

### *Christians, Moslems Ally Against Falange*

In Lebanon, key leaders of the Christian community — including leaders of the Maronite Catholic sect itself — have begun to join hands with Moslem leaders to work together to rebuild the institutions of the Lebanese state. With the full support of Syria, the Vatican, Saudi Arabia, and France, in particular, these Lebanese forces are putting together an ecumenical coalition that has already isolated the fascist militia of the Nazi Falangists and the allied followers of Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party.

The leading event was the meeting last week in north Lebanon, when Walid Jumblatt the leader of Lebanon's Druze Moslem community and chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party met with Rashid Karami, the leader of the Sunni Moslems in Tripoli, and Suleiman Frangieh, a Maronite Catholic leader from Zharta, to discuss the formation of a national Popular Front.

This is virtually the same coalition which came together in 1958, during the civil war of that year, to oppose the unconstitutional re-election drive of then-President Chamoun.

Backing the efforts of Jumblatt, Karami, and Frangieh are the various bishops and patriarchs of the Maronite and other Christian sects. Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Maronites are uniting to isolate the Nazis who, in the Falangist militia, have long terrorized even the Christian community.

— *Mary Sonnenblick*

### **Pope Urges Comprehensive Solution to Mideast**

*The following is the text of a statement by newly elected Pope John Paul I in a general audience on Sept. 7:*

"Today at Camp David an important meeting between the heads of state of Egypt, Israel and the United States begins, to find a solution to the Middle East conflict. This conflict, which for more than thirty years has raged in the land of Jesus, has already caused casualties and much suffering both among the Arabs and the Israelis, and like an ugly disease, has infected the neighboring countries.

"Think about martyred Lebanon, disrupted by the repercussions of this crisis. Because of this, we would like to ask you to pray together for the success of the Camp David meeting, so that these discussions might smooth the way towards a just and complete peace. Just, that is, with satisfaction for all the conflicting parties. Complete, in the sense of not leaving any questions unresolved: the problem of the Palestinians, the security of Israel, the Holy City of Jerusalem.

"We beseech the Lord, praying that He might enlighten those responsible for all the interested peoples, that they might with foresight and courage make the decisions that will bring peace and tranquility to the Holy Land and the entire eastern world."

## **Mediterranean-Mexican Development Is Focus Of Three-Way Trade Deals**

The past week witnessed a flurry of negotiations about large-scale triangular development deals involving key Western and Eastern European nations and Japan, and such oil-producing states as Mexico, Libya, Iran, and Nigeria. While many details are yet to be released, as a whole, the discussed deals seem to represent the longer-term promise of the new monetary system initiated in Bremen, West Germany on July 8: the pooling of advanced sector, oil-producing sector, and Third World resources for a major world industrial boom.

Centered on the Mediterranean and Arab East-Gulf States regions, the geometry of projected deals is also meant, implicitly in most cases, to address the problem being explicitly addressed now by the government of Japan: how to ensure Middle East and world peace through development. The war danger had motivated Chancellor Schmidt's approach both to Bremen and to

the 25-year economic cooperation agreements with the Soviet Union in May. Now the governments of several nations aside from West Germany — including the Soviet Union and other East bloc states, Greece, Italy, and the above-named oil-producers — are acting along that perspective.

### *French-Arab Credit to Mexico*

Intriguing in this context was an article in the Mexico City daily *Excelsior* suggesting that the multi-billion petrodollars of the French-Arab consortium UBAF will be available for Mexican development:

The Union de Banques Arabes et Francoises (UBAF) told *Excelsior* that it is willing to invest all the petrodollars our country needs for its rapid development, regardless of whether it (Mexico) is a member of OPEC.

This statement was made by Gerard Charvet, 2nd assistant to the director of international trade of the Union de Banques Arabes et Francoises (UBAF). The

UBAF could make its capital of \$6 billion available to strengthen Mexico's gross national product and aid in the opening of new world markets to which it does not now have access.

Charvet explained that if they (UBAF) operate as commercial banks in our country, they could obtain very interesting markets in the Mideast, which in addition to expanding trade horizons for our country, would make us less dependent on the United States. . . .

The UBAF posed the following analysis of our reality, as it is seen by banking experts of the Arab world, led by Doctor Mohamed M. Abushadi. The major points are as follows:

—Mexico should diversify its markets, preferably toward Europe, the Middle and Far East. Arab countries should receive special attention.

