politics – both direct consequences of U.S. policy – the way was cleared for the oligarchs to return to power. Roberto D’Aubuisson, the notorious death-squad leader and ARENA founder, took a behind-the-scenes role while a “moderate,” English-speaking businessman, Alfredo Cristiani, became the public front man.

Amidst an electoral mobilization campaign unprecedented in El Salvador’s history, with Cristiani as candidate, ARENA won the presidency in March 1989. As the voting drew to a close, hundreds of rich teenagers poured into the streets to celebrate the victory of the neo-fascists. Decked out in Reebok sneakers, Bermuda shorts, and designer sunglasses, the victorious children of the oligarchy approached U.S. journalists shouting, “Gringos Go To Hell!”

The FMLN's Side



Commander Leonel González is one of five members of the General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), El Salvador's leftist guerrillas. In this interview, he comments on the peace talks that his organization is conducting with the country's right-wing government.

What do you think of President Alfredo Cristiani's recent speech before the United Nations in which he put forward a proposal for a total end to hostilities?

Leonel Gonzalez

Cristiani's speech, as everyone has recognized, is demagogic and shows a lack of sincerity, a lack of political will to bring peace and democracy to El Salvador. Everyone was waiting for a clear response to the proposal the FMLN made in Mexico, but he didn't even mention it. This is a bad sign. It shows he doesn't want to make a mutual agreement, but to impose one.

It confirms that Cristiani doesn't even want peace and that it is a lie that they're working in the spirit of the Esquipulas II, Costa del Sol, and Tela agreements in which the Central American presidents expressed the need for the government and FMLN to come to an agreement.

Do you think the army would accept a total end to the hostilities?

All the High Command is capable of accepting is a uni-

lateral end to hostilities. They're afraid of reaching a mutual agreement since our forces are now established in 12 of the country's 14 departments. This agreement would mean respecting our presence in these areas. Like we stated in our September 11 proposal: let's have full guarantees on both sides.

By calling for a unilateral end to hostilities, they are searching for a military advantage. They would deploy their forces deep into our zones in order to show they have military control. But this will bring us back to a very difficult situation since any force that enters our zone must be opposed. So this measure would mean prolongation of the war.

What conditions would the FMLN demand for an end to hostilities?

We propose not just a cease-fire but also the incorporation of the FMLN into political life, the beginning of an electoral debate, and the search, via the vote, for what the people would decide to be the way forward.

One proposal we presented has had acceptance nationally and internationally because it's seen as a good draft of a way towards constructing a negotiated solution. What the people and the international community are demanding of Cristiani and the High Command is that they find the political will to end this conflict.

How do FMLN military operations and the decision to initiate sabotage fit into the negotiation process?

Like I said, in Mexico we presented our proposal to end all actions and get involved as a political party. To date, the government has given us no response. On the contrary, it has shown little will to make a mutual agreement. Our political-military action is justified now more than ever, because we've put it in terms of the entire nation's hope to attain peace.

* Cries/Pesamiento Propio English Special Services. This interview was conducted by SALPRESS and first published in the Nicaraguan newspaper "Barricada."

The FMLN, for its part, welcomed ARENA to power with a nationwide military offensive, vowing to make the country "ungovernable" for the ultra-right. A decade of U.S. policy in El Salvador was at a dead end.

U.S. policy at a crossroads — With ARENA now in power El Salvador seems poised on the edge of an even more brutal round of violence. Many ARENA leaders were key figures in the death-squad rampages of the early 1980s. And there are indications that if opposition groups mount a serious challenge to the regime, the ultra-right may be prepared to repeat a bloody wave of murders again.

Several union leaders were arrested on charges of "subversion" shortly after ARENA took office in June 1989. The office of the organization coordinating the efforts of refugees to return home was surrounded by government troops and all its occupants seized. In urban neighborhoods, state-sponsored vigilante groups are being installed. More victims of death squads have appeared, their mutilated bodies dumped by the side of roads. And the ARENA-controlled legislature prepared sweeping anti-terrorist laws to give legal backing to the Gestapo-like tactics being used.

The rebels, meanwhile, have been growing stronger than ever, predicting an insurrection that would sweep the

ARENA government from power. In 1983, Salvadoran army officers estimated that without U.S. aid they could sustain the pace of the war against the guerrillas for up to half a year. Today they estimate they could maintain their level of operations for four weeks. Analysts of all political persuasions agree that a commitment of hundreds of millions of U.S. tax dollars each year for many years to come will be required to keep the government from falling to the rebellion.

Fearing an escalation of the war and political violence that has already claimed 70,000 lives, many sectors of Salvadoran society see a negotiated settlement as the only viable option. In



New victims: a mother posts a notice of her disappeared daughter (left) and imprisoned labor union members

1988, the Catholic Church sponsored a "National Debate" on the conflict. Fifty-nine organizations participated, ranging from the country's churches to human rights groups, universities, and rural co-operatives. Included were groups clearly

sympathetic to the rebels and those who had previously supported the government. The National Debate coalition concluded with an urgent call for a negotiated solution to the conflict, and has since held several large marches and

demonstrations to press for peace.

The rebels themselves appear concerned over the prospect of war without end in El Salvador, and have endorsed the positions of the National Debate. They have offered a series of peace proposals, calling for the formation of a "government of broad participation," in which all political groupings willing to participate would seek a program of "national consensus."

The U.S. administration of President George Bush rejected the rebel peace overtures, and continues to argue that the rebels have no popular support and that the proposals are ruses obscuring the rebels's real objective of seizing total power. But without U.S. insistence, neither the ARENA government nor the powerful military will consent to talk with the FMLN.

Yet a decade of failure leaves Washington with only two real options in El Salvador: pursue the war, or sit down with the FMLN. The cost of pursuing the war will be high indeed. A rebel insurrection, a wave of rightist terror, a police state, a shattered economy, severe environmental damage, thousands more killed or displaced, and an increasingly vicious war dragging on for years and years — these grim possibilities are El Salvador's only alternative to a negotiated peace. ■

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Superbarrio to the Rescue

A masked wrestler is one of Mexico's most famous and popular personalities. A staunch defender of the poor, he recently visited the United States to learn the problems facing Mexicans living there

Though nobody knows his name, he is known by everybody. Nobody has seen his face but he is one of Mexico's most famous personalities. He is Superbarrio, the masked wrestler who looks like a comic character, but who acts as a guardian of the poor.

Superbarrio thinks people should organize themselves to solve their problems. He was born in 1986 when an earthquake ravaged Mexico City and the state could not cope with the disaster. The victims had to organize themselves in order to survive.

Superbarrio often appears unexpectedly when people gather to block a street to demand traffic lights, or joins in demonstrations calling for improvements in transportation services. His presence fires the young, cheers adults, and invariably attracts larger crowds.

Superbarrio is not a political party, nor a leader, nor an organization. He is a new phenomenon in an exploding city whose population already tops 18 million. His fame spread quickly from the neighborhoods to envelop the city, then through the country and now abroad.

Recently, Superbarrio visited the United States, where he met with illegal immigrants, Chicano organizations, workers and students. On his return, Superbarrio announced that he would take the case of illegal Mexican workers in the United States to the Mexican Congress.

This interview was conducted upon Superbarrio's return from the U.S.

You became a real Superhero in the very land of Superman. You arrived, witnessed and headed demonstrations, interceded on behalf of the poor and got some promises from authorities. But what will happen to the Mexican immigrants now that you have left? Will they wait for Super-



barrio to return?

No. My visit was good for them because they widened their scope of action and their organizational capacity. More people got to know about their predicament. In Arvin, an agricultural world power, there are Mixtecos (from the Mixteca region in the state of Oaxaca) who live under bridges. The local mayor promised to develop a housing program for them. The Mixtecos did not protest for fear of being deported, but now they are going to be more critical.

What questions did people ask you in the United States?

The recurrent question was: why do I wear a mask, why do I hide my face. It was difficult for them to understand that the struggle is collective, not individual. It isn't me who got the things, but the struggle of thousands of Mexicans whose collective face is a mask, not the face of a person, of a leader. Superman is individualist, he doesn't wear a mask.

It's a different culture. Ours is rooted in anonymous fighters, theirs promotes individualism, the self-made man, to be the best. But the real strength lies in grassroots organization, where everyone is the main character. Superbarrio symbolizes the collective struggle.

Some children asked me to exhibit my superpowers and my muscles, and to fly. I told them about the Coronado Island bridge, which was built because the whole town organized, since one person couldn't have done it. Then a child stood up and said, "It's true, there is strength in unity."

Did they see Superbarrio as a disruptive factor in Mexico?

* Third World Network Features. This interview first appeared in the Mexican magazine *La Otra Cara de Mexico* (The Other Face of Mexico), a bimonthly publication put out with the collaboration of Mexican grassroots organizations and foreign correspondents.

No. They viewed me as a superhero who protects the poor. I didn't get mixed up in politics, and I didn't go as a political leader. Maybe if I had interfered they would have deported me on the spot when I was detained, because Yankees don't like those who stir up people.

How would you sum up the condition of the Latin Americans in the U.S.?

It's the same wretched life as that in Mexico.

What are the similarities?

There are no houses, rents are extremely high, evictions are frequent, those who lack a permanent job live huddled up or in the streets, there is unemployment. Many people stand in the streets offering to work, just like those in front of the Mexico City Cathedral. To make matters worse, Mexicans are victims of police abuse and racism, and U.S. authorities are not easily moved by their troubles.

Do they eat well?

They eat sheer rubbish, although they try to maintain the tradition of Mexican food.

What do you think of the people and the

society of the U.S.?

I saw a lot of anguish among Yankees, because there is mounting violence and high drug consumption. People are not communicative and live in isolation; they just mind their own businesses. They tend to reject Latin, Asian and black people. All of them may be dying of contaminated water but they don't want to recognize it, even if their children are affected.

Are the immigrants interested in what is happening in Mexico?

Yes. Most Mexicans keep in touch with their families, though they aren't much interested in political problems. Besides, Univision, that is to say Televisa (the Mexican private television monopoly), is the only thing they receive in southern California. So they asked us to tell the truth about the Mexican, mainly political, situation. As for the (North) Americans, they think that Mexico is a mess, a place that lacks order, peace or security.

Is there arbitrary behavior and abuse by police on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border?

Yes. The two police forces operate jointly. Two days after my arrival there



Superbarrio: "strength in unity"

was a coordinated action of the Tijuana (Mexico) police and the *migra* (officers of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service). Usually at 6 p.m. flocks of people start to cross the border toward the U.S. That day, around 3 p.m., the Mexican police surrounded a group of people, who ran to the U.S. frontier. They preferred the Yankees because the Mexicans are worse: the *migra* deport you and if you protest they beat you and can even kill you; but the Mexican police always beat you for no reason and steal your money.

An article appeared in Mexico which stated that the police removed your mask when you were arrested. It's the first time, isn't it?

It isn't true that my mask was taken off. I refused to allow it. It's true that they got angry when I told them that my name was Superbarrio Gomez. They told me, "Well, you are going to show us a passport with the name Superbarrio Gomez." At last I gave them my real personal details. But the best thing was that the detention was filmed and appeared on television three hours later. They put me in jail but soon they had to let me go because it had become a public scandal.



Superbarrio's majority: some of Mexico City's 18 million at a bus stop

Political Murder Revisited

Renewed political violence in Guatemala is stirring fears that once again the country could drown in a bloodbath of civil war and military repression

By Mary Jo McConahay*

A wave of political violence that has hit Guatemala in recent months is aimed at undermining the country's fledgling democracy, according to government officials and foreign diplomats.

Gunmen assassinated a top member of the ruling Christian Democratic Party and a prominent banker in smoothly executed daylight operations.

The tortured bodies of three "disappeared" students and one professor were discovered recently in a ditch near the university campus from where they were kidnapped a month earlier. A fourth student, snatched from downtown Tegucigalpa, Honduras, was discovered in a ravine 40 miles northeast of Guatemala City. Six other student leaders are still missing.

For many Guatemalans, who vividly remember the horrifying civil war and military repression that accounted for 100,000 lives lost in the early 1980s, the renewed violence is causing what Roman Catholic Archbishop Próspero Penados calls "a climate of anxiety, a feeling of capsizing."

Penados says petitioners come daily to his episcopal residence saying they have received threats. Many of them ask for letters from Penados to present to foreign embassies in hopes of going into exile.

The violence, which has surged since a failed coup last May, is said to be the work of right-wing extremists and military dissidents who want to destabilize the civilian government of President Vinicio Cerezo and pave the way for another military takeover.

The kidnappings and assassinations

have often been carried out by teams — sometimes as many as 12 people, according to eyewitnesses — using sophisticated weapons, communications equipment and intelligence.

Since July, more than two dozen bombs have exploded in the capital, including one at a television station, killing one man. Another explosion damaged 13 shops in a luxury mall.

Defense Minister General Hector Gramajo said "fanaticized minds" from extreme-right political parties and the business community, together with "dissidents" from the army, were mostly responsible for the violence, although he has offered no proof linking individuals to the terrorist acts.

Observers trace the beginning of the current climate of insecurity to the May 9 coup attempt against the Cerezo government.

It was the second serious attempt by elements of the military, backed by rightist civilians, to topple Cerezo in the last two years. Cerezo, a Christian Democrat, became Guatemala's first elected civilian president in two decades.

Soon after the failed coup, human-rights workers received anonymous death threats, and one office was attacked. Exiled political activists who had returned to participate in the National Dialogue, mandated by the Central

American Peace Plan, were threatened and left again.

Death threats forced editorial staffers at the investigative magazine *Por Que? (Why?)* to quit last month, the sixth media outlet to close as a result of threats in the last year and a half, according to the Guatemala-based newsletter Central America Reports.

There has also been a renewal of leftist guerrilla activity in recent weeks. In a spectacular act of sabotage at the end of August, the National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala (UNRG), an umbrella organization of four guerrilla groups, claimed responsibility for blowing up an electricity transmission tower, causing two days of blackouts, rationing and traffic tie-ups throughout the country.

Despite the guerrilla actions, government officials blame alleged rightists for most of the violence. Senior military officials say they expect terrorist acts to increase in the run-up to national elections next year.

"This is definitely the beginning of election violence," said one officer. "Certain very conservative sectors are opting to destabilize the regime."

On September 15, authorities discovered grenades and ammunitions at the

* Copyright Pacific News Service (PNS). PNS Central America editor Mary Jo McConahay is based fulltime in Guatemala City.

Student march: protesting disappearances at San Carlos University



home of Lionel Sisniega Otero, a long-time rightist political figure. An arrest order was issued for Sisniega, but he dropped out of sight a few hours before the search.

Sisniega took part in the 1954 coup engineered by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency that overthrew civilian President Jacobo Arbenz. In 1985, Sisniega ran for president, garnering less than two percent of the vote.

Two associates of Sisniega, Maximiliano Archila Pellecer and Mario Roberto Martinez Pena, were arrested recently in connection with terrorist acts. They have proclaimed their innocence.

In mid-September the U.S. State Department issued a travel advisory on Guatemala, warning tourists and businessmen to take

precautions while traveling. Taxi drivers and others who depend on the tourist trade, which had been recovering in the last two years, say business has dropped off sharply.

On the campus of the capital's University of San Carlos, where student leaders began disappearing August 21, the climate of fear is palpable.

Classes have been suspended, but students meet to protest the killings and demand safety for the disappeared. "We want them alive," reads the graffiti on the walls.

In the offices of the Associated University Students (AEU), Julio, 27, an agronomy student, said he received a phone call giving him 72 hours to leave the country or be killed.

Of 16 members of the AEU directorate, only three remain now, the others killed, disappeared, exiled or in hiding, say student activists. Julio, who has since gone into hiding, said he believed the threats came from the far right, who "have no way of arriving at power by elections, so they are sowing chaos." ●

Death Squad Resurgence

Less publicized but more extensive death squad-style killings and disappearances are occurring in the countryside

Fear is stalking the small towns of the mountain province of San Marcos, over 200 kilometers outside of Guatemala City. Tortured bodies of peasants and small merchants are appearing on the roadside, in rivers swollen from rain, in a marketplace when sellers arrive to open their stalls.

One priest hesitantly opens his door to reporters as they sit and speak so passers-by can see inside. He is being "watched" he says, and wants to give no cause for suspicion. He gives names of some victims but won't speculate about who killed them.

"There are things that are taboo to talk about," he says. "We priests don't feel secure now, even among ourselves. Distrust reaches everywhere, even into the confessional."

Information gathered on a two-day trip through several towns in the region indicate at least 27 persons were kidnapped and killed or disappeared in San Marcos between July and September, most of them in what residents now call "Black September."

"We're living in a climate of terror because one person is found killed after another, said Alvaro Ramazzini, the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Marcos.

As in several of the killings in the capital, the victims in this border area are often kidnapped first, usually by several

men armed with high-caliber weapons.

"It is a style of kidnapping usually associated with drug traffickers, or those with political aims," said Ramazzini. In the highlands north of here, poor farmers have begun growing opium poppies for Mexican middlemen who refine it into heroin.

Other sources say victims may have been suspected of giving food or other help, willingly or not, to guerrillas of the National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala (URNG) who roam the region. In some areas civilian defense patrols under army supervision are active, or have been reconstituted recently in the face of a perceived threat from guerrillas.

"There are likely some out there who see themselves as patriots who are saying we're going to take care of these things before it starts again," said a Western diplomat.

What is clear is that the life of the towns here is marked by tension that residents say reminds them of the civil war that took up to 100,000 lives in the early 1980s. Streets are abandoned after dark. Social and church group meetings are rescheduled for daytime hours, or canceled altogether.

"Things were finally beginning to get better for these people, who have been forgotten for many years," said Mayor Bernardo Chávez of Malacatan, a city of 75,000 near the Mexican border. "But it's hard to continue because there is



Sisniega Otero



Mounting body count: a murdered peasant is carried off to the morgue

one problem like this after another."

In July a friend of the mayor's, Rafael Velásquez, the president of a local Mormon Church congregation, was kidnapped by armed men as he inspected a large farm where he worked as the administrator. Two weeks later, said Chávez, a Christian Democrat, "They began bringing the bodies in here dead."

Sometimes, the bodies were nude. One had its genitals cut off. Another was shot in the head and the heart. Mayor Chávez has gone to look at his bodies, but his friend Velásquez has not been among them.

Information provided by church sources, civic and police officials and human rights advocates point to other recent cases.

On September 12, Genaro Robles, 42, his nephews and a co-worker were at work loading a truck with rocks near the town of Tejutla when six armed men in civilian clothing forced them into a car. Two days later Genaro Robles' body was found in a nearby town.

In another town on the same day the bodies of Gustavo Amilcar Robles, 22, Gregorio Leonel Robles, 19, and the co-worker Juan Bautista Ovalle, 23, were discovered. Their eyes were gouged out, and other facial features were mutilated. Family members identified them by the clothes they wore.

Also in mid-September, two armed men came to the home of a 41-year-old coffee buyer in the hamlet of Tokache at 6:30 p.m., asked for him by name, and killed him on his front porch in front of his five children. They said nothing more, but cut off an ear and a finger from their victim. Sources asked that the victim's name and other details of the case not be disclosed for fear of possible reprisals against the family.

On September 20, the 60-year-old mother of Catarino Enríquez Juárez

Pérez, 27, reported to priests that six armed men broke into their house at 4 a.m. in the remote hamlet El Marray and carried her son away. He has not been seen or heard from since.

