

# International VIEWPOINT

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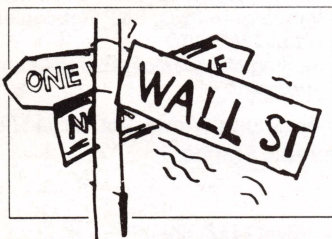
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# International VIEWPOINT

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# Aquino scores another personal triumph

IN THE May 11, 1987, legislative elections, more than a year after her triumphal accession to the presidency, Corazon Aquino passed another popularity test with flying colours. Owing to an extremely slow count, the complete results of the vote are not yet known. But government candidates must have received at least 20 — and perhaps 22 — of the 24 senatorial seats, and two-thirds of the 200 deputies' seats.

For the first time, the radical left participated in the national electoral contest under the name of the Alliance for New Politics (ANP). In the absence of precise percentages, it is still difficult to analyze the results it got. But while the campaign itself seems to have been relatively good in mobilizing activists and in political agitation, the electoral performance of the popular left seems to have been disappointing.

The following article takes a brief look at the initial implications of this election.

PAUL PETITJEAN

ACCORDING TO THE new constitution adopted in February 1987, the structure of the National Assembly in the Philippines is modeled on that of the US Congress. On May 11, 24 senators and 200 deputies of the lower House were elected. The senators were elected nationally, and the deputies in local districts. There were four competing national slates:

- The presidential slate, *Lakas ng Bayan* (Strength of the Nation), for which Corazon Aquino waged a vigorous campaign.

- The Grand Alliance for Democracy (GAD), led by Juan Ponce Enrile, minister of defence under the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and in the first Aquino government, who went into open opposition to Aquino at the end of 1986.

- The *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL), the Movement for the New Society, the official party of the Marcos dictatorship.

- The Alliance for New Politics (ANP), which included three militant left organizations: the *Partido ng Bayan* (PnB), formed in August 1986 and led by former political prisoners; the

*Bayan* coalition of mass organizations, formed in 1985, which includes notably the *KMU* union confederation formed in 1980<sup>1</sup>, and the *KMP* peasant confederation formed in 1985<sup>2</sup>; and the *Volunteers for Popular Democracy* (VPD). The VPD was formed in mid-1986 and is led in particular by Father Edicio de la Torre (former leader of *Christians for National Liberation*) and Horacio "Boy" Morales (former leader of the *National Democratic Front*), both of whom were imprisoned under Marcos.

Other left organizations, such as the socialist organization *Bisig*, campaigned for the ANP, where it ran candidates. *Kaiba*, the new women's party, also ran some candidates.<sup>3</sup>

## Cease-fire broken before elections

On Mindanao and in the Sulu islands in the south of the chain, where there are large Muslim communities, the *MNLF* called for boycotting the elections.<sup>4</sup> The cease-fire signed between the government and the *MNLF* was



Cory Aquino (DR)

broken on May 9, shortly before the elections.

Although the official voting count has been extremely slow, the exact results are not yet known, but the trends are clear.

The rate of participation was very high — 80-85% of the 26.3 million eligible voters (out of a population of 57 million) went to the polls. This fact deserves to be underlined. The Filipino electoral game remains deeply marked by patronage politics. But it seems that, in the eyes of the masses, such elections are again being seen as embodying their democratic aspirations.

The American model and the appeal for civic responsibility launched by the Church must have also played a role in this respect. But Filipinos have a rather long-standing electoral tradition, and are just coming out of 14 years of dictatorship. This was probably one of the most important factors that the militant left needs to analyze.

## Lakas ng Bayan stood under president's banner

The high rate of participation undoubtedly favored the candidates supported by Corazon Aquino, because these elections represented a new personal triumph for her. The *Lakas ng Bayan* candidates did not fight the election on a legislative program, but under the banner of the president. This made it possible to elect unknowns or newcomers to the electoral game and to transcend the traditional influence of local personalities.

So, for the present, Corazon Aquino

1. *Kilusang Mayo Uno*, May 1 Movement.

2. *KMP*, Peasant Movement of the Philippines.

3. On the founding of *Kaiba*, see Sonia Rupon's article, as well as the interview and report by Maita Gomez in *International Viewpoint* 115, March 9, 1987.

4. *MNLF*, the Moro National Liberation Front led by Nur Misuari.

represents a distinct and relatively durable political factor. A widow and a victim of the dictatorship, she gained legitimacy successively through the February 7, 1986, elections, then by the "parliament of the streets" (the mass mobilization of February 22-25, 1986, which forced Marcos to flee the country) and, finally, she was virtually beatified by the very powerful Filipino Catholic Church.

Her legitimacy has been reinforced by the constant blackmail threat of a coup d'etat by the military right, which made her appear to be a guarantor of stability in the eyes of the population; the constitutional referendum in February 1987; and, finally, by the legislative elections.

Rejection of the dictatorial past, as well as the role that Corazon Aquino has played, were major factors in the defeat of the GAD and the KBL, two movements associated with the former regime who spent fortunes on the electoral contest. The defeat of the extreme right assured a certain stability for the Aquino regime. But, because of the support the rightists have in the army, they can keep up a constant pressure, and will not fail to do so.

### Rumours of mutinies widespread

On the occasion of the legislative elections, the military bases once again demonstrated their defiance of the government. Rumors of mutinies were widespread after the vote. And on May 24, some 20,000 to 30,000 demonstrators came out in response to the call of the GAD and KBL. They built extensive barricades with buses whose tires had been flattened, and for 24 hours occupied the area around the headquarters of the army general staff and of a police unit.

While it does not represent an immediate danger, such permanent pressure serves Washington's interests well by helping to reinforce feelings of insecurity and thus increase the hold that the United States can exercise over the country.

Corazon Aquino's popularity as head of a bourgeois state and government poses difficult problems for the militant left. But it should not conceal the revival of the traditional politics of the big provincial families. The president herself has not been exempt from nepotism. Corazon Aquino has not failed to offer a helping hand to those close to her.

In many election districts, alliances were formed between Lakas ng Bayan and local personalities linked to the former regime. In others, rival "families" fought bitterly for official recognition from Malacañang, the pres-

idential palace. The House will be primarily the parliament of the traditional elites and a marketplace for influence-peddling.

Lacking financial resources, the ANP was unable to win the electoral contest. It will not get a single senator, and seems likely to get less than 5 deputies. Even in very poor election districts, such as Malabon-Navotas in the dock zone of northern Manila, its candidates did not manage a breakthrough.

Lean Alejandro, general secretary of Bayan who comes from the neighborhood, ran in this area, where intensive mass work has been carried on for years. In his campaign, he called for rejecting the "politics of money and guns," and stressed the social needs of a particularly badly-off population. But he seems to have only come in third place, behind a candidate of the Aquino "family" and one of the rightist Partido Nacionalista.

The perceptible disappointment at the results probably comes from the fact that many activists hoped that the base of the mass movement would be reflected directly at the electoral level. In fact, experience in this respect in many countries shows that this is not generally so simple. It takes time and experience to establish yourself in this arena.

The balance sheet of this first electoral campaign is certainly going to revive the discussion in the militant left about how much importance should be given to electoral work. It is not clear, moreover, that nationally the underground National Democratic movement fully mobilized its forces behind the ANP campaign.

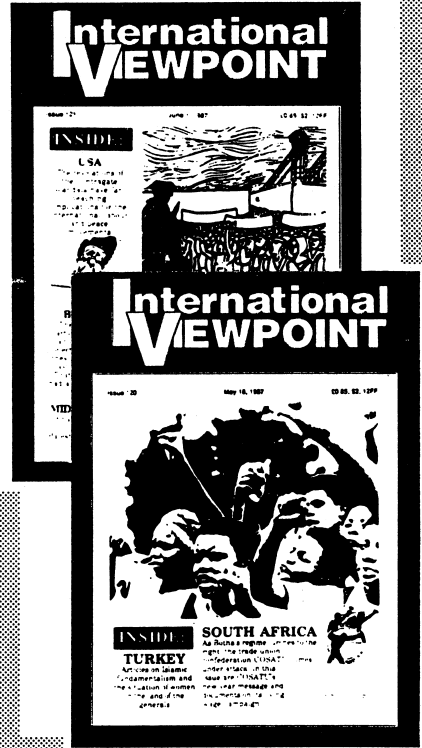
In late November provincial and municipal elections are to be held, which should be easier for the militant left than the elections to the National Assembly. Seventy-two provincial governors and about 1,500 mayors are to be elected. But such campaigns require major financial investment, especially since the electoral rules are particularly inequitable in this respect in the Philippines.

### Murder squads and police repression

Another obstacle is repression. More than 20 ANP activists, it seems, were killed by thugs during the past campaign, which was nonetheless one of the least bloody in the country's history. At a press conference ANP chair Fidel Agcaoili denounced "a systematic, concerted and institutionalized campaign [which] was launched by the entire government machinery and its allies in the [Roman Catholic] Church hierarchy, the media and big business

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circles to discredit [us]."<sup>5</sup>

Parallel police repression did not stop with the end of the electoral campaign. On June 8, Bernabe Buscayno suffered a murderous attack. He was hit twice by bullets in Manila, but a TV cameraman lost his life. The "target" chosen, probably by the military, was especially symbolic.

Better known under the name Kumannder Dante, Bernabe Buscayno was one of the main leaders of the New People's Army, the guerrilla force led by the Communist Party of the Philippines. He was arrested and spent ten years in detention under the Marcos regime, not being released until after the "February revolution" in 1986. Today, he is one of the best known leaders of the Partido ng Bayan.

The fight waged by the ANP, the PnB and the other militant left formations is not limited to the electoral arena. It is also a constant fight for the right to a legal existence for the radical, Marxist left in the Philippines. ☆

5. Quoted by James Clad, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 4, 1987, p.41.

# PASOK's right turn creates crisis on the left

**THE PAN-Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) was returned to power in the 1985 legislative elections, with 46% of the vote (as opposed to 48% in 1981).**

**In October 1985, PASOK introduced a series of austerity measures, contrasting sharply with its previous economic course. These included a two-year wage/price freeze, abolition of the sliding scale of wages, higher prices for public services and a 15% devaluation of the drachma. The PASOK government, headed by Papandreou, thus accepted the IMF and the EEC's "language of reason".**

**They had been pressing Greece to reduce or at least stabilize its budget and trade deficits, and to assure a more regular payment of the interest on the country's foreign debt. In 1985 this was of the order of \$14,000 million. In 1986, a third of foreign currency income — nearly \$1,300 million — went to pay this interest.**

**The Papandreou government's turn toward a head-on attack on working people shook up not only his own party and the union movement, but also the two Greek Communist parties, which had tried to attach themselves to PASOK. The political crisis of the left in Greece today is described in the following article.**

**DIMITRI IONOS**

**P**OPULAR reactions to the post-electoral cold shower were violent. The wave of mass protests unleashed after October 1985 ran up against an intransigent Papandreou government. In order to show its determination to impose austerity and make an "example," the regime did not hesitate to inflict a very heavy fine on the Communist daily *Rizospastis* for giving its workers a raise. That touched off a general strike of the press in March 1986.

Far from ebbing, the strikes spread and grew after the autumn of 1986, hitting every sector of the economy, both public and private, and also drawing in young people.

In the October 1986 municipal elections, PASOK paid a high price for its austerity policy. The country's big cities — Athens, Piraeus and Salonica — fell into the hands of the rightist opposition, New Democracy (ND). They continued the advance begun in the 1985 legislative elections, gaining 41% of the vote as opposed to 35.8% in 1981. It was this party that profited from the high abstention rate of 20%.

## A series of splits and realignments

The Moscow-loyalist Communist Party (KKE), which had made an electoral alliance with some sectors expelled from PASOK, took no position on the second round, leaving its voters to cast their ballots "according to their consciences." At the same time, in the capital, it called on them to "punish" PASOK.

The so-called Communist Party-Interior (KKE-es) had not yet split at the time, but it was already deeply divided. It took two positions toward the elections. The majority of its Central Committee called on its members to

vote for PASOK in order to block a return of the right. At the same time, some members of the CC — especially the party's organization in Piraeus — called for abstention or left the choice up to the ranks.

A thoroughgoing crisis gripped this party and more generally the Greek left has a whole. This has been reflected by a series of splits and realignments both in the trade unions and political parties.

Shortly before the 1985 elections, two PASOK deputies — T. Injes and V. Evangelinos — who had already been flirting with the KKE for a long time — reached the conclusion that they were certain to be expelled from their party. So, together with two other former members of the PASOK Central Committee — V. Filias and L. Fillipatos — they formed a new organization, Militant People's Unity (LEA).

In the legislative elections the KKE made an electoral accord with the new

party, as well as with the United Socialist Tendency of Greece (ESPE). This was formed in 1984 by the ex-PASOK minister of finance, Manolis Detrakis, and former secretary of state for the interior, Stathis Panagoulis.

In October 1985, G. Arsenis, who until then had been minister for the economy, was expelled from PASOK. He had implicitly expressed differences with the austerity policy that the government was going to institute, presenting himself as the main defender of the neo-Keynesian policy against the free-enterprisers of PASOK.

The General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), which included all the tendencies in the workers' movement organized in more or less political currents, was not to escape the backlash against PASOK's crackdown. The GSEE is the country's main trade-union organization, the other important confederation being the one that includes public workers.

During a meeting of the Executive Committee of the GSEE in November 1985, under pressure from workers unhappy with the government's policy, a group of trade-union leaders let it be known that they were opposed to the economic measures taken by the Papandreou team. On February 6, 1986, they were expelled from PASOK. Along with 1,200 trade unionists, they then decided to form the Blue- and White-Collar Workers' Socialist Trade-Union Movement (SSEK).

## New socialist trade-union movement

The new group's main forces came essentially from the public sector — electricity, post office, telecommunications and water. The SSEK took on political activity going beyond the narrow trade-union framework. In disagreement, two leading cadres of the SSEK decided shortly afterward to re-

join PASOK. In March 1987, another series of departures hit the newly formed trade-union organization. Other leading cadres joined the Socialist Party of Greece, which had just been formed by G. Arsenis.

Finally, along with PASOK, the Union of the Democratic Left (EDA) was hit by a split in November 1986. Thanks to collaboration with PASOK, this organization was able to elect a deputy, Manos Glezos, to the Greek parliament and another, S. Kolokotronis, to the European parliament.<sup>1</sup> It was the municipal elections that were at the root of this split.

A minority of the EDA leadership, including Glezos, clung to the alliance with PASOK, while a majority opted for an alliance with the KKE. For example, the general secretary of the EDA, T. Katrivanos (former prefect of Attica for PASOK) headed an EDA-KKE coalition slate.

The CP-Interior was a small Eurocommunist party. It originated from a split in February 1968 by the leadership of the CP's political work inside the country during the colonel's dictatorship, hence its name. There is not room in this article to analyze in detail the reasons for the split. I would note only that they began to emerge in 1944, and took a concrete form at the CP's Sixth Plenum in 1956, which condemned "Zachariadism" (for Nikos Zachariadis, general secretary of the party from 1931 to 1956), the party's "abnormal" internal regime and certain political decisions of the leadership in the 1950-55 period.

### Conflict within the Communist Party

The Soviet Communist Party, seeing that the internal crisis of the KKE could develop its own dynamic, decided to control the outcome by appointing K. Koliyiannis as the new general secretary. Numerous expulsions were carried out, and those members of the Greek CP who had been living in East European countries since the end of the 1944-47 civil war were subjected to systematic persecution.

In the ensuing years, and until the colonels' coup d'état in 1967, the conflict within the CP took the form of opposition between the part of the leadership living abroad and the part living in Greece. The dispute focused on organizational problems, but also on the question of the relations between the CP (then illegal) and the EDA, in which it was working.

In the years following the split, from 1968 to 1972, the CP-Interior had an influence equal to that of the CP Exterior. Among the youth, with the Lambra-kis Youth of the EDA and the Rigas

Fereos (its own youth organization), the CP-Interior held unquestionable dominance. But its political orientation after 1972 and in the period that followed the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 led to its marginalization.

