

sponsors, this is a moot question.

Lately, George Shultz, the Chinese, and others have stepped up their charges that Vietnam is "occupying" and "colonizing" Kampuchea. At the recent ASEAN summit, Shultz found new evidence that hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese had been sent into eastern Kampuchea. The evidence was somehow discovered just as some of the ASEAN nations had made new overtures to find a way to reach a settlement on the Kampuchean issue; the charges were used to hinder these overtures. Nonetheless, I investigated the charges, and found that State Department statements about Vietnam and Kampuchea bear the same relation to the evidence of first-hand observations as they did during the Vietnam War: very little.

### The Vietnamese role

My observations concerning the Vietnamese presence are unchanged from two years ago. Traditional tensions between the Khmer and Vietnamese peoples remain, but I found no sense at all that the Vietnamese army forces in the country are regarded as "occupiers." Every day, Vietnamese troops can be seen, often unarmed, among the Kampuchean population, eating and drinking with Kampucheans in the cafes of Phnom Penh or the rural markets.

One night, as I was sitting in a restaurant in Phnom Penh, a group of Vietnamese and Kampuchean army officers, who had been eating together, came over to my table. In halting French mixed with a little English, they told me they wanted me to know that they were friends, that the Vietnamese and Kampuchean people now stand together against the return of the butcher.

Among ordinary people it is still common to hear what I heard from Kampuchean villagers on my last visit: that because the Vietnamese came, they are alive today. In rural areas, Vietnamese soldiers sometimes help out farmers, which has also earned them respect. Problems that exist seem to stem more, particularly in Phnom Penh, from the activities of semi-criminal Vietnamese who have drifted there in search of easy money.

Charges of Vietnamese colonization also ignore the previous history of intermingling in this region. The ethnic Vietnamese population of Kampuchea before 1975 was estimated at 500,000. Some of these were killed and many fled to Vietnam during the Pol Pot period. I encountered many Vietnamese, particularly fishermen, but all of them spoke Khmer fairly well. Most of the Vietnamese civilians in Kampuchea simply returned to their previous country of residence. I asked peasants again and again in the provinces bordering Vietnam—Svay Rieng and Takeo—whether they had noticed newly arrived Vietnamese in any significant numbers. None had.

Kampuchea has undergone unmatched agonies, but it is slowly regaining stability and normal life. Problems remain and daily existence is still a struggle; but the country is reviving, and the smile is back.

## Spain's severe drought, the result of decades

by Joëlle Leconte

After five years of severe drought, Spain is suffering from a water shortage that could, coming on top of 16 to 18 percent unemployment, lead to dangerous social unrest. With rainfall at about 70-80 percent below normal and reservoirs at about 40 percent of normal capacity, approximately 1,500,000 persons are affected by water restrictions of various kinds, with 350,000 living in a "red alert zone" and 50,000 persons getting their only water from tank trucks. Already there is a black market selling drinking water in the worst-affected areas.

The Communist Party and Comisiones Obreras, the communist trade union, traditionally very strong in the desperately poor, latifundist-ridden south where journeyman labor still prevails, have begun to organize in Andalusia around the water issue. A virtual mass strike situation already exists in Valencia due to thousands of layoffs at the Altos Hornos del Mediterraneo steel plant. Since the Communists are also leading the wave of protests against the U.S. military bases in Spain and the repeated ecologist-pacifist demonstrations over the past few months, the water issue will give them another handle to use to unseat the shaky Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government of Felipe González.

As Antonio Figueruelo Almazan, Spain's Director General of Civil Protection interviewed below, told the Madrid newsweekly *Cambio* 16 July 18, "This has all the makings of a catastrophe. The threat of desertification that affects North Africa seems to have crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. If it doesn't rain by this fall, extraordinary measures will have to be adopted. The limit is October. Then the faucets will have to be turned off." Figueruelo continued that the situation was even graver in longer terms: subterranean water levels—which take years to replace—are falling very rapidly.

Farmers are staging demonstrations in the worst-affected areas, and there has been a wave of calls for moratoria on agricultural debt in some regions.