As afternoon clouds rolled into San Carlos one day last week, 28-year-old human rights worker Milhen Chávez (no relation to the Malacatan mayor) walked into his tiny office of the non-governmental Center for Investigation, Study and Promotion of Human Rights (CIEPRODH), which he opened recently.

Chávez was visibly shaken. He said a blue car with darkened windows had followed him that morning as he drove his pickup truck on an errand in town, then along a circuitous route home, where it parked outside.

That night, Chávez, who earlier this month had taken down a report from Robles' brother accusing the army of complicity in the case, said a leader of the local students union had warned of a death threat directed against Chávez.

By late September, Chávez was in hiding in Guatemala City. Four armed men had arrived at his office to threaten him, he said, and he decided not to wait for another visit.

The sign outside the CIEPRODH office has been taken down. The owner of the building told Chávez he was afraid the building would be machinegunned from the street if the sign were left up.

Churches in San Marcos have begun a "prayer campaign" until Christmas "to do something at a spiritual level, because the insecurity is terrible," said Ramazzini. He spoke of the prayer campaign as if it were a last resort.

"What can we do? What can we counsel?" said the bishop. "All this is so diabolical. How is it possible to kill people like this?"

Mary Jo McConahay

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Passive Resistance

For the first time Guatemalan peasants are refusing to participate in the army's "self defense" patrols, long a key part of its counterinsurgency armor. Armed with copies of Guatemala's recently promulgated constitution, they have begun asserting their civil rights

In Central America, the term "Guatemala solution" stands for a stark two-step method of combating guerrilla insurgencies: kill those suspected of sympathizing with the left, and put those who remain to work policing themselves.

That was how the Guatemala military smashed the civil war that raged here in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The scorched-earth tactics left tens of thousands dead, and wiped out an estimated 400 hamlets.

No one can bring back the dead, but a growing movement of peasants is challenging the second step of the "Guatemala solution." They are deserting the army's network of civilian paramilitary patrols.

In recent months at least 7,000 Indians in 200 communities have refused to continue the unpaid service. Hundreds of thousands remain, but the military senses a crack in its counterinsurgency armor. The army is responding with a media blitz, as well as visits by civic affairs teams who promise improvements to villages which continue patrol service. More darkly, peasants interviewed in the provincial capital of Quiché claim the army is also responding with threats against those who won't serve.

"Anyone who doesn't want the patrols is painted red," says Jose Morales, 30.

The farmers' challenge takes the

form of passive resistance: after seven years or more, they are quietly laying down the antiquated carbines and sharpened sticks they carried as weapons. For moral support, they carry copies of the constitution promulgated under democratically elected President Vinicio Cerezo in 1986, which declares the patrols must be "voluntary." But Cerezo, the first civilian to head the government after 16 years of military dictatorships, has been unable or unwilling to confront the army.

"The army arrives in the community, they put a weapon right in front of you and say, 'Are you going to patrol or not? If you don't, it is because you're a guerrilla,'" says a 22-year-old farmer who did not want his name used.

In July 1988, Amilcar Mendez, a teacher at a local elementary school and one-time labor organizer, founded a human rights advocacy group to push for disbanding the patrols. The *Runujel Junam* ("Everyone Is Equal" in the Quiche Indian language) Council of Ethnic Communities, known by its Spanish acronym CERJ, functions as a primitive rural legal aid office. Semiliterate peasants gather on the porch, pouring over personal copies of the constitution provided by CERJ, discussing sections they have underlined: "Liberty of Action,"

"Inviolability of the Home."

CERJ has paid a high price for its one-year existence. One member was shot dead by unidentified gunmen, another kidnapped and disappeared. In April, soldiers kidnapped four members as they slept on a coffee farm and they have disappeared.

Manuel Mejía, 28, a farmer and vice-president of CERJ, says he and fellow villager Antonio Quechon were threatened by military commissioners, civilians who work for the army. Quechon is in hiding.

Jose Morales says National Police "shot up houses" in his village of Churruales de Solola on June 20, and later searched homes at night looking for individuals who refused to serve.

Last May, when four soldiers captured two ex-patrollers from the village of Chichicastenango, some 60 neighbors converged on the local garrison to demand their return, recalls Sebastian Velásquez Mejía, 37. "We made an agreement when we decided to get out of the patrol that we would do what was needed if they captured any one of us," he says.

By dropping out of the "self-defense" units, the peasants are striking at the heart of the military's control over thousands of tiny villages.

"The patrols had a devastating effect on the guerrillas," says a western diplomat. Now "they are the eyes and ears of the army in the countryside."

Peasants say they believe the patrols are now meant to control them more than guerrillas. In this region of pine-covered forests the shooting war has been quiet for years.

Growing unemployment and inflation fuel the resistance movement. Land is so scarce that many highland Indians travel for weeks at a time to the southern coast to farm available parcels or hire out as cotton pickers earning about US\$1.30 a day. When they return they must pay US\$2.50 for each day of patrolling they missed.

Jose Set, from the hamlet of Quiajel, says that he and 25 fellow villagers left their civil patrol last October because they were "tired" of being required to carry wood for the local army post, and to provide construction materials for its guardhouses.

"We never thought about leaving before, because when the army started our patrol in 1981 they said they'd shoot us if we did," says Set.

Today, however, Set carries a pocket-sized copy of the constitution along with his pocket edition of the New Testament. He says he has quoted the constitution to army officials, but they in turn have begun investigating him as a suspect subversive.

"Patrols are forced servitude, imposed by the army, required under the rain and the sun, and discriminatory — they only included Indians," says Mendez.

A year of tension and death threats have taken a personal toll on Mendez: he looks gaunt, and goes out in public now only accompanied by international volunteers who act as a human shield.

"Sometimes I feel like I've got one foot on solid ground and the other over an abyss," he says.

Recently, in the yard adjoining his simple house, Mendez gave advice to some 80 men and a few women on how to deal with harassment: "Look for the color of the vehicle, get the license numbers, remember the color of their clothes," he said. ●

A civilian patrol reports in: some are refusing to serve



* Copyright Pacific News Service (PNS)



President de Klerk meets with black leader Bishop Desmond Tutu

Jockeying for Negotiating Positions

Recent moves are part of a process that started years ago

The recent initiatives by the South African government are the latest in a long series of moves, with both sides seeking to control the setting for negotiations.

Some observers date the onset of a rush to negotiate from the election of National Party President F.W. de Klerk, but strategies have been unfolding for at least two years. The October 15 release of eight long-term political prisoners fits into this context. As one analyst put it, "The chess game remains the same as ever. We have just progressed momentarily from the slow pace of normal

play to a period of moves governed by a five-minute clock".

On one side are the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) - led by the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) - and the banned African National Congress (ANC). On the other is the de Klerk government, pulling along a nervous coalition of middle class Afrikaners and recent immigrants while being pushed by a small but powerful multinational corporate elite.

Despite the rhetoric, neither side believes the other's pledges to negotiate

for a democratic and free South Africa.

The regime thinks the ANC intends to engage officials in an exhausting set of procedures, drawing attention away from its so-called four pillars of struggle: mass mobilization, armed struggle, development of an internal underground and the international isolation of South Africa through sanctions and diplomatic activity.

Elements within the ANC/MDM alliance distrust de Klerk. They see the apparent shift from former President P.W. Botha's hard-line stand as a ploy to convince Pretoria's conservative international allies that change is imminent. The aim is to stave off increasingly effective sanctions, particularly financial restrictions, while taking the "global high ground" to make opposition forces accept its negotiating terms. They want to put the democratic alliance in the position of having to reject negotiations.

Both sides are mobilizing support nationally and internationally. The ANC, with the approval of the UDF and COSATU, has embarked on a program to take their case to world leaders and garner international diplomatic support.

This "talks tactic" has been deployed since 1985 in an effort to unify as many representative South African organizations as possible while winning over or neutralizing potential adversaries. Outside analysts say that this tactic has been one of the most successful mounted by the movement during the 1980s.

More recently there has been a concerted effort to form a united front on the preconditions for negotiations. Starting from a 1987 ANC document on negotiations, anti-apartheid leaders have expanded the list into a serious set of preconditions.

Feverish diplomatic activity has achieved endorsements for the preconditions by the nations making up the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Meanwhile, the Pretoria government's steps toward negotiations accelerate as the apartheid economy continues to deteriorate and the repressive state of emergency and attempts to win over conservative black petty capitalists prove ineffective.

Last year the state hatched an auste-



ANC rally: the "talks tactic" is one of the banned group's successes

erity program that called for sale of public corporations, across-the-board cuts in certain government departments, and the de-escalation of destabilization efforts in Southern Africa, the latter keyed to a pullout from Angola.

Key sectors of the National Party, the Afrikaner intellectual elite and their lib-

eral private sector allies started softening up their followers for negotiations with a campaign that included articles and editorials in a leading pro-National Party newspaper.

The July 1989 meeting between Botha and Nelson Mandela signaled the launching of the strategy. When de

Klerk took the reins of the National Party, he sought alliances for his negotiation strategy. He met with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkhata, consisting of ethnic Zulus, the conservative National Forum, and a string of Bantustan leaders.

Without responding to the progressive stipulations, de Klerk started to outline his own preconditions. Democratic observers say the steps are designed to mimic the ANC/MDM preconditions. Internationally, he hopes to create the appearance of rapid change so that Pretoria's conservative allies will be able to stem the sanction tide.

Timing is crucial for de Klerk. By the first quarter of 1990, he must finish negotiating the roll-over of the foreign commercial debt of over US\$14 billion. He is hoping the current moves will reduce the bankers' willingness to listen to anti-apartheid lobbyists.

Many in South Africa expect prisoner releases, the legalization of banned organizations, and the dismantling of portions of the state of emergency restrictions by mid-1990.

This will allow de Klerk to challenge the ANC/MDM leadership to negotiate. One hope in his ranks is that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will sponsor an attempt at a settlement along the lines of the Lancaster House accord for Zimbabwean independence which bound the government to provide guarantees for the private sector and so-called minority rights.

In the face of this strategy, progressive forces are bent on maintaining unity and using diplomacy to rally support for their preconditions, giving them the political capital to be able to reject any ploy which would put Pretoria in the driver's seat.

Right now, the most probable outcome is a stalemate. The government does not trust the progressive forces and is seeking to use them as a foil while playing to the international gallery. The ANC/MDM alliance believes the government is illegitimate because it seized power from a majority denied the vote, and that it must relinquish control before a proper climate for negotiations can be established.

A/A



Pawns and players: ex-prisoners Walter Sisulu (left) and Oscar Mpetha

Barren Region

Thousands are threatened with famine and death in the region around the town of Sokota. Relief efforts are complicated by the country's civil war

By Alfred Taban*

Starvation threatens the 80,000 inhabitants of the ancient town of Sokota and a large surrounding area. Sokota is one of the main towns in Wollo province of central Ethiopia. Since the highly publicized drought of 1972-73, in which at least 200,000 people died in Wollo, Gondar and Tigray provinces, there has been little improvement in Gondar or Wollo, despite heavy rains last year.

There have been intermittent droughts since 1973, the latest from 1985 to 1987. Many people and most animals perished. Since almost all cultivation in these provinces is done by oxen, the shortage of oxen makes it difficult to plough fields.

The few families who own oxen could not take advantage of last year's heavy rains because of a lack of suitable ploughs. "Although the place is fertile it is rocky and requires steel ploughs," says Zerihune Demesse, the chairman of the Ethiopian Relief Organization (ERO), the relief arm of the Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement (EPDM).

The people of the area, over 90 percent of whom depend on cultivation for their livelihood, have only wooden ploughs. There is also an acute shortage of seeds, as well as sickles and other farm implements.

Last year's rains were so heavy that they washed away most of the fertile



Wheeling in for aid: little improvement since the 1972-73 drought

topsoil on the high ground, and flooded the lowland areas. This made cultivation either impossible or reduced yields.

One million of the 2.5 million people living in areas controlled by the EPDM are now experiencing an acute shortage of food and need aid. To prevent mass starvation and deaths, at least 150,000 metric tons of relief food over a six-month period, or four million Ethiopian birr (about US\$2 million) to purchase food. Several people have already died of hunger.

The most serious handicap to any major relief operation in the area is lack of transport. Sokota is only about 600 kilometers from the capital Addis Ababa and only 100 kilometers from Desa, the capital of Wollo province. But those two cities are in areas held by the Ethiopian government while Sokota is held by the EPDM. There is no contact between them.

Most areas in Wollo province can be reached only on foot because of mountains which make this one of the most hostile terrains in the world. Sokota itself is accessible only to small vehicles which must travel through narrow mountain passes barely resembling roads.

For the residents of Sokota, lack of communication with the outside presents a serious problem. The townspeople depended almost entirely on trade for their livelihood. Merchants used to come from as far as Eritrea to the north to buy and sell commodities. Now business has almost dried up because of the war. Sudan is too far away, and to travel there traders have to pass through more war zones.

Almost all basic commodities are thus in short supply at Sokota. There

are only three salaried people in the town: the local priest and two medical workers. The health workers earn 80 birr (US\$40) a month and are paid by the local government council. The priest does not say how he gets his money.

There are only two clinics for the 2.5 million people in the Wollo and Gondar areas. There is no doctor or trained medical assistant. One of the two clinics is in Sokota, but it has no drugs. Disease is rampant. Several people are reported to have died of meningitis this year. Malaria, diarrhea and typhoid fever are also very common, say town residents.

Although Wollo province is one of the most mountainous areas in Ethiopia, there are few running streams. Sokota and all the other areas in the hands of the EPDM are suffering from an acute shortage of water. A shortage of soap complicates hygiene problems.

The town's school buildings stand empty, students having fled at the start of hostilities in the province. Now, the only school is a primary school, with 200 pupils, in the town of Belasa in Gondar province.

Two years ago there was electricity but the only generator broke down and has not been repaired. Hotels are empty, as there are no visitors, and half the houses are empty because the owners have either fled to Sudan or to government-held areas. Very few stores are open because they have little to sell.

The hunger and lack of services in Sokota have been compounded by uncertainty. "You have to remember that this is a contested area. Today we are in control here but tomorrow nobody knows. This hampers the development of social services," said one EPDM commander.

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Drugs and Politics

In cracking down on Pakistan's drug mafias, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is taking a heavy political gamble. Her hold on power was already tenuous. Now the opposition claims that the drug arrests are politically motivated

*By Ahmed Rashid**

Drugs, politics and tribalism are a lethal cocktail for any Third World leader, as Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is discovering. Her U.S.-backed crackdown on Pakistan's drug mafias has become closely linked to the political survival of her young government.

Pakistan will export nearly 200 tons of heroin to the West this year – 60 percent of the West's total supply. It also serves as the main gateway for the 400-500 tons of heroin which originate in war-torn Afghanistan.

Bhutto's crackdown began with the indictment in early August of Hajji Iqbal Beg, 55, a silver-haired, meek-mannered millionaire with vast holdings in Lahore, the country's second largest city, and a reputation for giving lavishly to charity and politicians' election campaigns.

Iqbal now sits in jail charged with being one of the biggest hashish and heroin smugglers in the world.

Meanwhile, the crackdown is widely perceived to be targeting senior politicians and generals from the era of former President General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq who run the opposition Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA).

Leaders of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) from the key province of Punjab have charged family members of IDA leader and Punjab Chief Minister Nawaz Sharif with being "pioneers in the drug trade." The government's head of narcotics control has also announced that the former president's widow, along with other high Zia officials, are now under investigation for drug smuggling.

The IDA is hitting back, charging three PPP federal ministers with accepting drug money from Hajji Iqbal for their election campaigns last year, and other top PPP officials with being involved in narcotics.

Political tensions have increased with the arrest of retired General Fazle Haq, an IDA leader who served under Zia as governor of the Frontier province bordering Afghanistan. Accused of murdering a prominent religious leader in Peshawar, Fazle is also expected to be charged with drug smuggling. His broth-



Bhutto: drug fight or political fray?

er, Fazle Hussai has long been identified by western antidrug agencies as a heroin smuggler.

IDA leaders charge that the crackdown is linked to the PPP's inability to unseat Nawaz Sharif in Punjab and to prevent the fall in Frontier province of PPP Chief Minister Aftab Sherpao. Sherpao was on the verge of being voted out of office just before the arrest of Fazle Haq.

Fazle Haq's arrest is also the first

time that a retired general has ever gone to jail in Pakistan. Although Haq is unpopular both in the army and with the public, senior military officials are asking aloud who will be next. For many years charges have circulated in Pakistan and abroad that officers belonging to the military Inter-Services Intelligence have helped fund the Afghan war through the drug trade. Chief of Army Staff General Mizra Aslam Beg is known to want a purge of those officers.

The recent arrests have also focused attention on how much U.S., British and other European antidrug agencies knew about drug smuggling operations in Pakistan under Zia's rule, and why – despite at least 17 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents in Pakistan – no drug smuggling charges were ever leveled at Pakistani officials during that 11-year period. Pakistani journalists are asking whether the West and the DEA in particular were more interested in protecting Zia's regime from drug scandals than in fighting drugs because of his role in the Afghan war – a major East-West strategic battlefield in the 1980s.

It remains to be seen whether the current campaign will bolster or undermine Bhutto's own stability. Even before the crackdown was launched, she was walking a political tightrope. Two of Pakistan's four provinces are already run by the IDA; her grip on the Sind is fragile; she risks tribal warfare if she moves militarily against drug smugglers hiding out in the volatile Pathan tribal belt; and she faces a possible debacle in Frontier province. If the PPP government falls there, the IDA plans to go for a quick vote of no confidence against Bhutto in the National Assembly.

Clearly, Bhutto has decided that the best form of defense is attack. Although the antidrug crusade has gripped Pakistanis, she is taking a heavy gamble on whether she can pull it off. Her credibility will also depend on whether she is willing to move against alleged drug smugglers in her own party. ●

* Copyright Pacific News Service (PNS). PNS correspondent Ahmed Rashid writes on South Asia for the Far Eastern Economic Review and the London Independent.

No Human Rights Shangri-la

Repression of government critics offers a stark reality in contrast to the mythical Shangri-la in this Himalayan monarchy

By Tan Jo Hann*

Nepal is a Hindu kingdom on the Himalayan plateau, the setting for the mythical Shangri-la. It also has one of Asia's worst human rights records. One of the world's poorest countries, Nepal has a government whose abusive treatment of its citizens is often compared to that of the Philippines during its martial law period under the late former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

More than 300 political prisoners sit in Nepalese jails. Two-thirds of them were detained under the 1961 Public Security Act, locally referred to as *Kalo Kanoon* (Dark Law).

Some 90 percent of the country's 17.5 million residents are Hindus, a fact reflected in the theocratic rule of monarch King Birendra. His government has gone so far as to pass laws that contradict human rights provisions in the country's 1962 constitution.

Even the constitution itself is self-contradictory. Article 11(2), for instance, provides for freedom of speech, expression, peaceful assembly, and to form unions and associations. But an amendment states that "no political party or any other organization, union or association motivated by party politics shall be formed or caused to be formed or run."

The Nepalese monarchy has historically sought absolute powers. King Mahendra, the present monarch's father, tried in the late 1950s to consolidate his

rule over the nation. But unified political parties forced the king to hold elections, creating a national parliament in 1959.