After 1972, the whole political line of the CP-Interior came to center around elections, which were seen as a means of undermining the military regime "from within." By putting its emphasis on the contradiction — which it saw as primary — between the statements of a regime that claimed to be an "advanced democracy of the Western type" and its dictatorial practice, it managed to give the impression that it was a party seeking a policy of compromise with the regime.

More and more, this orientation came into conflict with radicalizing forces among the youth, but also more broadly with all of the anti-dictatorial forces, which called for abstention in the elections that the military were preparing in 1973.

At the time of the fall of the colonels in 1974, the CP-Interior's line was to counterpose two blocs — those forces that were supposed to be preparing the way for a new dictatorship and all the anti-dictatorial forces, including the right. It even failed to see that the apparatuses of the military junta were not going to be dissolved in the new regime, but rather integrated into it.

In the November 1974 elections, it proposed a united slate of all the parties and declared that it was ready to participate unconditionally in a government of national unity, regardless of the results of the vote. Needless to say, all the parties rejected this proposal.

Under the pretext of a threat of dictatorship, and in the name of anti-dictatorial unity, it held back and depoliticized social and political struggles.

### CP-Interior expels youth organization

Until the 1977 elections, it kept within the framework of the National Anti-dictatorial Democratic Unity (EADE) and sought to "unify the forces of the left, the center and the anti-dictatorial right" with the aim of extending democracy and limiting "certain social inequalities."

This policy did not fail to have consequences for the party's electoral performance. The CP-Interior never managed to get more than 1.5% to 2% in the various votes. The reason for the predominance the CP-Exterior gained over the CP-Interior has to be sought in the latter's own political line.

When, after the 1977 elections, a major part of the CP-Interior's youth organization, Rigas Fereos, challenged the line of the EADE, the party leadership proceeded to expel them.

The expelled Rigas Fereos members formed the "B Pan-Hellenic" organization (the name comes from the Second Pan-Hellenic Conference of Rigas Fereos). They were, undoubtedly, the most revolutionary current in the CP-Interior. Today, the leading group in the movement publishes the theoretical magazine *Thesis*, which places itself in a framework close to revolutionary Marxism.

After the 1977 elections, it became clear that PASOK was the main party in opposition to the government. The evolution of sections of the small and middle bourgeoisie who had traditionally voted for the right, and PASOK's impact on sections of the working class, had the effect of transforming the two Communist parties into uncritical fellow-travellers of Papandreou's party.

The CP-Interior no longer differentiated itself ideologically and politically from PASOK. Its goal remained to achieve its heralded extension of democracy and limitation of social inequalities through regrouping the left



Melina Mercouri campaigning for PASOK (DR)

1. Glezos is a hero of the Nazi resistance, and he still enjoys a strong moral authority. The EDA, founded in 1950, was the party in which the Communists worked during the entire period of clandestinity extending from the civil war (1944-47) to the dictatorship of the colonels.

and center. The only difference was that it no longer talked about the anti-dictatorial right.

In fact, PASOK became the supreme arbiter in the confrontations between the two Communist parties. The whole question was which one was going to profit most from special and exclusive cooperation with PASOK.

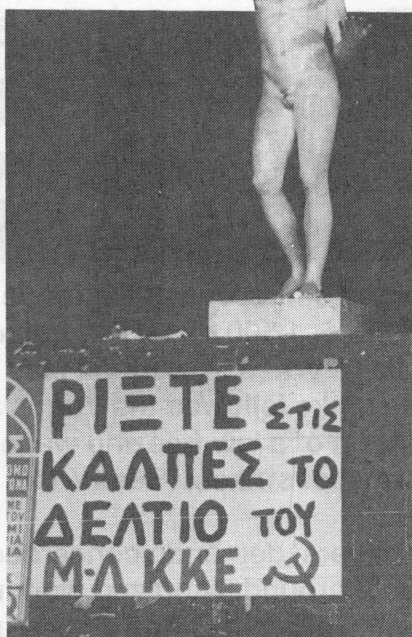
Within the CP-Interior, a challenge began to develop to the political choices made since 1971, without however questioning the logic of the "third way" to socialism through democracy and freedom. Its leading cadres — such as Leonidas Kirkos, Kostas Filinis, Babis Drakopoulos and Antonis Brilakis — covered the whole spectrum of shades of Eurocommunism.

The election of G. Banias to the post of general secretary at the 1982 congress solved none of the problems of the CP-Interior. Its credibility was being worn away by critical support to the PASOK government. It restricted itself to emphasizing the "inadequacy" of the measures adopted, while everything confirmed that once again a social democratic experiment had failed because, in a period of economic crisis and deep recession, reforms are simply impossible.

### Race to fill a political vacuum

Increasingly, the press and the parties starting talking about "after PASOK." The departures and splits from this party showed that a large number of its members were leaving without going on to join the traditional left. There was a political vacuum. This explains why everyone threw themselves into a race to fill it, with a more or less long-term project of forming a new party. This is the main reason for the split that the CP-Interior has just undergone.

The majority of the party — the so-called Transformation faction — led by such people as Kirkos, Filinis and Brilakis, is anxious to make a big appeal to the masses. The minority, the "Re-evaluation" faction — led by Banias, Kotoula, Bistis and Portaliou — maintains that it is necessary to continue the work of renewing the party that



was begun in 1968, without the future grouping losing its Communist profile.

The main difference between the two currents, thus, centers around the character of the grouping. No real differences of political strategy have appeared.

The Communist character of the new party has been at the center of the debates. But this question has been discussed in a schematic way.

The Euro MP Filinis, today leader of the Greek Left (EAR), said:

"Communism repels the masses, and since we have failed to change the masses, it is time to change ourselves. The new party will be left, Communist and socialist; it will be inter-class, social, ecological, pacifist, anarcho-autonomist and anti-authoritarian: whatever it has to be to appear modern, beautiful and attractive." (*Politis*, No. 61.)

You might think that the specter of Communism was haunting Greece, and that this was the reason that the former CP-Interior got no more than 1.5-2% of the vote. There was no self-criticism. No conclusion was drawn from the past course of the party, nor any about the source of the errors.

Filinis was carried along by his own momentum: "It is not necessary to go digging up the past nor get ourselves tied up in exercises of criticizing the options taken by the CP-Interior. The question we have to ask ourselves is why have the new options of the CP-Interior proved as ineffective as those that preceded them, and why have they left the party barely clinging onto survival?"

The logic, therefore, of the Transformation faction of the CP-Interior — and of the organization that has come from it today, the EAR — is no longer the same. It has been transformed into a purely social-democratic orientation. And if anyone could still have any doubts about the social-democratic character of the EAR, the analysis offered Political Bureau member D. Psychoyios of the way to handle the economic crisis should be enough to dispel them:

"Capitalist economic investment has to be intensified, and productivity has to be increased. Of course, the inevitable result of this in an economy such as that of Greece will be a rise in un-

employment, unless the number of working hours drops in tandem with a drop in wages, which means a drop in the real income of the working class. This can only become acceptable in the framework of a multi-directional and proportional austerity, that is one extended to all classes through the appropriate measures." (*The Left Today*, No. 12-13.)

### NATO — a central question in Greek politics

The function of the new party, therefore, would be to help to impose an acceptable austerity policy!

The founding congress of the EAR took place in April in Athens. The publicity it got from the big press was in inverse proportion to its real strength. The pre-congress discussions were open to all. But there were only about 12,000 people who paid 500 drachmas (about \$5) to join, and who can be considered to have an ideological and political affinity with this new party. It is estimated that the EAR has 4,000 to 5,000 organized members.

Those who participated in the founding of the Greek left were mainly former members of the CP-Interior who agreed with the majority faction, as well as the party's traditional voters, along with some expelled from PASOK. The main decision taken at the founding conference was to run an independent EAR slate in the coming legislative elections.

On NATO, one of the key questions in Greek politics, the EAR thinks that until the "two blocs" are eliminated, "strengthening the European pole will make it possible to reduce American domination, which is total today." The adoption of this position is undoubtedly one of the reasons for all the publicity given to the congress of such a small organization with an uncertain future.

The minority tendency, "Re-evaluation," organized a Pan-Hellenic conference on March 12-15. It decided to adopt the name "CP-Interior—Renovating Left" until its next congress, which is scheduled for October. This new organization has about 3,000 members. They represent the most vital sector of the defunct CP-Interior, and have some mass support.

The great success of "Re-evaluation" was to bring along almost all the active members of the youth organization, Rigas Fereos. The CP-Interior minority has been joined by the current around the magazine *15 Ioros Politis*, and a small group of revolutionary left activists who publish the *Socialist Workers Bulletin*.

The leadership of "Re-evaluation" stands on positions that could be char-

acterized as "left Eurocommunist." Their theoretical reference to an anti-capitalist strategy or the relevance of socialism, will probably be insufficient to differentiate them programmatically from the EAR.

The main differences they have with EAR at the moment are that they are radically opposed to PASOK's economic policy, and that they are for the elimination of the US military bases and for leaving NATO. At the trade-union level, they want to promote common action by all those forces to the left of the reformist apparatuses of PASOK and the KKE.

The CP-Interior—Renovating Left was the only political organization invited to a conference in Athens on May 9 initiated by SSEK, members of the municipal government and independent activists who have left PASOK since 1976. The meeting's objective was to start discussions for forming a new workers' party.

What is more, the CP-Interior—Renovating Left is open to any activist who accepts the party's Communist character. In reaction to the bureaucratic functioning of the former CP-Interior, the party's members are sensitive to any attempt to impose "from above" positions not previously discussed. The silence of the mass media about this organization contrasts strangely with the publicity given to the EAR! The future of this party will depend on its capacity to draw the lessons of the past and measure up to current tasks.

### PASOK — a failure of reformism

All attempts that have been made in Greece today to form a new left party are running into a certain number of obstacles, not least of which is a lack of understanding of the reasons for PASOK's failure. The criticisms of this party are concentrated on the classically capitalist policy that it has followed since 1985. They never take up its first term, during which it applied a Keynesian policy.

What many fail to understand is that the failure of PASOK is the failure of reformism. The political vacuum that everyone refers to can only be filled by a real anti-capitalist alternative. But, in many areas, whether it is the question of the EEC or the quarrel between Greece and Turkey over the Aegean Sea, the left is far from having class-struggle positions.

A process of recomposition of the left is undeniably underway. Many debates and clarifications in the light of the facts will be necessary. With their modest forces, revolutionary Marxists will take their place in this. ☆

## "The leadership is incompetent, if not outright corrupt"

**AFTER A 33-day long strike, one of the longest in Yugoslavia since 1945, 1,500 miners in Labin in the Republic of Croatia returned to work on May 11, claiming a partial victory. The strike followed the Yugoslav parliament's adoption of a law freezing wages on February 27, provoking a wave of strikes. (See IV 118, April 20, 1987.)**

Only one of the miners' demands concerned wages. Their other demands were around living and working conditions.

This unprecedented strike has had a deep impact, especially in Croatia. In March, the leadership of the unions and the party in that republic had already condemned the wage freeze. And the Trade-Union Alliance of Croatia took a more ambiguous attitude during the strike than the local unions.

The media reported the strike extensively. There was a roundtable on TV on the strikes in Yugoslavia, of which, according to the official figures, there were 380 between January and May, involving 50,000 workers. The press also published a series of articles, including the following one. It is a feature by the journalist Mila Stula, which was published in the April 21 issue of Croatia's main magazine, *Danas*.

### MILA STULA

**W**E DEMAND a 100 per cent wage increase, we demand the replacement of managers whom we do not trust, we demand that we be granted housing loans on the same terms as other workers — these are the demands of the workers of the Istra Mines Rasa, whose long-lasting strike has provoked great interest among the Yugoslav public.

They say that they will not return to work until their demands are met. It is estimated that each strike day costs several billions of [old] dinars. However, according to Mujo Kasumovic, a skilled worker from the Tupljak pit, they are ready to work Saturdays and Sundays to make up the losses.

The miners say that their trade union has deserted them. We searched in vain for Refik Radimic, the mine's trade-union president. He was nowhere to be found. We were unable to speak either with the president of the Labin Com-

mune, Sergije Baskijeri, or with the president of the Commune's LCY [League of Yugoslav Communists] committee, Vlado Cekad, or with its secretary, Veljko Gole.

Instead, the journalists were directed to speak with the president of the Commune's trade-union council, Antek Uksic, and the Rasa director, Egidije Milevoj. At the press conference, they warned us to "be careful with whom you speak and how you use your material". Apparently, we could not trust just anybody. It is also very clear that the miners, for their part, do not trust the trade union, and even less the general director, whose resignation they have been unsuccessfully demanding.

For the time being, however, the technical director of the Labin Basic Organization of Associated Labour (BOAL), Matija Lisica, and its administrative secretary, Duro Tomic, have been suspended [at the miners' insistence]



from their posts.

"We have had enough of Engineer Lisica. On the first day of the strike, he came to see us in his new Volvo, which must have cost more than one and a half billion old dinars, whereas we do not have enough to eat. We have to borrow from trade-union funds in order to buy textbooks and clothes for our children", says Hasan Velagic, a miner.

### Lies about miner's sabotage

Stories have started to circulate lately that the miners want to flood the mine.

"This is a barefaced lie", insists Ivica Stjepanovic, a miner. "Why should we want to flood something on which our livelihood depends? The mine is our bread. We are looking after the situation in the mine, and will not allow anything to happen to it."

However, we were told by Silvije Berkaric, director of the Labin BOAL — a man whom workers describe as a "real communist" and as the only man they can trust — that "despite their intention to safeguard the mines, their safety is being endangered. We have tried to send down a team to make the pits safe, but it was stopped. There is a real danger that a disaster will happen, unless we continue to safeguard the walls."

The miners are nevertheless refusing to return to work. They are waiting for the republic [Croatian] leadership. They want somebody from the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, the Economic Chamber of Croatia, from the Federal Executive Council [the government].

They say that Branko Jurlina from the Council of the Trade-Union Alliance of Croatia (CTUAC) came to speak to them, but that he told them "nothing new. We know all that already". They believe that only a discussion with these high functionaries will bring a change. Here they are mistaken because if there is no money, neither the republic leadership nor the government, from whom the miners are expecting help, can create it.

The leadership of the Labin Commune and the mine do not seem to understand that the miners are not hired labourers and that, if they are not given land for building houses and flats, or at least symbolic compensation for them in Labin, they will simply build houses in Bosnia, since they are largely Bosnian.

"Yugoslavia is here as well as there," says Karajkovic. "I would much rather see my sons living in Labin than elsewhere, because here they would have a better future. But what can I do when even I have nowhere to go?"

Ahmet Murtic was pensioned three

years ago. He has nowhere to live. "When I was about to be pensioned, I was the fifth on the housing list. But now my name is no longer on it: they say that pensioners cannot be placed on that list. When I go to the Commune housing department, they tell me to go and see the director. The director sends me to the trade union, and they send me somewhere else. So, I am given the runaround, and nowhere do they ask me who I am, nor wish me as much as good day. You know, at times I feel like crying. And yet I worked for 30 years shoulder to shoulder with these people. I have been a member of the party since 1957. But nobody asks now if I need help".

In the years immediately after the war, the mining profession was highly regarded and valued. Miners' wages were among the highest, and their standard of living was satisfactory. This was achieved despite the difficult conditions of generalized want, of reconstruction and building of the country.

However, over the past two decades,

through no fault of their own, the miners find themselves in the backwater of social and economic life. "That which has once been lost has been difficult to recover. Mines have been left without their best miners, modernization of pits is proceeding slowly, the coal is being mined in the same way as 50 years ago. In a majority of the mines, the technology is old, the machinery, ancient and worn out. The mines have no money with which to buy new machinery", wrote the [trade-union] paper *Rad* a few years ago.

