

# International VIEWPOINT

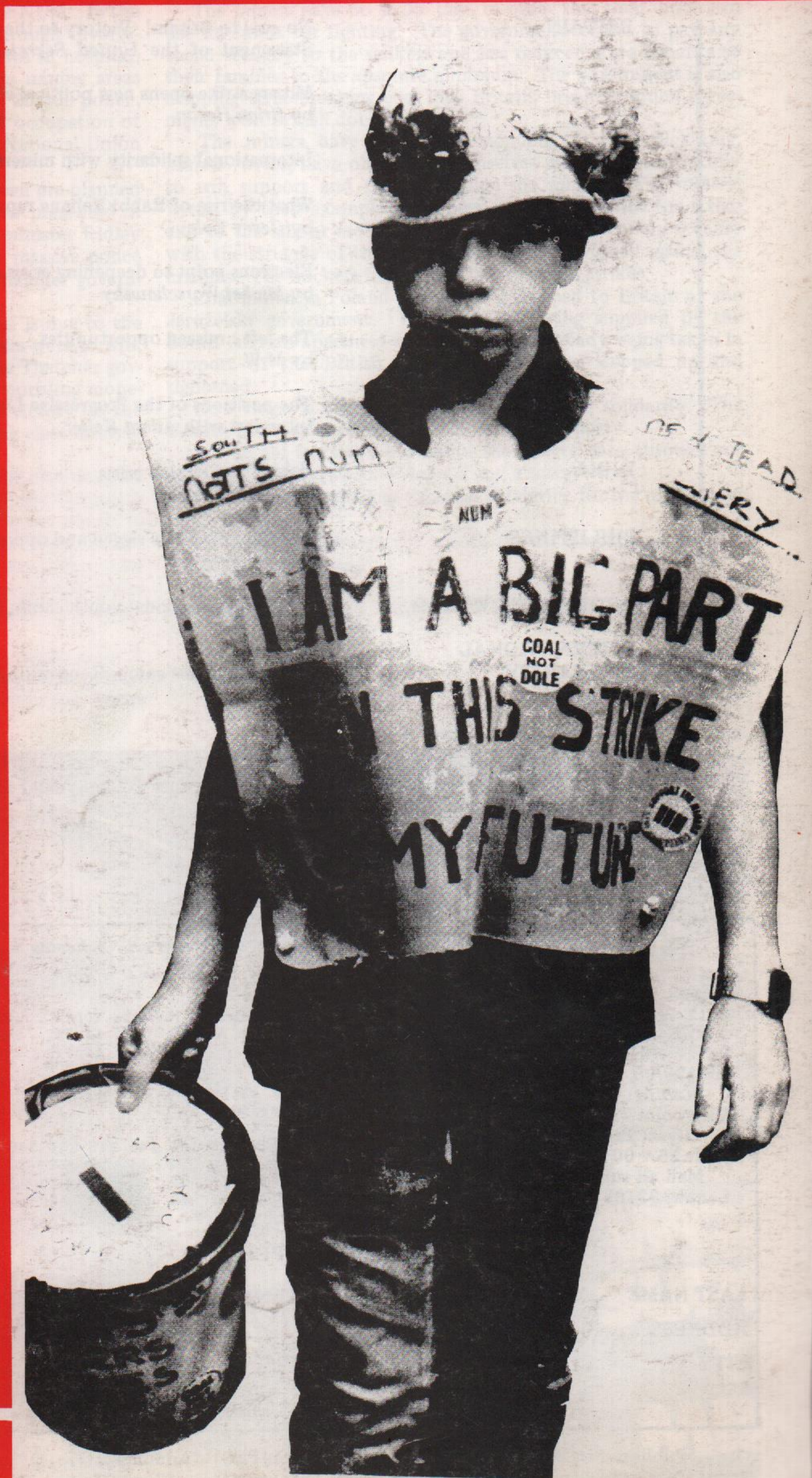
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## Crucial stage opens in miners strike

The deepening  
crisis of Zionism

Philippine  
upsurge still  
on the rise



# International Viewpoint

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# No coal to Britain! Victory to the British miners!

The British National Union of Mineworkers has now been on strike for six months fighting against the attempt of the mine employers to suppress 20,000 jobs, close 20 pits, destroy whole mining communities and smash the power of the NUM. In the course of this struggle five miners have died through involvement in the strike, two are fighting for their lives in hospital, and there have been almost 5,000 arrests. The mining areas have become almost police states with the use of 20,000 police, the blockade of roads, and the continual police occupation of key mining areas. The assets of the South Wales National Union of Mineworkers have been seized by the courts.

This entire assault on the mineworkers has been pre-planned by the Conservative Party for ten years and was presented in 1978 in a plan drawn up by the now finance minister Ridley for Thatcher. The confrontation, including the massive police operation, has been planned in detail by the Thatcher government during its five years in office.

The violent reaction of the Tory government is due to the stakes involved in the strike. If the British miners were to win, it would be a defeat for the entire policies of the Thatcher government — and a blow to all those governments pursuing monetarist austerity policies. For this reason alone a victory for the miners would be a victory for the whole working class internationally.

The British miners' strike is a crucial part of the international resistance of the working class to the capitalist and bourgeois governments' assaults on jobs and real income/wages which, in Europe, finds its expression in struggles like the fight for the 35-hour week in West Germany, the defence of the sliding scale of wages in Italy, the public sector workers general strike movement in Belgium, and industrial action against unemployment in France and Spain.

The miners are also a special target for the Tories since it was their action which brought down the Conservative government of Edward Heath in 1974. Since that time the Tories

have plotted to destroy the power of the miners' union as the key to breaking up the organised strength of the whole labour movement in Britain.

The miners have no strike pay, in order that their union can use its funds for fighting. The government refuses to pay any social security to the strikers and has reduced state benefits to their families to the absolute minimum. The government is also shipping strikebreaking coal into Britain, breaking union agreements with British dockers.

The miners have responded, stepping up their picketing. Miners' wives, have organised themselves nationally and locally to win support and fight alongside the miners. The miners' wives, by their example, have been an inspiration to the strike and to the labour movement. They have made common cause with the struggle of the Greenham Common women against the missiles. The dockers have called two national strikes.

Coal mined in Poland is still being shipped to Britain by the Jaruzelski government. Other coal is being supplied by the South African apartheid regime. Action already being taken in support of the British miners needs to be stepped up and tightened.

Now there is urgent need for international solidarity. The Fourth International pledges itself to play its part:

- to get the truth out about the miners' case, through our press and through tours of miners and miners' wives;
- to raise funds and material solidarity for the miners and their families;
- to fight through the unions for the blocking of all coal movements to Britain.

**No coal to Britain! Victory to the British miners!**

*United Secretariat  
of the Fourth International  
Paris, September 6, 1984*

*Miners' wives are playing a central role (DR)*



# Miners' strike opens new political situation

The September Trades Union Congress was completely dominated by the miners' strike. TUC leaders were forced to make a clear statement of support for the miners' union which had the effect of isolating the right wing of the trade union bureaucracy on this issue. It remains to be seen whether TUC policy can be translated into decisive action, not least in the power stations, over the coming weeks and months. Certainly the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) leaders made real concessions to get a common statement from TUC leaders.

A statement of 'total support', overwhelmingly carried on the first day of Congress, calls on unions to bar the carriage of coal, coke and other fuels across picket lines. But, as the *Financial Times* (September 3, 1984) comments, 'the support is conditional on agreement with the unions concerned.' Chapple, right-wing leader of the powerworkers' union, explained his view. 'The miners have been outrageous in their behaviour from the start...They do not deserve any support and they will not get it from the power stations.' Nevertheless, miners' leader Scargill claimed agreement with workers at five power stations to boycott the movement of coal within days of the TUC statement being voted through Congress.

Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock spoke to the TUC on the second day, echoing one of the main themes of the ruling class attack on the miners. The NUM, he explained, had provided the government 'with the opportunity they have long sought to introduce politically motivated change in the methods of British policing.'

Kinnock's craven speech was a right-wing provocation against the miners who are defending themselves against a vast and unprecedented police assault on their picket lines. He tried to *minimise* the commitment of the TUC and the labour movement to the miners by his speech, and thereby reunite the right-wing trade union bureaucracy around himself.

Despite Kinnock's speech (which provided legitimation for Chapple and other right-wing leaders) early reactions to and results of the TUC statement appear

Brian HERON

From the moment that it started, the British miner's strike was a fundamental class battle. (1) In the first seventeen weeks of the strike, the Thatcher government pretended that it was not involved. Thatcher claimed that the question was one to be solved by the NCB (National Coal Board) and its recently chosen American manager, MacGregor, and the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers.) In fact 20,000 police were mobilised for action against the miners' pickets. So far there have been nearly 4,000 arrests and two pickets have been killed. As well, the social security system has been used to starve miners' families back to work.

By July Thatcher was forced out of her corner. She indelibly marked the future of her government with the aim of victory in the miners' strike. She explained that while Galtieri (the Argentinian dictator during the Malvinas war) had been 'the enemy without', during the coal strike 'we are fighting the enemy within.' With this particularly inept comment, Thatcher both exposed the role of the Malvinas war and her attitude toward the trade union movement.

Of course her comments caused a storm of protest. But, most importantly, they marked the end of the supposed neutralism of the government. Naturally, the spotlight now moves onto the labour movement response. The coming Trades Union Congress (representing 9.5 million trade unionists) which meets in early September will be the forum where a labour movement response to the government's declaration of war is decided.

In fact, solidarity action by the whole of the working class has always been the issue in this miners' strike. It has been established by the press that considerable government effort has gone into pre-

venting other important sections of workers taking action during the miners' strike. According to the *Economist* (August 18, 1984), 'Two forces could disturb the crumbling of the strike [the *Economist* article predicts victory for the government by next Spring]. The first would be new trouble at the docks.... Second...executives of the two main rail unions want to fight job reductions on the railways by a one day strike...along with an unlimited work to rule campaign designed to disrupt services.'

In fact there has already been a national dockers' strike after the British Steel Corporation (BSC) broke existing agreements in loading iron ore for steel

favoured to the miners. In the first place, the dockers' strike has consolidated. Picketing has stepped up. Back to work moves at Tilbury and Hull have been stopped. Secondly, Thatcher was forced to interrupt a visit to Scotland to attend an emergency Cabinet committee meeting to discuss the implications of the TUC. Thirdly, Basnett, architect of the TUC statement, has called conferences of the members of his union (GMBACTU) who work at power stations to discuss the implementation of TUC policy on the miners' strike. Finally, the employers, the National Coal Board (NCB) have initiated further moves towards talks with the NUM, (although the government is not yet prepared to make any serious concessions). Nevertheless, the unity of the leadership of the TUC, expressed by their statement on the miners' strike, was bought at a cost. It remains to be seen whether the price was too high. Until recently, the NUM has kept the TUC at arm's length, because of its treacherous role in recent disputes with the government. Asked to comment on the TUC statement, TUC leader Murray denied that the statement was aimed at 'buying peace' at the congress. 'The important thing is that the TUC is involved.'

Originally the miners' union was set to lead the battle of the left wing at the TUC congress. But fighting amendments to their resolution on the strike were dropped to win a big majority of the union leaderships to support the TUC statement. A great deal now depends on whether the NUM can use the TUC statement to deepen the effects of their strike. In any case, it will be necessary to organise a left wing of the British labour movement around demands such as a national TUC Day of Action, whatever the results of the TUC's agreement. The *right wing* are still mobilising to defeat the miners. The article below, written before the TUC took place, looks at the political impact of the miners' strike in more depth.

B.H.  
September 6, 1984

1. See Steve Roberts 'Miners' strike most serious challenge yet to Thatcher' (*International Viewpoint*, No 50, April 9, 1984) and Pat Hickey 'Labour movement left challenges new realism' (*IV*, No 53, May 21, 1984).

production at the east coast port of Immingham. The Transport and General Workers Union (which organises the vast majority of dockers) called a national strike against this breach of the hard-won dock labour scheme (a scheme that guarantees every docker a job, regardless of the demand for dock labour). The scheme had been under attack for some time. On this occasion the port authorities found that BSC had acted to breach the agreement. After two weeks strike by dockers (in which the president of the Confederation of British Industry remarked that only 25 per cent of his member companies would be working in two weeks if the strike continued) the climb-down by employers meant a return to work.

The action of the dockers underlined the strategic weakness of the government. The *Economist's* fears are not without foundation. Any decisive section of the workers' movement coming into struggle alongside the miners will create a desperate emergency for the government.

As we write, a new dock strike has been called. The *Ostia*, a ship loaded with coal for the Scottish Ravenscraig steel works, has been unloaded at Hunterston docks by British Steel Corporation employees. 'Scab coal delivered by scab labour', said miners' president Scargill. In the first instance Scottish dockers at Scotland's twelve largest ports walked out. A national conference of Transport and General Workers Union dock workers, representing 35,000 docks and waterways workers, called an official strike following the conference on August 24.

### The bosses' and government's game

Certainly BSC's action is a deliberate provocation which, because of its consequences, must have been agreed to by the government. In fact Transport Union dockers have already offered a substantial coal quota to the Ravenscraig plant (within 5,000 tonnes of BSC's demands). BSC and the government believe that their act will 'expose' the fact that dockers are being brought into action because of the miners' dispute, and not to serve their own interests. They seek to weaken the working class response to the miners' strike by a salutary lesson about the divisions inside the trade union movement just before the Trades Union Congress meets.

In fact it is a deadly and dangerous game that the government and the steel employers are playing. In the first place the solidarity action that dockers had taken with the coal miners is strictly illegal according to the government's own trade union laws. And yet, to the disappointment of sections of the employers, the government does not feel strong enough to apply those laws to decisive sections of the trade union movement.

In the second place, although some dockers' responses have been mixed (Dover and Felixstowe delegates voted against; one-third of the workers at Immingham are working normally along with those at Barry in Wales) seventy per cent of British docks are closing or have already closed.

Of course, a huge media campaign is underway to pretend that the dockers are substantially split, but the *Financial Times* of Saturday August 25, is in no mood to fake the situation. Under the title 'Start to second national stoppage well underway' the article explains the strategy of the dock leaders: 'The TGWU's strategy is likely to be to widen the dispute rapidly.' What this means quickly became clear with the announcement by the rail unions that they were instructing members not to cross dockers' picket lines. It had not yet been decided whether the action had been limited to freight traffic. There was no indication yet whether dockers would picket cross-channel ferry ports, where railway unions dominate the workforce.

Industry, said the strike 'could have a disastrous effect on the economy.' First to be hit would be bulk imported raw materials. The effects would quickly spread to food, components and finished goods. It is clear therefore that the government faces a major crisis.

If the government is relying on the early collapse of the trade union movement, there is no sign yet that it will occur. However, the situation inside the trade union movement is far from rosy. Besides the effects of the crisis and the slump, divided reaction to the miners' strike shows that arguments still have to be won.

The miners' union has, naturally enough, been concerned to win a united front from the TUC to back its struggle. The NUM resolution commits the TUC to a levy, which would raise £1 million per week, and outlaws the crossing of miners' picket lines by other trade unionists. This has been happening on a large scale with lorrydrivers in the TGWU and steel workers in the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC).



NUM leader Scargill addresses women's support demo (DR)

The dockers' action is already incredibly damaging to the British economy. And the 'spread out' character of this strike has only just begun. John Connelly, the TGWU's national dock secretary, said on August 24 that an appeal would be made to the union's executive council for 'physical support' from other sections of the union. Towards the end of July's dock strike, national leaders of TGWU lorry drivers, oil tanker drivers and refinery workers promised support but were not at that stage called on to take any action.

A recent survey of business optimism taken at the end of July shows a dramatic slump from a previous poll. Only 28 per cent of Britain's directors felt that there was reason for optimism, compared with 65 per cent in June. The employers' organisation, the Confederation of British

The furniture-builders' union FTAT had an amendment to the NUM resolution calling for a national TUC-called Day of Action.

Initially, this amendment (along with others from the rail unions and seamen on the levy) appeared to be acceptable to the movers of the original resolution, the NUM. The amendment calls on the TUC's governing General Council to organise 'a day of solidarity action as soon as practicable.' But now the amendment appears to have become the victim of back door manoeuvrings by trade union bosses. At the time of writing, the NUM did not support the 'day of action' amendment, apparently in the interests of presenting a united face with the TUC leaders against the government.

In fact, the call for a day of solidarity is not built on sand. Although mass un-

employment has existed for more than six years and is still growing; although a series of groups of workers (like the steelworkers in 1980) have suffered defeats; important advances in the types of trade-union struggle have also been registered since the election of the first Tory government in 1979. For example, the healthworkers dispute (in 1981) saw enormous solidarity actions taken by millions of workers in 'Days of Action' on behalf of the healthworkers who could not leave the sick.

The beginning of the miners' strike saw a continuation of this tradition at the level of calls to action by the various regional TUC's (Scotland, Wales, the North West, Southern Region, etc.). These 'Regional Days of Action' mobilised millions of workers behind the miners, often, but not always, through 24-hour strike action. At the same time a massive movement of miners' wives in solidarity with the strike has been established, which spearheads the battle for 'social' solidarity (money, food, etc) and which called a solidarity demonstration of 20,000 in London on August 11. (2) The miners' wives movement is thereby also playing a leading political role in winning support for the strike.

