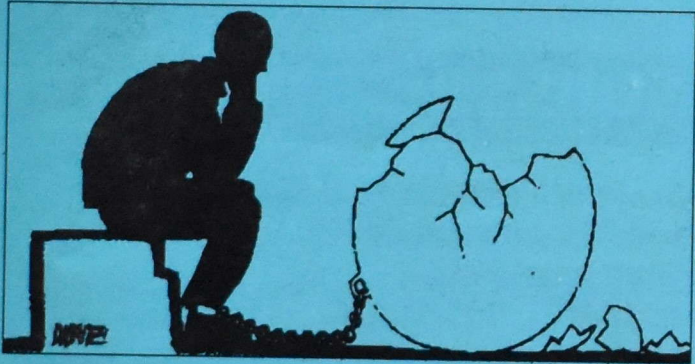


# INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

March 1993 – issue 243

## BOSNIA: the right to live together



**DOSSIER**  
Eastern Europe:  
The market mirage

**BLACK AFRICA**  
The liberal deceit



\$4.50 – 30 FF

CB2/170

## TUNISIA

*Drop the charges!*

THE fact that Tunisia is a dictatorship is becoming ever more obvious. After imprisoning 8,000 alleged militants of the En-Nahda fundamentalist movement, activists of the Revolutionary Communist Organization (OCR — Tunisian section of the Fourth International), and of the Workers Communist Party of Tunisia (PCOT — pro-Albanian) with sentences of up to four years for their views, and after having dissolved the Tunisian Human Rights League (LDTH), 18 democrats have just been arrested for having formed a "National Committee in Defence of Prisoners of Opinion" (CNDPO).

Its founders, well-known figures from students and teachers unions, human rights activists and long-standing opponents of the regime, proposed the freeing of those imprisoned for their views and an end to the practice of torture.

Accused of spreading false information, disturbing public order and forming an illegal organization, they have all been brought before a court and released with the exception of Salah Hamzawi the committee's coordinator who the judge ordered to be held.

An international protest campaign has forced the regime to retreat. They have reversed their decision to expel one of the committee's founders, Tahar Shagrush who is of Algerian nationality, and have let out Hamzawi on bail.

However, the protests must continue until the trial of the CNDPO's founders to demand the dropping of all the charges and an end to the persecution of the committee and its members.

Letters of protest should be sent to the President of Tunisia, the Presidential Palace, Carthage, Tunisia; and to the Minister of the Interior, Avenue Habib Bourguiba, 2000, Tunis. ★

## SOUTH KOREA

*Socialist arrested*

ON October 27, 1992, after several months of harassment, South Korea's political police arrested Ilbung Choe.

His crime is to be a leftwing publisher in a country which remains stuck not only



in the Cold War, but in the era of McCarthyism.

Ilbung Choe invested a modest inheritance in setting up a Korean-language publishing house, New Review Editions. Without even covering his outlay — the common fate of small leftwing publishing houses not supported by an organization — Choe published works including Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed* (with a preface by Ernest Mandel), Moshe Lewin's *Lenin's Last Struggle*, Tony Cliff's *Rosa Luxemburg* and some of the notebooks produced by the IIRE of Amsterdam such as Michael Löwy on *The Politics of Uneven and Combined Development* and *Plan, Market and Democracy* by Catherine Samary.

Accused variously of crimes against the state under the open-ended National Security Law, alleged links with North Korea and crimes of opinion against the South Korean state, Ilbung Choe was sentenced to two years in jail on January 2, 1993.

An international campaign has been launched to demand his immediate release. South Korea's new president, Kim Yung Sam, who took office on February 25, has announced a sweeping amnesty which may affect tens of thousands of people. Himself a former dissident who rallied to the government party, Kim Yung Sam has promised to liberalize the country. However, the scope of the amnesty announced excludes "socialists and rapists". It is nonetheless possible — though not probable — that Ilbung Choe's case will be covered by the amnesty.

For this to happen, as many messages as possible should be sent to the President of the Republic of Korea, Kim Yung Sam, c/o The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Seoul (fax no: 822-720 2686) asking for an amnesty for Ilbung Choe.

Ilbung Choe is 35 years old, and has three children, the last born after his arrest. His wife and mother have also been victims of the police harassment of the household. ★

## HONG KONG

*Cathay Pacific strike ends*

THE strike by over 3500 flight attendants, organized in the Flight Attendants Union (FAU), at the Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific Airways came to an end on January 28 when 90 per cent of workers bowed to the airline's ultimatum to sign on for work for February or face a contract freeze and possible firing.

300 defiant crew members vowed not to return to work without management's guarantee of amnesty for all FAU members.

The strike began on January 13 over increased workloads and the firing of three cabin attendants who followed union instructions not to work out of their positions.

The bulk of Cathay Pacific flights were immediately grounded and remained so for more than two weeks, including in the peak holiday season of the Chinese New Year. The dispute is estimated to have cost the airline some HK\$10-15m (US\$1.3-2m) per day.

Cathay Pacific's heavy-handedness ended up politicizing the strike — turning it into a struggle over the lack of trade union rights in the British colony.

The strike was an inspiring example of local and international solidarity. Locally, a committee of 50 community groups organized mass support rallies, a petition campaign which gathered 10,000 signatures, and found food, clothing and shelter for strikers who camped out at the Government House and for the many cabin crew members hailing from other parts of Asia.

Internationally, the FAU put out a call to assist stranded crew members around the world and track down and stop aircraft chartered by Cathay Pacific to break the strike.

Contacted by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), flight attendants' unions in Holland, Australia, Switzerland, the Philippines, Japan, Germany, the USA and Canada refused to board chartered planes replacing Cathay Pacific designated flights.

Negotiations with the company continue. The support coalition has shelved plans to call for an international boycott of Cathay Pacific but stressed it would resume the campaign in the event of company victimization of those active in the strike. ★