On the occasion of the celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Labin Republic and of the Prostina Revolt, on 1 May 1971, Comrade Tito said at a public meeting in Labin: "Naturally, we have discussed at great length the state of the economy. Prices are rising, and nobody seems to care about money. Many are behaving in an irresponsible manner towards our community. We continue to have grandiose investment plans. In a word, there is too much anarchy, and this leads to deviations and crises: We have agreed that we should

Poster published by the Socialist Youth Alliance of Slovenia in their weekly paper, *Mladina* ("Youth"). The slogan at the side reads "Repression in Socialism"

REPRESJA I SOCIALIZMIH



no longer allow investment without proper financial backing. I will not ask anybody here to save money. Who can I ask here to save? The worker who does not have enough for everyday needs?

"I call instead upon the people who are today in responsible positions in our industry, our banks and in other sectors of our economic life — most of whom are Communists — to behave not according to their own wishes but according to the decisions of the League of Communists".

There are many in Labin who recall Tito's speech today. But they also speak of something else. The miners say: "Everybody here celebrates Miners' Day. It has become the Commune's official holiday. Yet we, who really ought to celebrate, eat sausages with beans on that day, while at the same time leaders — whom we never see at the mines— celebrate in Rabac [the nearby tourist resort]". And there is a good deal of truth in these words.

For how are we to explain otherwise the deep mistrust that exists between the management of Istra Mines and the Commune leadership on the one hand and the miners on the other? They do not think much of each other. The leadership says that the miners do not take into account the problems that the society faces today, whereas the miners believe that the leadership is incompetent, if not outright corrupt. Therefore, this "unprecedented" strike is continuing.

Where are we to look for its causes? Some say that the main villain is the Intervention Law, which has directly affected the miners' pockets. But the essence of the strike causes go much deeper.

The Labin leadership today prefers to forget the last year's strike, when the miners wanted first of all to discuss the bad organization of work and absence of plans for the future, and only afterwards sought a 60 per cent wage increase. At that time, the miners also asked that some managers be replaced.

### Undermining worker's self-management

The day after they had won their wage increase, they were visited by the president of the CTUAC, Ivo Bilandzija; but no improvement in living standards and working conditions followed. No answers were given to the stagnation of the Istra Mines, failed investment in the Ripenda and Koromacno pits, the lack of coal in the Labin pit, the money that disappeared, nobody knows where. Yet all this has seriously affected the material, social situation and, indeed, the self-managing status of the workers.

"They say that we get 17-18 million [old] dinars, but here is my pay slip, which shows that my average for the past three months has been 10,759,000!" says miner Zijad Barjek-tarevic. The miners say that there is a lot of demagogy about their wage levels. It is true that sometimes they can earn as much as 20 million old dinars, but only if they work Saturdays and Sundays without a break. And the work is made much harder by the fact that they have nowhere to rest after their work.

We visited the so-called single men's hostel, which the mine managers and Commune leadership speak of with pride. Its inhabitants, on the other hand, call it, justifiably, "the Grey House." It looks like a paupers' ghetto, something that we never dreamt we could find in Yugoslavia 40 years after the war.

On the ceiling of the dining area are "paintings" made by the faulty sanitary system on the floor above. There is little or no heating. The iron beds are reminiscent of a prison. There are two or three wooden chairs made before the war or soon after. Running from wall to wall are washing lines. There, then, the tired miners are supposed to find their well-earned rest.

### "We simply have nothing"

Miner Hasan Karajkovic says: "Our youth drink and play cards because there is no money even for a table tennis set, which is the cheapest form of recreation. We simply have nothing. I do not want to be rich, but I do want to live like a human being."

Hadzib Pestalic, a disabled miner, says: "We are here only to labour, and we have a value only while we work — nobody cares about us as human beings".

Time runs on, the pits are empty, problems are growing, and nerves are being strained. A small incident can start a fire. Everybody is aware of this. The Labin miners say that they will not allow any manipulation with their strike. They will not allow anybody to proclaim them the enemies of society, for which "we are ready to give our lives at any time, if necessary". But they assure us also that "We shall fight on, as we know and can, to win what we have earned by our hard work". Despite a degree of naïveté, a touch of unnecessary eagerness perhaps, they need to be understood. They are largely young men, men in their twenties, living far from their families and almost completely isolated.

The Labin leadership and managers are, on the whole, local old-timers, well-to-do people, engineers, profes-

sors and such like. The miners are newcomers, temporary workers, virtually uninvolved in the life of the town, unskilled or semi-skilled workers, who often do not know about their rights under self-management or how to use them. How is this to be overcome? By using the organs of self-management, the party and the trade unions?

For years now, these organs have placidly watched the same people rotate from one function to another: the manager of the mine becoming the president of the Commune, the comrade from the party committee turning up as the mine's manager, and so on. Some have become richer, some poorer — and all the while the miners' lives have remained unchanged.

### Trade union behaves as an "organ of the authorities"

During these days of the strike, the Commune's party committee prefers to busy itself discussing the journalists' reports in the local paper, *The Labin Commune*, instead of discussing the lessons to be drawn from last year's strike, or how to change their style of work.

The trade union has remained equally uninvolved: it behaves not as an association of workers, but as an organ of the authorities. It is possible to argue that the workers' demands, or the methods that have been chosen to achieve them, may not be right, but the job of the trade union is to be among them — not outside them — in order to find better alternatives. It is simply not enough for trade unions to limit themselves to distributing loans for winter food or for clothes.

Last Friday, the presidency of the CTUAC issued a statement in which it said, "it is inappropriate for the republic [trade-union] leadership to intervene with positions and promises about increases in personal incomes in this or any other case. We support all the actions so far undertaken by the organs and organizations of the Labin Commune and of the Rijeka Association of Communes...."

"At the same time, we call on the Labin trade-union council and the Inter-Communal Trade-Union Alliance of Rijeka to prepare, together with the representative of the Republic's trade-union committee for energy and the Presiding Committee of the CTUAC, a complete analysis, with proposals for solving the question of individual house-building loans, employees' accommodation, food and other vital needs. This analysis should be ready for 15 May".

So much for the trade union. The miners will be considering in the coming days what to do next. ☆

# Anti-communal front needed in Punjab

**THE ELECTED government of Punjab state was ousted by a decree of Rajiv Gandhi on May 11. He put the state under direct rule from Delhi, under President's Rule, a procedure permitted by the Indian constitution but which is an important limitation of parliamentary rule in a country such as India.**

**The present prime minister's mother, the former prime minister Indira Gandhi, used this procedure many times to eliminate political challenges. She went on to impose emergency rule over the country as a whole for a period. The following article explains what this step means and why it was taken.**

**M NAVID**

**T**HE IMPOSITION of President's Rule in Punjab, unjustifiable though it is, did not come as a surprise. It only confirms the bankruptcy of the Central government's policy.

Far from helping to contain and reduce communal polarization in Punjab, it is guaranteed to make the situation worse, as the forces of "law and order" are let loose to widen the repression. That will further alienate the Sikh masses of the state and push them to support those sections of anti-Centre militants who argue that the only solution is formation of a separate country ruled by a Sikh theocracy — Khalistan.

The Punjab Accord signed between the prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, leader of the "moderates" in the Akali Dal, is as good as dead. The Accord was in some respects a concession to Sikh communalism as represented by Akali Dal. As such, some of its provisions had to be opposed. But it also recognized certain genuine grievances — not just of Sikhs, but of Punjab itself — and promised to redress these.

For example, a commission was to be set up to investigate the riots in New Delhi and other towns following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, in which thousands of Sikhs lost their lives. A tribunal was to adjudicate on the distribution of the waters of the Ravi-Beas rivers to the three states of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, all of which were clamouring for more.

Innocent people arrested in the Golden Temple at the time of the Operation Bluestar assault were to be released. Chandigarh, the dual capital of Haryana and Punjab (but a Union territory) was to be transferred to Punjab (in fulfillment of a promise made by the Centre as far back as 1970), and nearby Hindi-speaking areas in Punjab were to be transferred to Haryana in exchange.

The Accord was never a solution to the Punjab problem, but if at least those clauses that offered redress to real grievances had been properly implemented, it might have reduced tensions, checked the growing alienation of Sikhs, weakened the thrust towards Khalistan and thus bought time and space for building a genuine anti-communal front.

## Delhi aggravates communalism

Such a front would attack Hindu and Sikh communalism, as well as the communalism of all political parties, especially of the Congress and of the Akali Dal, the class party of rich Sikh farmers. The latter, by pandering to communal fears, had obtained the support of other sections of the Sikh community, including landless labourers, urban traders and professionals.

Akali Dal was itself divided into different factions. There was a "moderate" faction headed by Surjit Singh Barnala (Longowal's successor), chief minister of Punjab until the imposition of President's Rule, who had pinned his hopes on co-operation with the Centre and implementation of the Accord.

Other factions led by people like Amrinder Singh and Prakash Singh Baddal were willing to forge links with Sikh fundamentalist groupings of various kinds, including terrorists, in order to put pressure on the Centre to remove Barnala and do a deal with them. Even in Barnala's faction there were state cabinet ministers who were close

## Disaster for Rajiv

**OUT OF 90 seats in the Haryana state parliament, the Congress party had won only three, with 84 results decided. The opposition parties had won at least 70. However, Congress had gone into the election with a commanding majority of 61.**

**This election marked the sixth defeat for Congress out of seven state elections after Rajiv's landslide victory following the assassination of his mother, Indira. But this debacle dwarfs all the others, especially since it came in the Hindi-speaking belt that represents the traditional bastion of the prime minister's party. Already demands are being raised that the prime minister resign. After a spectacular rise, Indira's son seems to be setting rapidly.**

to some of the terrorist groups and shared their hostility to the Centre.

The Barnala government, which came to power through popular elections, never had any chance of stabilizing its position. The Centre was never serious about implementing the Accord, although that alone would have given some credibility to the Barnala government and enabled it to widen its base among Sikhs at the expense of the Sikh militant groups, including Khalistanis.

These forces had once again begun to assert their dominance within the Golden Temple [the Sikh religious centre] and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), the supreme religious body of Sikhs, on which the Akali Dal depends financially and from which it derives its moral and religious authority as defender of Sikh interests.

● To this day, almost three years after Operation Bluestar, people are still being detained in Jodhpur who have not been charged.

● The Mishra Commission, which was set up to investigate the riots, came up after two years with a final report that was an utterly disgraceful and shameless cover-up. This report said the anti-Sikh riots were essentially spontaneous. It made scapegoats out of a few low-level policemen, and absolved all Congress leaders of note who had actually organized those riots.

Numerous people have since torn the Mishra report to shreds, exposing its dishonest biases, its refusal to even look at hard evidence contradicting its findings, and its unwarranted conclusions from the data it did collect.

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The end result was only to confirm the view that Sikhs could expect no justice from the Congress-ruled Centre or its "tool," the Barnala wing of the Akali Dal.

● The question of granting Chandigarh to Punjab should have been separated from the vexed problem of finding nearby Hindi-speaking areas in Punjab to give to Haryana. As it is, Chandigarh remains a Union territory and a running sore.

● The final award of the Eradi Tribunal on river waters was a farce. Afraid of alienating any of the states, the tribunal "discovered" additional water that could be distributed to all the states, so that everybody gets more than before, especially Haryana.

However, what this amounted to basically was simply statistical juggling and pretence, since the "new" water sources are at best seasonal streams that can only provide more water at the right time if there is first immense investment in barrages and in the Sutlej-Yamuna canal link between Haryana and Punjab. Even then, the "extra" water would be much less than the amount claimed by the tribunal.

Why has the Centre imposed President's Rule? Unwilling to implement the Accord in a serious way, it had nothing to fall back on except police repression led by India's "super-cop", Julius Ribeiro, who has an unmatched reputation for ruthlessness.

Though terrorists are still active, there is no satisfactory evidence of any rise in the rate of the killing of innocent people (who in recent months have been more frequently Sikhs than Hindus).

### Sikh fundamentalist campaign losing ground

Nor had the Sikh-fundamentalist inspired "social reform movement" gathered momentum. Indeed, this campaign to force the closure of liquor, tobacco, meat and barber shops was beginning to lose ground steadily. (According to Sikh fundamentalist beliefs, Sikhs must not smoke, drink alcohol, eat beef or shave.) Cross-migration of Sikhs and Hindus in and out of Punjab had not reached any serious level either.

It seems certain that the principal reason for imposing President's Rule was to pander to Hindu communalism,



Militant Sikh fundamentalists in the Punjab (DR)

above all in Haryana, where state assembly elections are scheduled for June 17. These elections are crucial for the Congress, which has lost a series of state elections recently.

In fact, if Congress should lose in Haryana, Rajiv Gandhi's leadership in the Congress will be gravely jeopardized, especially in the present context. Because of corruption scandals, the credibility of the government and of the Congress Party is at an all time low.<sup>1</sup>

The opposition Lok Dal party in Haryana, although divided, had been making enormous capital out of the Accord and the unruly state of Punjab. Before President's Rule, the Congress had no chance of retaining Haryana. Now it has a slim possibility of doing so.

But what of Punjab? The Centre has said that President's Rule is temporary, a claim that only reinforces the view that the Haryana elections were the factor determining the decision. Since the Barnala faction is discredited, if the Centre wants to restore civilian rule (in fact, it says that there has to be a "political" and not merely a law-and-order solution), then it will have to do a deal with some other section of the Sikh elite, perhaps the religious leaders who today control the SGPC and the Golden Temple itself.

Many Sikh political figures are opportunist in their "hostility" to the Centre. These people would probably be willing to do a deal with Delhi, if the latter gives them some concessions, as well as helping them to take up the reins of political power in the state.

However, the fundamental problems of Punjab remain untouched. No communal force (which means the existing bourgeois parties of the state) can suc-

cessfully de-communalise the situation, or fairly address the grievances and fears of both the Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab. Neither the pro-Khalistan forces nor the openly Hindu communalist organizations, such as Patit Pawan, Shiv Sena and so on (which are growing in Punjab and Haryana), will be curbed, let alone defeated.

### Revival in anti-communalist activities

Only the construction of a truly secular, anti-communal front can point a way out of the tragic morass. In recent months, in parts of Punjab, there has been something of a revival in genuine anti-communalist activities, such as street plays, demonstrations against terrorist killings, unitary activities between Hindus and Sikhs in villages. Cadres of the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India-Marxist and the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist have played a prominent part in these activities.

Whatever the failings of the political line of these parties, the secular beliefs and commitment of these cadres are beyond question. The success of these actions has made their organizers targets of the terrorists (hence the rise in the number of left cadres assassinated). But it also testifies to the still strong bonds of friendship and solidarity between ordinary Hindus and Sikhs, especially in the villages and small towns of Punjab.

This remains a strong foundation on which to wage the struggle against communalism. ☆

1. See "Rajiv's fading star," *International Viewpoint* 121, June 1, 1987.

# The snowballing financial crisis

**FOREIGN EXCHANGE markets are in turmoil. The dollar is plummeting; there is a new explosion of gold prices. What is the meaning of this new stage in the financial crisis?**

**Is the devaluation of the dollar in relation to the yen and the currencies of the European Monetary System simply a weapon in the trade war that American imperialism has launched against its main competitors? Or does it also reflect a more basic financial crisis in the US and in the whole international monetary system, which is still not completely detached from the dollar?**

**ERNEST MANDEL**

**T**HE PROBLEM of the dollar debt is not solely — or even primarily — a problem of the so-called third world countries. Admittedly, with a \$1,000,000 million debt these countries are particularly vulnerable, given the size of it compared to their export revenues, or even more so to their national income.

Nevertheless, this sum only represents barely 15% of the total world debt in dollars, to which must be added debts made out in other convertible currencies. This brings the total third world debt up to around \$7,500-8,000 million. Finally, only 15% of the total debt is owed by 60% of the world's population, if one includes the People's Republic of China. The saying "Only lend to the rich" is truer than ever.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the debts of the third world and the so-called socialist countries, there are four other major sources of world indebtedness: the foreign debt of other imperialist powers (France, for example, has a foreign debt amounting

to \$55-60,000 million); the internal debt of the US, where 15-20% of purchases are made on credit; business debts (all the amalgamations and takeover bids in the US and Britain have been financed by credit); and, finally, the rapid growth of the US public debt.