—The development of its economy should permit foreign investment . . . through the joining of capital with transnational interests, from the government and from Mexico's private sector.

—Mexico's oil policy, in terms of channeling any excess toward export, is considered to be correct. The world's energy future could, within a reasonably short time, reduce to very little the value of that which is today of such enormous value. . . .

—Mexico's decision to develop through international trade is well-known. With its proven oil reserves, immediate wealth is foreseen, and development which could well be described as dramatic. . . .

The French banker noted that there is an immediate possibility for opening trade relations between Mexico and the Arab countries, and that the latter need to increase their agricultural imports.

"It is thought," said Charvet, "that Sudan is the cattle center of the Arab world, but this is not the case. Perhaps within the next twenty years, this could happen. This is why the Arab countries need the produce of other countries with which they do not now enjoy trade agreements, such as in the case of Mexico."

"This is an immediate possibility," the banker said. . . .

Gerhard Charvet said that the UBAF is already studying a plan for Mexico's consideration, which will cheapen transport between European countries who will commercialize Mexican oil. This plan includes the presence of Greek shipowners whose ships carry oil from the Arab countries to the United States and who have already agreed, in principle, to do what they can to achieve the purposes being sought.

### *Greek-Soviet Marriages?*

The UBAF-Mexico relationship, with its interconnections into the Greek shipping world, adds special relevance to Greek-Soviet economic development negotiations during the past week.

The first Greek official since 1924 visited the Soviet Union this week amid reports of a new package of economic agreements between the two countries. Greek Foreign Minister Rallis held talks with Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin on foreign policy matters concerning the Mideast, Cyprus and the Balkans. According to the daily *Eleftherotypia*, Kosygin also broached the prospect of the USSR providing Greece with technology for construction of nuclear power generating capacity, noting that the Soviet Union is increasingly orienting toward nuclear plants to replace depleting fossil fuels.

As a result of the talks Soviet President Brezhnev extended an invitation to Greek Premier Karamanlis to make his first visit to Moscow, most likely in early 1979.

During a dinner reception for Rallis, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko stated: "The peoples of our countries share long-standing feelings of friendship and mutual respect. We believe that there exist great potentialities for the development of Greek-Soviet relations and we believe that you share the same view." Karamanlis sent a message to Moscow in which he affirmed "that the relations between our two countries are developing satisfactorily in all sectors. Foreign Minister Rallis and Gromyko agreed to continue a dialogue to build new economic relations, with the field of shipping being of paramount concern.

The *Journal of Commerce*, Sept. 6, reports that the discussions included the prospects of Soviet merchant ships gaining rights to repair at nationalized Greek shipyards. Other proposals which were considered during the talks were the construction of an aluminum plant with Soviet financing in Greece, the supply by the Soviet Union of oil storage reservoirs on Greek territory and the prospects for the Greek purchase of Soviet oil products.

The Soviet Union has proposed that the Greeks purchase Soviet natural gas piped into Greece via a pipeline through Bulgaria, as well as a possible second purchase of a Soviet-made electric power plant. Prior to the Rallis visit the two countries had already signed a merchant shipping agreement. The *Journal of Commerce* notes that Greek-Soviet trade has increased from a total of \$249.7 million in 1975 to \$325.1 million last year.

Other countries of southern Europe, both East and West, are discussing entering into an ambitious Mediterranean-Africa deal with the Libyans and Nigerians.

### *Persian Gulf and the East Bloc*

The final center of motion around Middle Eastern regional development is Iran and its Gulf States' neighbors. Primarily, motion here centers around Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda's trip to the area.

Prior to his upcoming trip to Eastern Europe, the Shah of Iran laid out a perspective for cooperation and development in a Sept. 7 interview with East Germany's *Neues Deutschland* daily.

After calling for a nuclear-free zone to be established in the Middle East and Indian Ocean, the Shah emphasized that "certain problems of humanity, such as nutrition, illiteracy and hygiene, can only be solved through cooperation of all countries without respect to differences in their social systems."

The Shah then called for "efforts to develop new energy resources." He praised Iran's agrarian reform programs, continued national economic growth, and the income per capita increase during the past 15 years from \$160 to \$2250.

—Mark Burdman and Judith Wyer