

er have accepted the government policy with no protest for fear that if the FIS comes to power in Algeria, it would create a domino effect throughout the rest of the Maghreb countries, especially in Tunisia and Morocco, which, up to now, have avoided Islamist regimes.

Who controls the Algerian terrorists?

If the FIS is claiming that it is moderate and many of its leaders seek contacts with the West, who, then, are the extremists? For the past couple of years, the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) has been terrorizing foreigners and moderate Islamic and even secular Algerians. Fifty-seven foreigners have been killed all told, a strategy clearly aimed at breaking all Algerian ties to the outside world. Within Algeria, the armed groups are trying to force Islamic law on people who don't necessarily want it. Thus in some areas they have threatened women to wear the *jehab* (veil), or stay inside their houses. They even made death threats against students and teachers, if they attended the beginning of the school year in September.

The GIA, comprised of Afghans—those Islamists who participated in the Afghanistan war against the Soviets—is playing right into the “clash of civilizations” scenario of the Trilateral Commission think-tanker Samuel Huntington, according to which, in this post-communist era, the old East-West political confrontation will be supplanted by a deepening conflict between the Enlightenment-inspired West and a supposed “Islamic-Confucian” monolith on the other.

There is some amount of suspicion that this policy is being promoted by evil circles in advanced countries, in England in particular, who want to rule over a divided world, plunged into wars over ethnic, religious, and cultural differences. Great Britain in particular, has a long tradition of creation and manipulation of “radical Islamists,” who can be deployed against numerous targets.

The British *Guardian* reported that much tension, a “diplomatic rift” even, occurred between Britain and France over the issue of British laxity toward radical Islamists on its territory. The French were pointing notably to a conference of the Hizb ut-Tahrir which took place at the Wembley Hall in Britain, on Aug. 8. Indeed this is one of the most extreme Islamic groups. Further inquiry into the group revealed, however, that it is a group of “extremist hotheads” which has received massive backup for a little over a year, from the British establishment. Created in Jordan about 25 years ago, this radical group remained very small until about a year ago when the British elite started lavishing media attention on it. The group received two pages of coverage in the *Guardian* and was covered by national TV. The *Independent* called it the most important international Islamic conference in the recent period, while the BBC ran hourly commercials for it. It is thus that this group, which could only bring out 10-15 people to demonstrations one year ago, was able to gather 8,000 at the Wembley meeting.

Book Reviews

China's murderous anti-family policy

by Sabine Muehler

A Mother's Ordeal

by Steven Mosher

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1994

288 pages, hardbound, \$21.95

The following first appeared in the German weekly Neue Solidarität as a review of the book Der zerrissene Herz, by Chi An and Steven Mosher, which is the German translation of A Mother's Ordeal. All quotes that appear in this review have been translated from the German.

The wish to have children, to found a family, is one of the most basic rights and most private domains of each married couple. To curtail and control this right means a degradation of individual freedom. But this is exactly what the United Nations sought at their population conference in Cairo. Although the conference strategists avoided, in the more recent period, praising China's one-child policy too much, still, in the World Population Report 1990 of the U.N. Population Fund, it is positively mentioned that China managed to reduce the number of children to 2.2 per woman in less than two decades.

Now, a book has appeared in Germany, co-authored by Chinese nurse Chi An, on her work as an enforcer in family policy, and by American social scientist Steven Mosher. In a very moving way, Chi An exposes the practice and effects of population control. The report was published in German under the title, *Das zerrissene Herz*, or *The Lacerated Heart*.

In the preface, Steven Mosher, who pulled together Chi An's eyewitness report, explains the incredible situation he found when conducting research in China in 1980. He followed the women who were forcibly transported to the county hospital; watched the abortions and sterilizations; talked to depressed husbands and desperate grandparents, and held interviews with responsible functionaries. In closing he writes: “When I left China a few months later, the cries for

help of the women were still ringing in my ears.”

China's path to the one-child family started after the great starvation in 1961-63, in which 30 million people died. Instead of initiating a massive reconstruction program, Mao Zedong forced population control as the most important measure for the “Great Leap Forward.” Step by step, the measures implemented became more drastic and draconian. While at first, two children were permitted, in 1981 a national law decreed that there must be only one child per couple; this is in force up to the present day. The decree says:

“Each family has to obtain a birth permission before having a baby. It may take years to get that permission. Therefore, not only is the number of children mandatory, but also the time when one is allowed to have a baby.

“Women who get pregnant without having the birth permit, must have abortions, no matter which month of pregnancy they're in.

“After the first child, or in those cases where there's no birth permit, a coil is automatically inserted, which is made of metal, so that it is easily visible on an X-ray in the yearly medical control examination [this is the intrauterine device, IUD].

“When getting married, couples are pressured to sign a one-child agreement. This means that after the first child's birth, the woman will be sterilized.

“If a family refuses to abort a child that is not allowed, they will be refused permission to build a house, and water and electricity will be cut. Grain stamps, driver's licenses, and all business permits are cancelled.”

Family planning combat groups were founded, which took illegally pregnant women by force to the maternity ward. What steps these combat groups would take otherwise is described by a Chinese journalist: “Six women fled, but their families were threatened, that their houses would be torn down if these women did not reappear in the clinic within one week for abortions. This was no empty threat. On the way back she saw the six torn-down houses. No one in the village was allowed to give shelter or help to the families.”