## World flooded with US dollars

Between 1976 and 1980, it was primarily the debt of the third world and the bureaucratized workers' states that grew more quickly than the overall debt. The effects of the 1974-75 recession were cushioned a little because of this, to a point where "third world aid" appeared more like aid to the export industries of the imperialist countries.

From 1983-85, it was mainly the debt of the big American and British trusts that grew. But, more and more, it is the US public debt that has taken over in "bailing out" the international capitalist economy. Ronald Reagan's arms race and the colossal American balance of payments deficit flooded the US and the entire world with dollars.

With the law of supply and demand acting on foreign exchange markets — determining reciprocal currency rates in a "floating" exchange market (that is, no fixed parity between currencies) — it was inevitable that the dollar would resume its free fall, initially reversed between 1980 and 1984. This is what has been happening since 1985.

The objective mechanism behind this motion should not be underestimated. It appears clearly if the "monetary system" is looked at from a global point of view. It can be visualized as a system with four poles: the US dollar; the Japanese yen; the German mark and its European monetary satellites; and the

**Table 1**  
Main USA commercial deficits in 1986 (\$1,000 million)

Japan	58.6
Canada	23.3
Taiwan	15.7
West Germany	15.6
South Korea	7.1
Italy	6.5
Hong Kong	6.4

(Source: International Herald Tribune, May 11, 1987.)

currencies of the third world and the so-called socialist countries.

There are some currencies occupying an intermediary position. Some examples are the pound sterling, which oscillates between the dollar and the EMS currencies; the South Korean won and the Taiwan dollar, oscillating between the dollar and the yen<sup>2</sup>; the Saudi riyal, which has been detaching itself from the US dollar, and so on. But, essentially, it is a four-cornered system.

However, if the dollar has rapidly lost value against the yen and the European currencies, this is not the case regarding third world currencies. This includes the semi-industrialized countries, with the exception of South Korea and Taiwan — but for how long? Even when their balance of payments is in credit in relation to the US, these countries have a higher rate of inflation than the United States.<sup>3</sup> The demand for, and therefore the shortage of, dollars for investment and hoarding purposes (fraud, safeguarding private fortunes) stays constant. Consequently, these countries' currencies devalue unceasingly against the dollar, even in the "black" and the "grey" markets of the so-called socialist countries. So the dollar's present fall, as well as the accompanying rise in interest rates, hardly benefits them.

## The dollar's uncontrollable slide

In the dollar's slide against the yen and European currencies there is something uncontrollable happening, in addition to the intentions of the Reagan administration. An enormous snowball is rolling. Nobody can stop it, and even less stop it completely.

For the general public, the dollar's fall seems mainly to be an instrument American imperialism is using to redress its catastrophic balance of trade deficit, and stop the US market being inundated by industrial goods from abroad — including from countries like Taiwan, South Korea and Brazil. The US now has a trade deficit in manufactured products with these countries, as the major part of these imports are not coming from branches of American trusts established abroad.

The lower rate of the dollar means a fall in American product prices compared to those of Japan and Europe. It can be assumed that this will mean US imports will fall and exports increase,

1. See the chapter on the world debt in Ernest Mandel's *La crise*, Flammanion, Paris, 1985.

2. The Taiwan dollar has grown by 20% in relation to American currency. Today, Taiwan holds exchange reserves of more than \$50,000 million in exchange value. On this scale, Taiwan comes third in the world after West Germany and Japan, but before the US, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Britain etc.

3. To take just one example, in Brazil inflation is presently growing by 80% a year.



and speculators towards big industrial capital.<sup>4</sup> But, in particular, this whole scenario has to be revised and corrected in the context of the foreseeable reactions of American imperialism's main competitors, Japanese and West German imperialism. And the picture which finally emerges is a lot more complex than the sorcerer's apprentices at the White House have imagined.

It is Japanese capitalists who have financed the bulk of the US balance of trade deficit during the past few years, by massively subscribing to American government loans.

Japanese capital exports amounted in 1986 to \$145,000 million gross (some \$100,000 million net), of which \$47,000 million went to buy American state bonds. But these purchases decreased rapidly: from 56.4% of total bonds purchased abroad in the first quarter to 38.5% in the fourth quarter. In March 1987, this fall accelerated: only \$2,500 million worth of American bonds were bought. (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 16, 1987.)

Japan has dramatically reversed the situation to become the world's leading creditor. In 1981, it had only \$11,000 million in net foreign holdings, whereas the US had \$140,000 million. Today, Japan has \$200,000 million, while the US has become a debtor nation in relation to the rest of the world.

None of this is abnormal in the history of capitalism. Marx had already pointed out in the 19th century that the British bourgeoisie financed a part of British exports by loaning money capital to Britain's trading customers. The US did the same with the Europeans at the time of the Marshall Plan, after the Second World War.

### A double blackmail operation

But the 19th century pound sterling and the 1948 dollar were stable currencies: "as good as gold". Today, the dollar is depreciating. In the space of one year, Japanese holders of American treasury bonds have lost 30-40% of their capital's value, solely because of the dollar's fall in value against the yen. Will they continue, in these conditions, to subscribe month after month to American issues? Nothing could be less certain.

In reality, we are witnessing a double blackmail operation behind the smoke screen of the "trade war" and the protectionist measures taken by the Reagan administration against Japanese electronic products.

On the one hand, like all big money lenders, Japan is terrified by the idea that the dollar's exchange rate will continue its slow slide. By the end of

another year, a further 30% of this capital could evaporate! But, on the other hand, Japan can also give the United States jitters: if the dollar's fall carries on, all the liquid and semi-liquid dollar holdings that the Japanese capitalists possess could be thrown back into the market all at once. That would not only provoke the dollar's collapse, but also the insolvency of the American banking system, already in a bad state. At today's exchange rate, there is not a single American bank among the ten biggest in the world. Most of these banks are Japanese.

### American holdings going cheap

This is not the only weapon Japanese imperialism has for retaliating. An expensive yen and Deutschmark and a cheap dollar mean that American land, buildings, stocks and shares and plants are cheap for the Japanese and German bourgeoisies. This is therefore the time to buy up American companies, particularly in the high-technology field. The German and Japanese capitalists are doing just that.

This is where the shoe pinches. We are living in the imperialist epoch, not in the free-market epoch of liberal capitalism. American imperialism cannot tolerate the "de-industrialization" of its country. This would involve increasing US dependence on high-technology products, including military ones, imported or foreign-owned (by Japan and South Korea, and West Germany in the future).

This would be intolerable for big American capital. When the Japanese bought one of the main "sophisticated" electronic companies in the US — Fairchild — Washington said "no". But, as in the imperialist epoch, it is financial capital which decides in the last analysis. One cannot save American factories without saving the dollar, above all the dollars of the American banks. American imperialism faces a wrenching choice. Political pressure and military blackmail, including the threat to reduce the American presence in Japan and Europe, can decide nothing. The decisive battle will be on the financial and industrial terrain.

This is so true that the Reagan administration, at the same time as imposing high customs tariffs on Japanese products, was also forced to increase the interest rate on its public loans. Without this "bonus against exchange loss" — a gap of 6% between

4. Just as ideology generally reflects the preoccupations of the dominant classes, now a work has appeared on the success of the US's "re-industrialization": *Manufacturing matters, the myth of the post-industrial economy*, by Stephen Cohen and John Zysman, Basic Books, New York, 1986.

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the interest rates of the US and Japan — Japanese capitalists would no longer underwrite American obligations.<sup>5</sup> "The Japanese financial institutions insist that if the long-term interest rate does not reach at least 9.25%, they will no longer be the big buyers that they have been in the past." (*Business Week*, May 11, 1987.) From this point the US could no longer cover its trade deficit except by using the remaining gold in Fort Knox and American property abroad.

The rise in interest rates, combined with the upturn in inflation in the US, accentuates the recession. And recession is hardly the way to encourage re-industrialization — far from it. This is the problem.

But Japan itself is a giant with feet of clay, given the international monetary crisis and the (mini?) recession.

First of all, the rise of the yen in relation to other currencies makes Japanese exports very vulnerable. They are already dropping in volume, even if increasing in value. They are particularly less and less competitive with goods from South Korea, Hong Kong, Brazil and even Taiwan. Japan's huge trade surplus is concentrated in three sectors: steel, cars and electronic products. Competition in these sectors is fierce; world demand is either stagnant or already decreasing.

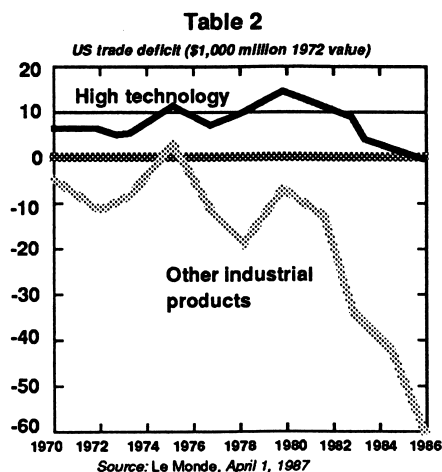
There are two prevalent reactions in Tokyo. First of all, stimulating home demand. It should be noted that the standard of living of the Japanese masses — particularly in housing and social security — is still 25% below that of the US and the richest European countries. But, as the Japanese public debt is already very high, this increase of internal demand would stimulate higher inflation and further undermine the international competitiveness of Japanese companies.

### Wild speculation on Tokyo stock exchange

The second solution is to increase capital export towards the US and Europe, as well as South-East and South Asia and certain Latin American countries, or even to certain bureaucratized workers' states, particularly China.

In the video-recorder field, for example, the Japanese already produce 1.9 million machines in Europe against 1.7 million produced by European firms. (*Business Week*, April 13, 1987.) But the South Koreans already have 10% of the market; selling at half price, their share is likely to increase further.

But such a massive shift of productive investment abroad will sharpen the recession which has already started in Japan, and cause a clear explosion of unemployment — hardly likely to en-



courage American imports.

The immediate consequence of this difficult choice is that the rise in the yen is expressed in Japan by an excess of money-capital and bankers searching desperately for new outlets.<sup>6</sup> Given the prevailing climate in the international capitalist economy, this has provoked wild speculation on the stock exchange. The capitalization of stocks on the Tokyo exchange in the present yen/dollar exchange rate is already greater than that of Wall Street: \$2,750,000 million. This enormous wave of speculation is in turn mainly financed by credit. The speculators in Tokyo buy on credit, offering the shares bought as guarantee. But these shares have reached breathtaking heights: 70 times the income of these shares. (*Financial Times*, April 28, 1987.) In addition, a good part of the purchases of long-term obligations abroad are also done on credit (short-term dollar buying) accorded by the banks.

These latter must, in turn, incur heavy debts abroad. According to the Bank of Japan's statistics (reported in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 9, 1987), the Japanese private sector at the end of 1985 held foreign shares and obligations worth \$146,000 million, but owed \$161,000 million in short-term currency.

The risk of a bank crash, like the 1929 Wall Street crash, could arise today through the bankruptcy of the big third world debtors, the decline of the dollar or a crash in the Tokyo stock exchange.

It should be emphasized that the competition on the world market — which is no longer expanding — is determined in the last analysis by the law of value, that is by the long- and medium-term movement in labour productivity in the main countries concerned. In this regard, the relative decline of the US is striking (see Table 2 above for the evolution of the American trade balance).

It is true that in principle no capital-

ist power has a longer-term interest in stifling the expansion of world trade by protectionism. Each one will end up suffering from a contraction of its outlets, except perhaps the most competitive. This is why there is a growing chorus warning against an extension of the trade war.<sup>7</sup> And it is hardly by chance that these warnings are growing in Germany in particular. (*Die Zeit*, May 8, 1987.) Of all the big imperialist powers, this is the one that depends most on exports.

But re-absorbing the trade deficit without a trade war simply through the fall in dollar exchange rates and deflation in West Germany would also be a severe blow to German exports and those of other European countries. This would spread the Japanese and US recession to Europe. With an international capitalist economy in recession, how could American exports really take off? The problem seems insoluble.

### Making workers pay for the crisis

Another dimension of international capitalist competition and the "trade war" should not be hidden. Each "national" bourgeoisie — those in the third world and semi-industrialized countries as much as those of imperialist countries — constantly tries to make the wage earners of its country pay the cost of making its companies more competitive internationally.

There is no lack of opportunity and pretext for doing this: diktats from the International Monetary Fund (Brazil); pressing obligations to pay the interest on the debt (Mexico); maintaining an "open" economy (France under the Union of the Left); drastic reduction in the rate of inflation (Britain under Thatcher or Spain under Gonzalez); or the rise and subsequent fall in oil prices or reduction of the public spending

5. At the last auction of monthly American treasury bonds, Wall Street and Washington were very worried: "to buy or not?" Finally, the Japanese bought, but only 20% of their usual amount. (*International Herald Tribune*, May 4, 1987; *Sunday Times*, May 10, 1987.)

6. Here is an interesting remark from the *Japan Economic Journal*, May 16, 1987: "Japanese financial institutions confront a speculation...produced by an excess of liquidities. While they suffer a big pressure to lend, there is only a limited circle of borrowers," explains an analyst of the Bank of Japan. "They have practically no other choice than to lend to the US." [All quotes in this article are re-translated from the French.]

7. Capitalist logic in the crisis has some rules of conduct: "We are all in the same boat. Don't let us capsize it by making false moves. But even so we must manoeuvre to be in the best position in case it capsizes." During his trip to the US, Nakasone announced a certain number of measures including "re-cycling \$30,000 million of Japanese surplus as loans to developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia during the next three years...In the past, similar commitments to use Japanese capital to stimulate growth were criticized as being simply attempts to ensure the sale of Japanese products." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 14, 1987.)

deficit (Belgium under the various Martens' governments).

But the result is always the same: seeking increased competitiveness on the world market (for exports) through reducing wage costs.



To get caught up in this, as a number of trade union bureaucracies throughout the world have done, is extremely dangerous. There is no limit to how far wages can go down and unemployment can go up, except for the physical non-reproduction of the labour force — that is, death from famine. According to the *Sunday Times* (April 19, 1987), a labourer in the copper mines of Kitwe in Zambia at present receives less than \$3 per week for 84 hours of work.

We are not yet at this point in Europe, Japan or the United States. There is still determined workers' resistance. Working class gains are only slowly being worn away. But there is already a real erosion in the US, where the buying power of wages is 14% less than it was in 1973, and even slightly below that of 1962. (*Financial Times*, May 13, 1987.) Nevertheless, American industry's "competitiveness" has never been so low.

### Attempt to extend the model of the "dual society"

The bourgeoisie is resolutely trying to extend on a world scale the model of a "dual society" originating from Japan and East Asia. Here there are, side by side, an ultra-modern, relatively protected and well-paid sector and an "archaic" sector (and social infrastructure) with miserable wages and working conditions; a low organic composition of capital and a high rate of super-exploitation.

Describing the luxury flaunted by the

*nouveau riche* in Taiwan, *Business Week* (April 13, 1987) points out: "But the roads are not those of a modern industrialized nation. The streets of Taipei are polluted. The road full of potholes. There is a stinking black smoke coming out of the antique buses. The pavements, potted with holes, are covered by a hoard of parked motorcycles."

"In Taipei a factory is often just an apartment in a back courtyard where the workers work six days a week in bad lighting and without air-conditioning."

It is, therefore, just a short-sighted policy to try to save jobs by protectionism and wage concessions on the part of the workers. This unleashes a descending spiral of "wage costs" on

an international level, which will end up impoverishing all wage earners in the capitalist world. It is better to fight back together in every country against any austerity policy, and to fight against unemployment on an international scale by demanding a drastic reduction of the working week without loss of wages.