The miners' and the dockers' actions will dominate the coming TUC congress. The question will be hard to avoid of whether these strikes are supported by the leadership of the trade-union movement. The right wing of the trade-union leadership may be let off the hook in terms of the wording of a resolution which they feel they can support. It may now not be necessary to put their own resolution (which up to now was very much on the cards) openly demonstrating the split in the labour movement leadership that everyone knows is there.

### The left/right divide

The right wing sought, through a general resolution moved on behalf of the TUC's ruling committee, to express vague support for the miners and perhaps committing any money to a miners' family 'hardship fund' rather than towards the costs of the dispute. Such a motion, claimed the *Financial Times* (August 18, 1984) 'could be promoted as an addition to the NUM motion rather than as an alternative [which] if passed, would allow Congress the option as to whether to adopt a militant or moderate posture, as necessary to prevent splits'.

But, whether the right wing have their own motion or not as the *Financial Times* reports (August 18, 1984): 'The Congress is increasingly seen as the focus for decisions on the strike at every level.' The only question is whether the workers' movement will see the completely opposed right-wing and left-wing choices spelt out, or whether, as is more normal, they will have to read between the lines.

The right wing have found support in some important places. Kinnock, the

new leader of the Labour Party, denounced any 'big bang' or general strike in support of the miners in a speech in Parliament when it was raised that miners' leaders were conspiring with left trade-union leaders for this. Up to now, he has contented himself with 'evenhandedly' attacking the violence of the picket lines. Yet, it is apparent to anyone with eyes to watch the nightly edited television commentary that the 'violence' of the picket lines is entirely the violence of a police force mobilised to destroy miners' picket lines. This police violence has already killed two pickets. Despite the obvious role of the police, and the government (most recently exposed in their methods in the North of Ireland with the killing of Sean Downes by plastic bullet at a peaceful meeting), Kinnock remains more frightened of the mobilisation of the labour movement than the results of a victory for Thatcher.

Despite Kinnock, a massive left wing of the labour movement has grown up around the strike. Its head is firmly in the Labour Party, if its feet are on the miners' picket lines. The miners' strike has seen the spectacular expansion and growth in self-confidence of the movement at the base of the Labour Party and trade unions led by Benn and Scargill. The leadership of the movement is, for its own reasons, committed to a victory of the miners.

From the start of the strike, 20 per cent of the miners, mainly based in the Nottingham area, have refused to support the strike. The Notts area has a right-wing tradition; the coalfields there will provide mining jobs longer. But, in the last analysis, the split of the miners is a reflection of the divisions of the whole of the workers' movement. At the last general election a majority of organised trade unionists voted for parties other than the Labour Party. Of course the miners' union has a tremendous history of militancy and struggle. This means that the divisions they face are less important than those in the labour movement as a whole. Nevertheless, even the miners' union is affected by the dramatic division of Britain's anti-Thatcher majority.

In this context a huge discussion has opened in the Labour Party about the best way to re-assemble the anti-Thatcher majority around the Labour Party. In this argument right-wing leaders of the Party have argued the necessity of politically displacing the SDP (Social Democratic Party, formed by a right-wing split from the Labour Party) by adopting its policies and — failing that — to prepare the labour movement for coalition.

Benn in the Labour Party and the union leader most associated with him, miners' president Arthur Scargill, have argued instead for the maintenance of the Party's radical policies and the construction of a new alliance of all the oppressed around the labour movement. Key to that vision of a new alliance is that the struggle against the Thatcher

government opens out. Unless such a struggle is on the agenda, there would be no reason why anti-Thatcher forces would ally themselves with the labour movement and the Labour Party.

It is from that perspective that Scargill and his allies have been running the strike. To overcome the disunity in the pits, and, for example, between the recently defeated steelworkers and the miners, Scargill has chosen the method of the mass picket. Constantly Scargill explains: 'steelworkers had the complete support of miners when they fought closure, we demand the same support. The way to keep steel jobs is for the miners to be victorious.' At the same time thousands of pickets are mobilised to prevent the movement of coal to steel plants and scabs going to work in the still working pits.

These methods have drawn a sharp line through the leadership of the labour movement. Left leaders of the Labour Party, like Benn and Labour leader of the Greater London Council, Ken Livingstone, have totally endorsed the miners' union struggle. At the base, the whole progressive movement inside the British working class has swung behind the miners. This is true in literally every field.

For example, one of the first acts of the national miners' wives movement was to send a delegation to Greenham Common to wish the Women's Peace Camp well. Greenham women now appear on many miners' platforms. Around the miners' strike appears a new type of labour movement; in struggle, embracing all the oppressed; using the methods of mass action.

In this perspective, the miners' strike appears as the centrepiece to a whole series of struggles against the Thatcher government including the struggle against the missiles and the battle to keep elected local authorities against new laws designed to do away with them.

But the point has now been reached where a challenge to the right-wing leadership of the trade-union movement has to be made. The success of the miners' struggle depends upon an extension of the support it can win. There is no way of doing that without organising those on the left of the trade-union movement prepared to act now, and, secondly, challenging the role of the right-wing leaders who up to now have given purely verbal support if that. In some cases (like that of the electricians' union leader Frank Chapple) these leaders have called openly on their members to scab on the strike.

From the start of the miners' struggle, the tremendous picket line battles with the police have caused right-wing trade-union leaders to demand the calling off of the mass pickets, for the sake of 'law and order'. The huge police operation, costing more than £2 million a day, in-

2. See Janine Inglefield 'Miners' wives on the march' (IV, No 55, June 18, 1984).



Despite real hardship for their families...

volving the banning of movement by miners between certain counties, vast phone taps (exposed by some telecommunications workers), has polarised the labour movement leadership. Against these 'police state' tactics the Labour and trade-union lefts are calling for further support of the trade union and labour movement for the miners' union. Calls for such support have led to the current second dock strike; but the whole labour movement needs to be won to support these strikes if Thatcher is to be beaten.

Such a perspective inevitably requires the defeat of the right-wing leadership of a large section of the labour movement today. The struggle between this left wing of the labour movement and the right wing will dominate this year's TUC Congress however much the curtain is drawn over the struggle. The Bennite left wing has also been thoroughly associated with the important retreat of the Thatcher government on the issue of local government. The government was defeated in the Houses of Parliament (by the Lords!) in their attempt to close down the London local authority, led by Ken Livingstone who is known as one of the country's most radical Bennites. This defeat was seen as part of the process of the government 'losing its touch' in British politics.

So, increasingly, the Bennites are seen as the most effective opposition to the Thatcher government. According to the *Economist* of July 7, 'Mrs Thatcher's second government is stepping out to become Britain's most inept since the

war.' Much of that can be put down to the actions of the Bennite left wing of the labour movement.

The Bennites are clear in their perspectives for the strike. At the end of June Benn said the following at a public rally in solidarity with the miners:

'There are two things which the movement should be doing right now for the miners. First, trade unionists in a whole range of industries and services should plan to take industrial action where they work. This would be the best and most direct way to help now, and no one need wait for permission to begin. We have learnt that from the women's movement. An extension of strike action would directly assist the NUM and give them a tremendous boost at the same time. Secondly, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party should organise a national demonstration, invite Arthur Scargill and other trade union leaders and members of the women's support groups to speak alongside leading members of the Labour Party, to launch a sustained national political campaign that must go on until the miners win. The financial and moral support that has come from the movement has been much appreciated. But it has been left to the miners and their families to carry the main burden. They are fighting for us and we cannot let them fight alone.'

This is the Bennite 'programme of action' around the strike. Everybody on the left will wholeheartedly agree with that programme. It remains to be seen how far the fight will be carried to or-

...miners' wives are militant in their support (FR)



organise a left wing now around that programme of action, and how far the Bennites will be prepared to go dividing the labour movement leadership — the better to knit together its ranks. Often, victories at the level of the bureaucratic leadership of the labour movement are confused by the Bennites with victories in the movement as a whole. But at this stage there is no way around the disunity of the labour movement leadership, no way around an open challenge to the scabbing right wing. By bringing forward that challenge, on the issue of the miners' strike and now the dockers' strike, a new unity of the broader movement around the strikes is possible.

## Two decisive congresses

But the Bennite leadership is itself a fraction of the labour bureaucracy (although it is in a tiny minority). Consequently, the struggles which it conducts have as their end the reform of that bureaucracy...on Bennite lines! For that reason there are important limits to how far the Bennites will go at this TUC and the following Labour Party Conference.

The coming TUC and the Labour Party Conference scheduled for the end of September will determine much of the future of the miners' dispute, the Bennite section of the leadership of the labour movement which supports that dispute, and the prospects of the Thatcher government itself. But these Congresses will not end the story. A July national conference of the NUM saw miners' leader Scargill prepare the ranks of the miners for a dispute lasting well into the winter. The 'drift back to work' campaign of the employers and the government is, in the words of the *Economist*, (August 18, 1984) 'hardly even a trickle for the moment, with a rise of only 700 in those working since the start of July.'

The *Economist* (which backs the government to the hilt) sees the spotting of what it calls 'rebel miners' (or scabs) by 'right-wing newspapers' as this season's equivalent to the number of sightings of the Loch Ness monster (another completely unserious activity). In fact, the figures belie any 'drift back to work.' Of Britain's 180 pits, 130 are completely stopped. The vast majority of the rest are producing at much below their normal capacity. These figures have been more or less the same since the start of the strike, twenty-two weeks ago.

The resilience and self-sacrifice of the miners and their families has dramatically shaken up the British labour movement. For example, it has produced two dock strikes so far! That process will not stop at the end of the TUC and Labour Party Congresses — whatever their outcome. But in every corner of the British labour movement it is recognised that these two Congresses, should they wish, have the power to bring speedy victory against what increasingly looks like a 'lame duck' government.

## International solidarity with British miners

**In West Germany** ....British miners toured for ten days at the end of May raising support for their struggle, particularly among the engineering workers of IG Metall and the print workers of the IG Druck und Papier who were on strike themselves in support of the thirty-five hour week. Trade union activists and support groups of the 35-hour struggle organised meetings for the miners in Berlin, Hamburg, Duisburg and Karlsruhe.

The GIM (International Marxist Group — Gruppe Internationale Marxisten), German section of the Fourth International, organised an international solidarity meeting with speakers reporting on the Italian factory councils and the Belgian general strike.

The meeting took place in Stuttgart, in Baden-Wurtemberg one of the key areas for the 35-hour week struggle. The British miners went to the nearby town of Lordi where the workers had occupied their plant in support of the strike. The miners addressed the workers there, stressing the common struggle against Kohl in Germany and Thatcher in Britain.

Nearly 6,000 German marks (about £1,600) was raised during the tour. A future tour is being planned in which a miner's wife and a woman from Greenham Common will take up the role of women in the strike and the link between the fight for jobs and against nuclear weapons.

**In Sweden** ....activists and rank and file trade unionists are trying to set up a broad based trade-union committee to beat the crisis and fight the government's austerity measures. They decided to invite some dockworkers from Denmark and some miners from Britain to address them. Arthur Scargill, leader of the National Union of Mineworkers, was the natural choice.

However, when the spokesperson of the trade-union committee announced the intention to invite Scargill, employers in the Volvo company, a section of whose workforce support the new committee, literally 'saw red'. They claimed that if the Volvo trade unionists were to invite Scargill, this would get them, the management, into deep trouble in Britain and would severely upset the British market for Volvo lorries!

The main leader of the union at Volvo was immediately contacted but he issued a strong statement in support of the miners.

If Scargill came to Sweden, it would be very important for the Swedish campaign against their own bosses and in solidarity with the miners. For the British miners it would bring support from the broad-based trade-union committee and thus force the hand of the Swedish trade-union and social democratic leaders.

**In the Netherlands** ....miners' wives, Katherine Slater and Lynn Bennett completed a tour at the end of August. The tour was organised by the Women's Union, FNV-Vrouwenbond, who felt that although the main trade-union federation (FNV) had agreed to open a special bank account for the miners, more active and practical support was needed.

The women started off in South Limburg which used to be a mining area and where some ex-miners still live, many of them unemployed. The groups which they formed ten years ago to fight pit closures in the area still exist today and gave the women a warm welcome. About 200 people attended a meeting addressed by the women. They raised 12,000 guilders (about £3,000) of which 5,000 guilders came from the ex-miners groups. Even bingo-halls in the area pledged an evening's profits to the British miners!

The women also visited Amsterdam where they raised 8,000 guilders at a 300-strong meeting supported by, in addition to the Women's Union, many other unions and political parties including the Communist Party (CPN) and the SAP (Socialistische Arbeiders Partij — Socialist Workers Party), Dutch section of the Fourth International.

The youth sections of the trade unions are also organising support and the squatters' movement has already organised

holidays for 30 miners' children. The pop group, Rick Noloc, has even launched a record, the proceeds of which will go to the miners.

The Women's Union is continuing to organise solidarity up and down the country and has drawn up a hit list of factories and workplaces where collections can be organised. In one steel plant the women's group is discussing what to do next and in Rotterdam a solidarity committee has already been set up.

**In France** ....a delegation from the Bold branch of the NUM met miners from the CGT (General Workers Union) in Carmaux and Gardanne. In a visit to the steel-producing areas one of the delegation spoke on the platform with Henri Krasucki, the leader of the CGT. A miner's wife in the delegation also addressed women at a meeting at the Paris women's centre. The tour raised 20,000 French francs (about £1,800). It was sponsored by, among others, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), French section of the Fourth International.

**In Belgium** ....dockers in Ghent have pledged that upon word from the NUM they will stop all movement of coal.

The Belgian section of the Fourth International, the POS/SAP (Socialist Workers Party) has been very active and at a meeting in June of left trade unionists which they helped organise about 18,000 Belgian francs (£250) was raised for visiting miners.

**In Switzerland** ....Thatcher could not get away from the miners' strike even while on holiday. Members of the Swiss socialist youth organisation, the RSJ, dumped 300 kilos of coal on the drive to her holiday home. The youth, supporters of the Fourth International, called for support for the miners and Britain out of the North of Ireland.

**In Australia** ....the miners, dockers and seafarers unions have already started an embargo following a visit of miners' leader Malcolm Pitt of Kent NUM. The support of the dockers and seafarers internationally will be vital in the coming months to stop the movement of coal.

**In New Zealand** ....support is beginning with the seafarers and the engineering unions each sending 5,000 Australian dollars (£1,920) to the miners. Also a telegram from the ship *Toki Arrow* pledging 600 Australian dollars was sent to the miners. Dave Morgan, of the New Zealand seafarers union, explained in the union journal that, 'a supreme effort is required. This is probably the most important fight of the decade and every assistance is needed. Support the British miners in every way you can.'

**In the Republic of South Africa**... the independent, non-racist Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) has issued the following statement in support of the British miners:

'To: Arthur Scargill, President  
National Union of Mineworkers  
From: Joe Foster, General Secretary,  
Federation of SA Trade Unions

The Federation of SA Trade Unions fully supports the NUM in its fight against pit closures. With the formation of a wider federation of South Africa's independent trade unions next year, we hope in future to be able to offer you more concrete support.

The fight for the right to work is particularly understood by South African workers and supported by our Federation. We believe that your victory will be a major step forward in the worldwide workers' struggle for job security and for a rational society. Amandla! [Forward!]



## What the rise of Rabbi Kahane represents

The most dramatic note in the July general elections in Israel was that for the first time an open advocate of driving out all the Arabs remaining on Zionist-ruled territories won a seat in parliament.

At the same time, this sinister figure gained parliamentary immunity for organizing racist rabble-rousing and gang attacks on the Arab communities. So, Rabbi Meir Kahane began immediately to increase the temperature of Zionist politics.

Gerry FOLEY

In August, when I was in Israel, and since, Rabbi Meir Kahane has provided a focus for the deepening crisis of Zionism. Indeed, better than any other single event his rise has highlighted the crisis and the degeneration of Zionist ideology, symbolizing the fading of those elements that reflected the search of oppressed Jews for a solution to their problems and the growing predominance of racist and reactionary attitudes based on the disinheriting and repression of the Arab people of Palestine. In fact, as a founder of the Jewish Defense League in the US, an organization aimed mainly against Blacks, Kahane is a by-product of American racism.

Historical Zionism, moreover, was a mainly secular ideology, offering release from the suffocating religious rules and ritual of the ghetto. Appropriately, the outstanding representative of a decaying Zionism, poisoned by its basic contradiction — the scheme of liberating the Jews through an alliance with imperialism and by crushing another people — is both a religious and racist fanatic.

On the basis of the claim that the Jews have a divine right to supremacy in Palestine, the American-born religious leader has no qualms about referring to Arabs in rallies as "dogs" and organizing pogromist gangs to attack Arab settlements.

By its nature, Kahane's brand of rabble rousing requires provocations. Immediately after his election, he announced his intention to open a "Palestinian emigration office" in Um Al-Fahum, the largest Arab town near the Zionist core settlements.

In response to the threat, the town leaders called a joint Arab-Jewish rally. It was held on the first weekend in July, just after I arrived in the country.

Although Um Al-Fahum is only about an hour's trip from Tel Aviv by bus, it is a different world. It is high in barren hills still inhabited by Arabs, no doubt because they had little to attract Zionist settlers.

Today, these Arab mountain towns live mainly from the crumbs of the

Jewish society, from casual and marginal jobs in Tel Aviv. On the outskirts of the Jewish towns, you can see groups of Arab men and boys standing about. Everyone in Israel calls them the "slave markets." There is no ideological motivation behind this term, no denunciation; it is just a description that everyone accepts as obvious.