The real criminal of the story is the monetarist faction in Spain, which has determined Spanish investment policy since the time of Charles V, the first Hapsburg ruler. There have been only a few notable exceptions to this control, such as occurred in the reign of Charles III. Spanish rulers, heavily indebted to Venetian and Genoese financiers since the discovery and looting of America in the 15th and 16th centuries,

# social unrest of usury

turned the countryside from farming to sheep herding, which stripped the vegetation from the land and began a process of desertification which has led to the present drought.

Only heavy investment in infrastructure projects on a long-term basis can solve the present crisis. These must include massive reforestation programs, changing the course of the Galician and Asturian rivers on the model of the American NAWAPA program—a project of dams and canals which would bring water from the glaciers of Alaska down into the agricultural areas of California and the Southwest—and, by the turn of the century, desalinating seawater using thermonuclear fusion process, which Antonio Figueruelo Almazan alludes to below.

The avowed policy of the Bank of Spain monetarists grouped around Friedmanite deputy governor Mariano Rubio Ximenez and Enrique Fuentes-Quintana, the head of the Fundacion de Caja de Ahorros, a savings banks institute, is that Spain's economy is a lost cause, and it is not worth developing any infrastructure. In an April interview, Minister of Public Works Julian Campos expressed complete pessimism about the usefulness of investing in such grandiose projects for Spain, as opposed to developing Latin America or the Mahgreb in Northern Africa. Perhaps the spectre of a nation torn by civil disorder will make him change his mind.

Under the inhuman conditions prevailing in Spain, where water use is cut off for over 10 hours a day in Jaen and four or five other major Andalusian towns and a number of towns in Castile suffer water cuts ranging from 4 to 14 hours a day, and at a time when Spain's neighbor Africa is suffering the most severe food shortages in the world, to accept the calculations of the gray-faced bureaucrats in the Common Market and fail to make the infrastructure investments which would employ thousands of jobless workers, would be a critical error.

*The following are excerpts from an interview with Antonio Figueruelo Almazan, Director-General of Civil Protection of Spain, conducted by EIR July 12 from Madrid.*

**EIR:** What measures will your department take in the short term?

**Figueruelo:** The council of ministers meeting on June 1

approved a special plan against the drought. These measures call for investments of over 50 billion pesetas [\$340 million], to be pushed through as an emergency. This plan completes one approved last year for investments of around 25 billion pesetas; the various ministries intervene, depending on the gravity of the situation, in a manner which is basically infrastructural and not contingent on the present crisis.

**EIR:** What are the basic causes of the drought which you think governmental action could affect?

**Figueruelo:** The deep causes [of the drought] are both geographical and ecological. The predominance of grazing during the Middle Ages led to the disappearance of extensive forests, which slowly changed the climate and reduced rainfall. The poverty of the soil, along with increasingly acute meteorological factors, accelerated the erosion of the soil, and in some areas in a few short years we went from forest, to bare ground, to desert.

The cycle has become increasingly short; in the past 30 years there have also been a great number of forest fires. [In the case of Catalonia, these fires are known to have been started by real estate speculators.]

This acceleration of the process of degeneration was never braked by successive governments. [There was no] concerted reforestation policy to stop erosion by coherent ordering of the entire national territory with respect to water and agriculture. The combination of these adverse factors has led to an increasingly grave situation, and in some areas, an irreversible situation. This is the challenge the new government is now facing.

I do believe that modern technology has sufficient resources to solve the grave problems I refer to above. Our geography, with mountain ranges crossing it on all sides, greatly multiplies the cost of all projects for moving water from one river basin to another. According to European experts, the cost of the heavy investments initiated under Franco for the Tajo-Segura project exceeds the profitability in the medium and long term for Spanish agriculture.

In spite of that, and until such point as it becomes economically possible to desalinate sea water, the policy of balancing out the hydrography of the various river basins will have to be pursued, though I think that first an exhaustive study must be carried out of the capacity of each region, drawing on all available water through a policy of small dams.

One should not forget that the extremely high costs of heavy engineering projects will have the effect of increasing Spanish agriculture production in an international market that chronically suffers from overproduction and surpluses. [Spain's agricultural surpluses] is a problem which has paralyzed Spain's entry into the Common Market. [Much of Western Europe's fresh produce is grown in Spain. Already, French farmers are attacking and dumping truckloads of Spanish produce entering France from Spain, out of fear that they will lose their market.]