It is better at one stroke to wipe out the third world debt than to encourage lower wages there. It is better to fight for anti-capitalist solutions to the crisis and for a socialist perspective on a world and continental level than to continue the race into the abyss — long-term mass unemployment, social regression, poverty, "the dual society", the strong state, a dismantled workers' movement and war. ☆

## Referendum victory for pro-imperialists

THE PRO-Imperialists won the May 27 referendum on the Single European Act (SEA), allowing them to continue binding the country closer to the more specifically imperialist and military aspects of the EEC. The vote had been provoked by a Supreme Court ruling that Dublin's adherence to the SEA was unconstitutional. KEN MOORE reports on the results from Dublin.

THE TURNOUT was an all time low of 44 per cent. The yes vote was concentrated in farming areas, that have benefited from EEC agricultural subsidies, and middle-class urban areas. The no vote was strongest in the urban working-class neighborhoods, such as Theresa's Gardens in the south inner-city area of Dublin, where the no votes outnumbered the yes votes by two to one.

Two coalitions fought for a no vote. One, the Constitutional Rights Committee, followed a non-class and non-political approach, including right-wing Catholic forces that argued that getting too close to the EEC would bring in "evils," such as abortion and divorce. One of the slogans they raised, for example, was "Don't let your TD [*teachta dala*, member of parliament] bring in VD"! Prominent figures in the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child and Family Solidarity campaigned for it.

This coalition was also supported by Sinn Fein, the Communist Party, and other progressive forces who thought that the prop-

er strategy was to go for the maximum vote against SEA, without raising any "divisive" political questions. Needless to say, this did not stop the right from pushing its own reactionary point of view.

The other coalition took the name "Cosain" ("Defend"), the Coalition for Peace and Neutrality. It was led by Irish CND and was headed up by Roger Cole, a socialist republican member of the Labor Party, Carol Fox of Irish CND and Peadar Kirby, an activist on third-world issues. It gathered together third-world solidarity groups, peace groups and left-wing activists. It included groups influenced by liberation theology.

In practice, both coalitions worked together, and the lines between them were blurred in constituency groups.

The three bourgeois parties — Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats — had no real campaigns. The first, which traditionally makes a nationalist appeal, was a bit shame-faced, as they had indulged in some populist nationalist rhetoric before gaining power in the recent general elections. In the Dail [parliament], they had abstained on the SEA.

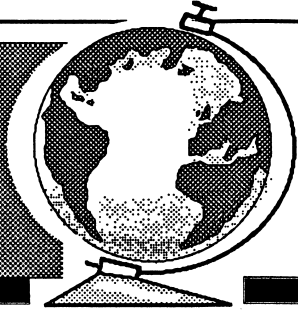
The Workers Party, a sectarian "socialist" party left over from the "Official" wing of the republican movement, campaigned for a no vote, issuing its own literature. This was a major bid by them to be seen as the only credible left-wing opposition to the EEC.

In the Labor Party, only the left wing fought for a no vote. The party leader, Dick Spring, advocated a yes vote. The major unions, such as the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Workers' Union of Ireland supported a no vote.

In the campaign against the Single European Act, no major forces put forward a clear anti-EEC position, offering a socialist alternative. That was needed, in particular since Ireland has the highest unemployment and emigration rates of any state in Western Europe, with a third-world-type debt that is strangling working-class tax payers. In the absence of believable alternatives to the EEC and its consequences, many people accept it.

People's Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, put this position at a public meeting in Dublin, and a layer of activists responded to its plea for a consistent left-wing anti-EEC position. ☆



AROUND  
THE  
WORLD

## BASQUE COUNTRY

## GAL attack

A BASQUE Fourth Internationalist was attacked on May 30 in San Sebastian/Donosti by two men who claimed to be policemen and carved the initials of the parallel police murder gang, GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación), on his arm.

Txerra Iriarte, a member of the Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (Revolutionary Communist League), the Fourth Internationalist organization in the part of the Basque country in the Spanish state, opened his door at 9.30 in the evening, thinking the two were neighbors. They forced their way into his home with pistols. They undressed him, forced him to lie on a bed, and questioned him about supporters of ETA, the Basque revolutionary nationalist organization in the neighborhood. They demanded the names of those who had been to Nicaragua, as well as those of an ETA activist killed by the police a year ago. They also questioned him about a Basque industrialist kidnapped by ETA. All the while, they beat and threatened him.

Before they left, they told him "We'll leave you marked so that you will know who we are." They carved a swastika and the initials of the GAL in his arm.

The following day, the LKI denounced the attack to the press, pointing out that "it is one in a long chain of attacks by the GAL," and was "a typical terror operation. The...impunity with which the GAL acts, the toleration of it by the state bodies, as well as the manifold obstacles that have been put in the way of investigation...are a revelation of the cowardly character of a contaminated democracy."

A call for a protest demonstration in San Sebastian/Donosti was signed by the LKI, Herri Batasuna, the EMK [the Basque affiliate of the Communist Movement of Spain (MCE)] Aizan! [Listen Woman!], the Gestoras Pro Amnistia [the revolutionary nationalist defence committees], the Women's Assembly, the Anti-nuclear and Ecological Committees, Jarrai [the youth organization of Herri Batasuna], Kemen [Vigor] and Izaultza Taldeak [Revolution Groups].

On the Spanish-state level, the Liga Komunista Revolucionaria (LCR) and the Movimiento Comunista issued a joint communique stressing:

"This attack comes in the context of attacks recently in Burgos and in Granada on public meetings by the committees supporting Herri Batasuna's campaign for the European elections....These acts take place at a time when sympathy and the campaign of solidarity supported by our parties [both the LCR and MCE backed the Herri Batasuna campaign] has been growing steadily.

"We will not waver in our support for the Basque people's movement and the national resistance in its fight for amnesty and recognition of the right to self-determination." ★

## ISRAELI STATE

## Arms industry

THE SIZE of Israel's arms industry was described in an article in the June 15 *El Pais* on the tug of war over the production of the fabulously expensive Lavi fighter plane, to which Washington has expressed its opposition.

"Last October [with Vanunu's revela-

tions], the world learned that Israel has been building atomic bombs for 20 years in the Dimona factory in the Negev, and that it has almost certainly begun already to build thermonuclear weapons.

"Israel is also in the list of the ten major producers of conventional arms. Its production amounts to a value of \$2,000 million a year. Weapons make up a quarter of its total industrial exports.

"The United States is Israel's main customer, buying \$500 million worth of weapons a year. Between 500 and 700 million are exported annually to another 50 countries, often in surreptitious ways. Among the more dubious buyers are, or have been, the Argentine military junta, South Africa, and the Nicaraguan contras, through Honduras.

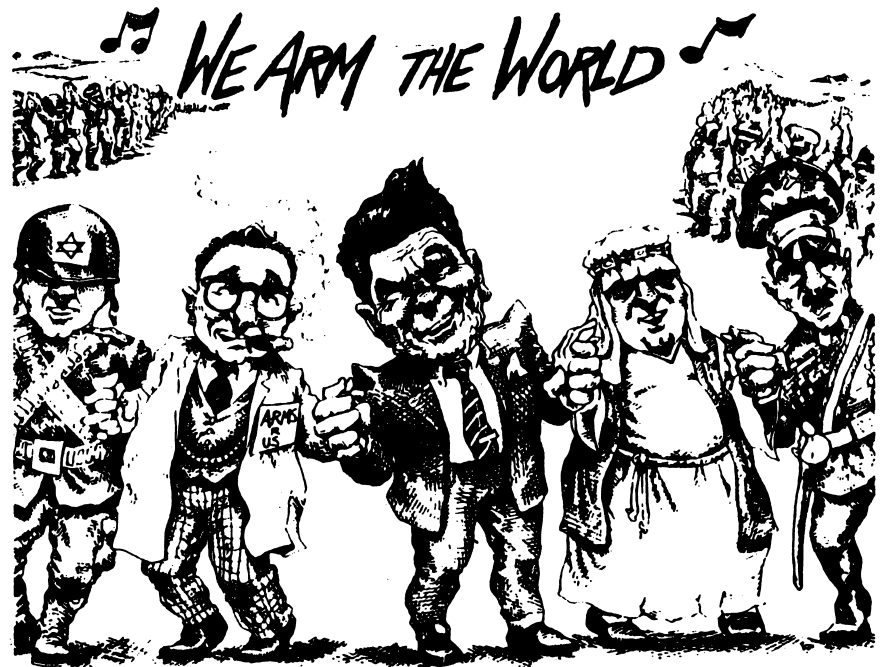
"Israel also trades arms produced by other countries, as revealed by the Iran-gate case....

"The arms industry employs between 60,00 and 100,000 workers, about 7 per cent of the country's labor force. There are 800 authorized arms dealers, most of them retired officers." ★

## A U S T R I A

## Homelessness on the increase

EVEN IN one of the most "social" capitalist countries, homelessness is a crying social evil, *Die Linke*, the paper of the Austrian section of the Fourth International, noted in its May 20 issue. It began an interview with Peter Wandaller of the Bundesdachverbands für Sozialinitiativen [Federal Umbrella Organization for Social Initiative Groups]





by asking: "The United Nations has declared 1987 the Year of the Homeless. What effect has that had for Austria, and to what extent does homelessness exist here?"

Wandaller answered: "The UN Year of the Homeless has meant absolutely nothing for Austria. Like all UN years the present one will pass without leaving a trace...."

"We estimate that in Austria today, there are 10,000 homeless people [in a population roughly equal to London or New York City]. Along with this, there is latent homelessness, that is tens of thousands of people are living in poor and overcrowded housing.

"Homelessness is the last stage of the marginalization process that begins with the loss of work, continues with the loss of housing through family conflicts and ends with living on the street. That this process of pauperization is increasing is shown by the growing number of court dispossession orders and utility arrears."

*Die Linke* asked whether there were other causes of homelessness besides the economic crisis. Wandaller replied: "This problem is not only connected with unemployment. There is also a problem in the distribution of accommodation. In Austria, there are 360,000 empty dwellings and tens of thousands of homeless. So, there are enough dwellings, but there are too few low-rent ones, with the result that the lowest stratum of the population can no longer get housing on the free market. That is why we are demanding that the state offer cheap housing."

Over a million people in Austria live

under the poverty line, Wandaller explained. "These are people who have to make ends meet on 5,000 to 6,000 schillings a month (about \$100). Of these about 500,000 are in work but earn less than than 7,800 schillings gross. Then there are 300,000 pensioners, who have to live on 4,800 schillings. Then there are 70,000 who live on welfare, and 50 per cent of the jobless, who do not get more than 5,000 schillings."

Moreover, now the main capitalist party is in power and pushing for austerity.

"If the policy of dismantling nationalized industry and 'budget consolidation' is carried through, the number of homeless will continue to rise, since the projections for unemployment in the coming year and a half already predict a jobless rate of 8 to 8.5 per cent. Thus, the process of impoverishment will sharpen." ★

## PEACE MOVEMENT

### END convention

THE Sixth END International Peace Convention will take place July 15-19 in Coventry, England. Over 1,500 peace activists are expected from more than 30 countries. Past conventions have been in Brussels, West Berlin, Perugia, Amsterdam and Paris — next year's will be in Sweden.

At past END conventions there has been a debate between those who believe in "detente from below" and

stress action and solidarity with the oppressed, and those who believe in "detente from above" and "dialogue" with those who hold political power or a possibility for holding it, i.e., mainly social-democratic or Stalinist leaders.

The mass demonstrations through Europe against the installation of Cruise missiles in the early 1980s gave the END conventions a real and lively base and forged links with other movements. For example, the women of Greenham Common and COMISO drew a parallel between the struggle against war and the fight against sexism, and went on to express solidarity with the women of the South Pacific who opposed the testing of nuclear weapons.

An important link in the conventions has been that with the independent peace groups of Eastern Europe. These have made their position clear that there can be no peace in Europe without a movement for democracy in the Stalinized states.

This position, of course, is one which those believing in "detente from above" find difficult to accept, wedded as they are to attaining peaceful coexistence between the existing regimes, East and West. Much of the END International Liaison Committee's time this year has been taken up with an acrimonious argument about the nature of the Gorbachev proposals, and there has been talk of splits and an end to the conventions.

The main discussion has been over whether or how to invite official peace movement representatives from the Stalinist states, in view of the Gorbachev proposals, and whether they should be invited to speak and, if so, where on the agenda. A compromise has been reached.

Since the arrival of Cruise missiles in Europe, the Western peace movement has had to become more political. It has had a tremendous effect on public awareness and consciousness but has failed so far to achieve the removal of any nuclear weapons.

Many activists are working through the traditional left organizations of the social-democratic and Communist parties. Others operate in new parties such as the Greens, and yet others remain independent and stick to day-to-day campaigning and solidarity actions. The convention provides a forum, mainly in work shops, for all those disparate elements to discuss together.

Anyone interested in attending the END Convention should contact their national peace movement or write directly to Martin Butcher, CND Office, 22-24 Underwood Street, London NI 7JG. Telephone: London 250-4010. ★

Dave Spencer

# A year of debate in the Communist Party

**DURING THE last year, *International Viewpoint* has reported on the debates in the Filipino left.<sup>1</sup> The following article reviews some fundamental discussions that emerged in 1986 in the Communist movement.**

**It is based on many conversations with activists belonging to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and other radical organizations. In addition, a certain number of CPP internal documents have become public over the past few months, thereby enabling us to comment on them.<sup>2</sup> We cannot claim to offer a complete and balanced picture of the positions expressed within the CPP. But the new information on the critical balance sheet drawn by the CPP of February 1986 merits taking another look at this question. A forthcoming article will look at the evolution of the debates in the Filipino left in 1987.**

**PAUL PETITJEAN**

**T**HE Communist Party of the Philippines grew rapidly at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Because of this growth itself, new political problems appeared and began to be discussed in restricted circles. But it took the traumatic experience of the 1985-86 presidential campaign, the failure of the active boycott policy advocated by the party leadership and the unexpected fall of Marcos to extend the debate abruptly to the organization as a whole.

By the stubborn fight that it put up for nearly 15 years against the martial law regime, the CPP did more than any other political formation to prepare the way for the anti-dictatorial uprising of February 1986. Nonetheless, while hundreds of thousands, then millions, of people were coming into the streets demanding the resignation of dictator-president Marcos, the party found itself pushed to the sidelines.

## Call for an active boycott

In view of these events, the CPP leadership called on all the units of the party to discuss the reasons for this costly setback. Three months later, the CPP Political Bureau adopted an initial self-critical balance sheet of the policy that had been adopted in December 1985 in the name of the party by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee (EC-CC).<sup>3</sup>

The EC-CC had defined its position on the presidential elections in an internal circular addressed to "all party units" dated December 23, 1985.<sup>4</sup> Calling for an active boycott, it responded to the arguments by the many people in the CPP warning the leadership against the danger of isolation. After the fall of Marcos, this document was at the center of the internal controversy in the party.

The calling of a snap presidential election was, the EC-CC said, "a new maneuver" by the regime. Marcos was trying to gain a new legitimacy, and

wanted to get a step ahead of the rapidly growing democratic movement. Tightly controlled by the dictatorship, these elections left no chance for the opposition, since martial law could always be imposed as a last resort.

The snap election was also an answer to American concerns: "It is clear that US imperialism backs up Marcos to stay in power until 1992....The bourgeois opposition is encouraged to take part in the election in order to legitimize it, and consequently, in order to continue to secure the cooperation of the reactionary anti-Marcos and bourgeois reformists in the plans and programs of US imperialism in the Philippines.

## Differences within the legal opposition

"The US intention is to give a chance to Marcos' reactionary rivals to share in the power and privileges that have long been monopolized by the fascist camp....This way, the transition is neatly paved in the event that Marcos dies or is in the future expediently removed....

"The legal opposition is divided into three camps. The conservative bourgeois parties are in favor and are participating in the election. The foremost progressive mass organizations

and alliances are tightly opposed regarding the USMD [US-Marcos Dictatorship] plan and are prepared to boycott the snap election. In the middle, the anti-fascist and liberal democratic organizations that are based in Metro-Manila are divided on the issue of participation or boycott."