A year later the king declared a state of emergency and dismissed the government, arresting congressional leaders and banning all political parties. Many repressive laws were issued during this period, among them the 1961 PSA, the 1961 Treason Act, and the Organizations and Associations (Control) Act of 1963.

Lomani Jaishi, a member of the Nepal National Teacher's Union and a human rights worker, said the PSA was

"arbitrarily used in the 1970s to silence opponents of the government, political rivals within the government and especially left-wing groups spearheading changes within the country."

The PSA allows for the indefinite detention of anyone perceived to have violated Nepal's "peace and tranquility" or "amicable relations" between people of different classes or regions or between Nepal and other states. Persons charged under the PSA are liable to a maximum 9-month detention order renewable only once. However, political prisoners have been jailed under this act for years. An alleged leader of the Nepal Communist Party-Marxist Leninist (NCP-ML), Radha Krishna Mainali, had been in jail for 17 years when he was released in 1987.

The Treason (Crime and Punishment) Act of 1961 imposes a minimum detention order of two years, a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and in some cases, the death penalty, to persons guilty of committing offenses against the state and the royal family. •

* Third World Network Features/Philippine News and Features. Tan Jo Hann is a contributor to Philippine News and Features, from which this article is reproduced with permission.

Nepal: royal poverty and princely repression





Children gather to work but political assembly is prohibited

A zonal commissioner nominated by the king acts as the prosecuting attorney and judge. Naturally, most decisions favor the government. Appeals to the Supreme Court are allowed, but authorities often manipulate the high costs involved in the procedure to deprive defendants of due process.

A partyless system – called *Panchayat* – was installed after a 1980 referendum, reinforcing the restrictive measures of the Organizations and Associations (Control) Act of 1963. This act has been used to suppress groups such as the All-Nepal National Free Student Union (ANNFSU), the Nepal National Teachers' Organization, the People's Front-Political Front of the NCP-ML, and the Democratic Socialist Front.

Dhunnakari Jaishi of ANNFSU said that "the Imelda Marcos of Nepal, Queen Aiswarya (a Sanskrit word for Goddess), has controlled organizations through the government Social Services Coordinating Council." He added that "all organizational funding coming into the country is received by the Queen's pet projects, and portions are deducted to finance its dole-out projects to pacify the people's yearning for justice."

Repression in Nepal has been likened to that in many Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia and Singapore where stringent laws and acts have been used to suppress dissent and silence critics.

Maria Socorro Diokno, secretary-general of the Regional Council for Human Rights, says that political prisoners there are tortured and subjected to indefinite periods of detention. Human rights activists note that many political prisoners are killed while being transferred from one detention center to another.

Although protest may appear impossible in Nepal, mass action has occasionally been used by the populace to oppose oppressive government policies. *Nepal Bund* (Nepal Closed) is a strike action resulting in the closing of shops, transportation and public facilities, and schools. On occasion, it has brought the country to a near standstill.

The general lack of response from the Nepalese populace concerning human rights is attributed to ignorance or fear. With a literacy rate of only 20 percent, the general Nepalese population is easily victimized.

International protest has had little effect on the Nepalese government. Pockets of human rights advocates, like the Forum for the Protection of Human Rights, within the country have been operating without legal sanction. Yet in its five-year existence since 1984, the nationwide organization has mobilized journalists, lawyers, students and academics to promote human rights concerns in Nepal.

Landlocked and Blockaded

What began as a manageable trade dispute with India is now having serious economic, social and environmental consequences. But because of their isolation, many communities, ironically, are immune to its worst side-effects

By Jean-Marion Aitken*

When India announced its trade blockade against Nepal at the end of March this year, there was consternation throughout the landlocked kingdom. How would this tiny country with minimal industry survive without imported goods from India – the country which borders Nepal to the south, west and east?

Nepal's only other border is with China to the north. Because it follows the great Himalayan range, it is hardly an ideal route for importing the rice, vegetables, medicines, manufactured goods of all kinds – and most importantly fuel – which Nepal normally gets from India.

Aid agencies were at the front of a panic to draw up emergency measures, decide priorities for the use of existing supplies and make best use of existing stocks.

Lack of infrastructure and effective communications in Nepal means that most aid bodies are very dependent on their own vehicles to move staff, materials and even letters around the country. Nepal also lacks a developed local manufacturing capability, so they also

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depend on supplies from or through India for technical support in their work.

Within days of the blockade, repair work on the Dhgaran-Dhankuta road in eastern Nepal almost stopped. There was not enough fuel to collect workers from the town and ferry them up to their worksites along the 52-kilometer road. This road, built with British aid and completed only five years ago, was badly damaged by an earthquake in August 1988 and subsequent heavy rains.

Engineers were anxious to complete the job before the onset of the monsoon in June. It is one of the few roads going

rosy control work in eastern Nepal, last reported – in June – that its drug supply would last only three months. Transport is still very difficult. The petrol ration and black market fueling enable only skeleton work programs to be kept up.

On the smaller scale, development work has also been hit. A women's credit program supplying loans to help village women start their own businesses (part of the Intensive Banking Program run by Nepal's banks) has been badly affected.

Projects popular with women in Sankhuwa Sabha, in eastern Nepal, inclu-

receive their quota. A flourishing black market has quickly established itself along the border, which is hard to police.

Fuel is the commodity most in demand, especially in the cities, where people, apart from the requirements of bus and taxi services, need kerosene (paraffin) for cooking. Those who can afford it have bought electric rings and pressure cookers to save cooking time, but most Nepali town dwellers cook on kerosene stoves and the staple diet of rice and lentils must be cooked slowly.

Queueing for the family's kerosene ration takes many hours and it is often very meager. Many of the poorer people have returned to cooking on wood, which will have the expected effect upon Nepal's already denuded hillsides.

Oddly, the embargo is having least effect upon the poor peasants in the hills. Life is almost unchanged for the 95 percent of Nepal's population that lives there. Too poor to buy or use things from outside, they are not experiencing any new deprivation. Isolation has imposed on the local people a simple lifestyle and a high degree of self-sufficiency.

The absence of imported goods means little in areas where people must walk for days to reach the nearest road. The only imported goods they are dependent on are salt, of which the government claims still to have reserves, and kerosene.

Kerosene is used to fuel their little wick lamps, the only source of lighting in their homes. As kerosene disappeared from the weekly markets in April, candles rapidly followed suit, leaving people with no alternative but firelight and an early bed.

Ironically, the very isolation which is at the root of their poverty and which has proved a barrier to many development attempts in the past, is now proving an effective insulator against these new troubles.

In many ways this isolation of the majority of Nepal's population makes it far better placed than most countries, which are too heavily dependent on imported goods to supply essentials, to withstand this kind of blockade. ●



Ironically, the poor are least affected by the blockade

up into the middle hills and provides an alternative to the traditional portering routes along which goods for the hills must be carried by people.

Similarly, construction work on the Eastern Regional Water Supply Program, also British-funded, came to a halt as the fuel to move workers and materials to the sites ran out.

The blockade is having an effect on medical services and aid programs which rely on supplies and links from outside. The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust, which carries out tuberculosis and lep-

ded buying grain, carrying it to the mill to be ground and then selling the flour; they also traded in Indian glass bangles at small markets. Both activities are now impossible: the first because there is no kerosene to power the mill; the second because there are no imported bangles. Nepalese women who had just begun to see a way out of their poverty and dependence on men must now wait out the crisis.

Nevertheless, Nepal has not yet ground to a halt. Fuel rationing is operating in many areas and aid agencies

Happy Talk, Tough Reality

For all of its successes, the 40-year-old Chinese revolution faces monumental problems which were evident even before the Tiananmen massacre last June. But China has now reverted to the old practice of trumpeting successes while hiding what's going wrong

By Yu Bin*

In the aftermath of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of its revolution, the Chinese government is waging a media campaign to show how much the country has achieved. As during the Cultural Revolution, the media today covers only the bright side of the story — claiming that almost every aspect of social life has improved since 1949.

Nobody can deny the success of the People's Republic. It is almost a miracle to feed and house one-fifth of the world's population with very limited resources. But a brief review of the Chinese media's more objective reporting earlier this year reveals that even before the Tiananmen demonstrations, China was a country overwhelmed with problems.

According to those reports, China's widely hailed economic reforms had long since bogged down, unable to motivate people to work harder for a better life. A poll by the government in early 1989 found that worker morale in state-owned enterprises, for instance, had dropped to its lowest since 1949.

The numerous experimental reforms Beijing undertook failed to create an environment in which these enterprises could function effectively. While the state bears the burden of losses for those firms that fail, it derives few benefits from those that make it. The result is low efficiency and productivity in state-owned enterprises: profit earnings fell 12.1 percent in the first half of 1989 alone over the previous period.

Even the initially more promising agricultural reforms have run into serious trouble. Although the return to individual farming created tremendous incentives for peasants, this was not the



case for state-owned or directed farms. Meanwhile, prices for industrial products for agriculture have soared — fertilizer costs, for example, jumped 20 to 30 percent in 1988 over 1987, and 40 to 50 percent this year over last. The rising cost of farming is driving many farmers out of business.

Economic decentralization has cut back significantly on the regulative ability of the central government. Since last year, Beijing has fought a losing battle in directing investments. The economy is overheated but its performance is poor. Official inflation figures were 18.5 percent in 1988 and 25.5 percent for the first half of 1989. But the actual rate of inflation is much higher, with price rises for some food items topping 100 percent or more. Early this year China's inflation was singled out by eleven leading Chinese newspapers as one of the "Top 10 National News Stories in 1988."

Soon the economy will end its relatively "free-ride" foreign-loan phase. By 1990-91, China will owe the maximum pay-back amount on its debts. By then the annual payment will reach billions of dollars. Even if the Chinese economy should rebound, this will be an enormous burden for the country.



More alarming is the worsening problem of overpopulation. Since 1980 the country has seen an average nine million annual population increase over and above the state "planning" target. On April 14, China officially admitted its population had hit 1.1 billion. Overpopulation is especially acute in rural areas where unemployed and underemployed laborers amount to 180 million. Given the present rate of increase, the figure will be close to 300 million by the end of this century.

The job situation in the cities is equally grim. After a two percent annual unemployment rate between 1984 and 1989, unemployment is expected to reach a record high of 3.5 percent of the total workforce by the end of this year.

Aside from economic difficulties, the government's refusal to reform the political system has resulted in widespread corruption at every level of the hierarchy. Public anger over corruption and demands for greater political participation exploded in last spring's Tiananmen demonstrations.

No one knows better than the Chinese government that for all of its evident successes, the country is riddled with problems. It is especially sad to see the Chinese media, which had recently begun to develop more objective reporting, being forced back to the old track — singing praises of the achievements while covering up the challenges. ●

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Reverse Robin Hood Syndrome

"Just compensation" means that landowners can name their price, saddling peasant "beneficiaries" with high mortgage installments in President Aquino's land reform program

By Joseph Collins*

Recently in Tokyo, Japan, 19 governments and seven international lending institutions gathered to make five-year aid pledges to the government of the Philippines. Of the US\$16.5-billion dollar appeal made by Manila, almost half came under the rubric of financing its land reform program which President Cory Aquino assures us will "lift the yoke of poverty" from the country's millions of landless peasants.

Also in Tokyo was the Philippine National Peasant Movement (KMP) which represents over 750,000 poor farming families and whose stance on land reform is shared by every other peasant organization in the Philippines. Ironically, the KMP travelled to Tokyo to lobby prospective aid donors to refuse to bankroll the Aquino government's land reform program. The peasants angrily warned that the foreign aid pledges will only finance a "parody of land reform."

Most fundamentally, millions of Filipino peasants view the government's land reform program as a parody because it is based on a law fashioned by a Congress dominated by landlords and implemented by a president who is one of the wealthiest sugar planters in the country. The law is so riddled with limitations, exemptions, and loopholes for landowners that it is utterly toothless. A handful of seemingly land-to-the-tiller provisions are canceled out by a myriad of pro-landlord provisions.

Only a fraction of the redistributions desperately needed by land-hungry peasant families will be achieved under the Aquino government's program. In

fact, with so many escape clauses for landowners, virtually the only lands that will be transferred to peasants will be those belonging to owners who volunteer them for redistribution. These lands are likely to be of poor quality or in areas controlled by the peasant-backed communist guerrillas.

The law mandates "just compensation" for landowners whose land is redistributed. Particularly ludicrous, however, is the Aquino government's interpretation of this proviso. The landowners' asking price is the main determinant of what the government will pay for their property. This is a worldwide "first" in the history of land reform — and probably in other types of eminent domain appropriations, as well.

This excessive compensation stands in sharp contrast with successful land reforms in Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. In Taiwan, for instance, compensation was set at a flat rate that is less than one-seventh (even taking inflation into consideration) of what landowners in the Philippines are now raking in, thanks to the Aquino government. Even the late former President Ferdinand Marcos used the Taiwanese compensation formula in his barely implemented reform. Now the Aquino government has recently declared its intention to give retroactive additional compensation to landowners who feel shortchanged by the Marcos/Taiwan formula.

The government's generosity does not extend to the few poor peasants who will obtain land. The compensation

Aquino: a large landowner



parody means that peasant "beneficiaries" will be saddled with years of high mortgage installments to pay back the government and will therefore find it difficult to make investments to improve the productivity of their farms. This Robin Hood-in-reverse syndrome also means that billions of pesos will be wasted that could go for farmer services, schools, health care, and housing so urgently needed by the majority of Filipinos.

This name-your-price approach to compensation also lends itself to graft and corruption as abundantly demonstrated by the multi-million dollar land reform compensation scandals recently exposed in Manila. The government, anxious about the Tokyo pledging session, undoubtedly took consolation in the absence of foreign media attention to these scandals, which involved high officials in the Aquino government.

Land reform in the Philippines is urgent. Seven of 10 Filipinos whose lives depend on farming do not own the land they till; they and their families literally cannot survive as sharecroppers and poorly paid farmworkers. Land reform is crucial in a country whose hunger problem is now second in Asia only to that of Cambodia.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker asserted in Tokyo that the aid pledges would "help buttress Mrs. Aquino's fragile democracy." The peasants of the Philippines warn us that the aid pledges shore up a parody of democracy. Despite formal trappings, Philippine democracy remains the rule by the few for the few. And that is very fragile indeed.

* Copyright Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First). Joseph Collins is a senior analyst at the Institute and author of a new book, *The Philippines: Fire on the Rim*.

Dead Dictator

Once a reform-minded outsider,
Marcos became a corrupt tyrant

By Walden Bello*

By the time of his recent death, Ferdinand Marcos had become a marginal man on the Philippine political scene.

He was not always so. Indeed Marcos once stood on center stage. He could have decisively changed the direction of Philippines politics, and possibly even moved to resolve the country's daunting challenges of poverty and gross inequality.

Marcos made himself into the consummate practitioner of Philippine electoral politics, finally becoming president in 1965. Though an outsider from the provinces, he managed to break into the tight circle of patrician power brokers who traditionally ruled the country.

Once in power he forged a formidable network of alliances with powerful national and regional families. But more important politically, he also created three other power bases: his cronies, intensely loyal middle-class aides whom he placed in key government bureaucracies; technocrats, U.S.-educated economic managers; and, most important, the military.

Marcos transformed the military into an instrument of his personal power. By the beginning of the 1970s, with the officer corps owing personal fealty to him, Marcos came into possession of an instrument of personal control which dwarfed the combined private armies of both his allies and enemies.

A key Marcos tactic in his drive for absolute power was the way he shrewdly exploited the fundamental weakness of Philippine democracy. It functioned mainly as a medium which allowed the various elite factions to compete for power. And it served to preserve one of the most skewed economic structures in East Asia, where 20 percent of the po-

pulation controlled 80 percent of the land.

Marcos adopted a grassroots populist rhetoric, and began to denounce the "democratic deadlock." That justified his drive for full dictatorial powers which he assumed with his declaration of martial law in September 1972. To many at the time it seemed he was going to use his new powers to crack elite power and bring some justice to the people.

With far more power than any of his presidential predecessors, Marcos could have established a mass base among the lower classes and set up a system of authoritarian populism as did Juan Perón in Argentina. Indeed, many reformers, attracted by Marcos' rhetoric, jumped on his bandwagon, while others gave him the benefit of the doubt.

The hopeful years were 1973-74, when Marcos unrolled his "New Society" agrarian reform program, under which 4.5 million acres of rice and corn land was to be transferred to one million peasants.

However, Marcos pulled back and halted the program when opposition came from medium and small landlords who formed one of the regime's main pillars of support. He lost working class support when, at the advice of the World Bank, he adopted a program of export-oriented industrialization designed to entice foreign investors with the promise of cheap, non-union labor.

As a result the peasantry and the working class became fertile ground for the growth of the left, particularly the guerrilla New People's Army and the National Democratic Front.

Having abandoned the populist path, Marcos opted to keep the middle and upper classes happy with a superficial prosperity brought on by a massive inflow of foreign money. The U.S. provided Marcos with US\$10 billion in aid between 1972 and 1985. Foreign creditors pumped in some US\$26 billion in



the same period, encouraged by the A-1 credit ratings which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) consistently gave the regime in international capital markets.

However, after 1979, in the wake of a worldwide economic downturn, the growth rate plunged. The middle class suffered and its resentment grew against Marcos' cronies who had cornered key sectors of the economy. The turning point was the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. on August 21, 1983, which transformed deepening discontent into active opposition.

As his broader social support vanished, Marcos' days were numbered. His fate was sealed when the U.S., fearful of the increasing influence of the left, distanced itself from him and threw its support to the opposition led in good part by the old elites. The end came in the form of a civilian-military uprising on February 25, 1986 which swept Corazon Aquino into power.

In exile in Honolulu, Marcos and his wife, Imelda, schemed endlessly to return to power but each month that went by made a return less likely. Corazon Aquino brought back the old elitist electoral system. To secure her power, she, with the help of her brother Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, has moved to co-opt Marcos allies among the provincial elites and the military. Quietly many of the former were incorporated into the new ruling coalition, and plans were shelved to prosecute officers for human rights abuses during the Marcos era.

The essence of Aquino's new ruling formula is, as in the old days, elite competition through elections with the military exercising a veto power in vital areas of national policy. The formula has room for everyone except Marcos' closest cronies.

By 1988 Ferdinand Marcos completed his journey to irrelevance. But he did continue to serve an important purpose to the end — a bogeyman for Aquino who could wave the threat of his return to defuse popular discontent in the absence of reform. ●

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Common Fund Shortchanged

It was touted as the Third World's main instrument to stabilize commodity prices, but the Common Fund for Commodities may have started a decade late and a billion dollars short

By Satish Jha*

It took 15 years to find a seat for the Common Fund for Commodities. In July the first governing body meeting of the fund at Geneva, Switzerland, decided to locate its offices in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and appointed Budi Hartantyo of Indonesia its first chief executive.

Considering that the Common Fund is the only concrete symbol of the idea of a New International Economic Order, its birth was a rather quiet affair. Moreover, the process of giving it the final touches left a few questions about its functioning and future.

Amsterdam was chosen for its office in preference to Brussels, Belgium, even though the latter came up with a better proposal, offering office space virtually free of cost forever compared to the Netherlands' concession of free office for six years only.

Secondly, a compromise was made in naming a chief executive - favoring Indonesia, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and a country that has since the beginning been a strong proponent of the idea. But in doing so, the group passed over a somewhat more suited candidate from India who led the common fund cell in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) earlier this decade and was thought to be the top candidate for the job.

