

MEXICO

Confrontation Builds In Mexico As CIA Labor Agent Velazquez Threatens General Strike

Sept. 10 (NSIPS) — Mexican CIA labor controller Fidel Velazquez yesterday threatened to call a nation-wide general strike for the end of this month unless his demands for a 65 per cent wage increase are agreed to immediately. Velazquez's demands in direct defiance of President Echeverria's assurances that all workers' salaries will be increased retroactively at the end of this month to compensate for inflation resulting from the recent devaluation of the peso. Velazquez's push for a strike is rapidly building into a major confrontation with the pro-development government forces of President Luis Echeverria.

Immediately after Velazquez announced his strike plans, supporters of Echeverria within the ruling PRI party, which represents over 15 million workers, peasants and small businessmen, issued a veiled attack against CIA labor boss. In a two page ad in the Mexican press, the "Popular Revolutionary Alliance" charged that there are "false leaders who call for anarchy and thus favor reactionary tactics aimed at preventing the wage increases" announced by President Echeverria the day after the peso was officially devalued. On the following day pro-Echeverria Natural Resources Minister Francisco Javier Alejo said that while all workers have a right to strike, the CTM strike should be called off since it would only "impede the stabilization of the country's economy."

The strike threat by the aging head of the CTM is similar in purpose and content to the truck drivers' strike which the CIA used to set the stage for the 1973 fascist takeover of Chile. If carried out, the strike, which would involve over three million workers and 15,000 companies across the country, would paralyze an economy already seriously weakened by the Wall Street-ordered devaluation. Despite Velazquez's pronouncements that he is fighting for "wages" the strike has nothing to do with increasing the standard of living of the CTM workers. It is a political power play aimed at creating a pre-coup environment in Mexico.

Velazquez's strike is finding support in some strange quarters. In a statement on August 28 a representative of the "Monterrey Group," the businessmen who comprise the center of Mexico's fascist "invisible government," explicitly expressed his support for Velazquez's wage demands. President Echeverria has repeatedly accused these layers of plotting to overthrow his government.

This is not the first time that Velazquez in his thirty years reign as head of the CTM and of the CIA's established Interamerican Regional Labor Organization (ORIT), has operated in coordination with the rightwing apparatus. It was Velazquez who in the late 1940's helped to force a "general wage freeze" down CTM workers' throats in support of then-President Miguel Aleman, the current head of Mexico's fascist "invisible government."

This time around however, Velazquez finds himself in a vulnerable position. In the last two days the smaller anti-Velazquez labor organizations have joined the Echeverria forces with cautious, but open attacks on Velazquez. Two days ago the head of the Mexico Workers' Confederation (COM), Leopoldo Zeron implicitly attacked Velazquez's strike threats by stating that his union would await the "wage adjustments"

proposed by Echeverria and would not strike. The attacks escalated yesterday with statements by the large State Workers' Union (FSTSE) and the Tamaulipas section of the CTM to the effect that they would not go out, but would instead follow Echeverria's wage increase proposal.

Rightwing Reaction to Devaluation

Rightwing business layers, through their spokesmen have attacked the anti-austerity measures taken by the government since last week's peso devaluation. There are also loud complaints from these same quarters over the prospects of a continued peso float — a move that makes further speculation against the currency unprofitable.

The rightwing's argument for austerity was best presented by Financial Times correspondent Alan Riding in an article on Sept. 7 which stated that when President-elect Jose Lopez Portillo takes office in December, he will have to impose austerity measures similar to the "system of wage controls and export incentives adopted by then Brazilian Finance Minister, Sr. Antonio Delfim Neto in the late 1960s" in order to deal with the "serious" economic problems that outgoing President Echeverria "will bequeath" him. "To succeed," Riding adds, Lopez Portillo will have to abandon Echeverria's "militant" "Third Worldliness," and carry out repression, since, Riding concludes, how can Lopez impose "unpopular economic austerity measures . . . without repression?"

There is a strong fight against such "solutions" being waged by pro-Echeverria forces. On Sept. 7, Congressman Ramirez Cuellar blamed the devaluation of the peso on imperialist forces who hold control "over the international banking institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund," which manipulate "foreign debt causing technological and economic dependence." Other pro-Echeverria Congressmen including Jesus Puente Leyva and Armando Labra denounced the Brazilian economic model imposed in Mexico by Aleman — the so-called Mexican Miracle. Congressman Armando Labra also went on to state that Echeverria has led Mexico to "the threshold of a new economic strategy which abandons the monetarist model."

As the Group of 77 meeting scheduled to begin in Mexico City on Sept. 13 approaches, the Echeverria forces are bringing the debt question out into the open. In a press conference in San Antonio, Texas two days ago, Echeverria stated that "the foreign debt of not only developing countries, but also of some which were once great empires is due to a bad, defective and inequitable international economic order." Echeverria also stressed the danger to world peace posed by the unbearable debt burden on these countries. "The panorama of economic insolvency in 85 countries which stop purchasing, which can't exploit their natural resources, which barely survive from hand to mouth, which can't increase the numbers of teachers, and which don't have the margin for breaking out of the vicious cycle of underdevelopment . . . is very dangerous for world peace . . . and that's ultimately tied to the foreign debt of each one of those countries."