The formation of the Corazon Aquino/Salvador Laurel<sup>5</sup> tandem "only shows the prevalence of conservative directions in the bourgeois oppositions' side." Nonetheless, "there is disagreement in the majority of the anti-fascist and progressive organizations of the middle forces in the urban centers.... Despite the conviction of rightness and morality of the boycott of the snap

election, the majority [of them] have the apprehension that a boycott will result in...isolation from the masses. Because of this, [most of them] called for participation. There was also temporary hesitation on the side of the progressive mass organizations and alliances."

For several months, the snap election would dominate the political life of the country, the EC-CC noted. It

1. See Paul Petitjean, "After the election: reassessment in the revolutionary left," *International Viewpoint* 100, June 2, 1986; "The trajectory of the left forces that supported Cory Aquino's campaign," *IV*103, July 14, 1986; "Communist Party makes a self-criticism," *IV* 102, June 30, 1986.

All the themes taken up in that series of articles are not tackled again here, such as the very important one of the united front. We should note, however, that the discussion on this subject has continued in the Philippines and among Filipino emigrés, as attested by a virulent article by E. San Juan Jr., "New dangers, new opportunities, revolutionary struggle in the Philippines," *Forward Motion*, January-February 1987.

2. The documents referred to have either been rather widely disseminated outside the CPP or have already been quoted or presented in the legal or underground press.

3. The Political Bureau and the Executive Committee are two different bodies. The PB has perhaps three times more members than the EC. Both are responsible to the Central Committee. The initials in Tagalog, the Filipino language, of the EC-CC are KT-KS, and are sometimes found in this form in documents in English.

4. This circular is in Tagalog. This is a non-official translation.

5. President Corazon Aquino was put up by the Laban (Combat) coalition originally launched by her deceased husband; while Vice-President Salvador Laurel was the candidate of the conservative coalition, UNIDO.

was "a good opportunity to thoroughly and effectively expound the Party's revolutionary program....The people will see the true nature of Marcos' rivals and the irrelevance of their promises and actions. The deceptions and anti-people objectives of US imperialism will be clearly exposed. On the other hand, there is also a big danger that a large number of people can be pulled over to bourgeois reformism, especially within the ranks of the middle forces in the urban centers...."

### "The election will only be a show"

"Considering all these elements, the Party's most suitable and correct tactic on the snap election is: to launch the strong boycott campaign....Combine this with other tactical political and economic struggles in order to orient all the facets of the people's struggle against the fascist dictatorship by means of a boycott campaign, tactical sector and multi-sectoral struggles, urban and rural guerrilla warfare." (The document went on to specify that this did not include attacks on the polling stations on election day.)

There were four fundamental questions for this boycott tactic. First, participating would be playing into the hands of the regime's maneuver and fooling the people. Secondly, the dictatorship controlled the electoral game, and the revolutionary movement could not change it in any way. "Not one of the minimum demands for a 'clean and honest' election put forward by the progressive legal opposition was granted. This only goes to show that nothing can be expected of the election. The results are determined. The election will only be a show. No gain can be made by the people and the revolutionary movement by participating in this scheme.

"Third, not one of their candidates, nor parties of theirs carries a true program of national and democratic content. Marcos' reactionary rivals cannot be counted upon in promoting the fundamental national and democratic interests of the people. What they truly represent are their own reactionary and factional interests...and, if we participate together with them, we will only become mere supporters of the anti-Marcos reactionaries in a revival of bourgeois reformism. In short, participation in the snap election is contrary to the fundamental interest of the people and the revolution.

"Fourth, the fundamental and foremost duty of the revolutionary movement is to enlighten the people and show them the correct way of action and struggle. There is no basis to the fear held by a few, that we might be

isolated from the people, as the majority will still vote, whatsoever we do....Even now the majority [of the people] can see through the true nature and aim of the snap election."

In these conditions, it was necessary to accept "the temporary alienation and separation of allies who take the side of participation and support for the conservative bourgeois opposition." The electoral period "is also a preparation for a broad anti-dictatorship protest and mass campaign after the snap election."

The EC-CC's position had the strength of coherence, and presented in an apparently rigorous way the revolutionary point of view against an election controlled by the dictatorship, manipulated by imperialism, and in which even the legal opposition camps were dominated by bourgeois forces. Nonetheless, none of the expectations voiced in this circular came to pass. The mobilization of the population behind democratic demands upset all the projected scenarios, and transformed the election campaign into a vast anti-dictatorial struggle.

Thus, far from giving the regime a "new mandate," the election exposed all the contradictions of the dictatorship and of American policy.

No one had really foreseen what was going to happen. But many people both inside and outside of the CPP had understood as early as the end of 1985 that the February 7, 1986, presidential election was not going to be any ordinary election, and that it was necessary to analyze it as an important phase in the fight against the dictatorship.

The political climate was explosive. Contrary to what the EC-CC affirmed, resistance to the boycott was expressed not only in Manila.

### A substantial public self-criticism

The failure of the boycott campaign rapidly became so glaring that the regional leaderships de facto applied the policy advocated by the EC-CC in different ways in many places such as Negros, Mindanao, Cebu and Ilocos. In fact, it seems that in most cases it was precisely where the boycott campaign was most vigorously waged, as in Manila (where the mass organizations actively campaigned for the boycott, organizing street demonstrations and caravans of vehicles in the suburbs or of boats on the Pasig river<sup>6</sup>) that the isolation of the National Democratic forces was most serious.<sup>7</sup> It was a severe trial for a movement whose mass base is estimated in millions and not, as it was ten years ago, in thousands.

In May 1986, a public self-criticism appeared in *Ang Bayan*, the journal of

the Central Committee of the CPP.<sup>8</sup> The self-criticism was substantial: "in all those 17 years [since its creation], the Party and the revolutionary forces that it leads have contributed tremendously to exposing, isolating and weakening the regime, leading to its downfall. Yet, when the people saw in the February 7 snap presidential election a chance to deliver a crippling blow to the Marcos regime, a memorandum by the EC-CC saw it merely as a 'noisy and empty political battle' among factions in the ruling classes. And when the aroused and militant moved spontaneously but resolutely to oust the hated regime last February 22-25, the Party and its forces were not there to lead them. In large measure the Party and its forces were on the sidelines, unable to lead or influence the hundreds of thousands of people who moved....This was because of the Party's official policy enunciated by the EC-CC to launch an active and vigorous boycott campaign [which] was based — as events showed — on an incorrect reading of the political situation. A recent assessment conducted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee characterized the boycott policy as a major tactical blunder."<sup>9</sup>

### "Climax of the people's struggle against Marcos"

The EC-CC, noted the Political Bureau, overestimated the Americans' capacity to control local politics, underestimated the determination of the bourgeois reformists, failed to realize the extent of the contradictions being expressed within the army and "above all these, misread the people's deep anti-fascist sentiments and readiness to go beyond the confines of the electoral process in their determination to end the fascist dictatorship. As practice subsequently showed...the election and the major events it unleashed constituted the climax of the people's long drawn out struggle against the Marcos regime....This being the case, it was tactically necessary for the revolution-

6. The national democratic movement did not manage to attract more than a few thousand activists to the demonstrations for the boycott (5-10,000 at most), while hundreds of thousands mobilized against the dictatorship and responded to appeals from Aquino.

7. The name "national democrat" is given to the legal, semi-legal, or clandestine movement that identifies with the program of national democratic revolution proposed by the CPP.

8. "Party conduct assessment, says boycott policy was wrong," editorial in *Ang Bayan*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, May 1986, pp.1-3. This self-criticism was already presented in the July 30 issue of *International Viewpoint*, before the full text of this document was available.

9. *Ang Bayan*, op. cit., p.1. The final words of this quotation are in fact "major political blunder," but a correction appeared in the following issue of *Ang Bayan* noting that there had been a translation error, and that in accordance with the Tagalog original it should have read "major tactical blunder."

ary forces to participate critically in the snap election in order to effectively combine and make use of all forms of struggle, march at the head of the politically active masses, and maintain flexibility and an active position in the face of the fast-changing situation. Only by doing so could the revolutionary forces have maximized their political and military capability and reaped the optimum gains for the revolution under the prevailing circumstances.

"The boycott policy forfeited all these....This showed an insufficient understanding of the tasks of political leadership during such a time, as well as a lack of appreciation of the current level of mass participation in revolutionary struggles, and confusion regarding the actual needs of the revolutionary armed struggle..."

"While we missed out on important political as well as military opportunities, and suffered other negative effects as a result of our erroneous boycott policy, the fact remains that the events of last February represented a great victory for our people and for their struggles towards genuine freedom and democracy."

While *Ang Bayan's* self-critical article ended on an optimistic note ("the future is bright"), it called for developing a "democratic spirit" in the party in order to carry forward the discussion. Debate had in fact already started in the ranks of the CPP in the aftermath of the February experience, but in a fragmented and localized way. In May, however, the first issue appeared of a very original discussion magazine, *Praktika*. It offered its readers a selection of articles from the CPP's internal discussion.

## Debate on the boycott policy continues

This printed and rather widely circulated magazine is published under the auspices of a regular party body involved in urban work.<sup>10</sup> The first issue, dated May 14, 1986, essentially reprinted documents written shortly after the overthrow of the dictatorship criticizing the boycott policy. It also included an interesting article on the lessons of the crisis of the Communist Party of Thailand. The second issue, dated August 1986, continued the debate on the boycott policy by publishing contradictory articles. In that issue, there was also the beginning of a discussion on the nature of the Aquino regime and an analysis of the Salvadorian experience.

*Praktika* was published with the agreement of the national leadership of the CPP. In its introduction to the first issue, the editorial board noted that it was necessary to freshen up the party's



Reagan and Marcos (DR)

theoretical thinking:

"Correct political alignments and correct tactics, and new tasks and new methods of work must be grasped. In order to win, therefore, revolutionary theory must always be apace with the fully and rapidly unfolding revolutionary situation. Such is the challenge facing the Party and the entire revolutionary movement at present."

The magazine is presented as a "school" of revolutionary theory, a "forum" open to debate, a "channel" for disseminating balance sheets of practical experiences, a "guide" for deepening the study of Marxist theory. It is directed at party members and cadres in the urban centers and "national democrats," people who are not party members but who are nonetheless interested in Marxism.

In the second issue, an editorial entitled "Party Policy and Democracy" was published. The reception given to *Praktika* was very positive, the editors note, "however, several quarters have expressed concern over the current situation in the Party." Some people feared disunity at a time when reaction was doing everything possible to exploit the differences being expressed in the CPP.

While defending the necessary "iron unity" of the party, the editorial stressed how important it was to cultivate internal democracy. In fact, until now "the Party's tradition in active and healthy ideological discussions and debates involving the majority of its membership has not fully developed."

There was a rich ideological life in every activist unit, but "the instruments of ideological struggle" were "grossly under-utilized" on the national level (that is, in exchanges between the national leadership and the membership, among the various party bodies, etc).

"In these areas, bureaucratism, sectarianism and commandism still hound the Party, most especially in the leadership at different levels and in the interactions of different committees."

There were historical reasons for that. The party's underground existence imposed the norms of functioning. In its 18-year history, the CPP had not made any major error, and therefore the need for extensive ideological debate was not directly felt. In the past, internal political conflicts were badly handled, and no serious balance sheet was made in this regard. In fact, there was still a lot of theoretical work to be done. The lessons of very rich practical experiences have not been sufficiently reflected upon. So, it was necessary to take this opportunity for education.

"After all, this is the first major case of an error of policy that directly affected and animated the majority of the membership." While respecting party policy and centralism, it was necessary to develop internal democracy. It was necessary to learn to discuss the actual substance of the question and not supposed hidden intentions. It was necessary to understand how to carry on a discussion in a framework of mutual respect.

## Internal democracy becomes a sensitive issue

It is not surprising that the theme of internal democracy became so sensitive after the boycott campaign. Several proposals were put forward within the CPP leadership about the policy to be followed with respect to the presidential election. The body responsible for publishing *Praktika* itself presented an alternative tactical orientation combining a propagandistic (educational) campaign for a boycott with an active campaign against electoral fraud and terrorism.<sup>11</sup> The (unitary and mass) "alliances" were to stick to unmasking electoral manipulation.

In this way, the revolutionary movement could support the democratic demands of the masses and preserve unity and cooperation with the other progressive organizations.

The EC-CC, a very narrow body, imposed an "active boycott" line that involved at least a temporary break with

10. The magazine *Praktika* is presented as the theoretical journal of the party in the national urban centers ("Teoretikal na Dyornal ng Partido sa Pambansang Punong Lunsod"). According to Alex Magno, it represents the National Urban Commission of the CPP. (See his interesting article "CPP: rethinking the revolutionary process," *Diliman Review*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1986, pp.17, 20).

11. "The Editorial Board [of *Praktika*], in its official capacity as a commission of the party, sent an urgent appeal to the KT-KS [EC-CC] in the second week of December 1985 proposing a multi-faced tactic instead of the singular policy of active boycott." "Some clarifications," *Praktika*, No. 2, August 1986, pp.111-2.



the majority of the party's traditional allies. It did so by a one-vote majority alone, according to Alex Magno, against the advice of many leading bodies, which advocated for example a more flexible boycott "in principle."<sup>12</sup> That in part explains the violence of the reactions in the CPP once the failure of the line became evident, as well as the conclusions drawn about this by the Political Bureau: "The boycott policy erred...in its understanding and application of the Marxist-Leninist organizational principle of democratic centralism."<sup>13</sup> The debate over the CPP's election tactic before and after February 1986 did not bear on how much confidence could be placed in the Aquino leadership, but on how best revolutionists could respond to a situation at once complex and crucial. It was not a debate on the leading role of the "national bourgeoisie" in the "democratic stage" of the revolution.

Satur Ocampo, for example, one of the main representatives of the National Democratic Front during the cease-fire talks with the government, specified in an interview that participation in the elections behind the Aquino candidacy "would undoubtedly have made it possible to exacerbate the class conflicts," making it more difficult for US imperialism to co-opt the movement.<sup>14</sup>

The former leaders of the CPP, political prisoners under Marcos, participated from their cells in the debates at the end of 1985 and the beginning of 1986. José Maria Sison — Joma — the historic leader of the CPP, called for a "limited boycott," and opposed the ECC's orientation, even after it had been formally adopted. He is nonetheless one of the most intransigent critics of the Aquino regime.

Barnabe Buscayno — Kumander Dante — the historic leader of the New People's Army (NPA), argued from prison

for participating in the elections: "The people were in a revolutionary mood, an insurrectional mood. And that mood should have been guided by the party to a revolutionary change. But unfortunately the Party has failed in its role."<sup>15</sup>

In this regard, the debate was above all over the choice of a tactic suited to the tasks of the moment. This could be summed up in the following terms:

### Election was an opportunity for major battle

● For the supporters of practical, critical participation in the Aquino campaign (accompanied or not by a "propagandistic boycott" position), the presidential election was an opportunity for a real struggle against the dictatorship, a major battle. The February 1986 elections were of course an occasion for many maneuvers by the regime, the dissident faction of the army, the opposition bourgeoisie and Washington.<sup>16</sup>

The complete history of the "February revolution" is, like that of any great historical event, very complex. But the election campaign was primarily a real test of strength, the culminating point of years of anti-dictatorial mobilizations. This was therefore the starting point for defining the CPP's policy. In this, it was necessary to take account of the profound originality of the situation with respect to pre-defined schemas:

The fall of the dictatorship was possible, but not a direct conquest of state power by the toiling masses. The acute crisis of the Marcos regime did not coincide with a revolutionary crisis in the strict sense.

If the situation had been genuinely revolutionary, the boycott tactic could

have been the signal for an energetic offensive. But "in December 1985, the national capital region and towns were not ripe for a political uprising — at least not yet."