Worse is the virtually forced appointment of the candidate from Denmark as one of the three senior staff



Loading Brazilian coffee: can the fund help lift commodity prices?

members after he was defeated in the first round. He has little of the financial or commercial expertise that he may need to help run the fund.

This leaves the body with little continuity or first-rate professionalism. The governing body also failed to appoint two of its 28 executive directors because delegates were unfamiliar with the rules. The result is that First World countries have more votes in the executive committee than those of the Third World, although this body is ostensibly designed to help the latter.

To top it all, the member countries fought over the deadline for capital contributions rather than concern themselves with more pressing long-range plans. Reliable sources expect up to 15 member countries to default in their pledged subscriptions.

In any case, for now the first account dealing with the buffer-stocking operations is unlikely to be an active account. In the beginning, greater emphasis is going to be placed on a second account that will investigate how poor countries

can improve their commodities and processing.

The fund itself is much smaller than originally projected. Rather than the US\$1 billion in capital proposed a decade ago, it is starting with half that amount. It has taken so long to start that the initial enthusiasm has waned. Even UNCTAD seems less than thrilled.

The recent collapse of coffee prices, the experiences of tin and OPEC, and the state of commodity markets in general leave little room for optimism. Still, the Common Fund of Commodities is a reality.

As things stand now the fund is going to function with US\$315 million in capital and about US\$230 million of voluntary contributions to the second account. It will function with Budi Hartantyo as the managing director and Henrik Skouenborg, a Danish foreign service officer, as chief of operations.

* Third World Network Features, Satish Jha, an Indian economics writer, contributed this article to the "Economic and Political Weekly," based in Bombay, which granted reprint permission.

Two more senior officers are to be appointed by Hartantyo.

Only two international commodity agreements based on the buffer-stock principle – rubber and cocoa – are to join the fund to begin with.

There are doubts as to how much can be achieved by a small secretariat with a small kitty. But some of the senior negotiators associated with the fund's formation argue that while it has less capital, it will also be handling fewer commodities than originally expected.

Moreover, right now the second account involving research and development, quality and productivity improve-

In the background was the inability of commodity producers to stabilize prices or establish floor prices. In the three decades following the birth of the U.N. system only a few international commodity agreements (ICAs) with economic provisions were concluded. Some pertained to products like wheat, sugar, tin, and coffee. UNCTAD did little better, managing just one agreement by 1975 – for cocoa.

The UNCTAD secretariat, which was supposed to be functioning as the secretariat of Third World countries as well, came to the conclusion that buffer-stock financing was the major stumbling block in concluding ICAs. Finan-



Group of 77 leaders: lack of unity hurt the Third World

ment and market development will be the more active one. Still, doubts persist owing to the novelty of the experiment and about those chosen to lead it.

However, the very existence of the fund can be seen as a step forward.

Proposed in 1974 – First proposed in 1974 under United Nations General Assembly resolution 3202 (S-VI) calling for an integrated program for commodities, and discussed in UNCTAD papers over the next year, the idea was adopted at the UNCTAD meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1976.

ing for buffer-stock financing could be an effective way of intervening in the international commodity market while serving the goals of U.N. resolution 3202.

The common fund was thought of as a way of financing the purchase and stocking of commodities of individual commodity organizations whenever prices fell below a certain level. Those stocks would be sold when prices turned favorable or could be used to intervene in the market.

As things improved and stocks were sold, the loans would be paid back to the fund. Spreading its role over more



"Stopper": Henry Kissinger

than one commodity could spread the risk, possibly help guarantee profits and stabilize or improve prices. A joint fund was considered more workable than one for a single commodity.

The original proposal was for the fund to finance 10 core commodities mainly exported by Third World countries. These included sugar, cocoa, coffee, tea, rubber, cotton, jute hard fibers, copper and tin. Two-thirds of the exports of such products originated in the South. Eventually other commodities were to have come under the wings of the fund.

Original calculations for buffer-stock financing the 10 commodities were estimated at US\$5 billion. With the inclusion of some "non-core" commodities, US\$6 billion was considered sufficient to launch the fund effectively. However, initially the fund was to start functioning with only US\$1 billion as paid-up capital and US\$2 billion to be generated from loans. The other half of the estimated US\$6 billion was to be generated later in the same fashion.

The required equity was to be generated by country subscriptions on the basis of an agreed set of criteria including the benefit accruing to the country, gross national product, per capita income and its share in the world commodity trade. Loans were to come from governments, international financial institutions and the capital market.



Cotton: a second fund to help improve commodity production

For this it was necessary to make the fund a financially viable institution with surplus funds. OPEC was expected to come up with substantial concessional loans, etc.

Drawn-out negotiations – Once the idea was on paper, a long, drawn-out negotiation process followed. Negotiations were conducted according to the group system prevailing in UNCTAD: the Group of 77 (G77), Group B (capitalist countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), Group D (the Eastern bloc), and China.

The main negotiations, however, took place between the Group of 77 – with Group D and China declaring their agreement with the idea – and Group B, led by the French ambassador to the U.N. in Geneva.

There were also internal conflicts. The Group of 77 was not a homogeneous group: Africa stood on one side, with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Latin American commodity exporters on the other. Some defended the autonomy of existing ICAs. Moreover, some of the G77 countries were also commodity importers.

Within Group B as well there major differences – among the U.S., the hard-core opponent to the idea, the U.K., di-

vided between its ideology, short-term interests as a major commodity importer and the burden of meeting the pressure of the Commonwealth countries, and the Nordic countries which were generally sympathetic to the G77.

The major difference, however, could be seen in the composition of the negotiating groups from G77 and Group B, with the latter coming from technical ministries while the majority of the developing countries were represented by lay diplomats.

Group B also had the advantage of a competent secretariat in the OECD while G77 relied on the help of UNCTAD, which had to appear neutral.

At the pre-negotiation stage the U.S. sent Henry Kissinger to kill the idea of a common fund and instead propose an alternative International Resources Bank (IRB) with an initial capital of US\$1 billion, to guarantee against political risks that may be associated with commodity production investments. West Germany proposed stabilizing earnings rather than prices and the French suggested the idea of ex-post pooling.

These differences continued. The U.S., for example, is a signatory to the agreement but not a party to the fund.

The major differences were on the concept itself, with the G77 pressing for prior financing and Group B favoring the concept of pooling. Within the G77,

there were disagreements on the method of assessing the contribution, commodity coverage and how the ICAs and the fund were to relate.

Also, most Third World countries could not agree to subscribe to the fund's capital significantly as their commodities were not covered by ICAs and it was seen as a transfer from one developing country to another.

A compromise was reached which allowed for some pooling. The fund's capital was to be increased by direct subscription of guarantee capital from the member countries of ICAs.

The second account was an effort to increase the proposal's appeal to countries which did not have exportable commodities in existing ICAs.

Only at the 1980 UNCTAD meeting was an informal agreement reached and voluntary pledges invited for the second account. It took nearly a year to draft the Articles of Agreement and in June 1980 the agreement was finally adopted by consensus, establishing the Common Fund for Commodities.

However, it has taken nearly twice as long to make the agreement effective. Some 90 countries, accounting for two-thirds of the capital, have ratified the agreement. Some involved in the negotiations have noted that after the collapse of oil prices many countries lost their enthusiasm for the fund.

Abdelaziz Megzari, UNCTAD's senior advisor to the common fund, argues that ratification was complicated because most Third World countries sent diplomats to the negotiations, and they had trouble dealing with the technical elements of the pact.

Others see links between the change of leadership at UNCTAD, its decline and the fund's marginalization. A senior negotiator argues that UNCTAD virtually lost interest in the common fund. In his 1987 address to the Group of 77 in Havana, the UNCTAD secretary general failed to even mention the fund, while French President François Mitterrand became an enthusiastic supporter.

Even those who made the agreement possible express little optimism. It would seem as though the fund was born a decade late and a billion dollars short.

Sharing a Lifeboat

Brazil and Argentina, following the examples of Europe, North America and Southeast Asia, are seeking further economic integration in an initiative which could help unite the other countries in the region

By Marcelo Montenegro

A recent four-day visit to Brazil by Argentina's President Carlos Menem turned out to be a boon for the process of bilateral economic cooperation and integration between the two countries which began in 1985.

In an August meeting in the border town of Uruguayana, Menem and Brazilian President José Sarney inaugurated frontier committees which will facilitate trade between the two countries. Under the supervision of consular authorities, these government agencies will expedite customs procedures, thus easing the flow of goods and travelers. Protocol 23, signed in November 1988, provided for these frontier committees which, for the present, will link Paso de los Libres and Puerto Iguazú in Argentina, respectively, with Uruguayana and Foz do Iguazú in Brazil.

Another document signed in Uruguayana by Presidents Menem and Sarney set up a commission to establish conditions for financing and effecting sales of Argentinian natural gas to Brazil. This group of experts from Argentina's Energy Secretariat and the Brazilian state oil company, Petrobrás, is expected to promptly submit plans for a 900-kilometer gas pipeline joining San Gerónimo Norte, in Argentina's Santa Fé state, with the southern Brazilian town of Porto Alegre. In 1986, the cost of the gas duct was estimated at 800 million dollars. The two presidents also



Salute to integration: Presidents Menem, Sarney and Sanguinetti

ratified an agreement to build a one-kilometer bridge between San Tomé in Argentina and São Borja in Brazil.

Uruguay's President Júlio Sanguinetti was also in Uruguayana, continuing what has become a common practice since 1985, when Uruguay began to pursue closer political and diplomatic contacts with its neighbors and to accompany their bilateral plans for economic cooperation and integration. He met with his two colleagues from the Southern Cone and voiced support for one of the projects, dealing with road transport.

In Brasília, the second stop on his tour, the Argentinian president signed other agreements to broaden the Reciprocal Credit Agreement – raising its ceiling to US\$ 500 million – and to pave

the way for turn-key industry projects which Argentinian firms are eager to establish in Brazil. Argentina is to provide US\$360 million in financing for these projects, which range from remodeling a railway branchline between two state capitals in northeastern Brazil (São Luís, Maranhão, and Teresina, Piauí), supplying turbines for a hydroelectric facility in Miranda, Minas Gerais, extending a high-tension network in Mato Grosso and constructing hospitals and health care centers in Minas Gerais.

Brazil will help with Argentina's energy supply situation by opening the floodgates of its dams on the Uruguay River to raise the generating potential of waters further downstream at the Salto Grande plant in Argentina. Brazil is also

bringing forward construction plans for a transformer substation at Uruguayana which will enable it to supply Argentina with 50,000 kilowatts of electric power as of January 1990.

The free-trade list was extended to include considerably more capital goods items, and the agreements signed for scientific and technological cooperation provide for a bilateral scientific team to work on space projects.

A possible course – Despite the major problems facing both nations as a result of protracted military dictatorships and foreign indebtedness – or perhaps because of them – economic cooperation and integration have remained a key objective, maybe the only capable of strengthening Latin America's economy

after a decade in which almost all indicators of its societies' well-being and development have experienced stagnation and decline.

Around the world, regions are rushing to integrate and new trade blocks are rapidly consolidating. After four decades of effort, the European Economic Community plans to bring down customs barriers once and for all in 1992, creating a single, 12-country market in which goods, persons, capital, services and professionals may circulate freely. Through economic, technological and scientific cooperation and by forming joint ventures to take on major projects, Europe has managed to increase vastly its capacity to compete with the United States and Japan. For its part, the U.S. is setting up a free-trade area with Canada and Mexico to form a giant North American block. The experience of a decade in Southern Africa has brought together the Frontline States bordering the Republic of South Africa to form the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC), with promising results in the search for alterna-



The streets of Argentina: economic downfall

tives to economic dependence on their powerful racist neighbor. Several Asian nations, with Japan at their head, are debating frameworks for joining forces. Various socialist nations, led by the Soviet Union, are engaged in a far-reaching process of transformation to democratize their political life and modernize their economies: this too calls for progressive regional complementation.

There is a move to cooperate and to integrate regional economies into blocks, as countries seek to optimize resource utilization, galvanize trade and upgrade industrial facilities. In the final

decade of the 20th century, this trend could signal an end to the model of cold war-inspired military alliances.

In this context, Latin America is lagging. Throughout their history, Argentina and Brazil have been distanced by the course of events and a mutual mistrust. Relations began to warm only recently, in 1979, when an agreement was signed to reconcile operation of the Corpus and Itaipú dams and so regulate use of the Paraná River for hydroelectric purposes. Thus ended a long-standing controversy which had caused heated debate. Since then, bilateral relations between Argentina and Brazil have aimed at complementarity, collaboration and political, economic and cultural integration.

Given the overall standing that both countries have in the region, their ground-breaking attempt at fuller integration could lead the way for the remaining countries of Latin America which, to varying degrees, are all tied to what happens to their more populous and wealthier neighbors.

This trend was apparently confirmed at the swearing-in of Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora in La Paz, where plans were announced for the construction of a Paraná-Paraguay waterway, a project involving Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The numbers – Brazil and Argentina carry a lot of weight in the group: together they account for 45 percent of the region's population, 53 percent of its gross product and 35 percent of its total exports. They produce 63 percent of its manufactured exports and represent between 60 and 70 percent of the market for computers and automobiles, and of total spending in science and technology. Brazil, in turn, has a very large share in these percentages. Brazil is



Brazil: crosswalk to cooperation

nearly half of Latin America.

By virtue of the bulk of resources involved and the relative modernity of the two countries' economies – Brazil in communications, Argentina in education, and both in industrial sectors – planned integration may serve as a pivotal point of reference and focus of influence for the remaining countries in the region, as has occurred with other regional integration processes.

The foundations for Europe's economic integration, which will culminate in the establishment of a single market in 1992, were laid in the 1940s with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, a supranational authority to regulate iron and steel production by the six signatory countries, most significantly in France, Germany and northern Italy.

Similarities and differences – By comparing and contrasting the economies of Brazil and Argentina, it can be seen how integration offers benefits for both sides. The populations of both countries are predominantly urban, both are large automobile consumer markets, and the enormous potential of their own domestic markets has yet to be fully developed. They are also alike in that both have contracted large foreign debts.

The forces which drive the two economies are very different, however. While Brazil has the most dynamic economy in Latin America, Argentina's is just the opposite. Like Uruguay and Chile, it suffers from a stagnation which is reflected in the behavior, not only of economic forces, but of the very society and its political institutions themselves.

Another difference is that, among

Argentinians, there is a certain homogeneity of educational and income levels, whilst in Brazil the inequalities are among the most extreme anywhere in the world.

Comparing the structure of production in the two countries, Brazil generates half the region's manufactured exports and its industry leads the competitiveness ratings. Argentina, meanwhile, underwent a lengthy process of deindustrialization and declining competitiveness resulting in several years of negative industrial growth. Argentina manages to compete only in certain high-tech and capital goods sectors, such as the nuclear industry, and is self-sufficient in food and oil. Brazil has large surpluses in the industrial, mining and agricultural sectors, and is rapidly diminishing its energy deficit.

Another important difference is in the use to which the two countries put their foreign debts. Brazil employed a good deal of these funds to develop infrastructure, while 60 percent of the capital which generated Argentina's debt left the country during the military government.

Advantages and obstacles – The benefits of a policy of complementation and cooperation are thus quite evident. Brazil can consolidate itself in terms of comparative advantages, and in the

long term, greater integration with South American countries will help solve its problems of social and economic isolation. It can also benefit from wider markets and the cultural influence of those countries.

For Argentina, on the other hand, integration with Brazil means it can modernize its industrial facilities and become more competitive. Access to the great Brazilian market may help bring it out of stagnation and diversify its production profile.

Cooperation between the two countries is at an all-time high, even in areas of production managed by the armed forces. Besides a joint project to build a medium-sized commercial airplane which will be on the market in 1991, they are granting reciprocal access to nuclear programs. This high level of agreement in various aspects of their bilateral relations was very useful to Brazil when it needed to import foodstuffs urgently to combat shortages on the internal market during the economic readjustment program called the Cruzado Plan.

Brazilian support in pressing for a nuclear-free South Atlantic – one item of agreement in international affairs – is fundamental to Argentina's strategy in its conflict with Great Britain over the Falkland Islands.

Observers forecast that, with so many

factors favoring integration, the future of the process now hangs on how successfully the two countries reorganize their domestic economies. For this, they must contain inflation and create new conditions for investment in production.

Meanwhile, the process of political transition is still fraught with tensions in both countries. In Argentina, although Menem's Peronist government is taking its first steps amid promising signs, the armed forces are still restless and the risk of further outbreaks of popular violence cannot be discounted. Brazil, too, is undergoing a process of political definition: the new president, elected in late 1989, will take office in March 1990 and the country's inflation rate is running at over 30 percent a month.

In addition to the political difficulties of the moment, the freedom of action of both countries is limited – despite the pro-integration rhetoric – by their burden of external debt and the internal tensions generated by inflation. Although their capacity to implement the agreements is thus reduced, private groups are interested in participating in the bilateral integration initiatives and, under the circumstances, they may play a fundamental role in catalyzing this process on which so much of South America's future depends. ●

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The Color and Force of the Caribbean

U.S. colonialism may complicate the ability of Puerto Rican artists to project their work internationally, but it has not put a damper on their capacity to express the essence of the island's vitality

By Bill Hinchberger

Color, force and national space. Those elements might sum up the works and attitudes of the Puerto Rican contingent to the 20th São Paulo Biennial. The exhibition, hosted in Brazil's largest city, opened October 14 and closes December 14. It is considered one of the world's three most important gatherings for plastic artists — along with the Venice (Italy) Biennial and Kassel (West Germany) Documenta.

During their brief visit for the opening of the Biennial, Puerto Rican artists Noemi Ruiz, Pablo Rubio and Maria Emilia Somoza took the time to discuss their work and their country's art with *third world*. Also participating in the interview was Puerto Rican art critic José A. Pérez Ruiz, the curator of the three artists' exhibit.

The three rank up there among Puerto Rico's most established and influential artists — not only in terms of their work but also as university professors and leaders in the art world's associations and museums.

Noemi Ruiz is a 58-year-old painter whose abstract pieces contain a dynamic element that demands attention — even from across the room. She teaches art at the Interamerican University of Puerto Rico and sits on a slew of committees, including the board of directors of the Puerto Rican Museum of Contemporary Art, of which she is a co-founder.

Her colleague María Somoza, 53, is another cofounder of the museum, besides being its president, and teaches at the University of Puerto Rico. Her etchings demonstrate a concern with the need to constantly renew art. For instance, her work at the São Paulo Biennial is two-dimensional, breaking with etching's flat tradition.



Maria Emilia Somoza



Sculptor Paulo Rubio



Noemi Ruiz (above) and Pérez Ruiz



Sculptor Rubio is also drawn to experimentation. Early in his career, he identified himself with avant-garde artists who were working with scrap metal. The 45-year-old sculptor continues his work with metal, and he has found a way to imbue their cold, hard surfaces with the force, the invigorating spirit, of the Caribbean. Rubio also teaches at the University of Puerto Rico.

For someone unfamiliar with Puerto Rican art, it is interesting to note the differences among your works. Each of you works with different materials and has a distinct style. I thought that we might start with each of you talking a little about the works that you have brought to the biennial and your techniques.