I was struck in fact that there had been so little trickle down of Jewish economic development to an Arab town in an area so near the biggest city of the Zionist settlement.

Tel Aviv as a whole has a West European standard of living, poorer than the best off countries but with a more prosperous look than Britain. In the northern part of the city in particular, you could think you were in a middle-class suburb of Miami.

But in Um Al-Fahum, foul smelling water runs down the middle of poorly maintained roads. Skin inflammations are common among the children. And the people in general have an undernourished look — notably thinner, smaller and more gnarled than the Jews.

The town government is in the hands of the Communist Party. In the July elections, the CP-led Democratic Front got 46% of the vote here, and the Progressive List 37%; in all, 83% for the non-Zionist left slates. The CP has a long tradition here, but it has accommodated itself to the backward society, making little attempt to change it. On the other hand, it does use the method of mass mobilization. And the demonstration against Kahane was a good example.

The roughly two thousand Jewish demonstrators walked into the town through serrried ranks of local people clapping and shouting "Welcome, Welcome," and *Shalom!* [which means both "peace" and "greetings"]. Huge banners carried the same slogans. The town was mobilized.

In Israeli conditions, the presence of even a small number of Jewish demonstrators was important to the security of the local people. Their welcome was genuinely enthusiastic. But the social and cultural gap was vast. I noticed, for example, little Arab girls surreptitiously

trying to touch the bright clothing of the Jewish women, which they obviously admired.

The formal Jewish support for the demonstration went beyond the non-Zionist left. There were speakers from the Israeli Labor Party for instance. But they apparently brought few people. The main body of the demonstrators were people from radical backgrounds in Central and Eastern Europe who were forced to settle in the Zionist colony by forces beyond their control. There were also a number of younger people who looked like the hard-core of US anti-Vietnam war demonstrators.

This contingent did reflect some important contradictions in the settler community, the presence of old radical forces and a ferment among the youth made possible by bourgeois democracy. But it did not yet represent a powerful and growing current in the Jewish community.

In the same period, momentum began to build for a demonstration against Kahane at the opening of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. It was held about two weeks later on the sidewalk of the road running past the hill in West Jerusalem where the Knesset stands. This protest had very wide sponsorship, including from organizations of the Labor Party. But they did not mobilize many people, although the demonstration of about 2,000 was considered respectable for Jerusalem on a workday.

Even the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, spoke, although after public hesitation. He had said before that he could not take part because he had heard that the demonstration was being organized by the *Matzpen* group, as the section of the Fourth International in Israel is generally known.

In fact, the Revolutionary Communist League played an important role. They were well regarded as reliable and capable organizers of mass demonstrations, and on this occasion, as well as others, even moderate forces in the Jewish community were ready to accept their help. The RCL is also well known as the most intransigent opponent of Zionism. So, when Kollek made his statement, he did not have to explain whom he was talking about. Nonetheless, he ended up coming to the rally as the keynote speaker.

The RCL had fought to make the demonstration against racism rather than against fascism. They argued that Kahane was a result of the logic of Zionism, linked to its institutions by a thousand underground roots, and not the product of a fundamental crisis of capitalism, as fascism was.

The official theme of the demonstration was opposition to racism. But the Labor Party contingents pushed anti-fascist slogans, and they also apparently came most easily to the lips of most of the demonstrators. Thus, the main chant was *Ha-Fashism lo yavor* ("Fascism Shall Not Pass").

This framework offered the left

and liberal Zionist speakers ample room for self-satisfied declarations about how antagonistic the Jewish people were to fascism and how alien it supposedly was to what they claimed were the generous and humane values of Zionism. This gave them a way to avoid saying anything concrete about the racist discrimination that the Arabs under Israeli rule face in every aspect of their lives. Thus, they did not have to pay much of a price for participating in an action in which they had strong material interests.

### The passing of a kind of innocence

The viability of the Zionist society has in fact depended to a considerable extent on its maintaining a progressive, democratic image, and this is threatened by the rise of the activist right.

Although the Zionist authorities maintain a massive military and repressive machine, it has a rather innocent appearance to the American or European visitor, quite unlike the ugly face of the British military in the North of Ireland or the low-lives of the Irish political police.

In Israel the repressive machine is decent-looking people everywhere in rather casual military dress, carrying weapons but relaxed, convivial, confident. It is the sort of "people's defense force" that could only be built on the basis of the conviction of an entire people that they were engaged, together, in a righteous undertaking.

Even in the military courts, most of the judges, guards, prosecutors, etc. do not have the brutalized look of their counterparts, even in the most bourgeois democratic of countries. Nor do they fit the image of the "hanging judges" of British rule in Ireland, although their historical role is very similar.

For example, in a military court in Nablus, I watched the Israeli personnel as an Arab woman collapsed, hearing her husband sentenced to two years in prison for an alleged minor act of defiance. The occupation authorities had waited two years before even bringing the charge. The Israelis' attitude was wide-eyed surprise, but without much emotion, neither the sort of hatred you see on the part of the British and Orange repressive forces in Northern Ireland, nor sympathy. It did not seem that they were cruel, just that the fate of an Arab did not much concern them. It was only a bit of a shock, unpleasant, like seeing a dog run over.

This was a society that has been able to accept the imposition of the most thoroughgoing official and unofficial terror against a conquered people. (In the Gaza Strip, for instance, I listened to an Arab women recall how the Israeli army executed all the men and boys over 14 years of age in her village in retaliation for a guerrilla bombing.) Yet it was a society that, despite all, retained a kind of innocence. The time for that is now quickly passing. That is what the crisis of Zionism means. ■

## Elections point to deepening crisis of Zionism

By moving up the date of the elections, the Israeli parliament thought that it was opening up the way for a solution to the crisis that has gripped the Jewish state since the 1981 elections. In fact, the coalition government that emerged from the previous elections, based from the outset on the thinnest of majorities, suffered numerous defections as the months went on. Moreover, the contradictions among the various components of the ruling majority rapidly created a situation of paralysis in the fields of domestic and economic policy.

The major governmental party itself, the Likud, faced the threat of a split, since the Liberal Party sought to regain some independence from the Herut party of Shamir and Sharon. The economic disaster and the bogging down of Israeli forces in Lebanon gave grounds for supposing that the party's electoral base was shrinking. And, for several months, several of Likud's coalition partners had been looking constantly for a way of abandoning a ship whose helmsman seemed to have lost control.

On the Labor side, the hopes for regaining the majority and getting back its lost ministerial portfolios seemed within reach of fruition, to such an extent that the three Labor leaders — Peres, Navon and Rabin — decided to stop their factional warfare and present themselves to the people as a homogeneous collective leadership.

Michel WARSCHAWSKY

The polls gave the Labor Party a lead of 17 or even 23 seats over the Likud, although toward the end of the campaign the gap between the two parties was clearly narrowing. Everything seemed, therefore, to indicate that the Knesset that came out of these special elections would both put an end to the disastrous interlude marked by the Likud government and give the Labor Party maneuvering room that it had not enjoyed in many years.

With the defeat and the subsequent bogging down of Israeli forces in Lebanon, the 400 percent inflation rate, and the melting away of the country's hard-currency reserves, the Labor Party had no lack of issues on which it could have waged an aggressive campaign against the failures of the Likud government. But it did not do so. Never has the campaign rhetoric been so tame. The major opposition party held back from using the issues that most concern the people of Israel to mobilize the voters against the Likud.

Both those who directed the Labor Party campaign and those in the ranks who opposed their approach explain the moderate tone by two factors. One was a desire not to aggravate the divisions among the Jewish population, which the 1981 elections had split into two enemy camps that had not shrunk even from violence against each other. The other was a desire not to "scare" disillusioned Likud voters by a policy too diametrically opposed to that of the incumbent government.

In fact, the real reason for the lack of deepgoing political debate between Likud and Labor was that the latter have no real alternative policy on the basic problems facing the country. As regards the Lebanon war, the Labor Party supported it as long as it seemed likely to achieve its objectives. With respect to the schemes for annexing the occupied territories, Peres and Rabin talk about a "compromise border settlement" with Jordan that even King Hussein rejected a long time ago. As for the grave economic problems, everyone knows that the "Labor solution" is an austerity policy that it would be suicidal to advocate openly in an election campaign.

Since the Labor Party feared more than anything else a mass mobilization against the Likud's foreign or economic policies, it confined itself to playing to the prejudices of the voters and trying to outdo the Likud in nationalist and chauvinist rhetoric, replaying the old scenarios about the "heroic" age of Zionist colonization. Following such a course, the opposition had no chance to make a breakthrough among the Likud voters. In fact, it even lost a part of its traditional electoral support.

Contrary to all the polls, far from making a breakthrough and getting a comfortable majority, the Labor bloc lost two seats, dropping to a total of 44. The Likud also lost seats, six in its case, but unlike its rival it could consider the fact that it managed to hold on to 41 as a relative victory. So, while one could say that there was erosion of Likud's support, it proved to be very limited, and Labor were not the gainers. In other

words, the Zionist leadership crisis hit both the Likud and Labor, and this fact suggests that we can look forward to a worsening of the political instability that has characterized the Israeli political scene in recent years.

Let us look in more detail at the behavior of the various social strata in the recent elections. Without any doubt, the most important phenomenon is that the poor masses on which the Likud victories in 1977 and 1981 were based have remained loyal to the party of Shamir and David Levy. As an inhabitant of the poor section of Tel Aviv said, "Likud has restored our honor. It is true that the government has made big mistakes, but I will vote for it because I have no alternative. Labor? Never! They are our enemies. They despise us and want to push us back to being second-class citizens." (*Matzpen*, No 147, August 1984.)

Despite the eloquent silence of Menahem Begin, despite Israel's getting bogged down in Lebanon, and above all despite the economic crisis, the poor strata of oriental Jews continue to see the Likud, or rather the Herut faction in this heterogeneous bloc, as *their* party, the party of the "Second Israel."

In this respect, these elections confirmed what the revolutionary Marxists have been saying for four years, against the general current of opinion in the other left formations, that is, that the Likud victory in 1977 was no accident, no tragic interlude, as some said, but the reflection of a deepgoing structural change in the poor masses. Labor had no chance to regain influence in the poor neighborhoods and the immigrant towns.

If there was a shift of votes away from Likud, or to a larger extent toward bourgeois groups independent of the two main formations, such as the slates presented by former Defense Minister Weizman and former Finance Minister Howovits, which together got four deputies. The source of this has to be looked for among the well-off layers that supported the Likud. That is, what seems to have happened is that a part of the supporters of the Liberal faction of the Likud were frightened by the political adventurism (i.e., the Lebanon war) as well as by the economic adventurism of the Herut leaders, and were nervous about the Oriental "mob" that they allied with in order to oust the Labor government. But the Labor Party lost as much on the left as it gained on the right.

The votes lost by the two big formations went mainly to the extremes — on the one hand to the moderate and liberal parties standing to the left of the Labor bloc, and on the other to the activist formations on the extreme right of the Likud.

On the eve of the elections, to the left of the Labor Party there were only the four Communist deputies (elected almost entirely by the votes of the Palestinian population) and three liberal deputies advocating a moderate policy on the Palestinian question. After these last



*The Committee Against the War in Lebanon demonstrates (DR)*

elections, the left flank of Labor almost doubled. In addition to the four deputies of the Democratic Front led by the CP, there are now two deputies for the Progressive List for Peace, a Palestinian nationalist formation joined by the remnants of the Zionist and "a-Zionist" (1) far left, and six deputies for two liberal and moderate parties — Shinui, led by Professor Amnon Rubinstein; and the Movement for Civic Rights, led by Shulamit Aloni. To this must be added the more than 15,000 votes cast for the slate of former left Labor leader Luva Eliav, which fell short of the quota needed to elect a deputy to the Knesset.

### Polarization

Leaving aside the Arab vote, which is motivated very differently than that of the Jewish population, we can say that a significant section of the old Labor voters have lost confidence in the ability of the Peres-Rabin leadership to pursue a policy alternative to that of the Likud, and that a current has emerged that hopes to push the Labor policy to the left by building an independent force with firmer positions, at least as regards the defense of democratic rights and the fight against "excesses" in the occupation policy. This, no doubt, is one of the effects of the growth in recent years of a mass movement against the war and the occupation.

The more dynamic section of Peace Now and the more moderate elements in the reserve soldiers' movement Yesh Gvul voted for Shulamit Aloni's party, which had Reserve Colonel Baron, a prominent leader of Peace Now, second on its slate; and for Luva Eliav. This crystallization of a current to the left of the Labor bloc was matched by the emergence of one of the opposite sort to the right of the Likud.

For reasons similar to those that impelled a part of the Labor voters to shift to the left of the party, a section of the rightist voters wanted to establish an independent position, while insisting that they considered themselves an integral part of the "National Camp" led by the Likud. "Voting for the Likud means voting both for good patriots and for the opportunists of the Liberal Party," was what the T'hiya-Tsomet party led by Professor Neman and former chief of staff Eitan argued. "Voting for us means voting 100% for Eretz Israel [the land of Israel]."

With five deputies for the T'hiya-Tsomet, two for the far right religious party Matsad, and one for the fascist grouplet of Meir Kahane, the activist wing of the Zionist right made a breakthrough. These results are all the more significant because among the youth (e.g., the army vote), the rightists got on the average double the score that they achieved among the electorate as a whole.

The sort of issues around which the most determined section of the rightist voters are closing ranks are support for intensive colonization of the occupied territories, toughness against the Palestinian population, and an offensive policy against the Arab countries. Moreover, the public support of these extreme rightist parties for various Jewish-settler terrorist networks leaves no doubt about how seriously their declarations have to be taken.

In this respect, while the election of the fascist Kahane, who campaigned around openly racist slogans calling for the expulsion of the Palestinians from

1. "a-Zionist" is the term adopted by those who do not want to either oppose or support Zionism. — IV.

## The left - missed opportunities

Given the spectacular growth of the antiwar movement following the invasion of Lebanon and the process of radicalization in which this movement was caught up, when early elections were announced it was the duty of the left forces standing outside the national consensus to overcome their divisions and offer a common political answer to the thousands of men and women who had broken in practice with the Zionist parties and with the policy of national union.

As soon as the elections were called, the Revolutionary Communist League (section of the Fourth International in the Israeli state) and some activists independent of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality appealed to all the forces on the left to form an electoral slate around a platform combining the demands of the militant wing of the movement against the war and occupation. These included immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon, withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967, dismantling of the settlements, recognition of the PLO, and support for the formation of a Palestinian State in the territories occupied by Israel. These demands were the common denominator of the entire Israeli left and the Palestinian national movement and could have served as a program for bringing together left forces and Palestinian national forces in a coalition that could have attracted the votes of the thousands of activists breaking from the traditional Zionist parties.

The anti-Communism of some of the forces involved and the determination of the CP to maintain its dominance at cost over any slate formed wrecked the attempt to achieve unity and resulted in the loss of an unprecedented opportunity for the left to make a breakthrough into the Jewish electorate. A not inconsiderable part of this potential vote went to the slates of Shulamit Aloni and Luva Eliav.

Once it became clear that a united slate was not in the cards, and that the CP would put forward its own program in the framework of the Democratic Front, the RCL took up the project of forming a slate uniting all the revolutionary forces around a clearly anti-Zionist program. In fact, at that point an independent slate standing simply on a platform of democratic demands could only appear to be a sectarian and divisive maneuver. Against the CP's reformist program, which presents withdrawal from the occupied territories as the final solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the anti-Zionist left had to offer a programmatic alternative. This was a particularly urgent task since thousands of activists in the national movement and the antiwar movement were beginning to understand that without challenging the very bases of the Zionist regime and society peace and security were only a dream.

It was possible to draw up rapidly a common program representing the RCL, the left wing of the Sons of the Village [a Palestinian nationalist formation], and Jewish and Arab anti-Zionist activists. On the basis of such a program for de-Zionizing Israeli society, the formation of an anti-Zionist revolutionary slate could have been announced.

However, nationalist pressures on the Sons of the Village pushed these forces to join a new Arab organization that was formed in Nazareth around non-Communist Democratic Front leaders there who thought that they saw the opportunity for the first time to form a "pure" Palestinian nationalist organization in Israel. Such a new slate had a chance to make a real breakthrough among the Palestinian voters.

After trying in vain to outlaw this slate, on the basis of the principle that the Zionist state could not accept the legal existence of an Arab nationalist party, the Board of Elections had to allow the Progressive List for Peace to run in the elections, in particular because it included personalities from the Zionist and a-Zionist far left. A not inconsiderable section of the Palestinian revolutionary militants decided to back the Progressive List, and this put an end to the project of a revolutionary slate.

With the emergence of the Progressive List, all of the left and the national movement was to polarize around this formation and the CP's Democratic Front. While the CP held the mass support it managed previously to win among the Palestinian working masses, the Progressive List gained an influence among the Palestinian petty bourgeoisie, including both radical and moderate factions, as well as attracting a number of Jewish militants who had radicalized in the framework of the movement against the war in Lebanon. This was by no means an insignificant development, since the Progressive List was portrayed by the government and the media, with some justice, as the expression of the PLO in Israel.

With respect to program, the two left slates were absolutely identical, both representing a coalition between the Palestinian national movement and the most radicalized fringe of the Jewish left, and both openly identified themselves with the PLO and its central leader, Yasser Arafat.