You could not abstain, because a real struggle against the dictatorship was underway, nor could you simply call for a boycott because the situation was not yet ripe for this sort of direct offensive: "Precisely because of this, the proletarian revolutionaries should have made a detour, if they wanted to bring the masses in their millions to a more forward position in preparation for a direct and revolutionary assault against the fascist regime. But, unfortunately, they did not want to make the slightest detour — a short turn, a slight veer — toward the electoral path. They did not want to zigzag at all in the ascent toward the goal of mobilizing the people for direct revolutionary struggle to ultimately capture political power."<sup>17</sup>

● The supporters of the active boycott policy — the conscious supporters of this policy, who knew that the masses would not follow them — wanted to keep the future road open by conceding no legitimacy to the "electoral road" and a bourgeois leadership (Aquino/Laurel). This position was still being defended in *Praktika* after the February experience by Sol del Pilar. It

12. Alex Magno, op. cit., p.18.

13. *Ang Bayan*, May 1986, p.1.

14. "Interview de Satur Ocampo," *Philippines Informations*, No. 46, October 1986, p.4.

15. Barnabe Buscayno, *AMPO*, Vol. 18, No. 1.

16. A faction of the army, including the RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement) and the minister of defence had been preparing a coup d'etat for months. Since the plot had been exposed, they changed their plans (for a surprise attack on the presidential palace) at the last minute, going into open rebellion on February 22, 1986. See Al McCoy, Gwen Robinson and Marian Wilkinson, "How the February revolt was planned," *Philippine Inquirer*, October 5 and 12, 1986.

17. Editorial Board, "When a zigzag turn is shorter than a straight route," *Praktika*, No. 1, p.13.

was wrong to bend to the "election fever" that had gripped the masses. There were principled differences between Aquino and revolutionists (for example, as regards US imperialism): "There are basic principles, which we cannot compromise." And in this sphere, the struggle could not be cut up into separate pieces: "Comrades, the choice was not to concentrate on the anti-fascist struggle first to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle later, but it was a question of compromising basic issues on the anti-imperialist struggle just to get rid of Marcos."

In these conditions, the unpopularity of the boycott policy could only be temporary. Revolutionary firmness would pay off in the relatively near future, when the masses lost their illusions:

"In conclusion, the boycott stand of the Party was the only appropriate and effective tactic, given the objective conditions as discussed above. We did not forsake the masses during the election, for we stood up for their right to vote and fought election terrorism. The masses have come to realize that even if we know that they are in error in judgement, we still defend their rights....To think that the Party has become alienated from its masses because it refused to encourage the error of the latter is to denigrate the intelligence of the masses....The zig-zag road of participation for the national democrats, instead of being a detour towards the final emancipation of the majority classes, may turn out to be a longer route, if one does not get lost in the process."

### CPP's marginalization had grave consequences

The importance of this tactical debate was already stressed in articles in *International Viewpoint* in the spring of 1986. It is possible today to look at this question with the benefit of hindsight. It is more and more evident that the CPP's marginalization at the time of the February events has had grave and lasting consequences.

The active boycott policy had the paradoxical result, in view of the ECC's aims, of considerably reinforcing rather than reducing the legitimacy of Corazon Aquino, who became the sole apparent representative of "people's power" and the "February revolution." She had free rein to exploit her personal image, which was endowed with religious connotations.

In view of the constant pressure of the military extreme-right, the democratic aspirations of broad sections of the masses — and not only the petty bourgeoisie — focused on the new president, despite the Aquino regime's

bourgeois and pro-imperialist character, despite its failure to offer social and economic change, and despite also its sabotage of the peace negotiations, the proliferation of paramilitary groups and a repression that was sometimes bloody and always carried out with impunity.

The revolutionary movement has, to be sure, managed to make its voice heard on several occasions. It retains important resources in terms of activists and deep roots. But it has not to this day managed to regain the political initiative for any time. Corazon Aquino was able to reconsolidate her authority at the time of the vote on the constitution in February 1987 and in the legislative elections in May.

The new regime has proved incapable of seriously attacking the underlying evils from which the population is suffering. But nonetheless the presidential campaign represents an important turn in the political life of the country. The influence of the "February revolution" was not dissipated in a few months.

All of this confirms the central argument of those who criticized the active boycott line. The February 1986 presidential election was indeed a battle, a major political test. The revolutionary left should have taken its responsibility in this fight and asserted, in the arena of the electoral mobilization itself, its leadership of the democratic struggle. It could not do so by putting up its own candidates, without running the risk of further isolation, since such division would appear to be giving direct aid and comfort to the dictatorship.

A position of propagandist passivity (which is what the "active boycott" policy in fact led to) fell below the needs of the situation, as experience proved.

The task was not easy, because the situation was in fact complex, and in December 1985 the revolutionary left had already partially lost the political initiative.<sup>18</sup> The concrete tactical choices — critical participation in the Aquino campaign, an "educational" boycott combined with active involvement in the electoral struggle — could only have been made without a precise knowledge of the relationship of forces and the situation of the organizations concerned.

However, the CPP, through its mass base and without setting itself against a united mobilization, could have organized the anti-dictatorial aspirations of the population by promoting the formation of real people's committees and thereby bringing back into the presidential campaign the demands of the toiling masses, which Corazon Aquino, Salvador Laurel and their political parties were unwilling and unable to do.

The CPP at the same time could have integrated itself into the electoral mo-

bilization, participated actively in the general battle against the dictatorship and challenged the monopoly that Corazon Aquino was trying to establish as a basis for her perspective of presidential rule.

### "Politics is innovation"

The revolutionary left could only win out over Corazon Aquino's personal prestige by showing its capacity in those crucial months to take the initiative in practice, the leadership of the anti-dictatorial mass mobilization. In that way, the revolutionary movement and the people's committees would have been in a position to have an effect on the events that followed February 7.

After Marcos's fall, they would have embodied at least a part of the legitimacy of the "February revolution" — with all that that implied for carrying forward the people's struggles. It was necessary to find a response just as original as the situation it faced.

It is over this very important question of tactical choices that the CPP's debate have polarized. At the center of the polemics, we find the very Leninist theme of a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. The party's electoral policy should not have been mechanically deduced from a one-sided assessment of the test of the presidential election (a maneuver by the dictatorship) and general considerations of principle (the revolutionary project), but should have flowed from a profound understanding of the situation and of its originality.

"Politics is innovation," Ernesto Roque notes in the pages of *Liberation*, the official organ of the National Democratic Front. February 1986 "offers fresh evidence that real life is stranger than fiction and richer than even the most advanced theory....Few, if anyone at all, anticipated that the people-power uprising could have had such an impact so quickly and decisively....That some national democrats were stunned by events is understandable — but regrettable. It is now easy to talk, having the benefit of hindsight. Still, the direction of events — if not their precise form and pace — was predictable....Eyes were open, but they did not see what was happening. Which only corresponds to the biological fact that we do not see with our eyes but with our brain....Theory must constantly grapple with forces and events that do not fit familiar patterns. Politics is innovation. Political leadership de-

18. After the crisis that marked the founding of the Bayan coalition in May 1985.

mands broad-mindedness and flexibility." 19

Over and above questions of functioning, the Political Bureau's self-criticism stands on the ground — and on that ground alone — of concrete analysis of the concrete situation and of the corresponding tactical choices. However, other documents have broadened the debate. An example is that of the National Youth and Student Department, which concludes a vigorous criticism of the boycott by noting: "As a final word, we submit that our questions go far beyond the boycott policy. Behind the boycott tactics lurk the deep-rooted problems concerning the anti-fascist struggle, the parliamentary struggle, the united front, the urban mass movement and, generally speaking, the whole strategy and tactics of the Filipino revolution. It goes without saying that the ideological roots of the multifarious problems be subjected to a rigorous examination. Of course, all this requires a more comprehensive and much deeper study. We trust that the Party will successfully come to grips with these underlying problems." 20

Along with the question of the tactical rigidity displayed in 1985-86, the debate over the boycott policy also raised the problem of the rigidity of the CPP leadership's strategic conceptions. 21 The National Youth and Student Department noted in particular that the CPP had adopted a "three-year plan for a 'strategic counteroffensive.' Nothing is wrong with a three-year plan based on the classical formula of the strategic stages of people's war. What is wrong, however, is to restrict our strategy and tactics in a straightjacket, thereby immobilizing the movement to decisively cope with politico-historical twists and turns." 22

### "Protracted people's war" strategy

Thus, in 1986, CPP cadres and bodies introduced elements of strategic reflection into the party's internal discussions. That was especially true of Marty Villalobos, who in three discussion articles offered a particularly innovative approach. 23 In the first of these articles, he briefly analyzed the changing relation between protracted war and insurrection in various third world revolutions.

He concluded: "It is not just tactics which should change when circumstances change. As can be gleaned from the experience of other revolutions, particularly Nicaragua, strategy should also change when proven incorrect or when it is no longer attuned to important changes in the overall situation. Unfortunately, we here in the Philippines have been so fixated with the

'protracted people's war' strategy that we were too reluctant to make a fundamental shift in strategy even when there were already clear signs of an insurrectionary situation developing....

"In 1980-81, shortly after the Nicaraguan revolution, the [CPP] made certain adjustments in its overall strategy. Recognizing the higher level of urbanization in the Philippines (as compared to China and Vietnam at the time of their revolutions), the more sizeable middle class (especially the urban petty bourgeoisie) and the long bourgeois democratic tradition in Filipino politics, the Party saw an increased role for the urban struggle and the open, legal, democratic struggle in the overall conduct of our people's war.

### Three strategic combinations

"It recognized the importance of three strategic combinations: the combination of the struggle in the countryside and the urban struggle; and the combination of the struggle on the domestic front and the struggle on the international front. The military struggle, countryside work and the domestic front would still play the principal role, but the political struggle, urban work and the international front would not be too far behind. However, while all these adjustments did constitute a movement away from the 'classic' Chinese model of 'encircling the cities from the countryside,' the Party made no radical departure from the 'protracted people's war' strategy."

As early as 1983, elements in the CPP suggested incorporating an insurrectionary perspective into the party's policy, at least in certain centers or regions. After the assassination of Benigno Aquino that year and the opening up of a new political crisis, a proposal was made to prepare for "the possibility of a 'fast track' to victory through insurrectionary means" (without abandoning the "slow track" of "protracted people's war").

In 1984-85, "however, there were no fundamental shifts in strategy." But, in hindsight, Marty Villalobos thought "the Party should have shifted to an insurrectional strategy as early as 1983, or possibly even earlier." 24 Thus, according to him, the most important error was not made in December 1985 (the tactical evaluation of the situation) but several years before (the rigidity of the strategic conceptions).

In a second discussion article, Marty Villalobos analyzed the respective place of the armed struggle and the political struggle, of struggle in the countryside and in the urban areas, as well as the notion of "strategic stages" and the concept of the revolutionary

crisis in the people's war strategy and in an insurrectionary strategy. He went back to the lessons of February 1986 and took up again the basic idea of his preceding article:

"After the [Ninoy] Aquino assassination, it was an 'either-or' situation. Either continue with the 'protracted people's war' strategy or go 'insurrectional.' No in-between. You prepare your forces for one or the other...since each strategy follows its own complicated course....We tried an in-between. We stuck to the 'protracted people's war' strategy; but we were 'open' to a shift to the 'insurrectional strategy.' We waited...until events overtook us [despite all the adjustments of the line giving an increased role to the political struggle and the urban struggle]." 25

Finally, in a third article, Villalobos analyzed in more detail the Salvadoran experience of 1979-80 and its lessons for the Filipino left. 26 His theses seem to have been strongly challenged, including by a section of the activists who in December 1985 criticized the "active boycott" line. This was true notably of José Maria (Joma) Sison who, while not formally a member of the CPP since his arrest in 1977, probably still wields a real moral and political influence in the Filipino Communist movement.

Joma tended, in fact, to see the consequences of the "tactical blunder" committed by the EC-CC as secondary and to affirm the continuity of the fundamental strategic and tactical conceptions of the revolutionary movement. 27

In Marty Villalobos' view, if the CPP had shifted the axis of its strategy in 1983, the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship could have led to a situation analogous to that in Russia in February-October 1917 or to the one that existed in Nicaragua from 1977 to 1979. It is obviously difficult to form an opinion on this. But the need to incorporate much more systematically con-

19. Ernesto Roque, "Politics is innovation," *Liberation*, April-May 1987, p.25.

20. "Against the snap election boycott," *Praktika*, No. 1, p.36.

21. The CPP had in fact carried out relatively successful boycott campaigns on the occasion of other elections held by the dictatorship.

22. *Praktika*, op. cit., p.35. The three strategic stages of people's war are the strategic defensive, strategic stalemate and strategic offensive.

23. Marty Villalobos is the pen name of a party cadre (who also reflects the point of view of a unit) who identified with the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front and the leader Joaquín Villalobos in El Salvador (could he have been influenced also by the "father" of Cuban Marxism, José Martí?).

24. Marty Villalobos, "Where the Party faltered (An analysis of the snap polls and the February uprising)," typed document, pp.5-6.

25. Marty Villalobos, "On the insurrectional strategy (A sequel to 'Where the Party faltered')," typed document, March 30, 1986, pp.7-8.

26. Marty Villalobos, "Parallelism: the Philippines now and El Salvador in 1979-1980," *Praktika*, No. 2.

27. See in particular the interview with José Maria Sison in *IV*110, December 8, 1986.



temporary revolutionary experience from other countries is being expressed in many ways within the Filipino left.

The debate on the lessons of El Salvador is mobilizing other circles than those of the CPP, as attested to by the publication of an article on this subject by P.N. Abinales in the *Diliman Review*.<sup>28</sup> In this article, Abinales, an independent socialist left activist, discusses in particular Marty Villalobos' conclusions on insurrection, which he considers too one-sided.

The question is not a simple one. How, in a country where armed struggle has become a real factor in the situation, can you maintain the continuity of the revolutionary struggle and at the same time take full account of changes in the period and in the conjuncture?

## Discussion on socialism and democracy in Cuba

In August 1986, the launching of the English version of a long discussion between Fidel Castro and Father Frei Betto, *Fidel and Religion* (published by Pathfinder Press, Pacific and Asia), prompted two important public meetings attended by the Cuban ambassador, Ana Maria Gonzalez.<sup>29</sup>

The first, organized notably by the socialist organization Bisig at the University of the Philippines, gave rise to a long debate on socialism and democracy in Cuba. The second, organized by clerics, and in which Father Ed de la Torre participated, showed the interest the Filipinos have in revolutionary experiences such as the Cuban — and perhaps still more, the Nicaraguan — which have been carried out in countries with a Christian culture, in that respect closer to the Philippines than the China of 1949.

At the end of 1986, the CPP entered into a particularly delicate political period, with the opening of cease-fire talks between the government and the National Democratic Front, and then in 1987 with the referendum on the constitution, the aborting of the peace negotiations and the legislative campaign. The party press, such as *Ang Bayan*, reverted to a more doctrinal stance. The debate seems, at least temporarily, to have dried up. It is possible, for example, that *Praktika* will cease publication.

It is understandable that in an unstable political situation and continuing underground conditions it is not easy to organize a deepgoing discussion. But in 1986, the CPP had already gone through a period of political crisis. Nonetheless, in that year it experienced a broadening of internal democracy.

The discussion documents I have seen — whether they come from national bodies, such as the self-criticism

presented by the Political Bureau, or sectoral bodies, local units or individuals — display a real quality, a real maturity. The rapidity with which such documents were written and the clarity of the arguments showed that much more was involved here than a passing discussion.