Somoza: I do engravings, and my background is as a graphic artist. I have always done etchings. I believe that graphic techniques adapt most easily to my vocabulary and themes. I am concerned with continuity, but I try to take a unique approach to the problem that I am addressing in each of my works. As a result, sometimes people say that my work is very diversified. In the work that I'm showing at the São Paulo Biennial, I am exploring "bidimensionalism." It seems to me that the engraving must come out of its flat plane, so I'm including a second dimension.

Usually, I incorporate lots of color in my work. Puerto Rico is a land of light and color, and this is represented in almost all of the country's art: there is always lots of light. Etching, the technique that I use, is very complicated and time-consuming, so many artists that use this technique shy away from color. But I believe that it is very important, a very symbolic instrument.

The use of color appears to be an important element in the work of many of the region's artists.

Somoza: In the Caribbean, yes. Also the forms. We have a unique atmosphere. We do not have changes of seasons like in other countries, but we do have a joyful temperament. We like to share. And our art is accessible. It is not cold. It is not impermeable.

By looking at Pablo Rubio's sculptures and Naomi Ruíz' paintings, you can see that it is true that we all have unique styles, unique approaches and unique solutions. However, there is a common element that links the works that we have brought to São Paulo – the common element of life. The works are not cold. They are organic and project nature – something which is very exuberant in our country.

Rubio: I agree. In sculpture, there is no color, but there is strength. There is the strength of the design, the movement of the mountains, the people's problems.

I began as a painter, at the age of nine. I continued until I was 14. That's when I started working with sculpture, and I liked it. I still paint, but I am better known as a sculptor.

I came to work with steel due to the restlessness that all artists experience – the need to find something new, which is a continual struggle. The material is very difficult to work with. You have to pierce it with laser beams and solder it in a process that eliminates oxygen. The solder gun emits a carbonic gas,

Somoza: art that is "full of life" –



eliminating oxygen, and this is complicated, presenting the artist with a real challenge.

My work is rooted in Puerto Rico. It is Caribbean. And I would define it in two simple words: time and space. And energy. Because it is pure energy.

Noemi Ruíz: What Pablo says is very interesting. I imagine that it's the same in all countries, that artists deal with the same concepts. There are three concepts that interest me: rhythm, time and space. I believe that they are vital to man, and they are vital to us on the island of Puerto Rico. I believe that these concepts are evident in all of our works, but each of us takes a completely unique approach, as María Emilia said. In my painting, within these concepts of rhythm, time and space, I am interested in incorporating the heat of the tropics, the dynamics of the island, the strong sense of movement that I think is Puerto Rico. And all of this is reflected in my work, in Pablo's work, and in María Emilia's work – despite our distinct styles.

In my case, and I think this is true for both of them as well, the abstract style is the best way for me to express these concepts. I have always done abstract art. I started by doing realistic paintings, but my entire professional career has been in abstract art and expression.

Rubio: One important thing is that we were educated in Puerto Rico. Our work is Caribbean. Many people think that because I work with metal sculpture I studied in France or the United States, that this work was created there. But this work was created in Puerto Rico. It has a Caribbean flavor – the mountains, the peaks, the colors, the light, the force, the vegetation...

Somoza: I work on metal. Anyone familiar with the technique of etching knows that the surface is very hard – almost impenetrable. There is something interesting, in our judgment, about the works we have brought to show in São Paulo. The painter is using a material, acrylic, that is common today; the sculptor is using laser beams and aluminum; I am using hard materials. However, the final products are not cold. In



Ruíz: "the heat of the tropics"

fact, when we work with these materials, we produce things that are full of life.

We've been talking about technique, but you also seem to be expressing a sense of identity, even national identity. And thinking about Puerto Rico, the first thing that comes to mind is its condition as a colony of the United States. I would like to know two things: first, how colonialism affects your work as artists and what you produce; and, second, how it affects you in terms of working conditions, markets, etc.

Somoza: I think Puerto Rican artists develop without relying on international trends, from the U.S. or elsewhere. Puerto Rico is not very concerned with trends. I really believe that it is a type of art that responds honestly to a situation.

Still, there is no doubt that our colonial condition affects artists. But not in terms of influences of knowledge because we are able to keep up-to-date with what is happening not only in the United States but also in Hispanic America, Europe, etc.

Yet, it is very difficult for the Puerto Rican artist, for example, to participate in events like the São Paulo Biennial. Puerto Rico is small, and the larger countries have the most numerous delegations. They have more money to invest in their artists. They have embassies that provide them with support. Puerto Rican artists have to market their own work and have to search for promotional opportunities.

Pérez Ruiz: For example, when we needed to transport the works, we – along with the Puerto Rican Department of State, as it is called – approached the United States Consulate in São Paulo. The cultural attaché told us that it was not part of his job to deal with anything from Puerto Rico – and we Puerto Ricans are, not theoretically but in reality, North American citizens. How could he say this, if they consider us to be North American citizens?

Rubio: The same colonial problem keeps us from being invited to many biennials because the invitations are sent to the North American consulates or institutions, and the North Americans go. But they don't invite us.

Pérez Ruiz: So, we have excellent art that is being imprisoned and isolated.

Rubio: Many people are confused about our status. Here at the exhibition, someone came up to me and asked if the rays of my sculpture represented the colors of the North American flag. I said, "No, on the contrary, it is Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico – the Caribbean." In reality, they don't represent either of those things. But there is confusion over the political question.

Pérez Ruiz: This morning when we arrived at the Biennial, a woman was surprised that we were speaking Spanish because she thought that in Puerto Rico only English was spoken.

Noemi Ruíz: The problem is that we're in the air, we're neither here nor there.

Pérez Ruiz: At international events like this one, where the art of different countries is presented, we have the responsibility to include our work, but to what extent does this obligation represent a terrible sacrifice? To what extent do we have to go to bring a dignified delegation? We have to make sacrifices that I believe few countries have to make.

Somoza: It is important that all international invitations come directly to Puerto Rico without passing through



Rubio: "a Caribbean flavor" Photos: Maruska F. Rameck

the United States. As a representative of the Puerto Rican Museum of Contemporary Art, I encourage the organizers of these events to send invitations to us at the museum. We would gladly accept the task of selecting those artists who, on their merits, can represent our country. And, although we are a young institution, we will provide support to the extent that we are able. We are dedicated to assuring that our country is projected – and projected with a strong work, to show what is happening in our country.

Pérez Ruiz: The second part of your question addressed the market for Puerto Rican art. Puerto Rican art relies, principally, on the internal market – although it is a work that can be exhibited anywhere in the world, which is valid in any part of the world. But a tremendous amount of effort is necessary for Puerto Ricans to exhibit their work in galleries in the United States. I don't want to use the word discrimination because it rings too strong. But there is a separation. Although the artists may be good, as soon as it is known that they are Puerto Ricans, they are kept at an arm's length.

All of you are experienced artists, but you also work with young people as college professors. Based on this experience, can you tell me something about young ar-

tists in Puerto Rico?

Rubio: Within 10 years, a large number of young artists will emerge in Puerto Rico. Recently, an art museum was founded which will give young artists the opportunity to see various works. Five years ago Puerto Rico created modern cultural workshops, which I am in charge of, and they include the latest movements. This has created a sense of restlessness, and I believe that within 10 years new sculptors will emerge – and sculpture is the most difficult area. There are already lots of painters, but in sculpture, which is more complicated, harder to transport and sell, harder to execute in physical terms, I think it will take 10 years.

Noemi Ruíz: Our participation in the São Paulo Biennial is going to have a significant impact in Puerto Rico because we are professors at the island's most important universities, and all of the photographs we are taking and videos we are making will be shown there to the young people. And who knows? Maybe they'll have the same opportunity that we are having.

Pérez Ruiz: Since the 1960s, every 10 years a new generation has emerged. Now we are waiting for the generation of the 1990s. ●

Poetic Activism

Sajida al-Mousawi is a women's rights activist who writes poetry and defends the traditions of the Islamic faith

By Beatriz Bissio

Sajida Al-Mousawi is pregnant with her fourth child and her fifth book. The 39-year-old writer boasts a potent resumé: her poems have been translated into English, French and Spanish; she is editor of a magazine published by the Iraqi Federation of Women (IFW), a group that is affiliated with the the World Federation of Women; and she is secretary of the IFW Public



al-Mousawi: writer and women's leader

Relations and Information Department.

Sajida symbolizes the dual nature of present-day Iraq. On the one hand, she upholds the Islamic faith; on the other, she condemns those who, because of their fanatic or distorted interpretation of Islam, have contributed to its loss of prestige. She dresses in Western-style clothes and has picked up certain Western habits, but she admits that she would never allow her daughter or younger sisters to have pre-marital sex. She claims that Iraqis enjoy political freedom while agreeing that many of the country's poets and novelists have made social censorship and related behav-

ior a central theme in their work. Written in Arabic, her poems touch upon a wide variety of topics. Her latest work is an in-depth treatment of war – whose specter has overwhelmed the Gulf region for a decade.

During an interview with *third world* at the Baghdad headquarters of her magazine, Sajida proved both highly sensitive and intelligent. "As a woman," she said, "I was never harassed in any way, either in my journalism or my poetry. I always say and write whatever I please." She believes that her country is heading increasingly toward democracy, with freedom of opinion being encouraged at all levels – a process that is now facilitated by the precarious ceasefire with Iran.

She stressed that far reaching discussions are taking place on a range of subjects, including women's rights. Just prior to our interview, she met with the Iraqi minister of planning, at the request of the IFW Executive Board.

Her discussion with the minister focused on a set of specific issues. "Part of our campaign," she pointed out, "is to promote women's rights after they give birth. Our labor laws grant pregnant employees a six-month leave at full pay before they deliver, and another six months at half pay afterwards. But, as in capitalist countries, this privilege has become a double-edged sword in socialist-minded Iraq. Most companies – including state-owned enterprises – now avoid hiring women of reproductive age."

The IFW is now demanding that government offices and state-owned companies accept maternity as an additional task of women, especially as the government is encouraging an increase in the birthrate to address the population imbalance created by the war.

The problem is not restricted to the public sector. Although the so-called socialist sector offers the greatest benefits to women and hires the largest number of female employees, the number of women in the private sector has

been growing. In agriculture, for example, women account for 44 percent of the labor force. However, because of the new law on pregnant workers, private entrepreneurs are balking at hiring women.

The legacy of war – The subject of war dominates all conversations in Iraq, and our talk with Sajida was no different. She told us that during the eight years of conflict, Iraqi women assumed new responsibilities. Not only did they actively engage in defense work, but they also played leading roles in several areas of public administration, since most men were occupied on the battlefield. "Women had to do more than just replace men," she noted. "They had to work in hospitals, in mass organizations, and so on, forming secondary lines of defense, as it were."

Led by the circumstances of war, she said, "Women showed that they were capable of performing their traditional functions while replacing men in development work and meeting all of the country's wartime needs." As happened elsewhere under similar conditions, Sajida pointed out, women grew accustomed to doing several jobs at once – educating their children, filling the vacuum in public positions and – Sajida considers this fundamental – engaging in cultural activities, making art and poetry. "This way we helped men to go on defending the homeland and keep their morale high at the most difficult times. So strong was this feeling of resistance that many women prided themselves in having had a son killed in the war," she said. That feeling was helped along by government benefits – including automobiles and scholarships – that were granted to the families of soldiers killed in action.

The poor – One of the IFW's goals is to address the problems of what Sajida called "culturally deprived women, who we could say have a medium-level edu-

QUESTIONS

By Sajida al-Musawi

*"Who incited in the khaki
The color of the Lily,
The silky smoothness of water,
The odor of pistachio woods?
Who gave the khaki color,
The light of the sun,
The warmth of the sun,
The darkness of a dark night?
Who planted in your ribs
This heart?
Stronger than Iron it is in one day,
Lighter than the wing of a butterfly
in another,
Whoever planted in your heart a heart,
As large as the oceans of earth,
As spacious as the skies of
the Universe.*

*Who drew your heart's borders
Between Zakho and Fao,
Who?
Why is that, in my country alone,
The Almighty's sun rises from the East,
In my country alone,
The sun sets in the West,
While elsewhere,
Things are not,
Theories are upside-down,
Why?*

*What did the wind carry
Into your heart in that night?
What did al-Sayyab tell you
Under the flimsy light of the lantern?
Did he tell you to take care of
The children of Basra?*

*What did the soldier's mother
Put in that bundle?
What did she put in the white
plastic bag?
She put a throbbing heart...
Feelings
She put a throbbing soul,
Pastries,
She put pencils
So that he writes God's lesson,
And notebooks...
What will be left for the mother
When he leaves?
What is there to remain?*

*Who is that soldier
Who remained awake*



*For five nights and days
Without sleeping?
Who ever dropped salt into his eyes
To stand such an amazing
sleeplessness?
Who?*

*Which is more valuable?
A drop of effort,
A drop of blood,
A drop of tears,
Or a drop of love
Wherein the letters making up
your name,
O my homeland, is grouped?*

*Why did Bushra wash
Her plaits in the sun,
Why did Bushra spread out
Her ribbons on the rope?
Why did she defy the missile,
And stayed on the roof
Fondling its pussy-cat?*

*Who told the Imposter's Guards
That the Heaven keys
Do not lock
The God's door in their faces?*

*When the missile comes
Who will be there to
Record the birth
of millions of children,
Of hundreds of thousands of heroes?*

education. These women, and those of the poorer classes, are the hardest hit by the problems of post-war Iraq." The IFW holds political and educational courses, and provides training for rural women in professions like hairdressing, sewing and typing. When they graduate from the training program, the women receive IFW assistance in their job searches.

The organization also publishes pamphlets: some are purely didactic; others help women perform practical tasks like balancing the household budget and educating their children.

Public health is also a predominant concern of the women's federation. With the help of UNICEF and the cooperation of the ministry of education and daycare centers, the IFW is implementing a vaccination campaign. Eighty percent of this work is done in rural areas, where 125 IFW groups are in the field assisting women in 3,000 villages. More teams will be added in the future, with a goal of attending to 150,000 women.

Increasing the birthrate – A country emerging from a devastating war might be expected to try to boost its birthrate. But what about a woman who has already had several children? What are the policies on contraceptives and abortion?

Sajida told us that the population growth policy restricts the use of contraceptives to specific cases. Abortion has always been illegal, and is authorized only when the mother's life is at risk.

Adultery is a controversial subject in any society, but even more so where the Islamic *sharia* law applies. "In Muslim countries, adultery is banned on religious and legal grounds," noted Sajida, pointing out that penalties exist for both women and men, although they are difficult to enforce due to the legal requirement of four witnesses. "Adultery cannot be punished based on mere accusation. There must be witnesses, and witnesses to an adultery are hard to get. In other words, the law does not work in practice."

When asked about *sharia* in other Islamic countries, like Pakistan, where even the death penalty has been ap-



Entangled workplace: pregnancy leave is a motive for not hiring women

plied, Sajida said: "The problem is that there are many followers of Islam today who do not understand Islam. In some countries like Pakistan, the essence of the religion has been deformed, perhaps because of linguistic difficulties" – the later comment a reference to the fact that in some Islamic countries, the official language is not Arabic, the language in which the Koran, the holy book of Islam, was originally written.

On the topic of polygamy, Sajida said that there may be a few isolated cases in Iraq. However, according to Iraqi law, a man who plans to marry a second time must have his first wife's consent. Typically, this occurs when the first wife cannot bear children, in which case, in order to preserve their marriage, she must accept her husband's other wife. Divorce is legal in Iraq, and a woman can seek divorce on her own initiative. However, Sajida noted that Iraqi society is very conservative in this regard, and that divorce is often frowned upon.

Sexual repression – Since Sajida seemed willing to discuss almost any topic, we asked her about sexual repression in Iraq, referring to some Iraqi short stories on the theme. She replied that the limits of sexual freedom and repression are being reviewed the world over, and not only in Islamic societies. "In part, sexual repression is discussed in certain short stories because it is much more appealing as a literary theme than a normal relationship between a married couple. Lacking any other kind of repression – there is no political repres-

sion in Iraq – authors turn to the subject of sexual repression among women." Sajida admitted that the problem exists in Iraq as it does everywhere, adding that tradition, education, the family, social and religious practices all play a major role.

One point she emphasized was that "There is no sexual licentiousness in Iraq. Iraqi society is controlled by religious tenets. Rather than being a problem, this a positive thing – especially at a time in history when the process of sexual freedom is being reversed in some of the most liberal Western countries, where people are becoming aware of the dangers of total sexual freedom, particularly since AIDS came into the picture."

Sajida believes, however, that sexual repression is not total: in today's Iraq, a woman can choose her husband-to-be, select her friends, and enter into a relationship without social or family interference. Pre-marital sex, however, is forbidden, or at least disapproved. "I met my husband in college, and he was my fiancé for several years. This was 20 years ago, but I never had any problem, despite my family's religious fervor. I find it normal that my daughter or younger sisters should have a relationship with the men they choose, provided they intend to marry and establish a family. I would not permit them to have sexual relations prior to marriage. This feeling is common to both Muslims and Christians. It has nothing to do with religion. It has to do with our social structure."

The New Foreign Investors

With a glimmer of light at the end of Central America's long tunnel of war, the region has suddenly begun to attract interest from Western European and East Asian investors

European and Asian nations are positioning themselves to compete with the United States for Central America's resources and attention in the 1990s.

Long considered Washington's undisputed backyard, the five countries of Central America — Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica — are finding themselves courted by diplomats and businessmen of the European Economic Community (EEC). They are also receiving new aid from Japan and entering into economic ventures with Taiwan and South Korea.

"Western Europe is challenging the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America as a whole, and Central America is a test case within that challenge," said one European ambassador.

The region's 25 million inhabitants, slowly being freed from the wars that gripped them during the 1980s, are a potential market for the 12 European countries which unite economically in 1992. Asian producers already sell more cars here, for instance, than do U.S. manufacturers.

Besides commercial interests, countries across both seas appear to be eyeing this region as a place to establish more political influence. A look at the map shows why the United States will remain the most important outside power in the lives of Central Americans. Nevertheless, other countries clearly want a piece of the action.

"The Japanese are restless now, trying to shape a foreign policy of their own, even in Central America," predicts a European diplomat with experience in several Latin countries. "Europeans, too, want political importance commensurate with our economic importance, and Central America is symbolic of this."



Royal Reception: Nicaragua's Ortega with Belgium's King Baudouin



Spanish President Felipe Gonzalez (left) with Costa Rica's Arias

The new overseas interest in Central America comes at a time when bilateral relations between the United States and countries in the region are marked by distance, frustration, and worse.

U.S. military aid to Guatemala, for instance, was cut off in 1977 after human rights abuses by a military regime, and has been renewed only in the amount of US\$9.5 million, despite lobbying by officials of Guatemala's freely

elected civilian government in place since 1986.

Honduras, which was flooded with U.S. aid as long as it played host to U.S.-supported *contras*, complains now that Washington is holding back US\$75 million in congressionally approved funds pending economic reform — just at the moment when Honduras says the *contras* must leave its territory.

Despite the disapproval of Washing-

ton, Nobel Peace Prizewinner President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica is nursing a plan that is bringing peace to the region without isolating Nicaragua. Even in El Salvador, the rightwing National Republican Alliance (ARENA) party won the presidency with a campaign that sometimes included U.S. bashing and calls for Washington to keep hands off internal affairs.