In view of their reformist program and the insistence that both slates put on their support for the existence of the state of Israel, the LCR could not join either one of these two groupings. It therefore campaigned for a vote against the national consensus and against the war and occupation, that is for a vote for either of the two formations standing outside the Zionist camp. This position got a favorable response from some critical activists close to the CP and various national currents. As a result, the RCL today has a special responsibility in initiatives aimed at uniting the left forces.

In fact, the election campaign gave rise to very grave conflicts between the two slates, which accused each other of every possible or imaginable betrayal. On the one hand, the CP cannot accept the loss of its monopoly in the national movement (it even refused to sign an agreement for the division of excess votes (1) with the Progressive List, and this decision cost it hundreds of votes and the loss of a substantial part of the radical Jews who supported it at the start). On the other hand, the Progressive List is a very heterogeneous movement and was not discriminating about its choice of weapons. It did not hesitate to accuse the CP of being a "Jewish" organization, or, to the contrary, of being a current outside the context of Israeli reality.

It is essential today to get these mutual attacks stopped and to build a united front of the left. In fact there is no programmatic difference between these two formations (both have just announced that they will support a Labor government "against the Likud"). This is the central task that the RCL members are taking up today.

1. According to the Israeli system of proportional representation, parties can give what votes they receive over the quota required to elect other parties as second preference votes. — IV.

their homeland shocked local public opinion, the problem goes far beyond Kahane. That is, there is growing support for a tough colonialist policy. This current is based both in the power structures, in the army and the military and civilian administration of the occupied territories, and in semilegal, semi-clandestine paramilitary formations.

The growing polarization of Israeli political life is no more than a reflection of the impasse of the policy of consensus

around which the Likud and Labor are fundamentally united and whose most flagrant expression has been the Lebanon war. Despite the serious political and military setbacks it has suffered, the Palestinian movement remains a factor in Middle Eastern politics that cannot be gotten around. Facing it, there is less and less room between going for double or nothing, toward a general, more and more bloody conflict with all the peoples in the region — with all that this involves in

terms of human lives, lower standards of living — and the militarization of the society, or a radical turn toward the Palestinian people and their struggle for national liberation, which ultimately means putting in question the Zionist project as a whole.

The 700,000 Palestinians with Israeli citizenship do not count for much in the four years between elections. But with the approach of elections, the general staffs of the parties remember that they

represent a far from negligible reservoir of votes, one that can provide 12 seats.

Up until 1977, about two thirds of the Palestinian population voted directly for Zionist formations, or for Arab parties set up by the Labor Party administration. Repression and patronage practices considerably narrowed the possibilities for independent expression of Palestinian people. The banning of all nationalist political formations made the Israeli Communist Party the only means through which the Palestinians in Israel could express their rejection of their national oppression.

### The weight of the PLO

The impact of the Palestinian national liberation struggle and of the resistance organizations on the Palestinian minority was revealed in a spectacular way by the general strike and the mobilizations for the Day of the Land in March 1976. (2) A year later, the Israeli Communist Party set up the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality. In this front around its reformist program and under its total control, the CP managed to bring together a broad section of the Palestinian national movement, including both notables formerly linked to the Zionist parties and nationalist currents strongly influenced by the PLO, along with some Jewish democratic elements. In the 1977 elections, the Front got more than 50% of the Arab vote.

However, this electoral success, which was simply the reflection of the radicalization of the Palestinian population of Israel (the "Palestinianization of the Israeli Arabs," as the Israeli press put it) was very quickly worn out by the CP bureaucracy. Its hesitations, on the one hand, and its authoritarian and bureaucratic maneuvers, on the other, provoked desertions to the right and to the left. In the 1981 elections, the Front lost more than 20% of its vote and one deputy. Some of its former supporters went back to the Labor Party's patronage machine. Others preferred to abstain.

The most recent elections showed further erosion in the electoral support for the Democratic Front. It managed to hold on to its four seats, but it dropped below 35% of the vote of the Palestinian population. However, this time the votes it lost were not lost to the national movement. A new slate, made up in large part of moderate and radical nationalist activists who had left the Democratic Front over the last five years, won two seats. The some 37,000 votes for the Palestinian population cast for the Progressive Slate reflected a not inconsiderable current in the Palestinian national movement in Israel that rejects the domination of the Communist Party.

This current includes some who are looking for genuine representation of the Palestinian nation, others who regard the CP as too extremist, and still others who, to the contrary, think that the Communist Party is not nationalist enough and



Most of the Peace Now movement supported Progressive List (DR)

that it insists too much on its Israeli patriotism.

But over and above all such distinctions, 110,000 Palestinian votes (52.1% of the total) were cast for the two non-Zionist slates. This shows that the drop in the previous elections reflected more of a rejection of the CP's policy than a lowering of the national consciousness of the Palestinians in Israel.

The standoff between the Likud and Labor points to a deepening of the crisis of leadership in the Zionist state. There are two broad possibilities. One of the two major formations may manage to buy the support of several of the smaller ones by paying an exorbitant price and thereby gain a majority of two to six seats. In that case, we can expect to see a government paralyzed by trying to accommodate formations with contradictory interests. Or the two big parties may decide to combine in a government of national unity. In that case, they would have to decide explicitly not to take any steps that might offer a solution to the political and economic crisis.

In either case, in the long run new elections seem to be the only way out of the constitutional impasse in which the state of Israel finds itself. But first the electoral law will have to be changed so as to reduce the dependency of the big parties on the small formations.

The relative paralysis of government and the political polarization indicate that a new flareup of political and social struggles is ahead in Israel, but this is on the condition that the Palestinian national movement and the PLO can overcome the crisis that they also are going through and give a new impetus to the liberation struggles. Against a national consensus in which fundamentally Labor, the Likud and the activist far right are united behind the same strategy of war and colonization, only an alliance of the Israeli left with a determined and fighting Palestinian movement can offer a credible perspective for victory.

The Israeli left can bring little weight to bear against the activist right, which is supported to varying degrees by the ruling parties unless it can base itself on a mobilization of the Palestinian masses in Israel itself and in the occupied territories. If, on the other hand, an alliance develops between progressive Jews and the Palestinian movement, it will be possible not only to counter the fascist gangs of Kahane and the T'hiya but also to give new impetus to the fight against the occupation and thereby further deepen the structural crisis that is corroding the Zionist state.

2. Annual demonstrations celebrating the claim of the Palestinian people to their ancestral lands. — IV.

# The positions of the Progressive List for Peace

The following interview was given to Gerry Foley in Tel Aviv on August 22 by Adam Keller, a spokesperson of the Progressive List for Peace and also editor of *The Other Israel*, the bulletin of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (P. O. Box 956, Tel Aviv, Israel, 61008). The interviewee has not been able to review the edited text of the interview, which has had to be shortened for space reasons.

*Question. What is your assessment of the general election results?*

*Answer.* From my own corner of the field, I'm quite pleased. We got two seats, which is a good showing for a new list; one that was set up only two months before the elections. I think it is important, moreover, that we did not get these seats at the expense of the Communist Party but at the expense of Labor. Therefore, the vote that we got represents a substantial shift to the left.

I think the Labor Party deserved this lesson because they are responsible for much of the discrimination against the Arabs in Israel. Even in this election they showed contempt for the Arab voters. They had promised to have three Arab candidates on their slate, and then because of demands from other sections of the party pushing their own candidates, they cut this down to one. I'm glad that the Arab voters showed contempt in return.

Moreover, I think our success is having a big impact on the Arabs who remain in the Labor Party. The one Arab Knesset member who did get elected has already made some demands. He has said that his vote for a Labor government is not automatic. He's making some demands for more equality for the Arabs. This is a real revolution because the Arabs of the Labor Party used to be the most subservient quislings imaginable.

The shift of votes away from Labor to the two small liberal parties, the Civil Rights Movement and Shinui [Change] also represents a definite shift to the left. In conventional terms you would say that a shift from a Social Democratic Party to a center party was a shift to the right. But in Israeli terms, a shift from the Labor Party to Shinui and much more to the Civil Rights Movement is definitely a shift to the left or a more dovish line and a protest against the right-wing line Labor put forward in these elections.

*Q. Does that mean that you think the relative defeat of the Labor Party was a good thing?*

*A.* No. I hoped that the Labor Party would get a clear majority for creating a government. Of course, I'm not in love with Labor but everyone but the most dogmatic people have to admit that there is a definite difference between the two

big parties. A victory for Labor would have been a definite shift in the right direction and opened up the possibility for pressuring the Labor Party to go further than its intentions.

*Q. What's your evaluation of the vote for the Likud?*

*A.* It lost about 15% of its vote, seven seats. About half of the lost votes went to the extreme right. The T'hiya [Renaissance] Party increased its seats from three to five. There was also a qualitative change within the party. With all their chauvinism, the former leaders of the T'hiya tried at least to maintain some respectability, to stay within the rules of the parliamentary game. But the new leader Rafael Eitan, or "Raful," as he is called, displays an open contempt for any notion of restraint.

You might say that the T'hiya is just taking the mask off. But in politics, it is better if there is a political climate that forces extreme right people to put on masks. If they feel free to unmask, the climate is obviously changing in an unfavorable direction.

*Q. What about the vote for Rabbi Kahane?*

*A.* That represents a big escalation of the turn to the right. This is the first openly racist party represented in the Knesset. What I said about Raful goes ten times more for Kahane. One of his election slogans was "Kahane says what everyone is thinking but not saying." The truth is that he has a big electoral potential. I would guess that if everyone who thinks like him had voted for him, he would have got about ten seats or even more.

Up until now, it has not been the thing to do even for extreme right-wing people to say the sort of things Kahane did. For example, Neman, the minister of science from the T'hiya Party, was once asked what he thought about Kahane's idea of expelling all the Arabs. His answer was that there are some things that should be done but should not be talked about.

The vote for the Morasha Party also represents a shift to the right. This is a splitoff from the National Religious Party. The NRP is a right-wing party, but it still has a very big opportunist wing

that is willing to go along with any government so long as they get a share of the spoils. There is even a small dovish wing. The breakaway of the Morasha [Tradition] Party is a further stage in the degeneration of this current. In the 1950s, it had a strong left wing. For example, in the 1954 party congress, there was strong pressure for a resolution calling for Israeli neutrality between East and West.

The most alarming thing about the rise of Kahane is not just that he got into the Knesset but the kind of support he has got. It is quite obvious that most of his voters are oriental Jews, a large part of them either unemployed workers or workers afraid of losing their jobs. This is a textbook example of the rise of fascism. You have the unemployed thinking that the Arabs are taking their jobs and so the solution is to expel the Arabs. Kahane is playing to this and it is working. So, we have not just a fascist in the Knesset but the beginnings of a popular movement.

*Q. If you characterize Kahane's vote as fascist, what about the oriental Jews who voted for Likud and its satellite parties?*

*A.* Some of the orientals also voted for Weizman, which is a shift in the opposite direction.

*Q. What's your position on the negotiations underway for the formation of the new government?*

*A.* Our position is that the Likud should be thrown out of power. This is the fundamental thing. It should be thrown out completely; we are against a National Unity Government, which we call a "National Disaster Government."



Protest against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and

Q. Does that mean that you are prepared to throw your votes behind a Labor government?

A. We want to help the formation of a Labor government. At the same time, we don't want to become a satellite of Labor, because we don't share its political positions. We want a Labor government not because it would be a good thing but because it would be a lesser evil. So, our position is that we would be willing to support a Labor government from the outside but not to join it. Moreover, we would not support such a government without political concessions in return.

It should be emphasized that the very fact of forming a government dependent on the votes of the Progressive List and Hadash [the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, which is dominated by the CP; in Hebrew the acronym also means "New"] would represent a very radical step to the left for the Labor Party. This is because one of the cardinal principles of Israeli political life until now has been that the Arabs are outsiders. Formally they are citizens and can vote but when they vote for recognizably Arab parties and not for the big Jewish parties their vote shouldn't be allowed to influence big political decisions such as forming a government.

This policy was instituted by Ben Gurion. It is a traditional bipartisan policy, and if the Labor Party were prepared to break it, it would be violating a major taboo in Israeli politics. It would come under fierce attack from the right.

Personally, I have big doubts that the Labor leaders are prepared to take such a radical step, also because they are the inheritors of this racist principle. But I hope it will happen. There are some indications that the Labor Party has been

changing its traditional attitude.

One was the election of the Israeli president, who is chosen by the Knesset. Labor accepted the votes of the Communist Party in order to get its candidate, Herzog, elected. Labor also opposed an attempt to get "Ha-Tikvah," the Zionist anthem officially adopted as the national anthem of Israel, which would be a direct affront to the Arab people. A Likud backbencher introduced a bill calling for this as a way of getting some cheap publicity. It also called for a one-year prison sentence for anyone showing disrespect to the anthem. I am sure that if this bill had come up five or ten years ago, Labor would have voted for it.

Another factor is Labor's opportunistic motivation. They are willing to do almost anything to get back into power. You have to realize that people like Peres and Rabin really feel that they have a God-given right to rule. The Labor Party is very much like an old aristocracy that has been overthrown and is waiting for a restoration. [It is the party of the European Jews who have dominated the Zionist institutions from the beginning.]

In the election campaign, they used the most right-wing slogans they could think of, because they thought that the floating vote was rightist, and since they wanted to attract the floating vote, they tried to look as right wing as possible. So, I think that out of the same opportunism they may also be willing to make concessions to the left.

Q. What are the perspectives of the Progressive List now after the elections? Do you propose to remain a coalition or try to form a new party?

A. At present, the inclination is to remain a coalition because there are many political tendencies both among the Arabs and Jews who supported the list. Among the Jews, we have Zionists, anti-Zionists and non-Zionists, among whom I include myself. On the Arab side, the support for the list has really become a sort of popular movement, including every Arab who felt nationalist, felt he couldn't possibly vote for one of the big parties, and who for one reason or another — and there were a large variety of them — did not want to vote for the Communist Party.

Q. What do you think these reasons were?

A. Well, you have some intellectuals who disapprove of Rakakh [the CP] because of its adherence to the Soviet line. They are sort of independent socialists. Then you have a much larger number who object to Rakakh because it is a very bureaucratized party, really sort of a shadow establishment, especially in places like Nazareth [the biggest Arab town in Israel]. It used the municipalities that it controls as power structures in the most conventional way. It puts its people on the payroll. It has set up a considerable apparatus of its own. And it gets hundreds of scholarships for Arab students in Moscow and East Germany and so on.

Of course, spreading education among the Arabs is all right. But what is not so all right is that they use this as sort of a reward for people who are loyal to the party. It is a very strong incentive for a young man to know that if he is loyal to the party, he will get to study in Moscow.

Moreover, the Rakakh leadership has not changed in more than three decades. Meir Vilner, their No. 1 man, is a signatory to the Israeli declaration of independence. Their No. 2 man, Taufik Tubi, was involved in the negotiations between the Arab population of Haifa and the Israeli military authorities in 1948. So, it is a completely unchanging structure and many people object to it even for not very ideological reasons. Young men want a young party, not an old, ossified one. Some people were unhappy that Talfik Zayad, the mayor of Nazareth, has remained No. 4. He is the party's most popular figure. Many people would have like to see him at the head of the slate.

There is also another issue, which personally I don't like very much. A lot of Arabs say that they are not happy with the fact that Rakakh in principle puts a Jew at the head of the slate every time and that their votes go for putting Jews into the Knesset. I don't like this motivation, but such people came to our list. What they really wanted was a pure Arab party. Before our list was formed, there was a strong struggle among the Arab groups and a strong tendency toward establishing a pure Arab party.

If the Arabs in Israel want to establish an Arab nationalist party, I would support their right to do so to the best of my ability. But I think that the conditions in Israel require a joint struggle, an Arab-Jewish struggle. There were many Arabs who also thought so, and they prevailed. Some of the Arabs who were for an Arab party withdrew completely. Others accepted the situation and came to join the list.

Q. Does this Arab nationalist tendency still exist?

A. I don't think it is organized as a formal tendency, but there are still such people. I hear of them from time to time. But in general, they accept the present situation, especially since the value of Jewish-Arab partnership proved itself in the survival of the list. You know that there was an attempt to outlaw it. I think it is almost certain that a pure Arab list without Jews would not have gotten through the obstacles.

Q. What other tendencies exist among the Arabs supporting the list?

A. There is an Islamic religious tendency. They have caused us some trouble. For example, they prevented us from putting a point on abortion in the list's program. I'm not very much in love with this kind of people. But they are a force that can't be ignored. I think that it is much better that they are part of a list like ours and not forming some quasi-Khomeinist group.



Golan Heights in June 1984 (DR)

Q. I noticed in the news conference that Talfik Zayad gave on the occasion of the annual work camp in Nazareth that he made a very sharp attack on local supporters of the Progressive List.

A. The Communist Party's attitude was very hostile from the start, and in Nazareth, this attitude goes back further. One of the major components of our list was the Progressive Movement of Nazareth, which split from the Communist Party-controlled Democratic Front in 1981. It contested the elections and got about 20% of the vote.

On the other hand, the list did not get this vote in Nazareth at the expense of the Communist Party but at the expense of Labor. The former Labor representative was a real quisling. He has now completely disappeared from the political scene. So, there is no good reason for the hostility.

One factor is the history of the split. Another is that the Communist Party regards the Arabs in Israel as their fief. It even tends to say that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestinian people outside the borders of Israel and the Democratic Front is the sole representative inside the borders.

