

The Brunswick International

Protests over Israel's Sharon break out across Arab world



A Palestinian watches as Israeli soldiers find positions by the Temple Mount on Saturday, during noon prayer.

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) - Young Palestinians burned effigies of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon in a Lebanese refugee camp in one of a number of demonstrations across the Arab world Saturday over the current Israeli-Palestinian riots that have claimed six lives.

Some 1,000 youths carrying Palestinian flags marched through Ein El-Hilweh, Lebanon's largest refugee camp, shouting: "We live for Palestine! We die for Palestine!"

About 40 Palestinian guerrillas armed with AK-47 assault rifles trampled on the Israeli flag during the demonstration. Some protesters carried pictures of the Al-Aqsa mosque, one of two Islamic shrines in the Jerusalem compound known to Arabs as Haram as-Sharif or Noble Sanctuary and to Jews as the Temple Mount.

It was a visit to the compound Thursday by Israel's hawkish opposition leader, Ariel Sharon, that triggered three days of rioting in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sharon said his motive was to demonstrate Israeli control over the enclosure.

Arabs see the compound as the third holiest site in the Islamic world and Palestinians view that section of Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. Israel captured the compound, and the rest of east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

In Beirut, Lebanese Prime Minister Selim Hoss praised the riots in "Occupied Palestine" and called on nations to help stop "Israeli aggression against Arab Jerusalem."

In Amman on Saturday, the Jordanian Council of Unions called for a popular trial for Sharon, calling him a criminal.

"Contacts are underway with political parties, civil institutions and popular forces to hold a popular trial for the terrorist Sharon," council spokesman Saleh Armouti told reporters. The council groups 13 professional associations that are dominated by Muslim fundamentalists and leftists opposed to peace with Israel.

Armouti said the unions were planning several rallies to underline the plight of Palestinians, including an Oct. 24 protest at

the Allenby Bridge on the Jordan River which separates the kingdom from the West Bank.

At least 500,000 Jordanian political activists, as well as Palestinian refugees who were displaced in the 1948 and 1967 Middle East wars, are expected to take place in the rally, dubbed "the journey to return home," he said.

In Alexandria, Egypt, some 5,000 students staged noisy demonstrations on the various campuses in the Mediterranean port city, police officials said on condition of anonymity.

Waleed Mohamed, an engineering student and member of the Muslim Brotherhood, said he took part because of his "extreme pain and grief" over the "massacre" in Jerusalem and the Palestinian territories.

The protesters carried banners reading "Jerusalem is Islamic" and called for holy war, Mohammed said. In Lebanon's 13 refugee camps, Palestinians observed a general strike and day of mourning for the riots victims. Shops and schools were also closed.

Some 400,000 Palestinians live in the Lebanese refugee camps.

"Milosevic is clearly unwilling to bow out"

Patrick FitzPatrick

The Brunswickan

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia - Twenty or so anarchists gathered in a local internet cafe and were talking animatedly about the next installment of their "action." Told they would be denied entry to the Czech Republic to join other European protesters at the IMF and World Bank meetings in Prague, the group was in the middle of a surprisingly successful protest in Zagreb - albeit one marked more by dancing, chanting, the juggling of fire and more than a little public drunkenness, than by clashes with riot police.

In the multilingual babble of local activists they were squabbling over plans for the night's street party when a hush suddenly fell over the room as someone turned up the television playing in the corner.

It was 7:30 p.m., time for the state-run television news program. This was the day after Yugoslavia's federal and presidential elections.

The dreadlocked, pierced anarchists watched with rapt attention as the normally taciturn anchor announced with a smile that figures released by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) indicated DOS presidential candidate Vojislav Kostunica had trounced Slobodan Milosevic.

When the news shifted to coverage of events closer to home, the silence ended just as quickly as it had fallen as the anarchists returned to their talks of demos and actions, more interested in resistance to global capitalism than how they might help Otpor ("Resistance"), the Serbian students' opposition movement.

Now, as strikes ensure power cuts and the piling of garbage in Serbia's streets, hundreds of thousands of Serbs have taken to the streets demanding Milosevic cede power to the opposition's Kostunica. The international community, meanwhile, has followed the anarchists' example, distracted again by the press of world events - the death of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau; the American election campaign; the rebirth of violence in Israel and the Palestinian West Bank...

Here in Zagreb, pundits and politicians alike have been more than a little distracted by twin proclamations last week that have taken away from media coverage of Croatia's (rhetorical) support of the Yugoslav opposition. A week ago today, a group of 12 serving and retired general officers with strong combat records from the "Patriotic War," as the 1991-1995 war in the Balkans is known here, released a letter which amounted to a public declaration of an imminent coup.

Over the weekend, the Croatian Democratic Union or "HDZ" - the former ruling party of dead semi-dictator Franjo Tudjman - released a proclamation of its own, calling on Croats at

home and abroad to overthrow the "anti-Croatian Communist so-called government" i.e., the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Ivica Racan.

President Stipe Mesic's response as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces was swift; he sent seven of the letters' signatories into retirement - redoubling talk of a possible coup.

Croatia has done a little to help; members of the ruling coalition have quietly made it known they will support the gradual easing of sanctions against Belgrade if the Serbian opposition does come to power, while President Mesic convinced his Bulgarian counterpart, Petar Stojanov, to release a joint statement supporting the opposition. International observers seem not to have noticed but Mesic's move was a diplomatic coup, as Bulgaria has long allowed fuel and other black-market goods passage into Serbia.