The most visible U.S. policy in the 1980s – the attempt to bring down the Sandinistas in Nicaragua – is the failed policy of the Ronald Reagan years. "While (U.S. President George) Bush and (U.S. Secretary of State James) Baker are more pragmatic, we're not sure yet what replaces it," said a Guatemalan official.

If U.S. policy is now uncertain, the aims of the Europeans are clearer. They strongly support the Arias plan, regional integration that includes Nicaragua, post-war reconstruction, the creation of a Central American parliament, and eventually a regional common market.

EEC economic aid to Central America is currently about US\$100 million a year – about half to Nicaragua. European bilateral aid brings the total up to US\$150 million. Sweden, for one, gives more of its foreign aid budget to Nicaragua than to any other country. By including Nicaragua in aid programs, Europe stands in contrast to Washington which not only gives no foreign aid to Nicaragua but specifically prohibits the inclusion of Nicaragua in certain U.S.-funded programs such as environmental protection or the training of journalists.

"Western Europe thinks the Sandinista revolution in general is a viable thing, that it is possible to develop a kind of Nicaragua capable of coexisting with the rest of Central America," offered one European diplomat.

The amount of European aid to Central America is still small compared to U.S. assistance – US\$1.5 million in military and economic aid a day to El Salvador alone. But the difference is that European money puts pressure on individual countries to end the conflicts that have cost more than 100,000 lives in the last decade.

"The idea among Central Americans now is if we don't agree with each other,

we're going to lose that aid," said Julio Martini, Guatemala's vice foreign minister.

Probably the most massive economic incentive to peace in the region right now is a US\$4.3 billion United Nations Development Program plan for the five countries, strongly pushed by Europeans. The plan includes help to resettle some half a million refugees, recovering from what U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar calls "Latin America's lost decade."

"This is a kind of Marshall Plan for Central America which we cannot implement without social and political peace," said U.N. spokesman Mario Zamorano.

Asian countries, meanwhile, are being viewed as a model and source of development aid.

Alfredo Cesar, a former president of Nicaragua's Central Bank and leading member of the opposition coalition, holds a typical view. "Relations with Japan should be very close," said Cesar in an interview in Managua. "We want them to do here what they did with the four tigers."

The Sandinistas want close relations too. In recent months the government has been talking to Tokyo about the possibility of a Nicaragua passage – a canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. A Japanese technical mission recently completed a feasibility study on the canal's construction, although its conclusions have not been made public.

Before arriving in Tegucigalpa two years ago, Japanese diplomat Toshira Nakamura said he "didn't know where Honduras was, and most Japanese don't know much about Central America either." Now Nakamura's embassy is ready to deliver US\$50 million to Honduras, pending the reforms Washington has called for.

Japan is a major customer for Nicaraguan cotton, precious wood from Honduras and Guatemala, and fish throughout the region. Where once travelers to small rural villages in Honduras and Guatemala might meet U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, now they also meet young Japan Overseas Cooperation volunteers speaking Spanish, and working in grassroots agriculture and health projects.



The contras: Reagan's failure

Guatemala, the biggest and most diverse economy in the region, is moving closer to investors from Taiwan. Some 26 South Korean factories employ 7,000 Guatemalans, many manufacturing clothes for export to the U.S.

Ironically, the South Koreans are benefitting from the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a U.S. program of special trade considerations set up during the Reagan Administration to encourage imports from Central America and the Caribbean.

During an interview, Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo said his country was making some military purchases from Jordan after years of buying from the United States and then Israel. The coming decade, he predicted, would see more diversity in trading partners and alliances than in decades past.

"We prefer to vary our relations," he said.

Mary Jo McConahay

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ZIMBABWE PRESS MIRROR – As stated on the cover, this is “a fortnightly selection from the press on Zimbabwe.” All the news that’s fit to cut, paste and photocopy in 12 pages – covering subjects like local scandals, politics, housing and property, industrial relations, art, and health. Once in a while, even selected advertisements are included. A good way for those interested in Zimbabwe to keep track of events in that country without resorting to the difficult task of obtaining local newspapers, Zimbabwe Project Trust, P.O. Box 4111, Harare, Zimbabwe.

KAIF NEWSLETTER – This single-spaced newsletter of a half-dozen pages is the organ of the underground Kenya Anti-Imperialist Front (KAIF), a group opposed to the government of President Daniel Arap Moi. A recent special issue sported the imposing title: “Presidential Decrees for Murders in Violation of National and International Laws and Principles of Democracy: Moi’s Fascistic Measures to ‘Protect’ Wild Animals and Tourists.” Quoting local press reports, the newsletter states that KAIF supports measures to protect wildlife but claims that Moi’s anti-poaching shoot-to-kill policy has only resulted in the deaths of

innocent persons or poor employees of rich wildlife traffickers. It quotes Moi as admitting that the real dealers in ivory elephant tusks and goods made from rhinoceroses are “a few greedy, wealthy Kenyans.” KAIF, S. Gutto, Box 24, S-615 00 Valdemarsvik, Sweden.

HAITI REPORT/HAITI PROGRES – *Haiti Report* is a monthly newsletter in English produced by the publishers of the weekly French language newspaper *Haiti Progres*. Both are put out by the Committee Against Repression in Haiti, an opposition exile group based in New York. Besides providing up-to-date details on Haitian politics and popular mobilization, the publications attempt to counteract what the *Haiti Report* called “Sensationalist, cynical, and condescending...articles (that) depict a rudderless ‘banana republic,’ which, without a ruthless dictator at the helm, is lurching from crisis to crisis toward total anarchy.” Committee Against Repression in Haiti, 1398 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210, U.S.A.

ADC TIMES – This newsletter presents “news and opinions of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.” The committee was founded by former

U.S. Senator James Abourezk to unite North Americans of Arab descent like himself behind the goal of eliminating discrimination against the ethnic group and improving the image of Arabs in the U.S. media. Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, U.S.A.

ADC ISSUE PAPERS – The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee Research Institute periodically publishes pamphlets on issues it considers of special significance. Issue Papers 21 and 22, released in 1988, take radically different approaches to similar issues. “American Public Opinion and the Question of Palestine: An Analysis of Changes in American Views Based on Polls Taken from 1978-1988” is a brief but academic look into the subject by political scientist Fourad Moughrabi. On the other hand, “The Uprising in Cartoons: North American Political Cartoonists Look at the Palestinian Uprising” reprints over 50 editorial cartoons that appeared in the U.S. press depicting the Palestinian *intifadah* in 1988. Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, 4201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20008, U.S.A.

Sustaining What Development?

An alternative energy conference blazes a new path to "develop sustainability"

By Geraldo Franco

The term "sustainable development" had two distinct meanings during September in Montreal, Canada. It all depended on which conference you were attending – the 14th World Energy Conference or the alternative Green Energy Conference.

"Both conferences are talking about sustainable development," explained H'ne Lajambe, speaking for the Greens. "But we don't mean the same thing. The World Energy Conference is apparently dedicated to merely sustaining development, while we are committed to a far more challenging task – developing sustainability."

To symbolize their differences with the "power conference," while demonstrating that they harbored no ill will, the 250 Greens presented a gift to the official group – a Hiroshima survivor, a full-grown young Oink tree. As expected, the "powers that be" rejected the offering.

The alternative conference, organized by a coalition of Canadian groups, included several innovative thinkers and activists from around the world. Among them were Bolivian inventor Francisco Pacheco, a man in his late 60s who displayed his patented hydrogen-producing equipment; Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute, a physicist and 1983 winner of the Right to Livelihood Award (the alternative Nobel Prize); A.K.N. Reddy, professor at the Bangalore Institute in India and coauthor of *Energy for a Sustainable World*, a landmark study of the future of energy; and Jim Bohlen, an environmental activist from British Columbia, Canada, an engineer by trade who works with solar

power and is a cofounder of the Canadian Greenpeace.

Lovins' brainchild is the NEGAWATT Revolution. He has redefined the energy shortage problem by taking into consideration renewable soft technologies and variables like raw materials, suppliers and the eventual use of the energy. In his paradigm, energy is not a staple good but a service. In part, he plans to make power-guzzling motors, lamps, appliances and other equipment more efficient through correct lubrication and mechanical adjustments.

The NEGAWATT Revolution may bring about the proverbial reinvention of the wheel sought by the Third Millennium survivors. Author in the 1970s of the trenchant article "Soft Energy Paths: the Road not Taken" in *Foreign Affairs*, the official organ of the U.S. State Department, Lovins confided that he needed the help of some subversive friends within the U.S. "alternative power structure" to get the piece published. Nearly two decades later, his predictions are coming to pass.

Saving energy is much like eating a lobster, explains Lovins. You have to find the meat in hidden crevices. He proposes a series of technocultural revolutions to use energy efficiently rather than burn it randomly. Saving energy, say Lovins and his staff of scientists, is cheaper than producing more. That simply, is the NEGAWATT Revolution.

In the U.S., cost constraints have forced many industries to move in this direction. Lovins contends that national farming and forestry policies are also necessary. If adequately planned, he maintains, this new approach can be as profitable as today's haphazard practices. Thus, environmental and economic necessities dovetail into a single set of priorities.



Sustainable: solar water treatment

A.K.N. Reddy spoke of his experience in India's Karnataka state, whose capital Bangalore occasionally faces man-made energy crunches. Needed economic growth means added energy consumption, requiring energy production that, in turn, needs adequate financial support – not always existent – and, worse, environmental disruption. It is easy to become a prisoner of the demand curve and pose the question as "development versus environment." But Reddy and others are proposing a solution to the quandary of development toward degradation – a new paradigm for environmental soundness using new mathematical and statistical curves of need satisfaction.

In Karnataka, the originally estimated 32-gigawatt requirement was reduced to less than 14 gigawatts using the new approach. That eliminated the need for costly imported nuclear power plants or ineffective megaprojects.

Canadian Jim Bohlen argues that we cannot leave a legacy of problems for our children. Nuclear power, for example, is part of World War II's fallout, and it must be returned to the Pandora's box from which it emerged. A developed society must exert a large degree of self-restraint – in contrast to the current consumerist mode. He proposes a change in thinking that would respect the ecosystem, including all animals, and derides certain world leaders like Britain's Margaret Thatcher who put up ecology-loving façades while supporting megaprojects behind the scenes.

Transition from an unsustainable past to a sustainable future will require many creative and resourceful thinkers and practitioners, as well as massive support for soft energy production. Bohlen calls for a non-violent revolution, one that is philosophically green and politically mean. ●



Locomotives of history: the successor to Villa's freedom train and the computer-propelled information technology

In Pancho Villa's "Rail-steps"

Mexican revolutionaries turned that capitalist tool, the railroad, against their oppressors. Third World activists must follow suit with computers

*By Roberto Remo Bissio**

In early 1914, Mexican peasant revolutionary armies in the northern state of Sonora (bordering the U.S. state of Arizona) were marching southward from Hermosillo to Guaymas in their fight against the U.S. backed "federal" government of Victoriano Huerta.

Pancho Villa, Álvaro Obregón and other revolutionary generals marched by train. They used the very same North American and British-built railroads that in the previous three decades had driven capitalism into the Mexican countryside, forcing thousands of peasants into starvation or forced labor; now they were carrying peasant freedom fighters, their arms, their horses and their women. (It was a people's war, and no people's war was ever fought without the participation of women.)

But the federals had a strong hold on the town of Empalme, smack in the middle of the route to Mexico City. To

attack and take Empalme would take precious weeks, lives and ammunition — three scarce resources.

Abandoning the train and continuing on horseback through the desert would have created insurmountable obstacles. The revolutionaries solved the problem by making the train pass by the town instead of through it. They took 500 meters of tracks that they had already traversed and placed them in front of them; the locomotives advanced little by little as the procedure was constantly repeated. Terrain had to be leveled and water tanks were built on the 10-mile loop. But it took just 15 days for the revolutionary troops to circumvent the city and continue the march — without firing a shot.

The leaders of the convoy probably would have never thought of leading a train to where there were no rails if they were not illiterates with little knowledge of the logic of the machines. According to Adolfo Gilly, "When the train took normal rails again, it had materialized, in a peculiar Mexican way, Marx's saying that revolutions are the

locomotives of history and they may pull trains where there are no rails."

The modern information and telecommunication technologies placed options before us in Latin America that are reminiscent of those Villa had. Microelectronics plays in the last quarter of the 20th century the role that trains played 100 years ago: as tools of foreign domination, they are a consequence and a cause of the concentration of capital and power, encroaching upon national independence and adding to the misery of the people.

So, shall we condemn the instrument or learn to make it a tool for our struggles?

The Third World probably would be better off if there were no computers — and no trains, for that matter. Ecologically sound ways of living were firmly established in America when Columbus arrived half a millennium ago. The Quechuas had an advanced computing system — quipus, where bits and bytes were knots (or the absence of them) — that allowed them to control food distribu-

* Roberto Remo Bissio is the editor of the Third World Guide. This article is a revised and updated version of an idea first presented in Penang, Malaysia, at November 1986 at the Conference on The Crisis in Modern Science, organized by the Third World Network and the Consumers' Association of Penang.



Pancho Villa: turning the rails

tion for 15 million people, roughly equivalent to the number of malnourished people in today's Peru. And they were also familiar with the wheel - but wise enough to use it only in children toys.

Still, horses, trains and computers are here. The flow of data across borders allowed banks to spirit five billion dollars out of Mexico in two days in 1980. Mainframe computers allowed the military in my country, Uruguay, to classify *all* of its three million citizens into categories of loyal, neutral (and thus potentially suspect), and enemy. After redemocratization in the 1980s, the files have yet to be found by the civilian government, not to mention eliminated.

But computers have no ideological bias. Under the threat of a military coup, the Uruguayan parliament granted amnesty to those accused of human rights abuses. Computer technology was thus mobilized for another task - support of the petition campaign to overturn the amnesty law. The fact that over 25 percent of the Uruguayan electorate signed petitions is partially to the credit of a dozen personal computers and a group of committed computer experts.

feminists, members of cooperatives, scholars) and a national network is in the planning stages. Our major difficulty is not to convince the poor farmers federation that PCs may be of use to them, but to persuade First World donors that an AT compatible might indeed be appropriate technology for those agriculturalists.

Yes. Global electronic data flow is the nervous system of present-day transnational capitalism, as railroads were the veins of 19th-century imperialism. But since they are here, we still might find some use for them, as Villa did with the locomotive. Particularly if we have the ingenuity to circumvent established procedures and make them work according to our own needs.

Villa eventually won many battles, the revolutionaries won the war, but the peasants ultimately "lost the peace." Among the reasons was that their leaders had no idea of what to do with the trains - and the economy and social relations they carried - after the war.

If we can look at new technologies in new ways, like Villa did, they might speed up our march. But it is up to us to determine where that march will lead. •

ADOPT A SCHOOL

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**CONOZCO A LAS TRES
(I KNOW ALL THREE)**

55 minutes/Color/1983
3/4- or 1/2-inch videotape
Directed by Maryse Sistach
Available through Zafra
225 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012, USA

This is a sensitive story of a trio of women whose friendship of humor and solidarity is the backbone of their vital search for independence from the constraints placed on them as females. The setting is contemporary Mexico, where the three are subjected to the reality of traditional chauvinism, the infamous *machismo*. (Spanish with English subtitles.)

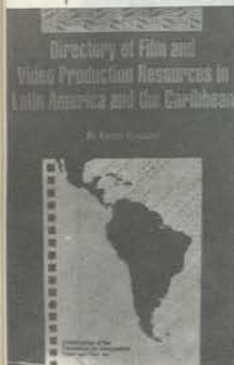
**LUGARES COMUNES
(COMMON PLACES)**

20 minutes/1983
16-millimeter film
Directed by Lillian Liberman
Available through Zafra
82 Leonardo DeVince
Mixocac 03910 - Mexico, D.F., Mexico

The school project of a feminist film

**DIRECTORY OF FILM AND VIDEO
PRODUCTION RESOURCES IN
LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN**

By Karen Ranucci
FIVE, Inc.
625 Broadway, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10012 - U.S.A.



This all but comprehensive indexed guide is a must for anyone planning to produce a film or video in Latin America. It lists film archives, broadcasters, distributors, exhibitors, federations, festival organizers, laboratories, "information providers," instructors and schools, producers,

student, this work examines the reality of life for Mexican women by contrasting the stories of two women from different social classes. One lives out her middle class existence waiting for her husband to come home from work. The other is a young secretary from a working class family who repeats the daily ritual of taking the bus to and from work. She comes to the realization that the only way out of this endless cycle is through marriage. (Spanish with English subtitles.)

AMAS DE CASA (HOUSEWIVES)

5 minutes/1984
Videotape
Produced by the Colectivo Cine Mujer
Available through Zafra
82 Leonardo DeVince
Mixocac 03910 - Mexico, D.F., Mexico

Women from one of the city's many cardboard villages act out a familiar situation. A neighbor, late with the rent, is being evicted. The entire community bands together to help her defy the court eviction order. This tape has been used as an organizing tool by a housewives association. (Spanish with English subtitles.)

publications, suppliers, transfer facilities, and those ever necessary repair persons in 29 countries. The directory also provides information about governmental requirements for foreigners who want to tape or film in the region. An introduction answers the question, "What is the purpose of this project?" The author states bluntly that "This directory was created to help build bridges between media communities in the North and the South." Hopefully, the book will be made accessible to Third World producers as well as to those in the North. Since the flow of information between countries of the South is often more like a clogged drain, it is these filmmakers who are most in need of a plunger like this directory. Video and film producers will be happy to know that similar guides on Africa and Asia are in the works.

NUESTRO TEQUITO (OUR TEQUITO)

10 minutes/1984
Videotape
Available through Zafra
82 Leonardo DeVince
Mixocac 03910 Mexico, D.F., Mexico

The Zapotecas are indigenous people from the state of Oaxaca. In the mid-1980s four young Zapotecas formed their own video production group using Betamax 1/2-inch equipment. They produce programs about their customs and institutions, as well as the political situations facing their villages. *Nuestro Tequito* is a documentary about the Indian custom of joining together one day a week to work on a community project. In Yalalag, the people had been working for three years to restore their city hall building. The video captures one of the "Tequito" days, as hundreds of people from the region gather to put a new roof on the building. (Spanish with English subtitles.)

EL TRIUNFO (THE TRIUMPH)

15 minutes/1985
Videotape
Produced by Video Servicios
Available through Zafra
82 Leonardo DeVince
Mixocac 03910
Mexico, D.F., Mexico

This tape was made for environmentalists as a tool in their fight to save the rainforests. It examines the reasons behind deforestation and shows a wildlife reserve.

VIDEO ROAD

10 minutes/1985
Super 8 and Videotape
Directed by Sara Minter
Available through Zafra
82 Leonardo DeVince
Mixocac 03910
Mexico, D.F., Mexico

This work documents a cross-country trip. It was filmed in super 8 and edited in video and serves as a prelude to the director's current project on Mexican punk rock street gangs.

Exporting Irresponsibility

Evidence continues to emerge of rich countries dumping their toxic wastes in the South – this time in Latin America and the Caribbean

By Diane K Bartz*

Chicago Tribune. Guinea Bissau has accepted "waste for US\$40 per ton."

In 1980, 12 companies notified the EPA that they intended to export hazardous waste. By 1987 the number had grown to 465, with officials estimating between 550 and 575 for 1988. This represents only legally exported waste, most of which is sent to Canada and Mexico.