The CP has the advantage of having the only Arab daily in Israel not controlled by the government, *Al-Ittihad*. During the elections, it devoted the bulk of its space to attacking us. It attacked us as Zionist agents, war criminals, agents of the local people most hated by the Arabs.

To be honest, I must say that some of our own people also made attacks, some of which I did not like. But I can honestly say that it was Rakakh that started this type of thing. We were afraid that something like this might happen, and so when we announced the formation of our list, we called on Rakakh to sign a sort of non-aggression pact. They did not accept this. Later, we asked them to sign a surplus vote agreement, so that on the basis of the votes over the quota to elect according to the proportional representation system either they or we could get an extra seat. Again they refused.

Q. You say *Al-Ittihad* is the only Arabic daily independent of the government. Does the Progressive List have an Arabic publication of its own?

A. We have a publication in Nazareth, a weekly whose name means "Solidarity" in Arabic. Its circulation increased by 200% during the elections, and so it was able to increase its frequency from fortnightly to weekly.

Q. What solution do you propose to the Palestinian problem?

A. The creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza strip with its capital in east Jerusalem and probably headed by the PLO with Yasser Arafat as premier. We are for negotiations with the PLO leading up to this goal. We are for mutual recognition of the state of Israel and the PLO.

We regard the mutual part as very important because of the not unjustified fears both peoples have of the other. Now to an outsider it might seem ridiculous to say that the Israeli people fear the Palestinians. An outside observer would say that Israel is the greatest military power in the Middle East, and the Palestinians are a homeless people without any state of their own. So why should the Israelis fear them?

But it has to be emphasized, especially for the readers of *International Viewpoint*, that these fears are very real and that when a subjective feeling is held by a whole people it becomes a very important objective fact.

First of all there is the memory of the Holocaust, which is deeply rooted in the consciousness of every Israeli, even those who are not from Europe. And there is more than the Holocaust; there are two thousand years of persecutions. Most Israelis have heard stories from their parents or grandparents about some kind of anti-Semitic persecution. The kind of story differs according to the parents. For some, it is slights and curses on the streets of the towns where they were born. From others it is the story of Auschwitz. There is a very strong paranoia, a feeling that everyone is against us, everyone hates us, everyone wants to kill us, and nobody will help us unless we help ourselves, unless we are strong.

This attitude is reinforced by every attack carried out by Palestinians against civilians. I can give you an example. About ten years ago, there was an attack in a town in the north in which a four-year old girl was kidnapped. When the Palestinians were cornered, they smashed the head of the child against a rock. This story has gone into Israeli consciousness. I have seen it raised in hundreds of arguments. They say, "How can we talk with people like this; they are just like the Nazis, or like the Ukrainians, or a thousand other devils?"

Another fact is the narrowness of Israel in its pre-1967 borders. In the central region, where we are now, the distance between the Jordanian border and the sea was not more than 15 or 20 kilometers.

Moreover, everyone knows that most of the state of Israel was once Arab. So every time when you say you want to return the West Bank, they will say, "Why just the West Bank, why not return this place we're standing on too." The right-wing people can say since everything is Arab land and we can't return everything, then we should not return anything. To the contrary, we have to continue to fight the Arabs and take more land because that's the way things are.

So, to convince the Israeli people that peace is possible and that coexistence with the Palestinians is possible, they have to be convinced that the Palestinians do not want everything back.

What I'm driving at is that while I'm not in love with the pre-1967 borders, they have come to represent the idea of

compromise, of coexistence, of Israelis recognizing the national rights of Palestinians and vice versa. I think that under the present conditions, this is the only concrete form that a compromise solution can take.

Q. Do you have any immediate program for opposing the superexploitation of Arab workers from the West Bank in Israel?

A. We are thinking about devoting more effort to this question. But you run into some contradictions that are hard to untangle. For example, if you want the workers from the occupied territories to enjoy protection, you should demand that they be accepted as full members in the trade unions. But making West Bank workers full members of the Israeli trade unions is an obvious act of annexation.

Q. What about the defense of the democratic rights of the Arabs who find themselves under Israeli rule?

A. Our program makes an absolute distinction between the Arabs in Israel and the occupied territories. The Arabs in the occupied territories are the future citizens of the Palestinian state. Everything that Israel is doing there is ipso facto wrong, because Israel shouldn't be there at all. Of course our struggle against the occupation includes defending people who in one way or the other are being victimized by the occupation.

The Arabs who are citizens of Israel within its pre-1967 borders are in a different category because they are citizens of Israel and by our program should remain citizens of Israel. So, our program is quite detailed on this. We call for repealing all the laws that discriminate in one way or another against the Arabs.

Q. What about economic demands?

A. I should make it clear that the left in Israel has no real base among the working class. It is composed mainly of intellectuals, upper-middle-class professional people and Kibbutzniks [collective farm members who form an elite in Israel]. For this reason it is very small, because you can't have a mass party without the working class.

The Israeli section of the Fourth International are very optimistic about converting the working class sooner or later. I must say that I am much more pessimistic. I continue to hope. But the fact is that the fight against the occupation, and the struggle before 1967 against the military rule imposed on the Arabs, and all the democratic struggles have been fought by intellectuals, upper-middle-class people, and Kibbutzniks, and the working class has been at best neutral at worst hostile. Even some things that seemed promising, such as the Black Panthers [a movement of poor oriental Jews] did not live up to their promise. I have a deep appreciation of people like Meir here [an RCL leader] who work in factories. I'm just not optimistic. ■



## Behind the Punjab crisis

The Golden Temple at Amritsar in Punjab is the most prominent symbol of the Sikh faith. More recently it had been associated with Sikh extremism, being used as a sanctuary and arms dump.

In early June, the Gandhi regime used the Indian Army to storm the Golden Temple complex and other Sikh shrines-turned-fortresses. The whole state of Punjab was insulated and immobilised. Emergency measures were imposed.

Extremists were routed. They are still being hounded from Punjab. There were Sikh deserters from the army at several places in India. They were captured.

But this was a purely military solution to what is basically a socio-economic and political problem. The Sikh community is deeply troubled. The leadership of the Akali Dal [the traditional Sikh political party] has been rounded up; so, for the time being, there are no avenues for negotiation.

There are no signs yet from any quarters of a correct grasp of and approach to the Punjab problem.

A class analysis of the Punjab problem — albeit inadequate — suggests that a lasting solution is not possible within the present backward capitalist system of social relations in India.

Sharad JHAVERI

The religious factor has loomed large in the society and politics of the Punjab. In recent times, the mixture of the Sikh religion and politics has proved highly explosive. As a result, communalism is on the rise and at a premium in politics, while there has been a considerable erosion of secular ideals. This is due to the fact that different religious communities have differential access to the economic opportunities that exist.

The overwhelming majority of the population of Punjab belongs to the two main religious categories of the Hindus and the Sikhs. Hindus are a minority and Sikhs preponderate in rural areas, while Hindus outnumber them in the urban areas. Different districts of Punjab have a highly uneven religious composition. While Gurdaspur, Jullundar and Hoshiarpur are Hindu majority areas; Bhatinda, Amritsar, Sangrur, Ludhiana, Ferozpur, and Kapurthala have pronounced Sikh majorities compared with Rapar and Patiala. (1)

Caste is an influential factor in the choice of occupation. The Hindu and Sikh religions as such do not bring any bias over the choice of occupation for their followers.

The Sikh castes are overrepresented in agriculture in Punjab, and the Hindus are overrepresented in trade and services. Whatever economic growth has occurred in Punjab, it has been directed through an inegalitarian social system. This unbalanced distribution of the Sikh and Hindu populations has had a big impact on communal tensions and

the communalisation of politics in Punjab.

The uneven development of capitalism has further exacerbated the situation. Despite having the highest per capita income in India, Punjab is still predominantly an agricultural state. The Green Revolution modernised Punjab agriculture along modern capitalist lines. Both agriculture and trade have grown enormously, and are very much linked together. Most agricultural outputs and inputs have to pass through the trade channels.

### The class differentiations

The Hindus are dominant in the trade sector. Even where Sikhs are active in trade in certain urban areas, it is on a lower scale. Thus, the result is a clash of interests between the economic interests between the dominant castes of the two major religious categories. The economic interests of the Sikh agricultural castes in rural areas come into conflict with those of the Hindu trading castes in the urban areas.

Even among the Sikh peasantry, the rise of a stratum of rich Jat peasants and their concentration in certain areas is more marked. They benefited the most from the Green Revolution. They are the capitalist farmers. Agrarian production has assumed the form of commodity production. As a result, the degree of integration with the market has become greater.

The capitalist development of agriculture has required better marketing facilities, secured markets, more and

easier credit, remunerative prices, etc.; hence the character of demands of the Anandpur Sahib resolution. (2)

There is another class aspect to this situation. Capitalist Sikh farmers have concentrated the surplus that can be invested into their own hands. Part of this has been used to develop agribusiness in Punjab. There is, however, still a large surplus seeking an investment outlet. Trade is closed to them because of the entrenched Hindu interest.

What about industry? Punjab lags behind in industrial development. There is virtually no large-scale industry. What industry there is is small-scale and capital intensive. There is no diversification of products. The three major production centres are Ludhiana, Amritsar and Jullundur, where woollen textiles, hosiery, cotton textiles, bicycles and spare parts, agricultural implements and machine tools, sports goods and rerolled steel are produced.

These capital-intensive and small-scale industries do not offer employment opportunities to the unemployed rural Sikh youths who flock to the urban areas in search of jobs. At the same time, nor do they offer many prospects to the rich Sikh capitalist farmers for investment of their surplus.

The rich Punjabi agrarian bourgeoisie cannot stand competition on an all-India scale with the highly monopolistic and well-entrenched Indian industrial bourgeoisie. At New Delhi [seat of government], this layer has control over all aspects of industrial development such as industrial licensing, capital issues control, location of new industries, market mechanisms, etc. Hence, the conflict between the capitalist Sikhs, especially the Jat peasantry of Punjab, and the Indian industrial bourgeoisie elsewhere. This takes the form of a struggle by the Sikhs against New Delhi, a communal form, and a question of Centre-state relations — which becomes a question of Sikh autonomy and ultimately of an independent Sikh state.

It is obvious that, in the communalisation of the Punjab problem, the real class contradictions and realities are blurred and blunted. The absence of a sizeable chunk of the modern, urban, cosmopolitan, industrial urban proletariat and the consequent lack of a clear class and left alternative and development of the class struggle have also contributed their portion of the Punjab crisis.

The current Punjab crisis is the outcome of uneven capitalist development of Punjab, which has occurred within the inegalitarian caste and class structure existing there. Nowhere have the interests of the really exploited workers, both Hindus and Sikhs, been taken into account.

1. 'Economy, Caste, Religion and Population Distribution, An Analysis of Communal Tension in Punjab' by Victor S. D'Souza in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XVII, No 19, May 18, 1982.

2. A resolution outlining the demands of the Sikhs. See below (footnote 5) for further reference.

The left parties, particularly the two major Stalinist formations the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)), were rendered politically ineffective and did not develop a clear view of the Punjab crisis.

This is primarily because of their electoralist politics. Just like the bourgeois parties, both the CPI and the CPI (M) have used communalism for short-term electoral gains. At one time or another, they have joined with the Akali Dal in the Punjab, and other communalist parties and groups on an all-India level. Their pursuance of opportunist communal policies for electoral purposes has prevented them from fighting communalism effectively, despite their secular stance programmatically and ideologically.

One searches in vain in their writings and resolutions for an adequate class analysis of underlying causes of the rise of communalism in Punjab and for an in-depth study of the class realities behind each demand of the Sikh communalists.

As a result of their own failure, their approach has been to blame the Gandhi regime for the eruption of the Punjab crisis. (3) They always regret the failure of talks between the Akalis and the government, and urge the Akalis to differentiate themselves from the extremist Sikhs. (4) That is, in essence they ask the moderate communalists to take their distance from secessionist communalists. Implicitly, this amounts to accepting the political premises of communalism.

They have, of course, opposed the demand for a Khalistan, a separate Sikh state. But they have done this in terms of national unity, the integrity of a nation, etc. and not on the basis of a principled political approach to the question of the Sikhs as a religious minority on an all-India scale, and a religious majority in Punjab.

They have failed to perceive that the communalisation of politics has blurred the edge of class contradictions and the class struggle in Punjab. As a result, in the present situation they were incapable of developing a class movement of the oppressed of both the Sikh and Hindu communities and the migrant workers.

To conclude on this point; the rise of communalism in India and the recent ascendancy of communalist politics in Punjab can also be accounted for by the failure of left politics to develop an alternative to this crisis.

The main political plank of the Akalis has been what is known as the Anandpur Sahib resolution. There are three versions of it. (5) The Akali Dal (Talwandi) version recognises the Sikhs as a nation and stands for a separate Sikh state. So also does another version identified with Kapur Singh. The third version, adopted by Shiromani Ahali Dal on October 16-17, 1973, is more frequently referred to, and is more comprehensive in that it also raises social and economic demands.

Obviously, the demand for a separate Sikh state or Khalistan cannot be sup-



Sikhs in the Golden Temple (DR)

ported because it militates against the so-called national unity or interest. The basis for opposition is that a Sikh state would be based on religion only. It would be a theocratic state. Moreover, it presupposes a unity of social and economic interests among those who follow the Sikh religion.

This unity does not exist. Moreover, Sikhs are not a nationality because religion cannot serve as the basis of a nationality. Punjabis are a nationality, not Sikhs. So, no question of self-determination arises as is mistakenly supposed, even by many on the left.

The main backbone of this demand comes from a regional bourgeois class in Punjab that has to compete with the well-established and well-entrenched national industrial bourgeoisie for the market. This tendency is represented by the National Council of Khalistan and the Dal Khalsa. It has social support from sections of the urban Sikh intelligentsia and unemployed traders and unemployed rural youth and ex-servicemen. (6) The clash of interests between the agrarian bourgeoisie and the 'central' bourgeoisie has added a new dimension.

Furthermore, the Anandpur Sahib resolution does not seek to protect the so-called interests of the 'Sikh community' but rather those of the rich and middle farmer. (7)

For instance, the demand for cheap inputs and modernisation in agriculture will serve the interests of these strata of Sikh peasantry. So also would the demand to consider India as a single food zone benefit only those farmers who have surpluses. Again, only these farmers would benefit from the demand for higher prices for agricultural prices and cash crops.

The resolution argues for the nationalisation of all industry with the exception of agro-based industries. This will benefit the rich farmers.

The resolution envisages that only four areas will remain under control of the central government: defence, foreign affairs, communications, currency. The other subjects would be left to the state. The question of Centre-state relations is also an economic question. The emergent class of capitalist farmers in Punjab perceives a clash of interests with the big industrialists elsewhere.

Thus, none of these demands are meant for the oppressed.

As for the demand to give the city of Chandigarh to Punjab as its capital, this is a just demand. Chandigarh grew up in place of Punjabi-speaking villages, the Haryanvis (people of Haryana) are a minority. The majority speak Punjabi. Chandigarh was built up as the capital of post-Independence Punjab.

In general, the just demands should be raised and supported. At the same time, even though there is no discrimination against Sikhs on the basis of their religion, the slightest infringement of the rights of religious minorities has to be opposed. Again, in general, attempts to communalise Punjab politics in particular and Indian politics in general have to be opposed. This has to be the framework within which every demand of Punjab politics has to be evaluated, from a class point of view.

The army crackdown on the Golden Temple represents a growing trend towards increasing and frequent use of the army in civilian affairs. From communal riots to floods and other natural and social calamities, the army is being increasingly pressed into service by the regime. One more disconcerting feature was the appointment of General Dayal as the governor's adviser in charge of home affairs and justice. Never before has an army officer been made an adviser, much less been given the home affairs portfolio.

The well-known columnist Kuldeep Nayar, writing in his famous column 'Between the Lines' in Bombay's *Free Press Journal* on July 5, 1984, rightly concluded that what the Gandhi regime has done in Punjab is to 'impose martial law without saying so'. According to Nayar, all the obnoxious aspects of the Emergency have been imposed, such as press censorship, denial of civil liberties, etc. And he is right in observing that the wounds of the excesses are not being allowed to heal. ■

3. See speech by CPI (M) representative Harkishan Singh Surjeet in the Upper House (Rajya Sabha) on November 15, 1983, quoted in the CPI (M) newspaper *People's Democracy* on November 27, 1983.

4. See 'Joint Statement on Punjab Tangle' in the CPI newspaper *New Age*, November 14, 1982.

5. For the texts of these three versions see *Punjab Crisis: Context and Trends* by Pramodkumar ManMohan Sharma. Atul Sood and Ashwani Handa. Chandigarh 1984.

6. *Ibid*, page 27.

7. 'Genesis of the Punjab Problem' by P. K. Nujhawan in *Man and Development*, Vol. IV, No 1.