This economic crisis effects "Mexico's economy — and let me stress — even the U.S.'s economy," Echeverria emphasized.

his policy," said Bongo, "He is racist through and through. Since no kind of dialogue can succeed with South Africa, we will have to take up arms and do what we did in Angola."

*Focusing on apartheid in South Africa as the key issue which Kissinger is trying to protect, Oliver Tambo, exiled chairman of the African National Congress of South Africa told journalists at the Tanzanian summit: "It is improbable that Kissinger would support an African majority solution. The only way towards this goal is struggle. Fundamentally, Kissinger and Vorster are in agreement on the system in South Africa."

Meanwhile Kissinger cohort Voster, upon whom the success of Kissinger's entire scheme supposedly rests since he is supposed to put pressure on Rhodesia to agree to majority rule, is justifying every condemnation being heaped upon him. On Sept. 8 he asserted that his police forces had been "restrained" so far in their brutal repression of the provoked rioting in South African cities, and threatened that unless the riots stopped immediately "other steps" would be taken. Speaking at the Nationalist Party Congress in Pretoria, Vorster added that the government would "move against...certain whites" as well whom he accused of "inciting" the black population by their opposition to government policy.

But Kissinger is not giving up. Now he is trying to bribe African countries to cooperate with him in setting up his shuttle. Today the Senate approved aid packages of \$20 million each to Zaire and Zambia and \$10 million to Botswana, but agreed to cut out funds for Mozambique and Angola. Both Zambia and Botswana are key "moderate" states in Kissinger's efforts to launch his shuttle hoax in southern Africa. Kissinger's shuttle technique involves provising (not necessarily delivering, as Egyptian President Anwar Sadat found out) economic aid in return for cooperation with his deadly schemes.

Soviets On Africa

Sept. 10 (NSIPS) — The following is a full translation of an article by Boris Drekhov which appeared in the "International Week" column of Pravda, Sept. 5.

The world's press is commenting widely on the Saturday meeting in Zurich between U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and South African Premier Vorster. The major theme of these talks is the so-called "Rhodesian formula," which states the American plan for resolving the Rhodesian question. The crux of the plan is to preserve in Rhodesia — under the cover of "a transfer of power to the black majority" — the racists' position and the position of the multinational corporations located there. As regards the question of allocation of political power to the true representatives of the people of Zimbabwe, they want to put off its resolution for an indefinite period.

The Zurich meeting, by intent of its initiators is supposed to help coordinate the strategy of world imperialism in Africa, the basic goals of which are, as before: to preserve the racist regimes in the south of the continent as strongholds of imperialism, to maintain the economic position of the imperialist states in Africa, and the battle against the national liberation movements of the African people.

From an expansive speech on the question of U.S. African policy, given by Kissinger last week in Philadelphia, it is clear that the U.S. Secretary of State is trying to protect the racist

Pretoria regime by focusing attention of the above-mentioned "Rhodesian formula". Such maneuvers can hardly fool the peoples of Africa. The powerful wave of the struggle for freedom is sweeping over the south of the continent. Statements from a number of South African cities, in unison with the widening scale of the armed struggle of the patriots of Zimbabwe and Namibia indicate that South Africa is on the eve of major events in its history. And these events cannot be averted by new "formulae" nor any contrivances of imperialist diplomacy.

Prensa Latina On Africa

Sept. 10 (NSIPS) — The following are excerpts of a wire from Prensa Latina, the Cuban press service, dated Sept. 8.

The eventual trip of Henry Kissinger to the African continent is characterized by the desperate efforts of Washington to maintain its hegemony and to save the racist regime of Pretoria, some observers estimate.

From the meetings of Kissinger with the chief of the racist regime, John Balthazar Vorster and with his main allies of the western capitalist world — from France, West Germany and Great Britain — one can deduce some lessons:

1) The essential aspect of the North American plans is to try to safeguard the economic and strategic bases of the imperialists in South Africa.

2) North America wants to launch onto the political stage several so-called "black moderate organizations" in order to neutralize national liberation movements, and later, to hand over power to the "black majority" in Rhodesia, and to grant independence to Namibia.

3) The North Americans want to obtain the assistance and the support of the formerly powerful colonists of Africa (France, Great Britain, and West Germany) in order to establish a fund of millions of dollars destined to indemnitize the white European colonists in Rhodesia and in Namibia.

But this entire plan, elaborately detailed, and which Kissinger has tried to put into practice, is facing serious obstacles.

For one thing, the progressive African governments and the national liberation movements don't have confidence in the "good will" of the North American Secretary of State. The meeting taking place in Dar es Salaam of the heads of state of Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, and Zambia, constitutes an answer to the imperialist manipulations...

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