But EPA Inspector General John Martin told the U.S. Congress last July that firms have shipped hundreds of tons of toxic materials abroad without notifying U.S. government officials whose job it is to ensure that the countries which accept the waste will dispose of it safely.

"Our review of the agency's program to control the exports of hazardous waste showed that the program needed major improvements," he said. "It is a program in shambles."

The case of Guyana – In one case, two California-based firms, Pott Industries and Teixeira Farms International, formed the Guyana Resource Company (GRC) in partnership with the government of Guyana to build an industrial waste incinerator to burn over 60,000 tons annually of industrial oil and paint sludge, waste their companies created.

In September 1988, however, the Guyanese government reversed its decision and rejected its own application to build the plant, causing the firm to pull out of the country after investing some US\$250,000 in the waste scheme.

Public opposition to the disposal plan had been fierce. Several environmental activists began hunger strikes and Guyana's Anglican Bishop Randolph George denounced the plan as "a money deal, like drugs."

An angry President Desmond Hoyte described the California firms' owners as "unscrupulous" in an interview last fall. He also said his government had



Drums: playing an imported tune

"no intention of importing any waste into our country, toxic or otherwise."

Belize also reportedly rejected the Pott/Teixeira plan in June 1988.

As part of its lobbying efforts, GRC hired American Environmental Audit, another California firm, to prepare a report it could use to sell the program to Congress, which was then considering proposals to curb or ban outright the dumping of waste in Third World countries. The report described the GRC plant as a boon for everyone involved.

But Jonathan Puth, an aide to U.S. Representative John Conyers, was unconvinced. "I am skeptical of any plan which seeks to take advantage of lax environmental regulations," he said. "The basic question is if it's so environmentally sound, why not do it closer to home?"

* Third World Network Features/Report on the Americas. Diane K. Bartz is a Washington-based journalist specializing in Latin American affairs.

An Italian waste disposal firm named Jelly Wax deposited more than 2,000 tons of leaky, corroded barrels near Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, in April 1987. Four months later, when area residents began complaining of skin sores, the government's environment ministry took notice. The barrels turned out to contain a witch's brew of chlorinated solvents, pesticide residues and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls).

An official at the Venezuela Embassy in Washington said, "It was deposited... without proper permission or knowledge, and was not labeled properly." Although Jelly Wax arranged for the waste to be removed, an incensed Venezuelan Congress promptly passed legislation prohibiting the importation of hazardous waste.

In May 1987, the 13-member economic association of English-speaking Caribbean countries, stated its opposition to toxic imports by any Caribbean nation. Thirty-nine Latin American and Caribbean nations – including Belize, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Peru, Saint Lucia and Venezuela – have banned waste imports.

But the shortage of landfill sites and the existence of local environmental regulations which push up the cost of waste disposal in the United States continue to encourage industries and communities to look abroad for places to dump their garbage. Between 1986 and 1988, more than 3.6 million tons of waste were shipped from rich countries to the Third World.

"It costs them from US\$250 to US\$300 per ton to dispose of wastes in the United States under the new regulations," Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Wendy Grieder told the

ENVIRONMENT

In the last congressional session, Conyers sponsored legislation banning the export of waste of sludge to any country, except Canada or Mexico. That bill is being rewritten to stiffen the proposed regulations and to include Canada and Mexico. The new legislation would establish a permit process, with a public hearing and a permit fee which Puth hopes will be "prohibitively high."

Puth said the new proposal had attracted bipartisan support. Even President George Bush, in a March statement, said he would push for "new legislation that will give the United States government authority to ban all exports of hazardous waste, except where we have an agreement with the receiving country providing for the safe handling and management of those wastes."

Even if regulations are stiffened, experience has shown that greedy corporations will still be able to find counterparts in Third World countries to act as their go-betweens.

Haiti: Philly's bitter garbage - Haiti's bitter experience with garbage from the U.S. city of Philadelphia is a case in point. Paolino and Sons, a Philadelphia-based firm, paid the Liberian-flagged ship *Khian Sea* to haul away 13,476 tons of toxic incinerator ash in August 1986. Samples of the ash showed it contained arsenic, barium, cadmium, lead, mercury and two different types of dioxins - between 0.184 and 4.7 parts per billion.

Captain Konstantinos Samos signed a cargo declaration identifying the load as "non-toxic, non-hazardous, non-flammable incinerator ash." In March 1987, the ship's owner, Amalgamated Shipping, tried to cut a deal with Honduras through Honduran promoter Edgardo Pacall.

Pacall told Tegucigalpa the ash was "neither toxic nor dangerous, and was an excellent material for landfills in low-lying zones and swampy areas." Honduras refused Amalgamated's offer to sell the ash for US\$22,000.

The Bahamas, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic and Guinea Bissau also rejected the load. In October 1987, after 14 months on the high seas, Felix and Antonio Paul, the brothers of late indicted drug trafficker Colonel Jean-



A dump in California: the First World is running out of trash space

Claude Paul, persuaded the Haitian Commerce Department to allow them to import the toxic ash, which they said was fertilizer.

The *Khian Sea* dumped 3,000 of the 13,000 tons of ash on a peninsula near the city of Gonaives in late January 1988. Port-au-Prince soon caught on and demanded the waste be reloaded onto the ship and threatened to prosecute those responsible for the dumping.

According to Jim Vallete of the environmental organization Greenpeace, the ash is still there. "Some has been repacked in barrels but most is still in a pile," he said. "Some is uncovered, some is covered."

The pile may contain 210,000 pounds of toxic heavy metals, including lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic. Much of the waste is near the sea and some is being lapped into the ocean. Although the peninsula is lightly populated, there is a small village only a few hundred yards downwind.

Environmental groups in Haiti are persisting in their efforts to get the waste removed. A representative of the Friends of Nature Federation met with Minister of Public Works Franck Paultre in December 1988 to discuss the waste while two grassroots organizations, the Christian Workers Youth and a second church group, organized anti-dumping protests.

The independent Radio Soleil's Go-

naives correspondent, Jean Bouchereau Joseph, visited the dump site in early December. "We saw many dead goats and found many people in the area who had respiratory problems and numerous large lesions," he reported.

Peru: a giant garbage park? - In Peru, the U.S.-based firm, American Security International (ASI), offered the city of Pisco, some 100 miles south of Lima, US\$400 million for the rights to build a toxic processing plant near the Paracas National Park. Felipe Benavides, president of the Peruvian National Conservation Federation, denounced the scheme as a plan to turn the park into a "giant garbage dump" and warned it would endanger local plants and wildlife.

ASI, which accepts radioactive and chemical waste from U.S. and European companies, signed a similar agreement with the northern Peruvian city of Paita. But public opposition to the deal forced the city to back out. Benavides said Paraguay had agreed to accept waste from ASI, while Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela rejected similar deals.

Honduras is considering allowing International Asphalt and Petroleum, a U.S. firm, to build an incinerator near the rainforest at Gracias a Dios. According to Pat Costner, a Greenpeace researcher who has studied the plan, the facility would be used to burn 1.8 million pounds of waste annually, posing

"significant risks to the public and the environment."

In December 1988, a subsidiary of Navarete International, NCTB Inc. of New Jersey, filed an application with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation to build a station to transfer up to 1,000 cubic yards of asbestos daily to Guatemala, saying the asbestos would be used to manufacture brake linings. The subsidiary also produced a letter from the Guatemalan government approving the plan.

Neil Gorfinkel of the White Lung Association, an asbestos watchdog organization, points out that the amount of asbestos slated for shipping so far exceeds the amount Guatemala could use to produce brake linings. He believes the asbestos comes from clean-up sites and will be dumped.

Such abuses should put Mexico and Canada on edge because their long, porous borders with the United States make detecting illegal waste exports extremely difficult. The Mexican government has banned importing waste for dis-

posal, but allows it for recycling. Greenpeace suspects it may be "sham recycling."

"We know that tens of thousands of tons of steel furnace dust, which has extremely high levels of heavy metals, have been shipped to Mexico," says Vallete. "There may be some reclamation of lead, but you're left with a highly toxic residue which should really be shipped back to the United States. Customs officials don't pay attention."

The EPA's Wendy Grieder disagrees, cautioning, "We have very little evidence of the illegal export of large quantities of waste. None of that information has made itself public." But, she added, "I'm not saying it's not happening."

Regulating what should be banned -

Following the Jelly Wax debacle in 1987, Venezuela decided to spearhead the fight for a global treaty banning all international traffic in toxic trash. In March 1989, following 18 months of negotiations, 105 members of the U.N. Environmental Program, based in Nai-

robi, Kenya, signed an accord which establishes some controls over toxic waste exports.

Early on, Third World countries appeared determined to draft an agreement which would ban all hazardous waste exports. But industrialized countries argued that a ban would stifle free trade. Not only did they successfully limit the document to simple regulation of the waste trade but, as the signing date drew near, the developed countries worked to weaken even those controls.

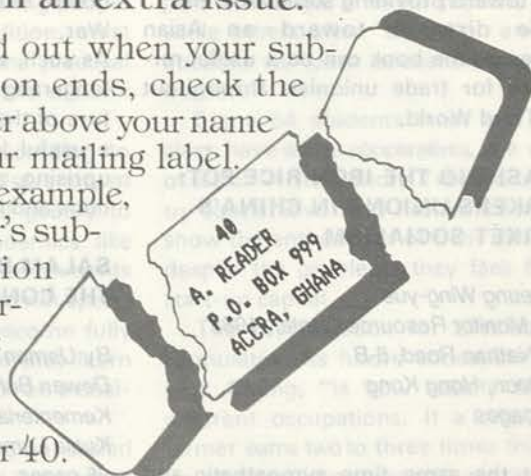
The final draft was a disappointment to many who argued that regulation implicitly legitimizes a practice that should be ended. Washington endorsed the final agreement but was one of only 11 countries which did not sign it.

The United States sees Latin America and the Caribbean as a cheap dumping ground for its wastes. As tighter environmental regulations and growing volume drive up the price of legal disposal methods, "the export of irresponsibility," as U.S. Representative Conyers puts it, is bound to increase.



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**PARTNERS OR PREDATORS:
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONISM
AND ASIA**

By Dave Spooner
Asia Monitor Resource Center, 1989
444 Nathan Road, 8-B
Kowloon, Hong Kong
108 pages

In 1987 and 1988, new democratic labor movements emerged in South Korea and Taiwan. These unions were immediately besieged by contacts from international organizations. Asian labor activists began to ask themselves, "Who are these organizations?" and "What are their roles and their motives?" As national trade unions widen their contacts in response to economic internationalization, such questions have become fundamental. While the publishers admit that they make no attempt to be comprehensive, this book is a good first step toward providing some answers. While directed toward an Asian audience, the book can be a useful reference for trade unionists throughout the Third World.

**SMASHING THE IRON RICE POT:
WORKERS UNIONS IN CHINA'S
MARKET SOCIALISM**

By Leung Wing-yue
Asia Monitor Resource Center, 1988
444 Nathan Road, 8-B
Kowloon, Hong Kong
233 pages

At the same time sympathetic and critical of modern urban Chinese trade unionism, this book is the result of detailed research and interviews inside China. Designed as a primer for trade unionists in other parts of the world, the

research that eventually led to the book was initiated at the request of a union in the Philippines, where workers were threatened with job losses due to a run-away plant headed for China. Sections are included on the history of the Chinese labor movement, reforms, wage and labor systems, and the role of trade unions in social change. Special emphasis is given to foreign investment and the special economic zones.

**MIN-JO NO-JO: SOUTH KOREA'S
NEW TRADE UNIONS**

Asia Monitor Resource Center, 1987
444 Nathan Road, 8-B
Kowloon, Hong Kong
101 pages

A thorough guide to labor relations and trade unions in South Korea, based on information culled at the height of the mid-1987 strike wave, the peak period of industrial action since the Korean War. As such, the book cannot give us a true long-range perspective on the future of the movement, but does provide a useful look into its history, the 1987 uprising, and issues like working conditions and labor law in South Korea.

**SALAM BENUA: GREETINGS TO
THE CONTINENT**

By Usman Awang
Dewan Bahasa Dan Putstaka, 1986
Kementerian Pelajaran
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
95 pages

A bilingual collection of poetry by one of Malaysia's best known writers. His poetry, above all, reflects his humanism, categorized by some as romanti-

cism. This humanism is reflected in poems that take on a political tinge - addressing poverty, war, and national and international events.

**TOXIC TERROR: DUMPING
OF HAZARDOUS WASTES IN THE
THIRD WORLD**

Third World Network, 1988
87, Cantonment Road
10250 Penang, Malaysia
132 pages

No group is better qualified to publish a book on toxic waste in the Third World than the Third World Network. The issue is one of the organization's specialties, and has been for some time. This volume is a collection of articles, many of which are reproduced from newspapers and magazines. Topics include "Third World as a Dump," "Lessons from the First World," "What is Toxic Waste," and "Laws and Policies to Control Waste."

**IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON
DEVELOPMENT AND
DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOUR:
CASE STUDIES IN SEVEN THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIES**

Edited by Carol Vlassoff and
Barkat-e-Khuda
International Development
Research Centre, 1988
P.O. Box 8500
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

A series of studies on demographic behavior in the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India, Colombia, Argentina and Peru. Like any good book adhering to the demands of academic rigor, this one is replete with explanations of the researchers' methodologies. Contributors include Barkat-e-Khuda, an economics professor at Dhaka University; Colombian health specialist Diego Giraldo Samper; Floreal Forni and Roberto Benencia of the Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales in Argentina; and Carlos E. Aramburú of the Instituto Andino de Estudios en Población y Desarrollo in Peru.

Learning for a Living

Tens of thousands of school-leavers face the prospect of unemployment. An innovative school offers a way out of the dilemma with a practical curriculum geared to earning a living and self-employment

By Colleen Lowe Morna*

career was compulsory for the rich, minority white population. Not surprisingly, black students viewed education as their only hope of breaking out of the impoverished rural areas and into well-paid urban jobs.

The new government lost little time in making primary school education free and compulsory for all Zimbabweans, while promising a place in secondary school for anyone wishing to go on. Almost overnight, school enrollments quadrupled, forcing many schools to add on fresh classrooms, as well as introduce a system called "hot seating," or double shifts. Today, no Zimbabwean child is denied an education.

The problem, however, is what happens after pupils leave school. Next year, for example, some 300,000 school-leavers are expected to join a labor market with only 10,000 new jobs available. Economists predict that by the turn of the century, some three million young people — about half Zimbabwe's labor force — will be jobless.

According to the Minister for School Education Faye Chung, Zimbabwe must industrialize to create more jobs. But she stresses that in the short term many Zimbabwean school-leavers will have to be self-employed, mostly in the rural areas.

Efforts have been made to bring home that reality. Says Chung: "We have made the curriculum focus on Zimbabwe, away from preparing people to live in London." In addition, most schools now offer at least one practical subject, and have adopted the dictum: "education with production."

But problems remain. According to an education analyst at the University of Zimbabwe, teachers are still geared to "turning students into academics like themselves." And even those students who take practical subjects do not spend enough time on them to become fully proficient in the skill, nor do they learn the mix of skills necessary to run a business.

"Our 'O' level students are not skilled enough to be self-employed," concedes Chung. In the future, she says, Zimbabwe hopes to introduce much more vocational education, citing Mupfure as an example of how that might work.



Mupfure students choose one of four core subjects: agriculture, building, textiles or woodwork. This takes up 75 percent of study time. The rest goes toward supportive theory subjects such as mathematics, "English for communication," business studies, cooperative theory and development studies.

During their second year, according to Headmaster Wilbert Matienga, pupils set up their own production units, in which they carry out market surveys and actually sell their products. Half of the proceeds goes to the group, the other half toward the running costs of the school.

Students learn management skills by sitting on the school management committee and helping to run its financial affairs. The difference between Mupfure and other schools, says Thepelo Mahlangu, a textile student, is that while others offer "education and production, we learn education with production."

Some 54 students from last year's class have set up cooperatives, the names of which — Grow More Trées (a carpentry cooperative) and Frontline Fabrics — show the enthusiasm of their members, despite the problems they face finding start-up capital.

The key question for Zimbabwe in formulating its future education policy, says Chung, "is how society rewards different occupations. If a small-scale farmer earns two to three times the minimum wage, everyone will get the message that it is better to be in that sector, rather than a clerk in town".

* PANOS, Colleen Lowe Morna is a freelance development journalist based in Harare.

While most school pupils in Zimbabwe go to class in well-pressed dresses or trousers, boys and girls at Mupfure school turn up in blue overalls.

Unlike most schools, which teach the curriculum for the academic "O" and "A" level exams set in London, Mupfure offers courses with strict practical relevance to pupils' lives, and none are for examination purposes. The 140 youngsters enrolled grow a third of the food they eat, help run the school, and learn how to set up business enterprises when they go out into the world.

Set up in 1986 to help ex-combatants of the independence war find employment, Mupfure's approach is becoming increasingly attractive as Zimbabwe struggles to find its own appropriate education policy.

Because of the country's colonial history, education is an especially sensitive issue. Prior to independence in 1980, only one third of eligible African children went to primary school, and only one eighth of these went on to secondary school.

In contrast, an 11-year educational



America's Asian Mother Culture?



A major find of artifacts has sparked a debate over the origins of American indigenous culture and potential Asian influences

By Jan Jocoy*

Ancient pottery shards represent a link with the history of the Americas before European settlement. As such, chips and slivers of pottery found in Ecuador have become the source of a harrowing, bitter feud between some of North and South America's most famed archaeologists—people like Betty Meggars, Collin Mcewan and Presley Norton. In fact, some archaeologists say that a stretch of Ecuador's coast, a few hours drive north of Guayaquil, is the site of the birth of America's mother culture.

On the surface, there is nothing remarkable about the village of Valdivia. Yet any archaeologist specializing in the study of pre-Columbian societies recognizes its importance. Some archaeologists believe that pottery unearthed in Valdivia, which dates from 3100 to 2700 B.C., 5,000 years old, is the most ancient in all the Americas.

No one disputes the pottery's age;

the argument revolves around whether the Valdivians were indigenous Americans or shipwrecked Asians. For if they were shipwrecked Asians, then might the oldest culture found in the Americas—potentially the region's mother culture—actually have been influenced by Asians? This is not the first time that a theory of trans-Pacific travel has been offered. North American researchers assert the Palos Verdes Stones in California were also from a pre-Columbian Asian shipwreck. Archaeologist Emilio Estrada unearthed the early Valdivian pottery while Presley Norton, an eminent Ecuadorian archaeologist, analyzed the fragments.

In his book, *Digging Up Pre-History: the Archaeology of Ecuador*, Karl Gattlemann states that Estrada studied more than 25,000 pieces of pottery shards found in Valdivia. There are various patterns on the shards, the author pointed out, some with curved lines made by fingernails, wedge shapes, dots, zig-zag lines, straight lines and shell impressions.

These designs are especially important because their sophistication is the basis of the archaeological feud. Both Estrada (who died recently) and Norton were convinced that the Valdivian shards are the earliest pottery complex found in the Americas.