## The May elections were rigged and the opposition divided

A year ago ex-senator Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino was assassinated in the Philippines on his return from exile. This murder was evidently masterminded by people high up in the regime, and carried out by elements in the armed forces. An acute political crisis was opened up, and during the months following 'Ninoy's' death millions of Filipinos demonstrated their opposition to President Marcos in the streets. On the first anniversary of the murder of Benigno Aquino, August 21, 1984, more than one million people again gathered in the heart of Manila, and hundreds of thousands more demonstrated in other towns throughout the country. Through such mass demonstrations, various layers in society were expressing a deep rejection of the presidential dictatorship introduced under martial law in 1972. (1)

These recent demonstrations and the May 14 elections to the National Assembly (Batasang Pambasa) provided an opportunity to assess the development of the crisis and the political forces involved. Faced with the challenge of elections three main political currents emerged; the pro-government current, represented essentially by the candidates of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL, Movement for a New Society), created by President Marcos; the moderate largely pro-American opposition which participated in the elections; and the 'radical' popular opposition which is generally left-wing even revolutionary, and which called for a boycott of the elections on the grounds that they were undemocratic.

It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of the election results. The opposition exposed many fraudulent practices involving electoral registration as well as the counting of votes by the official commission, COMELEC. According to the official results, out of 183 seats up for election, 61 were won by the moderate opposition and 11 by independents. Thanks to a further 17 deputies nominated by Marcos, the KBL was assured 117 of the two hundred seats in the National Assembly. Some 80 per cent of those registered had voted.

Confining oneself to these official results, the political conclusions seem relatively simple. The regime has suffered an indisputable setback, but it still retains a comfortable parliamentary majority and can pride itself on a new electoral legitimacy. The moderate opposition — which before only had 13 seats in the Assembly — gained a significant political victory. On the other hand, the radical opposition, which was calling for a boycott, appears to have been marginalised. A regulated development toward a post-Marcos regime headed by pro-American leaders and isolating the anti-imperialist forces, could now become a possibility. This is just what Washington probably hoped for from these elections.

On closer examination however, it is immediately obvious that the real development of the political relationship of forces is different from what the official results would allow one, at first, to suppose. Moreover, the crisis of the regime, which opened up a year ago, is very far from being resolved, and the dynamic of these mass mobilisations is still very much alive.

Paul PETITJEAN

The May 14 elections were supposed to play a very important role in the search for a solution to the crisis of the regime. The American administration, which is very influential in the Philippines, was anxious that the moderate opposition should get enough seats to make it appear to be the force that could bring a peaceful solution to the crisis. President Marcos knew this and was probably resigned to it. However, before the elections, on a television programme, he ventured to say that the opposition

would not get more than twenty seats. The entire machinery of the powerful ruling party — enjoying the resources of the state, as well as those of the KBL — was mobilised to ensure the control of the elections.

Threats, pressures and acts of terror marked the electoral campaign. Voting is compulsory, and the threat of sanctions against supporters of a boycott is a constant constraint. Several militants who called for a boycott were murdered and others injured, as were members of the moderate opposition. In fact, the election campaign was perhaps the blood-

iest in the history of the Philippines; 384 people were killed in the last week of the campaign, and 109 of those on polling day itself.

After the announcement of the first results, which were more favourable to the opposition, President Marcos could not hide his dismay. He revealed the real way he looked at the elections when he stated that 'the leaders of the KBL must have taken too literally our instructions that the opposition must be allowed to win a little.' (2)

The election results were announced several weeks after the count, and the delay was obviously used 'to correct' results that were unfavourable to the regime. This was particularly obvious in the case of Cebu in the centre of the archipelago, which constitutes a traditional bastion of the opposition. Although the first results there showed a massive victory for the anti-Marcos candidates, the figures announced one week later gave 5 elected for the KBL and one for the opposition. Thousands of demonstrators came together to denounce the electoral fraud, expressing their anger in front of an administrative building. Armed riot police intervened, killing three and injuring eight others.

It is significant that the regime kept its majority in those rural areas where there are no communist guerrillas operating, where the patronage system is strongest, where high-ups in the KBL are most influential and where it was hardest for the opposition to monitor the conduct of the poll. It is also significant that the opposition captured 15 out of the 21 seats in the capital, Manila, despite the exertions of the president's very powerful wife, Imelda Marcos, governor of Greater Manila. More than anywhere else, conditions here combined to ensure the regularity of the vote.

Under pressure of the crisis, divisions appeared within the government and the KBL themselves. The prime minister, Cesar Virata, who had the support of the World Bank, was overtly criticised by businessmen around Marcos. In the Council of State, rivalry between generals Ver and Ramos was reinforced.

In this context Marcos has been able to maintain, even reinforce, his personal presidential powers. Before the election he claimed for himself the right to nominate 17 members of the National Assembly in addition to the 183 elected.

Generally speaking, the October Constitutional Amendment No. 6 gave Marcos the power to legislate by decree, if he feels that the National Assembly 'fails or is unable to act adequately on any matter that for any reason in his judgement requires immediate action'.

It is therefore in this context of elections that were neither free nor

1. For a general analysis of this crisis see *International Viewpoint*, Nos. 37, October 3, 1983; 38, October 17, 1983; 49, March 26, 1984.

2. Quoted in *Solidaridad II*, News Supplement, June 1984, p. 1.

democratic and in the framework of a regime with a presidential dictator that the May 14 election results must be assessed. The polls confirm that a significant proportion of the population went into opposition to the president after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, and that they are still. But to understand how this mass opposition has manifested itself both through the success of the militant campaign for a boycott and in the electoral success of the candidates of the United Nationalist Democratic Organisation (UNIDO) and the Philippine Democratic Party — Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban), it is necessary to re-examine what unites and divides the anti-Marcos forces, as well as the development of American policy in the Philippines. (3)

The JAJA was run by people with progressive sympathies, but according to ex-senator Jose Diokno, the president of its executive committee, it drew together 85 organisations, and through them 'several million people.' (4) The JAJA is organised around seven basic democratic demands, and has played the role of rousing and politicising large sections of the urban population.

KOMPIL is essentially a middle-class organisation whose centre of gravity is less on the radical side. In January 1984 they symbolically elected a council of 15 members as an alternative to the Marcos government. Among them was Horacio Morales, formerly a top civil servant and now serving a prison sentence for being president of the underground

visionally avoided and unity re-established though a campaign called 'Boycott unless....' This made participation in the elections conditional on the realisation of six basic democratic demands including the freeing of political prisoners and the lifting of the special powers of the president.

The break-up of the united opposition occurred anyway when the 'Boycott unless...' campaign came to a conclusion on St. Valentine's day three months before the May 14 elections. Basically, the regime rejected the six democratic demands put forward by the united opposition.

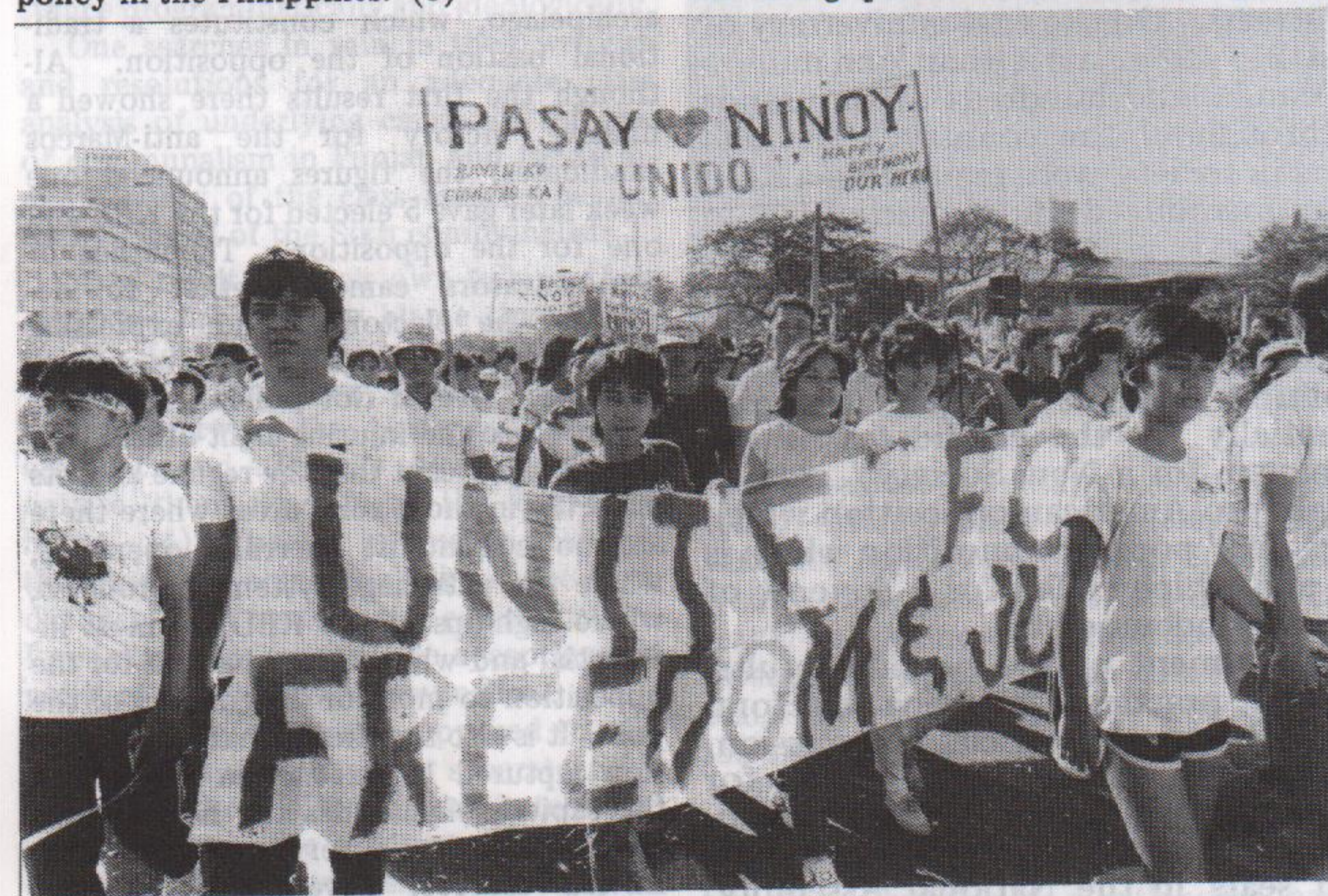
At a mass rally organised in the form of a night-long vigil, the popular, anti-imperialist revolutionary and radical democratic sections of the opposition announced the opening of their campaign for a boycott. But in the days that followed the vast majority of the bourgeois formations in the traditional opposition, mainly organised in UNIDO, opted for participation in the elections.

The Marcos regime and, with it, Washington, had thus scored a point, with the opposition henceforth fighting amongst themselves. The chaff could now be separated from the grain, or the pro-American opposition forces from the anti-imperialists. It was precisely with this in mind that the decision to hold parliamentary elections had been taken in the first place.

The opposition divided on this issue for some important reasons. The split ran vertically along social and political lines. Basically, the vast majority of the traditional bourgeois opposition groups, business people from the financial centre of Makati (the 'city' area of Manila) and Aquino's widow 'Cory', Corazon, supported participation in the elections.

Supporters of the boycott included — apart from Butz, Aquino's brother (himself a businessman) and a traditional politician like ex-senator Manglapus, as well as the leaders of the Liberal Party in exile in the US — the Nationalist Alliance; the mass organisations, such as the independent unions and the popular associations; nationalist leaders and democrats, such as Jose Diokno; and the progressive formations within the intellectual milieu, like the Movement for National Sovereignty and Democracy (KAAKBAY). (6)

It is possible to identify four basic differences that explain the deep division which opened up inside the opposition



Mass commemoration of first anniversary of Aquino death (DR)

The mass opposition to the Marcos regime did not begin with the assassination of Benigno Aquino. It came to the fore a long time ago in the growth of an anti-dictatorship movement from within the Church and the development of the underground revolutionary movement including the Philippine Communist Party (PCP), the New Peoples' Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front (NDF). But after the murder of 'Ninoy' the movement rapidly broadened both politically and in terms of social composition. The urban petty bourgeoisie and an important section of the business milieu became openly critical and took to the streets.

For a period of several months, all the various social and political components of the movement found themselves side by side in the huge demonstrations, raising slogans against the dictatorship and against the president. Broad united front organisations were built, such as the Movement for Justice for Aquino, the Justice for All (JAJA) group and the Philippine Peoples Congress (KOMPIL). On the organisational level these groups represented the whole political spectrum from the pro-American sections of the Philippine bourgeoisie through to the anti-imperialist, revolutionary left.

NDF. Also among the deputies was Jose Maria Sison, imprisoned for being the president of the CPP; and Father Conrad Balweg, who carried out his functions as a priest in the guerrilla movement led by the CPP.

The unity of the opposition was called into question for the first time when the regime announced the elections to the National Assembly. The popular sections of the opposition opted for a position of boycott straight away. In particular, this was the position of the Nationalist Alliance (whose president and spokesperson is Lorenzo Tanada, a man with a long and respected record in politics), which draws together various mass organisations. (5) In contrast, UNIDO tended immediately toward participation. A split was pro-

3. UNIDO (English initials for the United Nationalist Democratic Organisation) draws together 12 political formations of the traditional opposition. The PDP-Laban (Philippine Democratic Party — Lakas ng Bayan) took up the old torch of the Laban Party launched by Benigno Aquino in 1978. Apart from Aquino's widow, Corazon, the leaders of this party are businessmen like Jose Cojuangco. UNIDO is led by traditional politicians like Salvador Laurel and Eva Estrada Kalaw. But also in the moderate opposition there are politicians who enjoy local positions like Narciso Pimentel and Homobono Adaza in the Isle of Mindanao.

4. Interview published in *Veritas*, December 18, 1983.

5. The full name of the Nationalist Alliance

is the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy (NAJFD are the English initials or NA, abridged). It is basically made up of different regional alliances which in turn group together local mass organisations (unions and other associations) in a general class struggle direction. Officially launched after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, it was in fact well on the way one or two years before that. 6. The movement for Sovereignty and Democracy (KAAKBAY) is organised around a clear anti-imperialist platform and exists essentially in Manila among intellectual circles. Ex-senator Diokno is one of the leaders. It is not a political party but a movement which aims to contribute toward organising a particular section of society.

over the May elections. The traditional bourgeois groupings organised around UNIDO are weak in structure and do not have an organised mass base. On the terrain of the mass struggle, they are fighting a losing battle against the left anti-imperialist forces. In fact, they needed the elections, since they are essentially electoral formations. On this terrain they could revitalise their forces. The anti-imperialist left, on the other hand, was not able to make an effective intervention in the framework of elections that were so tightly controlled by the regime.

At another level, the bourgeois opposition was more easily satisfied with the electoral perspective defined by a regime from which it is merely seeking limited reforms such as the replacement of Marcos, the ending of the political monopoly of the KBL, the removal of Marcos-clique businessmen from certain economic positions, etc.

The nationalist left, however, from its non-communist wing — personified by ex-senator Diokno — right through to the CPP, is aiming for a real change in the regime. This involves achieving a position of strength based on social struggle and resistance to repression. The boycott campaign was decided within this perspective.

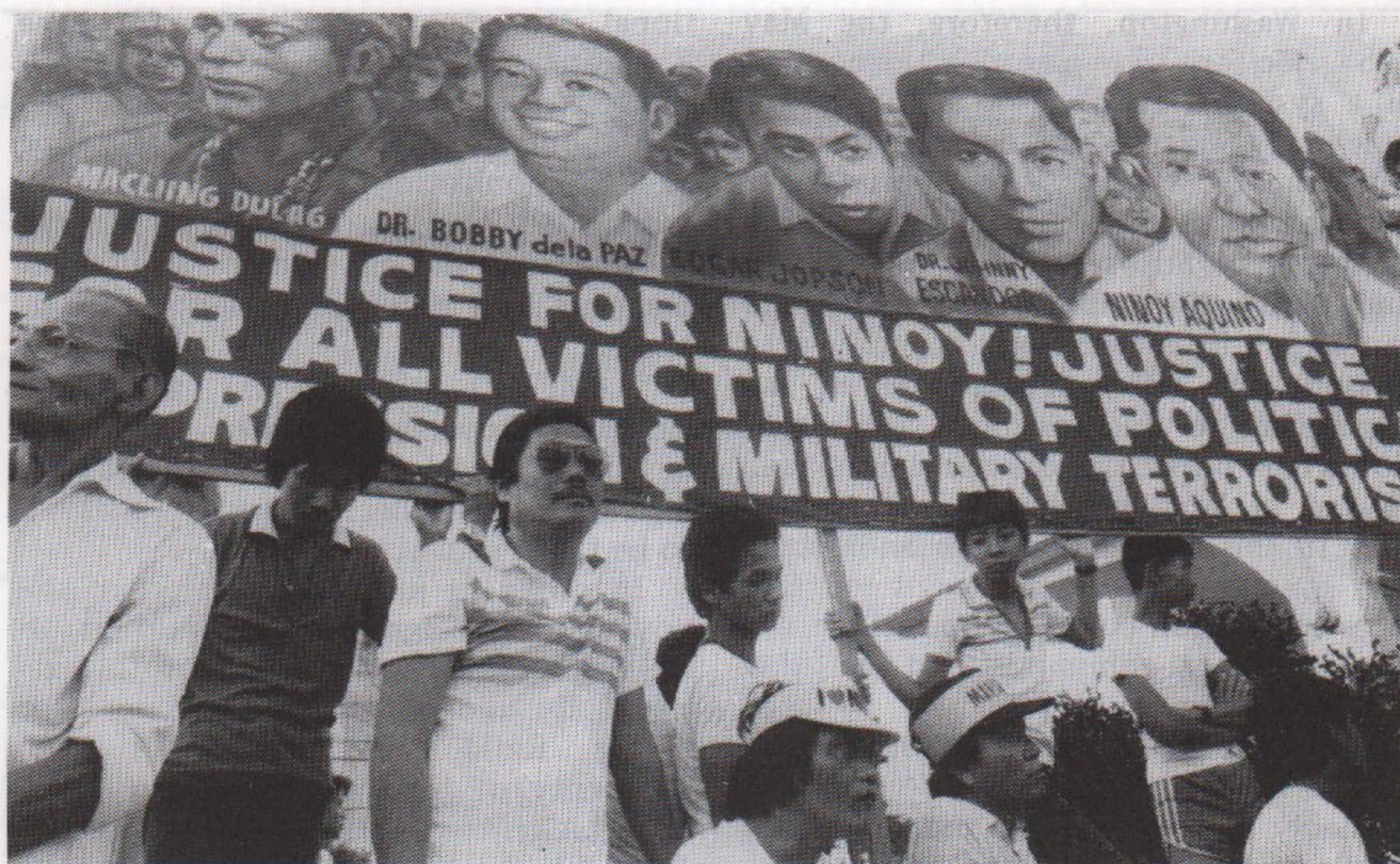
### The development of US policy

Splits in the opposition became more inevitable at the beginning of 1984 as the economic crisis began to bite. The bosses and the workers, represented respectively by UNIDO and the independent unions, obviously did not respond in the same way to the social and economic problems posed. At the end of 1983 and beginning of 1984 the situation in the country was no longer only dominated by the political consequences of the murder of Benigno Aquino.