Although bloodied by the electoral results, Milosevic is clearly unwilling to bow out. He knows full well his most likely fates are at the end of a noose, on the wrong end of a firing squad a la Nicolae Ceau'escu, or a free, one-way ticket to The Hague, where the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) eagerly awaits his appearance on an indictment issued by current Supreme Court Justice (and UNB honorary doctorate recipient) Louise Arbour when she was the ICTY's chief prosecutor.

The DOS' figures claim Kostunica won 51.34 percent of the vote to Slobodan's 36.22 percent, and hundreds of thousands have filled Serbia's streets for the past week, chanting "Gotov je!" ("He's Finished!"). Some carried posters of Milosevic painted with a Hitler moustache, mouthing "Gotov sam..." ("I'm finished...") as Yugoslav flags superimposed with Otpor's clenched-fist logo fluttered defiantly in the background.

The DOS-organized nation-wide strike has been highly successful, causing garbage to pile up in the streets, transit workers to refuse to report to work, and (most significantly) 4,500 coal miners in Kolubara to down their picks. As the Kolubara mine - the largest in Serbia - feeds the Obrenovac power plant that provides at least half of Serbia's power needs, intermittent blackouts have hit at least six major cities.

Meanwhile, Otpor and DOS-led protests have blocked highways throughout the nation, and nearly 40,000 started a march on Milosevic's Belgrade residence on Tuesday. A crowd of 20,000 even turned out in Pozarevac - Milosevic's hometown and a traditional bastion of support - to demand he step down in favour of Kostunica.

Although the protests had, at press time, not been met by state repression, indications

are this may soon change. In the run-up to Sunday's second round of balloting, a Milosevic spokesperson announced the government would use all means at its disposal to "prevent subversive activity." The announcement, which came on the eve of the DOS' launch of a court challenge to the Electoral Commission's results, was accompanied by the arrest of several high-profile union leaders involved in organizing the strike actions.

Milosevic's options are rapidly narrowing after Gen. Nebojsa Pavkovic, the former Milosevic loyalist and Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav Army (VJ), announced VJ units would not move against civilian demonstrators. Milosevic, though, has always known he could not fully trust the VJ.

Knowing he could not rely even on Pavkovic, his handpicked man, Milosevic has created a parallel command structure in the VJ by placing members of the always-loyal KOS (army counterintelligence service) in every unit down to the platoon level. Meanwhile, he has rebuilt his police force, the MUP, from a rag-tag band of police into an exceptionally loyal, well-trained and well equipped force of more than 100,000 men.

Whether Milosevic will move the MUP or army units, whose loyalty he can ensure against demonstrators as some observers speculate, remains to be seen.

On the streets of Zagreb as in Serbia, only one thing remains clear at the moment: despite the present optimism, no one really expects Europe's only real dictator to slip quietly into the shadows of political oblivion.

Patrick FitzPatrick is a UNB graduate student studying in the Balkans.



Opponents of Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, filled Serbia's streets last week.

Negotiations with farm leaders break down in Bolivia

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) - Negotiations between the government and the head of Bolivia's farmers' union broke down, failing to end two weeks of protests and roadblocks by Aymara and Quechua Indians seeking land reform and objecting to the destruction of coca crops. The violent protests, which have left 10 dead and dozens injured, also have been laced with a strong dose of anti-white sentiment.

Felipe Quispe, an Aymara Indian and leader of the country's main farmers organization, told government ministers in the talks Sunday that the land belongs to the Aymara and Quechua peoples and not the "Kharas," or the whites.

Quispe accused the ministers of being murderers, responsible for the deaths of the 10 Indians during the protests that have paralyzed the country. Farmers have shut down all major roads in the Bolivian highlands, and food shortages are being felt in many cities.

"The whites should leave the country. We cannot negotiate the blood of my brothers," Quispe shouted at the ministers. "Kill me if you are men."

The dramatic meeting took place in the Catholic Church offices in La Paz. The church

has been sponsoring the talks.

Quispe was convicted and served time several years ago for allegedly heading a terrorist organization. He said he would only hold a dialogue in the Aymara Indian town of Achacachi, where several deaths occurred in April during similar protests. "It is sad that Quispe is encouraging acts of violence," said Minister of the President Walter Guterres after the talks broke down Sunday. He blamed Quispe for the violence and said: "Nobody has the right to throw out those of us who live on this land."

"We are not willing to obey the whims and the goals that are not the goals of the Bolivian people," Guterres said. "Quispe is operating under a mentality of 400 years ago."

Bishop Jesus Juarez, who was hosting the negotiations, regretted the breakdown in talks and called for a truce and the renewal of negotiations.

Meanwhile, coca leaf farmers in the Chapare region of Bolivia were evaluating the government's latest proposal that includes an end to the construction of three U.S.-financed

Story continued on page 6.



NEW ENGLAND PIZZA COMPANY Campus Special

One 12" SQUARE Pizza (3 toppings)

One 8" SQUARE Garlic Cheese Fingers

\$9.99

One 15" SQUARE Pizza (3 Toppings)

One 12" SQUARE Garlic Cheese Fingers

\$12.99

Only a Toonie for Delivery

273 King st. (Downtown)

454-5400

URGENT NOTICE

To All Students Planning to Travel During Christmas



Due to the consolidation of airlines, there are fewer seats this year.

All students are therefore urged to book their flights NOW to avoid disappointment later. Student Class™ airfares are available exclusively from Travel CUTS, Canada's national student travel bureau.

TRAVEL CUTS

Main Floor, SUB
472-CUTS (2887)

Owned and operated by the Canadian Federation of Students.

THE CELLAR
EST. 1994
Pub & Grill

This Weekend

Morahambi
And
The Guthries
From Halifax

Oct 12