Asian or indigenous? However, they differed on the most significant point. While Norton believes that the pottery was made by pre-Columbian Ecuadorian peoples, Estrada insisted that the shards were from Asian contact. He noticed that the patterns and designs are almost identical to those of the Japanese Jomon culture. Since the Valdivian pottery style is advanced and no one has yet unearthed strata from a previous formative culture, Estrada claimed this pottery came from shipwrecked Japanese from the island of Kisuhu, and that it provided evidence for the transportation of Jomon culture to American shores.

* Jan Jocoy is a North American student of archaeology and anthropology, a freelance writer and a photography instructor.

In recent correspondence, Norton claimed that there is no reason to believe that this settlement is anything more than a 5,000-year-old Ecuador Indian site. He claimed that looking toward Japan as the source of the pottery innovation serves to devalue the image of indigenous people, their intelligence and history.

Enter Betty Meggars, an archaeologist from Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian Institution and a heavyweight to be reckoned with on the matter of Japanese visitations. She insists that the Valdivian pottery is, in fact, Japanese. Meggars argues that Japanese seafarers were carried off their course by wind and currents and shipwrecked in Valdivia. This pottery is too sophisticated to be Ecuadorian in nature, she maintains.

"Other archaeologists get mad and say that tagging Japanese to the culture takes away from the people's ingenuity," Meggars notes. "Well, we (referring to white North Americans) came from the Europeans; yet we do not feel degraded because we come from Greek and Roman antecedents."

Next we hear from Collin Mcewan, a University of Illinois archaeologist who has been digging up what are now termed Valdivian sites along the Ecuadorian coast. He considers Meggars' Japanese pottery theory bunk.

Mcewan, who is also one of the directors of the Agua Blanca Archaeological Park in Ecuador, says that "Our understanding has really changed in the last few years. Now we're finding and digging up earlier sites all up and down the coast area. I think the culture developed on its own, and there is evidence of clear Amazon contact and East Andean contact."

"This culture developed *in situ* (an archaeological term for on the spot, or independent of other influences)," argues Mcewan. "Perhaps there was Amazon contact, and that would make sense as cultures often travel and trade from area to area. But there has been no Japanese contact with this culture."

But Meggars retorts, "I see no alternatives. I worked in the Amazon where Collin Mcewan says the original influence could have come from. Well, there is no data to suggest the Amazon."



Ecuadoran children: partly descended from shipwrecked Japanese?

Of course, there are other issues involved, as Mcewan points out. "I don't know if I believe that Valdivian culture is 5,000 years old and the mother culture of the Americas," he notes. "What is important is that archaeologists previously thought Ecuador's highlands were the older sites. But the coastal lowland Valdivian culture sites are found way down in the Guayaquil marshes and far north in the tiny village of Valdivia."

"Now, the predominant theory is that early Valdivian culture influenced the highland culture," continues the University of Illinois archaeologist. "Ten to 15 years ago that would have been unthinkable, but we now know that agriculture developed along the coast, we have found evidence of root crops, manioc, and tobacco."

Estrada found evidence indicating that Ecuador's pottery had traveled north and south and actually inspired the designs of Central America and Peru. As scientists attempt to piece together the birth of civilization in the Americas, this tracing of pottery from source to influence becomes particularly significant.

Valdivia's construction is an important point, according to Ecuador's Norton. He wrote that there is evidence of houses and streets, which formed an elongated oval in the center of the village. Most archaeologists agree that in order for a civilization to flourish, a city has to have houses. After settlement, social and civil structure will follow, according to current archaeological think-

ing. Agriculture must also flourish in order for people to settle permanently at a location – and a primitive kind of corn has been unearthed from Valdivia sites. These are major definitions archaeologists use to define the existence of a civilization.

This is an extremely important point when discussing Valdivian pottery because it explains where the Valdivian got their constant replenishment of ideas for their centuries of beautiful pottery.

"We know that Valdivia was a sophisticated culture. They had pottery, agriculture, corn, beans, squash and crafts. There was also social stratification," Mcewan observes.

"In Salango, a Valdivian culture site north of the Valdivia village, there's a burial mound and a museum dedicated to early Ecuadorian pre-Columbian archaeology. Stop in the Salango museum and orient yourself with the Valdivian fact," Mcewan personally invites a traveler to a Valdivia site at Agua Blanca, one of Ecuador's national parks, where his team is unearthing Ecuador's pre-history. "I find that average tourists become excited once they understand what we are doing," he remarks.

Meanwhile, the archaeological controversy continues: As studies progress, it becomes clear that Guayaquil's marshes and the northern coastal region could hold the answer to one the Americas' most important archaeological mysteries: is Valdivia the mother culture of the Americas?

The East-West Thaw

Whither the Third World and its marginalized masses as the flirtation between the capitalist and communists blocs provides hope for the resolution of global militarization?



Can we be friends? NATO and Warsaw Pact warriors (left); U.S. leaders with the USSR's Gorbachev (right)

By Rajni Kothari*

What is happening around us? Is the world suddenly becoming a better place to live? More secure, less militarized? Is the shadow of nuclear war receding and the arms race being contained under the impact of what may turn out to be a new *détente*?

History is witness to major reversals in world affairs, at times for the better—especially after the balance of forces that govern the world goes off keel and the system appears to be on the edge of an abyss. Is something of this kind happening now?

The symptoms that generate this optimism are well known: the de-escalation of the nuclear arms race heralded

by the INF treaty and the general change in the 'superpowers' attitudes toward military spending; the Geneva accord on Afghanistan; the ceasefire in the seemingly endless war between Iran and Iraq; and the new initiatives in Cambodia and Angola, the latter heralding the journey toward Namibia's independence.

And there are even bigger shifts, such as the qualitative change in the status of Palestine and the gradual healing of the rifts between China and the Soviet Union, India and Vietnam.

With the relaxation of international tensions, broader gains may be possible: a preference for the economic welfare of people over the military power of the state, a consensus on the democratic process as a way of organizing governance, a broader acceptance of human rights, a spirit of tolerance toward cultural pluralism.

There are already some welcome developments—redemocratization in major countries like Brazil, Argentina and the Philippines, the democratic revolution in Nicaragua, the dramatic changeover in Pakistan, the powerful upswing of democratic resistance in Myanmar (Burma) and Korea.

The gradual emergence of so-called "concerned citizens," representing various social movements, have influenced affairs both inside their own countries and globally.

The peace movement in Europe, for example, not only stirred the conscience of large sections of the people, including privileged strata of the middle classes,

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but through patient research and advocacy it also exposed the horrible economic and ecological costs of the arms race.

Likewise, the ecology, women's and human rights movements have gone beyond merely raising ethical issues on behalf of deprived strata of the people. They have also contributed to national and international debates on the consequences of prevailing models of development and national security, thus helping to create a body of informed opinion that has over time led to changing perceptions among sections of the ruling elites.

This has not been limited to countries where these movements have had large media impacts. For a long time it was thought that the peace movement was an anathema to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Yet in some ways its impact has been most deeply felt in that part of the world.

There is also growing admission of "the crying environment danger" arising out of "the state of earth's resources" and "the crying social problem of the developing world" – all, for example, contained in the same thesis by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that propounded the logic of de-escalating the arms race.

But even more than the growing acceptance of these more obvious dangers, the various social movements have contributed to a deeper theoretical grasp of the human condition.

A real shift...or not? – From the deeper perspective of these social movements, the present global moves toward "adjustments" and "accommodations" could appear merely pragmatic. There is an apprehension that the disadvantaged groups will continue to be marginalized by governments and ruling elites, perhaps to an even greater extent.

True, there is now a slow rethinking in the military, economic and political spheres. Firstly, it has finally dawned on the erstwhile perpetrators of the war system and its academic justifiers that they have gone too far. They are beginning to recognize that they have ignored the consequences of their thinking while focusing on the performance

– and therefore the survival and stability – of their respective systems.

There is the essence of the Soviet reassessment, spurred in particular by the economic consequences of the continually escalating arms race (both nuclear and conventional). There is evidence of similar reconsideration by the Western allies, in particular the United States, reeling under the considerable economic costs of large military expenditures.

Secondly, there are emerging signs of a slow rethinking of economic ideology based on supply-side economics, liberalization and privatization, dismantling of the welfare state and the discrediting of the positive role of the state in

meeting basic human needs.

Thirdly, there is also some realization of the limits of so-called *Realpolitik* – the slow realization among Leninists and Maoists of the limits of the conflictual model of world politics and a simultaneous though slower realization among U.S. policymakers of the limits of their confrontational posture in foreign policy.

Both sides seem to be retreating from their neat blueprints of global hegemony to be achieved through superpower confrontation utilizing various regional client states.

No fundamental rethinking – However, these shifts represent no more than a pragmatic reassessment of the war system and are not yet based on any fundamental ideological or normative rethinking about basic arrangements and institutional structures. Such defensive responses are bound to be not only partial and unsatisfactory, and, in certain respects, counterproductive.

In large parts of the world, the state is still a coercive apparatus hovering over large sections of the people, frequently in close collaboration with (and often led by) interests emanating from transnational capitalism and its technocratic logic.

Many governments use the concept of national security to justify oppression. What they actually mean is the



Rising peace protests



Peace is at hand: Vietnamese (left) and Cambodian generals



Let the poor eat trash: leaving behind the marginalized majority



the new global politics that he has embarked upon. Still, we are keen to be assured that this does not create a situation in which socially marginalized segments of the human population are left further undefended and possibly exposed to the fundamental Western technocratic version of "the survival of the fittest."

The global paradigm of integration and exclusion – integration of systems and exclusion of people and cultures – seems to be entering its most problematic and possibly pernicious phase as we move into the last decade before the dawn of the 21st century.

Governments versus people – These issues appear more basic and dramatic in the context of the dispute of centralized governments versus the marginalized peoples, minorities and nationalities.

The rhetoric of militarism versus democracy often hides the deeper conflict between democratic struggles waged from the grassroots and so-called representative governments promoting high-tech and computerized manipulations of the mass mind.

As far as the masses are concerned there is no difference between the militarism of military regimes and technological control exercised by formally "democratic" regimes. Indeed, it is possible to argue that a high tech-based managerial order with democratic garb may be more difficult to fight than

an openly repressive military regime.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most interesting aspect of the emerging global convergence of norms has been the growing consensus on one key value – democracy. All over the world, people aspire for an ideal with a common label, that of democracy. Particularly in the Third World, struggles for democratization and redemocratization are on the upswing.

Yet a most disheartening aspect of the liberal democratic regimes long in power (such as India and Sri Lanka, Colombia and Venezuela) or which are succeeding dictatorial regimes (like in Brazil, Argentina, the Philippines and Pakistan) is the ease with which they have been subjected to global corporate penetration and their willing integration into the world economic, strategic and technological markets.

Many liberal democracies have promoted dualist structures: the integration of the upper deciles into a growing world middle class and banishment of the rest to a fate as part of the world's underclass. The latter consists of the rural poor, ethnic minorities and peripheral nationalities, women pushed out by modern technology, and the communities displaced by large development projects.

Somewhat similar consequences have also followed seemingly radical demands for a new international economic

order. This promoted greater transfer of technologies, collaboration with transnational corporations to modernize domestic economies, raising exports and using foreign exchange surpluses for making good the technological lag from which these countries suffer.

Unless utmost vigilance is exercised, similar tendencies are likely to get a fillip following the chain of regional reconciliations (India and China; India and Pakistan; Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand; Western Sahara; and Cyprus) sponsored by one of the superpowers.

The moving spirit and rationale for many of these has been the same – addressing the technological lag, releasing resources for modernization, getting integrated into the global framework of interdependence.

The dualist world structure has been a result of interlocking between a number of dimensions of which the crowning variable was militarization and the global arms race.

Any stepping away from the precipice to which this one factor was leading us can only be welcomed. It is the most important first step in the direction of global transformation and the creation of a better world. But it should be followed by other major steps and prevented from being swallowed and co-opted by dominant structures of the global status quo. Otherwise we may again misread symptomatic changes as being transformative and regenerative. ●

Hugo and Human Nature

Virgin Islanders learned a lot about themselves in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo

By Dion E. Phillips*

Disasters like Hurricane Hugo, which hit the Caribbean in September, teach us important lessons about human nature.

The U.S. Virgin Islands are no stranger to tragedy. In 1972, we were witness to the St. Croix Fountain Valley killings. Three years earlier, there was the fatal crash of an American Airlines plane at the St. Thomas Airport. Both of these incidents, though confined to small areas, did big damage to the tourist industry. But the scope of their effects was nothing compared to Hugo.

As I roved the three-island territory in the hurricane's aftermath, I heard many stories which – without exaggeration – can be called heroism.

Doctors and nurses turned out, under trying circumstances, to man our hospitals and care for the sick and injured – despite the fact that, in some instances, their own homes and families were endangered.

Equally deserving of commendation are the police, national guard and VITEMA. Far from flawless, they did put aside personal interest in order to render service in a time of need. Employees of the Water and Power Authority and the Virgin Islands Telephone Corporation, key to the recovery effort, are also to be lauded.

Community spirit: reconstruction



Special thanks is due radio station WSTA. We were fortunate that, unlike other electronic media, the station stayed on the air. During the darkest hours of the hurricane, the voices of Lee Carl, Addie Ottley and other radio personalities were the nexus that kept the territory together. Now that things are getting back to normal, the station's next step is unclear. It could potentially take advantage of its 24-hour hurricane coverage to develop a more permanent dynamic – as did the program *Niteline* on the U.S. ABC television network, which emerged out of the Iranian hostage crisis. Can "Lucky 13," as it is known, take its new 24-hour format and run with a greater share of the market?

We would be derelict if we omitted the countless individuals who pitched in after the hurricane had gone its way. They rendered aid to friends, neighbors and co-workers. Food, drink and even money was shared.

Behavioral patterns changed, as well. In recent years, some family members and childhood peers had grown apart on the three tiny islands – a change from the traditional patterns of proximity. But in the aftermath of Hugo, people ventured forth to assist in clean-up operations – clearing trees and debris from entrances and premises. Personally, I visited my next door neighbor, who was in distress, for the first time after living side-by-side for six years. Family and community solidarity tightened in the face of disaster. We may revert to our old habits, but we can never be the same again.

Regretably, some failed to act honorably. And they, too, tell us about ourselves. The hurricane left many people vulnerable, and some took advantage of the fact to practice acts of vandalism.

Calling the perpetrators names – like "scum" and "dirt" – is not the answer. We should reflect on the looting and ponder the fact that there are some who live in this island paradise but consider

themselves outcasts. Their motives for looting might well be the social conditions under which they live. Some of us, due to relative poverty or influenced by crowd behavior, exhibited behavior that suggests little allegiance and sympathy for the territory as a whole.

If we wish to forestall a repeat performance, we need more than the infusion of 1,200 "foreign troops." If this group and its sentiment should grow beyond the already disturbing proportions, the future of the territory seems grim indeed.

Hurricanes are far from rare in the Caribbean. Countries like Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Jamaica (a year ago September) have had their fair share of natural disaster and have been able to recover in good time without any permanent damage to their economies.

With the assistance of the U.S. federal government now at the disposal of Governor Alexander A. Farrelly, no less should be expected here. The performance of the Farrelly administration in its crisis management role will go a long way to determining its electoral chances in the elections scheduled for next November. Ron de Lugo, the islands' non-voting delegate to the U.S. Congress, has already earned many a vote with his skilled actions.

Recovery from Hugo requires energetic leaders working closely with federal officials, banks, insurance companies, building contractors and many others. But in the final analysis, it is the resilience of the people, already evident, that will set the rate and extent of reconstruction.

The key psychological factor is that the people of the Virgin Islands must see the hardships as a temporary phenomenon and feel confident, spurred by their leader, that the setback can be overcome.

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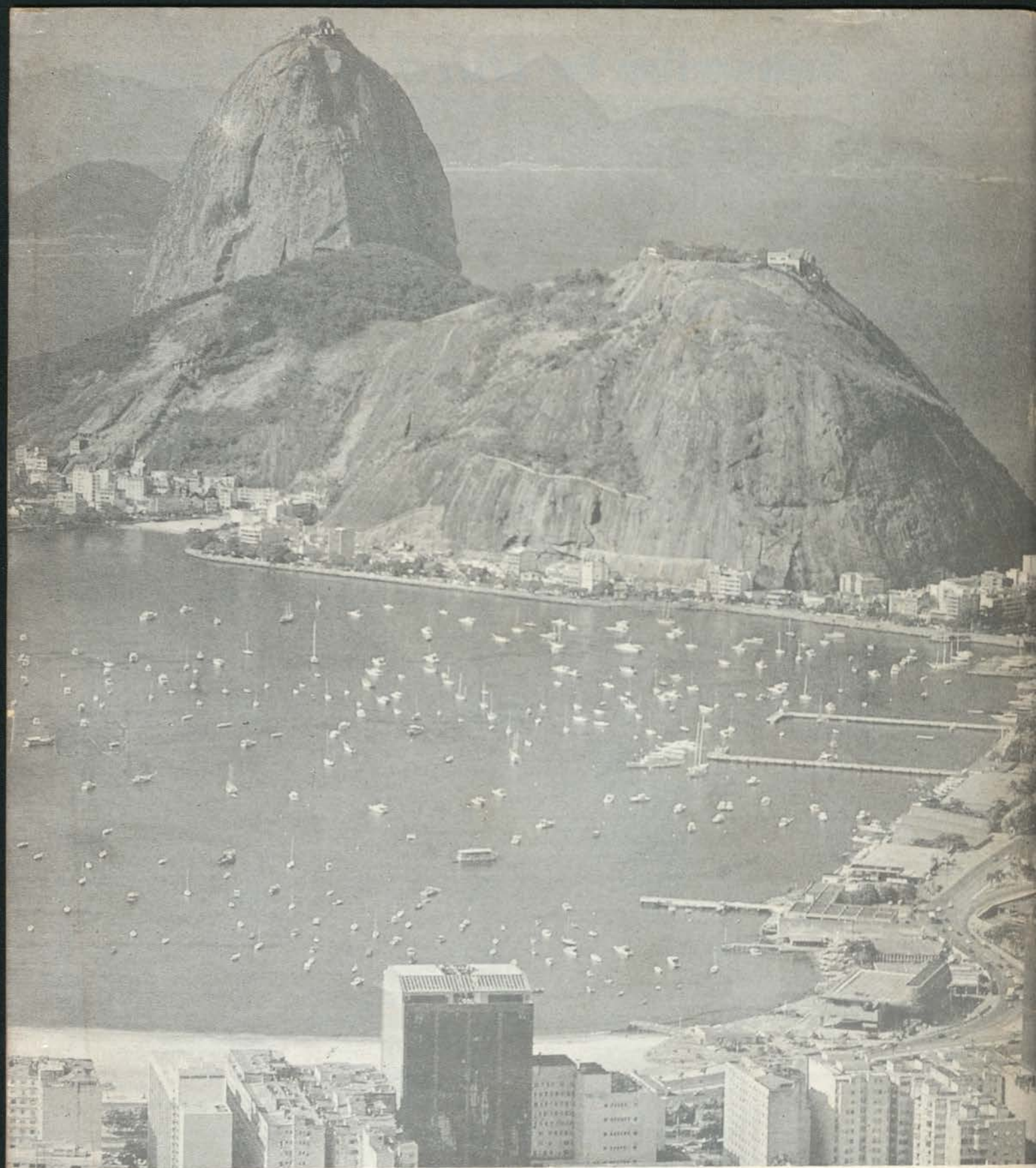
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