All political and social movements had to respond to the devaluation of the peso, the discovery of the misappropriation of funds by the regime and the increasing intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in determining the economic direction of the country. They had to turn their attention to the external debt, the increase in inflation and to the bankruptcies, real or fake, of thousands of firms, to tens of thousands of redundancies. Social and economic problems began to loom as large as the political ones.

Finally, the opposition was divided on the question of what attitude to take toward the US. The bourgeois opposition got some important guarantees from Washington and the American embassy in the Philippines. They knew that the American government could help them take advantage of the legislative elections. The anti-imperialist left, however, knew that Washington saw them as the enemy who had to be isolated and combated and that the elections were organised with this aim in mind.

For several years now, the American



September 1983 protest demonstration (DR)

administration has been divided on what policy to adopt vis-a-vis the Philippines which, more than any other country in South East Asia, is directly influenced by Washington. Should they be content to support Marcos unstintingly, or given the strengthening of communist forces, should they prepare actively for a democratic reform of the regime?

Benigno Aquino represented the best card that could have been played in a game of reforming the regime, and in setting the stage for the post-Marcos era. It is probably for this reason that Aquino returned to the Philippines, and also why he was killed the moment his plane landed.

Up until Aquino's murder, Ronald Reagan's preference for supporting Marcos to the hilt had apparently won the day. But the crisis that opened up as a result of this murder has forced the White House to modify its attitude slightly. The massive entry into opposition of sections of the business community — Aquino having been one of them — had many implications. First, on a national level, there was the rapid erosion of the social base of the regime. And then, internationally, there was the crisis of confidence that this shift in the business community engendered in a regime already up to its neck in debts.

In this context, the growth of the NPA and the CPP, as well as the NDF, became especially worrying to the US. At the same time, however, the strengthening of the anti-communist wing of the opposition movement provided a 'responsible' channel for the democratic sentiments of the masses which had been brought to the fore by the murder of Aquino.

In the US, the Philippine National Assembly elections were openly explained from this point of view. They were supposed to pave the way for the reintegration into political life of the country's dynamic business community and middle classes, who had been frozen out of it by the monopoly held by the Marcos family. In this way the pro-American opposition could be pried

away from the revolutionaries, and a bourgeois elite established that would be able to consolidate the government and fight effectively against the communists at the same time. This view was clearly expressed by a member of the American House of Representatives, Solarz, who declared on October 24, 1983: 'I think that these [May 1984] elections may well constitute a historic watershed in the history of the Philippines. At a time when there is growing support in that country for the Communist-dominated New People's Army...this may well be the last opportunity to demonstrate to the Filipino people that peaceful change is possible in their country.' (7)

John Monjo, joint undersecretary of state for East Asia, stated equally clearly on February 7, 1984: 'We trust that responsible Philippine leaders from the government, the opposition, and the private sector will make the extra efforts to make this electoral process a genuine milestone in the political normalisation process. If this elections is successful, it could be the vehicle for bringing into democratic political life a whole new generation of office holders.' (8)

One of the big problems faced by the American administration in the Philippines is the continuing political vacuum brought about by a family dictatorship imposed on the country by the Marcos clan. As some journalists of *Far Eastern Economic Review* wrote, 'many potential young leaders during the martial law years opted to take up their struggle in the hills with the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines rather than face the frustration of challenging Marcos through legal means.' (9)

7. *Congressional Record*, October 24, 1983. Cited by Walden Bello and Edward Herman in 'US-sponsored elections: the Philippine example,' stencil, p. 6.

8. J. Monjo 'Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific', Washington, DC, February 7, 1984, p. 10, quoted by Bello and Herman, *idem*, p. 7.

9. Guy Sacerdoti and Rodney Tasker, 'Marcos stays in the driving seat', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 21, 1984, p. 29.

In Washington, therefore, the May 1984 elections were placed in the context of a systematic policy of counter-insurgency. It was in this context that the anti-communist opposition received the necessary guarantees for its participation in the electoral arena. But in order to understand the relative success of the campaign, it is necessary to take into account the different reactions of the population to the possibility of an election where oppositionists could have been elected in large numbers. In fact, it is only in this way that we can understand the simultaneous development of two large opposition currents, one which was principally anti-communist and the other anti-imperialist.

With the political crisis precipitated by the murder of Aquino, the field was suddenly wide open for much broader development of oppositional forces. New sections of the population mobilised, semi-spontaneously. There was no political force ready to organise them immediately. The CPP and the NDF were unable to do this, because of the underground nature of their operation and their small number of cadres amongst the middle layers, as were the other left anti-imperialist currents, because of their limited forces on a national level.

Neither could the traditional bourgeois opposition parties take the leadership because they belonged to the past, and on the whole had been reduced to electoral formations, marginalised by the regime. A huge vacuum was thus opened up within which all the opposition groups could grow simultaneously, each on their own patch.

### The growing opposition

An electoral perspective had varying significance in different regions of the country and amongst different layers of society. Apparently, in the guerrilla areas, for example, the boycott was massively supported. In fact, to the majority of workers and peasants, the election never meant very much, apart from a legal obligation and above all an obligation to the local bigwigs, who were usually members of the KBL.

Amongst important sections of the urban middle classes, however, there existed a tradition of, and an aspiration for, electoral democracy. The Philippines had the most lively electoral tradition of all the countries in the region, even if it was based on patronage.

The introduction of martial law cut short the 'free' contest between competing parties and imposed the stifling regime of a family dictatorship. Since martial law the desire to participate in as free elections as possible was seemingly very strong amongst these urban middle layers. And this certainly played a role in the success of UNIDO and PDP-Laban.

The strength of this sentiment for free elections is also attested to by the activity of another organisation, one that played a key role observing the polls — the Na-

tional Movement of Citizens for Free Elections (NAMFREL). (10)

Despite the threat of repression, they had about 20,000 people actively taking part in monitoring the ballot boxes on polling day and this certainly forced the government to cut down fraudulent practices in a number of places, such as Manila.

NAMFREL took on the image of a citizens' movement which went well beyond political parties that were standing candidates. This is something that has to be taken into account.

In order to judge the success of the boycott campaign, it is important to stress that many supporters of this action fully understood this sentiment for voting. Randolph David, a lecturer at the University of the Philippines and leader of KAAKBAY explained on January 7, 1984: 'I think it is safe to assume that indeed many of our countrymen would like to participate in the May Batasan [Assembly] elections because they want to translate into a concrete act all the resentment and anger they have felt and tried to express in numerous rallies and truth fora, especially after August 21. Moreover, many of our countrymen are convinced that under the present circumstances, the Opposition has a great chance of winning a majority of the seats in the Batasan, and given such a majority, that it will then be possible to dismantle the Marcos dictatorship'. (11)

But the supporters of the boycott put forward two main arguments in response to those who called for participation in the vote. Firstly, the regime would maintain sufficient control of the elections to ensure their majority, even if the opposition were to return a significant minority of seats. Secondly, they pointed out that the purpose of the elections was to divert popular anger, directing it toward the ballot box in order to set the stage for an American solution to the crisis which the Marcos regime was undergoing. (12)

The primary objective of the boycott campaign became, therefore, to keep up the mobilisations on the streets and to promote the political education of new sections of the masses that these actions involved.

In terms of making a political impact in the urban centres, the pro-American opposition scored well during the campaign. To some extent, it probably even temporarily rolled back the influence of the NDF and the anti-imperialist forces. (13)

10. The citizens national movement for free elections (NAMFREL) is directed mainly by Jose Concepcion, ex-president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the support of the Makati Business Club of Enrique Zobel, finance magnate.

11. Randolph S. David, 'No participation in elections under a dictatorship', in *Boycott*, published by JAJA, p. 12.

12. See, for example, the declaration of the Coalition of Organisations for the Restoration of Democracy in *Solidaridad II*, News Supplement, May 1984.

13. This is at least what Communist Party cadres said to Guy Sacerdoti in 'Red Army on the march', *Far Eastern Economic Review*,

However, from the standpoint of actively broadening the mass movement, the boycott campaign seems to have given genuine encouragement to certain important mobilisations. For example, between March 1 and 7, two columns of demonstrators from the south and north of Luzon Island converged on the capital. On their arrival the march had grown to 100,000 peasants and inhabitants of Manila gathered together for a huge meeting.

On May 1, in the largest meeting of workers since the second world war, 60,000 workers assembled in the capital, in response to an appeal by the May 1 Movement (KMU) (14) and the National Coalition of Workers Against Poverty (PKMK). This, moreover, was despite the fact that the independent union opposition leadership had been severely weakened by the repression unfolding in the last two years. This repression had led to the arrest of Bert Olalia who died in 1983, not long after an eight-month spell in prison. The plethora of mass marches in the last six months has opened up contact with many villages and small towns and mobilised large numbers of people.

Because of the economic crisis, strikes have taken place under very difficult conditions. Take the example of the free zone of Bataan near Manila. The repression of activity here was extremely severe and is supposed to have provoked a flying unit of the NPA which specialises in small, lightning strikes to kill a Police Chief, Tomas Karingal. He was accused of giving the order to open fire on a picket line, thus killing two workers and seriously wounding ten others.

If the role of the CPP in this execution is confirmed, this would seem to indicate that the NPA has decided from now on to launch punitive operations in limited numbers in the main urban centres of the country. They had refused to do this before. In general the forces of the NPA are thought to have continued to grow in a significant way in recent months.

During the period of the elections, the NPA forces were most active in the islands of Mindanao in the south and Luzon in the north.

To look at the election just in formal terms, according to official figures 9.5 million people did not register or did not turn up to vote. A further two million are estimated to have placed blank papers in the ballot box.

The results of the May 1984 elections point up once more the difficulty of

June 28, 1984, p. 40. For the development of the NPA in the south of the archipelago see also: Rodney Tasker, 'Elusive law and order', *Feer*, July 4, 1984.

14. Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) or the May 1 Movement is an independent class struggle federation. The National Coalition of Workers Against Poverty (PKMK) is a regroupment of union federations including most importantly KMU and those federations affiliated to the World Federation of Unions (FSM) like the TUPAS union. The fact that the PKMK put out a call to the May 1 organisation shows a new dynamic toward unity in the union movement.

uniting behind a single perspective and under a single revolutionary leadership both sections of the masses of workers and peasants for whom elections have little or no relevance and others, mainly in the urban centres, for whom participation in elections represents a genuine aspiration. In this framework the CPP is said to be discussing what policy to follow in the elections for mayor and governor due to be held in 1986.

But much will depend in any case on the general development in the situation over the coming year. Washington's policy, which aims to reform the regime and at the same time ensure its continuity and unite a divided bourgeoisie, will come up against some real obstacles.

Firstly there are problems inherent in the regime itself. The barons of the Marcos clan do not seem ready to concede a significant slice of their power to their political and economic competitors. On the contrary, a man like Eduardo Cojuangco, for example, is consolidating his position conspicuously. Having headed up for several years a coconut production and distribution empire, he has recently taken control of another of the country's biggest businesses, one that was owned by the traditional bourgeoisie of Spanish origin — the San Miguel beer trust. Along with its financial resources, he also got its extraordinary distribution network which spans the whole country.

#### Deepening crisis since elections

But American policy will also founder on economic obstacles. At the behest of the IMF, the Philippine government has just devalued the peso which is now floating at three different rates; 18 pesos to one US dollar on basic commodities, 19.80 pesos for other legal transactions and 24 pesos on the black market. In all probability, a further devaluation will occur between now and the end of the year. The spiral of inflation, however, is taking on dramatic proportions for the working population. The price of all basic commodities jumped by 20 to 30 per cent following the 26 per cent rise in the cost of petrol on June 6. Even those goods whose prices are controlled, such as rice and dairy products, rose by 12 per cent. On a yearly base, inflation is now breaking the 50 per cent mark.

Under the pressure of an external debt of 25.6 billion dollars and the IMF's directives, the government's policy can only become more repressive. There is much disquiet in opposition circles about a phased implementation of an 'Operation Mad Dog' in the Philippines modeled on the notorious Phoenix Plan in Vietnam. This would entail the selective assassination of those oppositionists deemed dangerous to the government. Recently, a special police unit reorganised on June 18 by President Marcos summarily executed in one week 24 people who were deemed by the police to be common



Demonstration against the Marcos regime in November 1983 (DR)

criminals. In fact, the chief of that same force, Major General Prospero Olivas has let it be known that the people killed were members of the NPA and fundraisers for the communists. (15)

The three months since the elections have been filled with events confirming the prognosis that the crisis of the Marcos regime, far from being on the road to a solution, is worsening.

Despite the pressure to do so, President Marcos has still not taken a single practical step to open up the political situation. While Cardinal Sin, the archbishop of the Philippines, calls for reconciliation and reciprocal forgiveness between the regime and 'our brothers in the hills' (16), the army is engaged in massive military operations against the guerrilla forces, particularly in the north of Luzon. The police have been brutally repressing demonstrations, including that which took place on the day the National Assembly opened. The new Marcos government is as similar to the previous Council of Ministers as two peas in a pod. Imelda Marcos, wife of the president, is present as minister for housing and the quality of life. Cordially hated by large sectors of the business world, she had promised to withdraw from the government.

There is increasing tension between the 'technocrats' (represented by Cesar Virata, the prime minister) and the businessmen of the Marcos clan. The economic crisis is deepening, destabilising the country's economic system. The government has had to go to the aid of several banks threatened by bankruptcy including the Banco Filipino; small savers, panic-struck by alarmist rumours of bankruptcy, withdrew their money from the bank.

The official National Assembly has no credibility, and the 'street parliament' has retaken the initiative. After the May 14 elections, the organisations campaigning for a boycott had to respond to the electoral enthusiasm evinced by certain sections of the mass opposition. While emphasising the success recorded by the boycott movement, CORD noted that, 'it cannot be denied that the dictatorship has succeeded to a certain extent in projecting its own stability.' In fact, 'the regime has succeeded to a certain extent

15. *Le Monde*, June 28, 1984.

16. *Le Monde*, August 23, 1984.

in dividing the democratic movement through the Batasan Pambansa elections.' (17) As for the Nationalist Alliance, it noted that, 'The struggle to end the life of the US-Marcos dictatorship is a long and arduous process....It is important to remember that the decision to boycott the elections meant the continuation of the militant activities that rocked the stability of the present regime after the Aquino assassination.' The Nationalist Alliance considered that the boycott movement had been a success on three levels, 'education, organisation and leadership training'. On this occasion the 'people's organisations' experienced a quantitative and qualitative growth'. (18)

### Positive effect of boycott campaign

The declarations from the organisations that led the boycott movement thus reflected the impact — in the urban milieu — of an electoralist perspective. But, above all, they underline that it is on the terrain of mass struggles that the boycott campaign must be judged. The very positive balance sheet made of the intense activity during the boycott campaign was also quickly confirmed.

The anti-imperialist left was able to go back onto the initiative once the elections were over. There were successive demonstrations, sometimes assembling tens of thousands of people. The moderate opposition has also had to turn again to the 'street parliament'.

This new wave of activity since the elections culminated on August 21, 1984, the first anniversary of the assassination of Benigno Aquino. The bourgeois opposition and the popular movement found themselves once more side by side, the yellow of the 'Aquinistas' mixed with the red of the trade unions and student organisations in a huge gathering of one million people in Manila. Similar gatherings were held simultaneously at Cebu (in the centre of the archipelago), at Baguio (in the north) and Davao (in the south) and elsewhere.

These very disciplined, monster demonstrations expressed the extraordinary depth and dynamism of the anti-dictatorial sentiment that animates the population of the Philippines. On this occasion the regime preferred not to use the police. But in many places — like on Negros, the sugar island — the repression became ferocious. Peasants' bodies are now being found horribly mutilated, the heads missing.

This is no longer repression, but terrorism. Given the rise of the mass struggle and the appearance of military terror, increased support to the people of the Philippines should be offered by all progressives and anti-imperialists throughout the world.