In view of the scope of the questions raised, it seems doubtful that this debate had the time to ripen sufficiently. The sharpness of the disagreements expressed about the policy to follow with regard to the peace negotiations and the election campaign attest to that.<sup>30</sup>

It is to be hoped that the discussion opened in 1986 will continue in the future, for the benefit of the Filipino ac-

tivists first of all, but also for that of activists in other countries who are also discussing difficult tactical and strategic questions and who have a lot to learn from the revolutionary experience in the Philippines. ☆

28. P.N. Abinales, "Lessons from El Salvador," *Diliman Review*, Vol. 34, No. 4, 1986.

29. A Filipino edition of this book is to be published.

30. These questions will be taken up in a forthcoming article. It should be noted, for example, that in an interview Joma Sison has very violently criticized the negotiation policy pursued by the NDF leadership at the end of 1986. See *Solidaridad II*, Vol. 10, No. 3-4, p.3. Moreover, the magazine *Kasarinlan* published in its issue No. 4, Vol. 2, second quarter of 1987, an article by Pèpè Manalo entitled "Political strategy and the political negotiations." Manalo — this is the pen name of an underground activist — presents an opinion that is also critical but very different from that of Joma Sison.

## A step forward for the independent unions

**THE OBJECTIVE of establishing single unions in each industry was set at Cosatu's founding congress. In the metal industry, it combined with two other perspectives: to unite the autoworkers' union with the metalworkers' union; and to win to it smaller unions coming out of the crisis of class-collaborationist trade-unionism.**

**The formation of this new united union is, therefore, an important event in the building of the independent South African labor movement. The following article is from the May 29 issue of the *Weekly Mail*, a left democratic paper with a wide circulation published in Johannesburg.**

JEAN SUTHERLAND

**W**ITHIN hours of its launch in Johannesburg at the weekend, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) snarled, displaying a finely honed set of political teeth.

Numsa, the second largest trade union in South African history, challenged the government to dismantle the migrant labour system with interim efforts to improve the living conditions of migrant workers.

And in unanimously electing Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the former Metal and Allied Workers' Union (Mawu), as general secretary of the new union, the delegates displayed their recognition for his tireless efforts in organizing metal workers. The Alexandra community leader is awaiting trial for treason.

Other Numsa executive members are Daniel Dube, president, David Madupela, first president and Percy Thomas, second vice president.

The union also clearly spelled out its commitment to a socialist society, where the workers' control of government and industry was enforced.

This might have been the impetus which prompted the union to adopt the Freedom Charter as "containing the minimum political demands that reflect the view of the majority of metal workers' vision of a free and democratic, non-discriminatory South Africa", according to the preamble of the resolution.

These two resolutions are not unique to Numsa. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) adopted them at its fifth annual conference three months ago.<sup>1</sup>

Although the NUM's constituency in-

1. The miners' union also adopted the Freedom Charter. According to the comments of some NUM leaders, this was not a symbolic act, but a more formal acceptance of the hegemony of the ANC (see *South African Labour Bulletin*, May 1987.) They also evoke the need for a specific workers' charter. Some papers have pointed out the different attitudes of the miners' and metalworkers' unions on this.

cludes migrant workers from Lesotho, Mozambique and Botswana, Numsa's constituency is mostly composed of workers from within the borders of the country.

In adopting the Freedom Charter, Numsa undertook to "develop amongst metal workers in particular, and the organized working class and its allies in general, a coherent understanding that the demands of the Freedom Charter, and all other demands of organized workers, can only be realized in the lives of the working class masses through the practical leadership of the industrial working class...."

Numsa hopes to complement the Freedom Charter with a "workers' charter". In pursuit of the "workers' charter", "the union will consult and discuss the aims and programme with the working class at factory levels, shop steward councils and at National Congress".

### Unions bury sectarianism in quest for unity

It will also seek consultations with their allies, especially the organized youth, in order to build a programme which can bring together as many groups in society as possible.

The striking fact about the three-day conference at the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society's auditorium in Crown Mines is that unions that in the past were hostile and antagonistic towards each other managed to bury sectarianism in the quest for worker unity.

Two of the participating unions, Metal Mining and Allied Workers' Union of SA and the Motor Assembly and Components Workers' Union of SA split from the Metal and Allied Workers' Union and from the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union respectively a few years ago at the height of worker organization involvement in politics.<sup>2</sup> Numsa also represents a convergence of three South Africa trade-union traditions: those of the Federation of South Africa Trade Unions (Fosatu), the Trade Union Council of South Africa (Tuca) and unions with close ties to the UDF.<sup>3</sup>

To the former Tuca Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union (Micwu) politics was taboo a few years ago. The Fosatu unions, on the other hand, were initially wary of alliances with political movements, claiming that the priority was to build shop floor strength rather than to engage the state in the political arena.

The UDF-aligned unions had, however, always taken a clearly defined political stance.

Two years of intensive negotiations managed to draw the three traditions

closer together.

The tone of the conference was set by the chair of the meeting and executive member of the former Naawu, John Gomomo, when he called on unions to forget their badges and labels and unite to form "this giant of a union".

He was echoed by Cosatu's secretary general, Jay Naidoo, who called on delegates not to be trapped by labels such as "workerist or populist."

"Such labels destroy open and democratic debate and distract us from our goal of building working class politics and fulfilling our historical role of leadership in the liberation struggle."

Dube was reluctant to talk about the unions "we belonged to" when he addressed a press conference after the launch. He said such unions ceased to exist when Numsa was launched. He made an impassioned plea to "those workers outside Numsa" to join the new union.

Numsa, with a paid-up membership of 140,000 represents 30 per cent of the workers in the metal and motor industries.

Dube was quick to point out that although the South African Allied Workers Union (Saawu) was left out of the launch at the last minute, the door was still open for them.<sup>4</sup>

Saawu was granted observer status after it failed to submit an audited financial statement that would have indicated its paid-up members. This would have determined the number of delegates Saawu would have been allocated.

The launch also saw the forging of greater unity between the youth and workers. In the past the workers seem to have been scared off by the militancy and impatience of the youth in

launching campaigns.

South African Youth Congress president Peter Mokaba told the delegates that the quest for higher wages and better working conditions was inextricably bound up with "national liberation".

The new union is bound to alter drastically the bargaining structure in next year's negotiations with employer organizations. For the first time Seifsa [the employers' organization] will be faced with a united voice in the two industries.

Although Numsa took a strong political stance, it emphasized the importance of workers' shopfloor struggles as is evidenced by the resolutions taken. They include:

- A national "living wage" of R4,50 an hour.
- A 40-hour working week.
- The right to strike.
- Six months paid maternity leave.
- The extension of equal job training opportunities to women and youths.
- The recognition of May 1, March 21 and June 16 as paid holidays.

Numsa will seek affiliation to Cosatu, the International Metalworkers Federation and the International Chemical and

2. These are very small splits from currents wanting adherence to the Chartist current and the United Democratic Front.

3. Since the 1950s, Tuca has been a big class-collaborationist union dominated by whites but also including "Black" unions. The rise of independent unionism threw this organization into a crisis that ended in its self-dissolution in December 1986.

4. Saawu has been one of the main unions adhering to Chartism and the UDF. It is an organization of the "general union" type, which has had a great deal of difficult organizing on an industrial basis. Its forces are modest.

## INTERNATIONAL



### The legacy of Antonio Gramsci

THE SUMMER 1987 issue of the English language theoretical review of the Fourth International, *International Marxist Review*, will be available shortly.

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# 4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## Marxist Workers' League join PRT

**THE CENTRAL committee of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, unanimously agreed on May 2 to accept the Marxist Workers' League (LOM) into the party.**

**The LOM belonged to the international grouping known as the Fourth International—International Center for Reconstruction (CICIR), which underwent a major split in Caracas shortly after. The decision to include the LOM in the PRT was on the basis of the following agreement.**

**T**HE FOURTH National Congress of the Marxist Workers' League (LOM), held April 15-18, 1987, decided to unite with the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT).

The decision of the LOM congress thus concluded a process of fusion between the two organizations that began more than a year ago. It was based on the accords adopted in the framework of the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the PRT, which met from February 6-8, in which a delegation from the LOM's Political Bureau participated.

The LOM's fusion with the PRT is a step forward on the road of building a mass revolutionary party in Mexico independent of the state and the bourgeoisie; a centralized internationalist party in solidarity with the struggles of the workers throughout the world against the imperialist order and the bureaucracies that usurped power from the workers; a party standing for socialism and a revolutionary workers'

international.

In order to formalize the LOM's fusion with the PRT, the leadership of the two organizations agreed on the following points:

- The fusion will take effect immediately, so that militants coming from the LOM can participate in the discussion and collective elaboration of the party's political line in the framework of the PRT's Fifth National Congress. To that end, the list of members given by the LOM leadership to the PRT leadership will be included as members [of the PRT], and will have all the rights and duties set down by the PRT statutes, so that they will be able to participate on an equal basis in the preparations for the congress mentioned above.

- In view of the agreements in principle between the PRT and the LOM, which constitute the political basis of the fusion, the Fourth National Congress of the LOM decided to accept the PRT Central Committee's proposal that it join the party as a national tendency upholding its political positions on these issues where differences or particular political nuances remain. The LOM leadership decided that the name of this tendency should be the Fourth International Tendency (TCI).

It is clearly understood that, as PRT members, those who join and belong to the TCI do so as individuals, and this accord recognizes the right of the ex-LOM members to do so.

- Regarding the LOM's request that its members have the right to remain affiliated to the CICIR, without this meaning that they are any less loyal members of the PRT, the Fourth International Tendency of the PRT accepts the proposal of the Central Committee that this question be left open temporarily during the pre-congress period and during the coming Congress of the PRT. This is to promote a collective experience of the entire party under the strict discipline of the leading bodies of an already unified PRT.

Such collective experience is the guarantee that all the party members will be actively involved in deciding on the request from the LOM that its members be able to affiliate to the CICIR while in the PRT, that they will be able to participate in making this decision on the basis of full knowledge of what is involved and with the experience of members united in the PRT.

- In connection with the preceding point, the members of the Fourth International Tendency accept that nationally and internationally they are under the sole discipline of the PRT, exercised through its leading bodies and on the basis of the decisions democratically adopted by the majority. Likewise, they agree, in accordance with points 2 and 3 of the resolution of the Fourth

National Congress of the LOM:

"2. To accept fusion in accordance with the proposal of a national tendency, with the right to defend our political positions — in particular as regards our affiliation to the CICIR — and the proposals for international campaigns, so that they will be discussed in the bodies of the PRT.

"3. We conceive this process of fusion as taking place under the exclusive discipline of the PRT....This means that the Central Committee of the PRT is to provide us with the international internal bulletins of the International Secretariat of the CICIR and the Spanish edition of the magazine *Tribune internationale*...."

In this way, the members of the TCI of the PRT will have access to the press and correspondence of the CICIR through the intermediary of the regular leading organs of the PRT, its Central Committee and Political Committee.

### Political importance of the fusion

In line with this, the Political Bureau of the LOM will inform the International Secretariat of the CICIR of the agreements accepted by the Fourth National Congress of the LOM.

- In order to assure the LOM members' integration in the PRT and their active participation in building the party, as well as to guarantee the expression of their positions, members of this tendency will be coopted to the national and regional leading bodies in those areas where they are present. Likewise, the CC of the PRT will recommend to the Fifth National Congress to observe a criterion of political representativeness (that is, not strictly proportional representation) in the Central Committee that will be elected by the congress, in order to permit the inclusion of a significant number of leaders of the old LOM in the national leadership of the PRT.

- As a normal result of this principled fusion, all the goods and property of the LOM become the property of the PRT, and this transfer will be done in writing where the need arises. This applies to the central headquarters of the LOM. The General Council of the CICIR will be informed immediately of the transfer of this title, since this headquarters was acquired thanks to a fraternal gift from the CICIR.

- So that the political importance of this fusion for strengthening the PRT, through the contribution of the political capital of the LOM, may be appreciated, it will be publicly reported in the press of the party, as well as in a series of regional activities organized in agreement with the comrades concerned. ☆

# Railworkers score a major victory

**IN A SUDDEN turnabout, the South African railroad trust made important concessions in early June to striking workers in order to end the walkout. The strike had been prolonged, and had been marked by violent government attacks on the independent union movement.**

**On April 22, near Doornfontein in the Johannesburg area, police killed six striking workers. On the same day, they charged into the headquarters of the confederation of independent unions, Cosatu, looking for workers wounded at Doornfontein, causing extensive damage. The government seemed determined to launch a general attack on the Black labor movement.**

**GERRY FOLEY**

**T**HE VICTORY of the railworkers is all the more impressive in that context. A sympathetic journalist writing in Johannesburg's *Weekly Mail* of June 12 speculated why the semi-state rail company suddenly caved in:

"What is...surprising is why Sats [South African Transport Services] handled the present strike differently from the 1982 General Workers' Union strike, when a few hundred workers were summarily dismissed after a demand for the recognition of their union. This time the workers were fired only after several weeks and were then rehired."

The writer, Sefako Nyaka, then went

on to note: "Political and labour conditions have changed much since 1982 with the labour movement enjoying community and international support."

The railway corporation agreed, among other things, to:

- Re-employ all workers within two weeks on the same grade without loss of benefits, except annual bonuses and pay while on strike.

- Re-employ workers currently in detention within a week of their release, provided they are not found guilty on criminal charges.

- Grant permanent employment to all workers who qualify, irrespective of race.

- Allow workers to democratically elect their own representatives.

The militancy of the striking workers was indicated by the fact that despite these major concessions there was still a sentiment for continuing the strike until all those arrested were released.

Nyaka pointed out: "On two occasions Sarhwu [South African Railways and Harbours Workers' Union] officials and lawyers tried to persuade strikers to return to work, as it would have been tactically advantageous. But the speakers were booed and accused of selling out."

The issues in the strike were basic — protection against arbitrary firing and the workers' right to join trade unions of their choice. The railways are covered by the Conditions of Employment Act of 1983, which denies the elementary trade-union rights granted to workers in the private sector. The transport minister has the power to decide what unions can be recognized.

At the time of the strike, Sats recognized 11 unions, all of them company unions. Nyaka wrote: "Sats preferred its own staff associations, which it upgraded to the Blatu [Black Trade Union] during the strike."

The strike was touched off by the firing of a Sarhwu member, Andrew Nendzama, on a flimsy pretext. Workers went on strike demanding his reinstatement, and after six weeks out, 16,000 of them were dismissed.

The issues in the conflict soon grew to include the demand for recognition of Sarhwu and changes in Sats' disciplinary procedures.

A small union, Sarhwu was severely tested by the conflict. "The strike almost dried up the union's financial resources," Nyaka wrote. "It was an expensive strike for a union that had not yet consolidated its membership in the public sector."

The transport minister, Eli Louw,

tried to cover up the unions' victory, speaking to the South African House of Representatives. He said that no agreement had been negotiated or agreed with COSATU, but that the agreement was between Sats and its employees.

"Louw's statement is seen as an attempt to give credit to Sats' in-house union, the Black Trade Union," Nyaka wrote. But SARHWU got the credit where it most counted. It "increased its membership to 22,000 at Transvaal depots."

## Cosatu victim of smear campaign and bombings

Cosatu had to face a major smear campaign and numerous physical attacks. Besides the direct attacks striking workers, such as the Doornfontein shootings, Cosatu House was bombed and several regional offices were destroyed.

Nyaka thought that the slander campaign against the independent labor movement had been very grave:

"Even moderate sympathizers were stunned by allegations of 'necklacing' and torture at Cosatu House. More so as Cosatu didn't have the media and the resources to counter the allegations. The banning of Cosatu rallies and the confiscation of pamphlets also hampered the federation from stating its stand on violence."

However, the slander campaign seems to have backfired:

"The first sign that Sats was cracking came when they withdraw a court interdict against Cosatu and Sarhwu on allegations of torture and assault. Sats apparently couldn't substantiate claims that some workers were tortured at Cosatu House."

Sarhwu was also preparing a court case to show that the company had not even observed its own disciplinary procedures in firing three workers. Sats officials could have been called to testify about the company's labour practices and general working conditions. Publicity about that would have been distinctly embarrassing.

However, the effectiveness of all these factors depended on the pressure of international public opinion and the international labor movement on

South Africa.

The outcome of the railway strike confirms the need to keep a spotlight on the treatment of Black labor in South Africa and the need to continue building solidarity with the class-struggle union movement. ☆