The journalist also visited a hospital, “in which hundreds of women, many of them were past six months pregnant, sat squeezed into dark corridors, waiting to be called into the abortion center, which had been set up in the yard of the hospital. Next to it stood a public toilet. She went in: You simply could not set foot anywhere in it—everything was full of bloodsoaked toilet paper. Behind the toilet stood a row of trash barrels: The aborted babies were put in there—some of them were eight months along—which were later taken someplace else to be dumped.”

Whenever an illegal child is born in spite of these harsh controls, that child is not entered into the family register. Which means, that the child will get neither medical assistance nor grain rations, can't attend school, and later won't get a job. Officially the child simply doesn't exist.

These decrees show clearly that the Chinese family plan-

ning policy is being carried out against the will of the population, and can only be sustained by a great number of forceful measures. Strangely enough, no one outside China, including the so-called China experts, will talk about this. In general, the subject has been declared taboo.

A cog in the killing machine

All the more important, therefore, is Chi An's report. She worked in the family planning office of a large truck plant. At first, her job was to perform the pregnancy tests and insert IUDs. Later, she was given responsibility to take care of surveillance of the birth quota for the 15,000 workers. She went on to practice abortions herself, in the so-called early stage—first to fourth month of pregnancy. She describes her first abortion by suction: “I looked over there and saw that the ‘evidence’ existed of the remains of what had been, only a few minutes earlier, a 13-week-old fetus. I could recognize the remains of arms and legs, the body, and the skull. In my mind I put it all together, in order to make sure nothing was missing. Most of the parts were so crushed that they could hardly be recognized anymore as having a human form. Then my glance became fixed upon a perfect little hand, not more than a half-centimeter long. Four tiny fingers and a tiny thumb, it was all complete with its tiny, visible fingernails—and then I knew what I had done.”

Abortions after the fourth month were carried out surgically by physicians. I will spare the reader details on the different methods, and Chi An's description of what she saw of the babies, because it surpasses the bearable.

Her next duty was to persuade “recalcitrant” women to abort. They were locked into a shed, and worked over day and night until they suddenly agreed to an abortion “voluntarily.”

“The space was small, only four and a half meters wide and perhaps twice as long. On the rear end some rows of wooden benches were set up, over which a bare electric bulb dangled. In the course of the last two weeks, 16 women had capitulated. Now there were only seven left on the bench. With some luck, in the course of that day, another one or two would give in. The women sat with their heads down and returned my gaze. They were in all different stages of pregnancy. Ah Ching, for example, was already in her eighth month. And another, Hua, was at least past four months. They had all already felt their babies stir, I thought crossly. Women who had already felt these little treacherous movements in their womb were always the most recalcitrant. We adopted the ‘hard and soft’ tactic as it is called in party jargon. First, Party Secretary Chen and other top functionaries terrified the women with dark threats about the harsh consequences, then I would come and speak gently to them, as a friend. These ‘sessions’ were repeated until all the women had caved in. But it was a bottomless pit. As soon as some had given in, then new women would arrive who had been detected.”

The quota was so low, that more and more women be-



A 1977 photo of children at the Beijing Municipality Kindergarten Number 5, performing a traditional dance. The photo was circulated by the United Nations as part of its buildup for the 1979 International Year of the Child. By 1980, China had limited the number of children a family could have, issuing permits for bearing children, sterilizing women after their first child, and forcibly aborting women—up through the eighth month—who ventured a second pregnancy.

came pregnant illegally. On Chi An's street, for example, out of over 200 families there were only eight legal babies. For that reason, surveillance became more and more stringent and more degrading. On the office's walls, big boards showed all relevant facts: How many women were of child-bearing age; how many women were using what kind of contraceptives; who had already had an abortion; how many births were permitted for the next year, and how many people had applied for a birth permit. On huge boards, the day of the next menstrual period was noted, and each woman had to make a check by her name when her period started.

Street committees were formed which were responsible for enforcement of the quota and which had the right to spy on everyone everywhere.

Fighting for life

Chi An couldn't take these draconian measures. Although she had grown up and was educated under this ideology, she began to feel resistance, which was fed by two decisive events. She became a victim of the rules herself and had to abort her second child; and then, she had witnessed an aborted boy fighting for hours to stay alive. All this led to a profound change in her thinking, and she decided to follow her husband, who was living in the United States, and to ask for asylum, because even there she was threatened and spied on.

The story of Chi An's life is not only an extensive report

on methods and effects of population control in China, it provides a good picture of the country's living and social conditions as well. Her story shows how people were step-wise drawn out of their families and into a collective life, and how the regime succeeded in destroying the opposition, by destroying classical Chinese culture and its values. "For many long days we assaulted the homes of the families in our neighborhood, ripped apart their traditional Chinese robes, and their western clothing, smashed Buddha statues and antique vases, tore up photographs and painted scrolls. Books were burned in huge bonfires."

Furthermore it is shown how the population was degraded. Just in order to have a chance at an education, children were forced to denounce and renounce their parents if they didn't come from the "proletariat."

Through these measures and through the buildup of a strong power apparatus, people were robbed of any pride and dignity, and instead, the seeds of denunciation, mistrust, and deceit were sown. Chi An's achievement is that she has made public the encroachments of the state into people's personal lives.

All those who favor population control today should read this first-hand report, and take to heart the remark an elderly Chinese gynecologist made to Chi An: "Have you ever thought about what is going to happen to you after your death? When some day you must go down into the underworld, a throng of little hands will be grabbing for you."