17. Discussion paper on May elections. 'A call to defend the democratic alliance', CORD statement, June 12, 1984. In *Solidaridad II*, April-June 1984.

18. Leaflet of the Nationalist Alliance, May 23, 1984. ■



## AROUND THE WORLD



### More than 600 at international revolutionary youth summer camp

A total of 600 young people participated in the first international revolutionary youth camp launched by youth organisations in solidarity with the Fourth International and held in the Black Forest in West Germany from July 21 to 30. Youth from the following European countries took part: Switzerland, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Ireland, Austria, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Also in attendance were delegations from Japan, the Antilles, Bolivia, the United States, Canada and Sri Lanka as well as representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers Struggle) of France.

The average age of those taking part was 21, and 19 for the Belgian delegation on its own. Women constituted 37 per cent of the participants and were in a majority in the Dutch delegation. As far as social composition was concerned, a little over a quarter of the participants were workers, another quarter apprentices or unemployed, a quarter school-students, and the rest students. Two-thirds of those participating were sympathisers or members of the youth organisations and not of the sections of the Fourth International.

The first initiative was, therefore, a success, especially from the point of view of the level of participation. This is all the more encouraging and significant when you consider that most of these youth organisations have only come into being in the last three years and that some are still preparing for their launch conferences as in West Germany and Italy, whose conferences are due to be held in October 1984 and next December respectively.

The camp, with all its dynamism and enthusiasm, also marked an important political success. The debates every morning and the various forums and meetings drew good audiences, thus permitting wide exchanges of experience on the main themes chosen. These were the fight against the missiles and militarisation, against the crisis and unemployment, against racism and for equal rights, against the oppression of women and for solidarity with Central America as well as many other issues taken up by the youth themselves in the course of the camp.

The climax of the event was undoubtedly the welcome given to the representative of the Sandinista Youth-July 19 (JS-19), Uriel Ortega, who came especially from Matagalpa in Nicaragua to take part in the camp. He was greeted by a full-scale demonstration stretching through the camp and the singing of the Sandinista anthem. This identification with the Sandinista revolution is an expression of profound confidence in a revolutionary perspective, and in socialism as the only alternative to the military threat, to unemployment and to racism. In stark contrast to the doubts put out and encouraged by the media, this youth vanguard also showed its conviction that it is not simply a question of protesting, or resisting the threats of an apocalypse, but that radical social transformation remains not only necessary but possible and that the challenge launched by the Sandinista revolution against imperialism is the symbol of that today. The same feeling of confidence in the future was brought out during the final meeting and the contribution of Ernest Mandel on youth and the socialist future of humanity.

Apart from the determination to mobilise and to act collectively, which dominated the week's unfolding discussions, the meeting also reinforced the confidence and mutual respect between youth of different countries. Internationalism is often easier to proclaim in speeches than it is to put into practice on a day-to-day level, especially in times of adversity and in the face of big tests. The history of the workers movement has, unfortunately, often proved this. That is why, in a period when the economic crisis feeds not only racism but also national chauvinism, it is important, through such initiatives, to steel the revolutionary youth vanguard to face up to their responsibilities together and beyond frontiers, against the common enemy.

The international youth camp was also a success from the point of view of leisure activities and practical organisation. Despite the inexperience of the organisers, the variety of suggested activities meant that everyone could always find something to do which kept them happy or fed their curiosity. There were games of chess and football among others, swimming, ecological walks, self defence; there were photography laboratories,



video screen projection, music, dance and various improvised activities. A special mention must be made of the collective participation in an improvised evening of international cabaret.

The physical organisation of the camp was the cause of much anxiety on the eve of the event because the initial facilities planned for 400 participants had to embrace 200 extra people at the last moment. Thanks to collective effort and, in the first place, to the gusto and good humour of the kitchen staff who showed the way and then also to the translators, the technical services, the doctor and the cooperation of everyone, the organisational difficulties were all resolved for the best. An important measure of the success of this initiative is the fact it covered its costs.

These results can be credited to a small leadership team which had been set up a year and a half before, out of a series of international meetings, and to the responsibility exercised by the council of delegation representatives, which constituted the daily leadership of the camp. Even though there was cause for great satisfaction, we still left promising to do better...next time. Those who aim to change the world must also be ready to make their own permanent mini-revolution.

Apart from the reserve of collective strength and the willingness to go forward together, several concrete proposals came out of the camp:

— Firstly, that this autumn there would be a new European-wide tour of an FSLN delegation, the main theme of which will be solidarity with the victims of imperialist aggression (especially the wounded). Revolutionary youth organisations in solidarity with the Fourth International will be in the forefront of this new campaign.

— All the organisations present took positive note of the appeal launched by the youth section of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Great Britain (Youth CND) for a demonstration against the deployment of missiles to take place in Brussels where the headquarters of Nato are sited.

— The German comrades of Roter Maulwurf are involved in the organisation of a march against racism for the autumn of 1984. This could be marked by sending delegations from the countries where this question is already important (such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands).

We publish below the main statements (on Central America, on the anti-missiles movement, against racism and against unemployment) which were adopted by those attending the camp in the final meeting on July 29, 1984. Several other motions and initiatives were also decided on, including a resolution and a collection in solidarity with the British miners; a resolution against the repression of Basque nationalists and especially against the threats of extradition and other measures menacing them

in France and Belgium; a motion of solidarity with unemployed workers of Uni Royal in Belgium; and a declaration of opposition to the oppression of women. Lastly, and above all, a collective message of solidarity was addressed to comrade Catherine Vincent, a militant of the JCR (Revolutionary Communist

Youth) in France, who was seriously wounded this summer in Nicaragua in an ambush by the *contras* targeted on an international work brigade which was travelling to Managua for the fifth anniversary celebration of the downfall of the dictatorship.

## Youth against the crisis

As young people in capitalist Europe we cannot forget that every day, throughout the third world, the workers, the peasants and the youth are plunged into deeper and deeper suffering to satisfy the appetites of the capitalist class. The price of the capitalist crisis is an increase in hunger and misery.

— Death to imperialism that makes people starve! We salute the youth of Latin America, Africa and Asia! We salute the 'muchachos', flame of the Nicaraguan revolution!

Pillage of the third world is no longer enough to get the capitalists out of their crisis. They have to create unemployment and reduce living standards taking away the social gains and democratic rights of the working class and the youth in Europe. The bosses always begin by attacking youth as well as women and immigrants since they are not so strongly organised to resist. But the interests of youth are the same as the interests of the working class. When the British miners or the German steel workers fight for their demands it encourages youth of these countries to act and they become strong enough to organise themselves. When young immigrants in France fight racism it enables immigrant workers to enter into struggle against redundancies and deportations.

Unity of workers and youth against those who cause the crisis!

For those of us who are school-students and students, educational standards are deteriorating because bourgeois governments are cutting back on education for the benefit of the generals and the bosses.

— No to austerity! The right to education for all!

The bosses want to create a sub-proletariat of millions of unemployed youth and youth condemned to unstable jobs with low wages and poor working conditions. Their objective is to divide the working class and undermine trade-union

resistance as well as isolate young workers from the unions.

— Throughout Europe we demand an end to unemployment! For real jobs for real wages!

Youth must rely on their own strength to fight for the right to study and the right to jobs. If any governments are worried about youth unemployment, it is because they are afraid of our reaction. If politicians look for our support at election time, it's because they know there are millions of us. Without the youth, the anti-missiles movement would not be as powerful as it is today. We can use our strength by organising against the capitalist crisis. In Belgium, youth have organised two national marches for jobs, prepared by dozens of local committees. In taking this initiative they were able to get support and unity of all the workers and youth organisations. We want the unions to open their doors to youth and their demands in order to reinforce the unity of youth and workers against the crisis.

— No to redundancies! Immediate reduction of the working week with no loss of wages, to create jobs for the unemployed! Let's all work less to create jobs for everyone!

In Spain, Portugal, France and throughout Europe, the parties of the left which claim to defend workers and youth forget their promises as soon as they get elected. As young revolutionaries we have no confidence at all in parties which betray the working class. We seek unity in action with young socialists, social-democrats, communists or christians to get a government that acts in the interests of workers and youth. But, we build a revolutionary youth organisation because to solve the crisis, to change our lives, we have to get rid of capitalism itself.

Under the capitalist system, harvests are destroyed in Europe, while 40,000 children are dying every day in the third world. Under this system factories are closed while enormous needs remain unsatisfied. Under this system, they put tens of millions of workers on the dole rather than reduce the working week. Under capitalism they build up nuclear weapons systems capable of annihilating humanity several times over. Capitalism carries crisis and war within itself like a thundercloud carries a storm.

Let's all build barricades against the old world — let's build our revolutionary youth organisations!

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## Against the missiles and militarisation

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As members of youth organisations in political solidarity with the Fourth International, we declare our concern at the acceleration of the arms race throughout the world.

Now that the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles has already begun in most West European countries it is necessary to continue the mass movement to get rid of these missiles, or, in the case of the Netherlands and Belgium, to prevent their deployment.

Because it is our future that is at stake we are especially concerned with the anti-nuclear struggle. Mass campaigns are the only way to get rid of the missiles. We don't believe in negotiations between the USA and the USSR.

Neither do we believe that a non-nuclear defence strategy or a non-nuclear Nato will make this world any safer. Nuclear armament is the biggest threat but there is also the development of conventional weapons and special shock troops which are used against national liberation struggles by different imperialist powers.

We should attempt to strengthen mass action by drawing more trade union activists, more women and youth into the campaigns of the peace movements. Women and youth in particular have shown that they are willing to join or initiate mass action and that they are the most devoted fighters for disarmament.

— No to the missiles!

— For mass campaigns of the peace movements!

While fighting our own governments and against the deployment of Nato missiles, we declare our solidarity with the independent peace activists in the workers states of Eastern Europe. Fighting for the right to decide, to control the placement of missiles, organising themselves independently from the state, they confront severe repression from their bureaucratic governments. One of the key ways to achieve disarmament in Europe is to link up with the struggle of these independent peace activists.

— For solidarity with the independent peace activists of Eastern Europe!

In fighting against a 'pax Americana' in Europe, we also declare our solidarity with the freedom fighters of Central America and the revolutionary government of Nicaragua whose very existence is severely threatened by US imperialism.

— Solidarity with the struggles in Central America!

— Nato bases out! Down with Nato!

While billions and billions of dollars are put into the arms race, in Western Europe more and more youth are facing unemployment. In fact, not only our future but our very existence is now at stake. The money now used for the military build-up should be put into the education system and the public services.

— We want jobs not bombs!

Finally, we welcome the decision of Youth CND in Britain to call for an international youth march for disarmament. This would be the first time that youth have organised internationally, adding a new dimension to the fightback.

We'll show the world what kind of future we want and we'll force our governments to get rid of nuclear weapons!

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## Solidarity with the fighting peoples of Central America

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Every day, 30 bombs fall on El Salvador. Equipped with the latest in US war technology each bomb reaches its target — the population of the liberated zones — with precision. According to statements by the FMLN (Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional) the USA is planning a direct intervention in El Salvador for this autumn.

Every day, counter-revolutionary troops — trained with US aid — carry out raids on the population of Nicaragua. Their actions do not only cost the lives of hundreds of Nicaraguan men and women, but they also obstruct the further progress of the revolution. By attacking an international brigade in the southeast of Nicaragua in mid-July, the contras attempted for the first time to bring about the collapse of this form of international solidarity.

Behind the war against the revolutions in Central America stand the US imperialists and their allies. They want to stop, at any price, the liberation of the peoples of Latin America and destroy the Sandinista and the Cuban revolutions. They will not succeed. Against them stand, first and foremost, the workers and peasants, men and women of Central America itself. Their organisations, the FMLN in El Salvador, the FSLN in Nicaragua and the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union) in Guatemala have proved ready and able to lead a determined struggle for a social revolution. But the war in Central America will not be decided by weapons alone. A strong, worldwide solidarity movement has a vital role to play in the outcome of the struggle.

The youth organisations in political solidarity with the Fourth International pledge full political, moral and material support for the liberation struggles in Central America. The tour of two members of the Juventud Sandinista (Sandinista Youth) in April and May 1984 throughout Europe provided a good opportunity for this. We will continue to fight for:

— A broad front of all forces of the

peace movement and the workers movement in support of the revolution in Central America;

— The setting up of further work brigades for Nicaragua;

— Material support for armed struggle in El Salvador;

— A campaign of information on the real situation in Nicaragua and against the lies of the imperialist press. The Nicaraguan elections in November provide the next opportunity for this.

— And, finally, for a further tour of Europe by representatives of the Sandinistas in Europe.

Long live international solidarity!

Long live the struggle of the peoples of Central America!

Let's work together to defeat the intervention of US imperialism and its allies in Central America!

*No pasaran!*

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## Throughout Europe reject racism, demand equal rights

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In October 1983 in France about a dozen young immigrants launched an appeal 'Against racism, against racist attacks and for equal rights!' On December 3, 1983, more than 100,000 people responded to that appeal by demonstrating in Paris.

Throughout Europe racism is threatening not only immigrant workers, but the whole of the working class. The bosses are throwing millions of workers out of work, spreading misery and disillusion. They are making immigrant workers scapegoats for the crisis for which they alone are responsible. With the economic crisis the bosses are seeking any means to get rid of this superexploited labour force to whom they have denied basic rights, even the right to vote. Everywhere racist campaigns accompany legal measures restricting the rights of residence of immigrant workers. This is done through deportation fees, through border controls and arbitrary expulsions. Lack of job security creates insecurity of residence because the issuing of a resident's card depends on having a work permit.

Young immigrants are the first to feel the effects of the crisis. Excluded from political life because of their lack of rights, they are also marginalised as a result of unemployment and the crisis. Culturally, their identity is ridiculed by the education system. Denigrated in this way they are also subject to systematic racist attacks.

Young immigrants who are born in Europe, who study or work there, are demanding their rights, fighting discrimination, in order to find space to live and express their own identity. All youth must stand alongside them to stop racist campaigns like those of Le Pen in France which lead to hatred and other

crimes and which divide the workers movement.

We will fight shoulder to shoulder with young immigrants in defence of their rights: for the right to a job, for the right to organise, for the right to a unified education system for all young people; for the right to decent housing, for the right to leisure and to their own culture. We do not accept the treatment of immigrants as second class citizens and we demand the right to vote and other

rights.

After the success of the march in France the mobilisation is continuing. In West Germany young people have decided, in turn, to organise their own march against racism in October 1984.

At every stage we will be there to build the movement of immigrant youth against their oppression and to construct a united front of all young people against racism and fascism. ■

## Successful boycott campaign of South African elections

On November 2, 1983, South African prime minister P.W. Botha won the support of two-thirds of the white electorate (the only ones asked to vote) for his constitutional proposals (see *International Viewpoint*, No 46, February 13, 1984). The reforms approved by this referendum strengthened the power of the president, and created a parliament of three distinct chambers: one for the whites (the biggest), one for the 'Coloureds', and one for the 'Indians'. The 24 million blacks remain unrepresented.

This was a wide-ranging operation for Botha. While he undertook a military-diplomatic offensive directed towards his neighbours, he also had to respond to the growing activity of the black masses around their national oppression and on social questions.

The first stage was capped off by the agreements with Mozambique and Angola. Botha took advantage of these to make a tour of the European capitals to promote his image as a reformer. The second was a bitter failure. Despite a considerable effort, such as the 'special votes' for electors not able to go to the polls, participation did not reach a sufficient level to give this rump parliament the least credibility.

Voting took place in two stages, on August 22 for the Coloureds and on August 28 for the Indians. Of the potential Coloured electorate of 1.5 million, some 907,000 were registered to vote, only 270,469 actually cast a vote, giving a rate of participation of only 30% for those registered or 18% of the potential electorate. The rate of participation by Indians was still lower, around 17%.

One of the most significant facts was that the rate of abstention was markedly higher in the regions where these populations are concentrated, such as in the Cape which is one of the chief designated zones where Coloureds work, or Durban, a main designated residential zone for Indians. Moreover, many organisations denounced the procedure of written votes which made wide-spread vote rigging possible as the authorities went to collect voting papers from those who were unable for one reason or another to move. These factors reinforce the scope of the boycott and un-

derline the victory won on this occasion by the oppressed.

Botha's bitterness was expressed in his first comment: 'A good number of Coloureds still show little interest in the exercise of their democratic rights.' It is certain that the sort of 'rights' that the apartheid system offers to blacks are not likely to arouse the interest of the black masses.

The response of the oppressed people of the Republic of South Africa was clear. Through their activity, their meetings and their demonstrations they reaffirmed their refusal to collaborate with the racist regime and its puppets.

The principal forces in the campaign for a boycott of the elections were the United Democratic Front (UDF), a broad front set up a year ago in opposition to the constitutional proposals; the National Forum committee initiated by several organisations including the Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo); Azapo itself; the independent non-racial unions; etc. Meetings and rallies were held throughout the RSA to campaign for the boycott addressed by speakers from these organisations, the Transvaal Indian Congress and others. The *Rand Daily Mail*, reporting on two separate meetings in Johannesburg on the previous day attended by a total of 1,100 people, commented that 'These meetings were the clearest indication so far in the election campaigns on the Reef of the strength of the 'anti-participation' factions. Participating parties have drawn tiny crowds to meetings on the Reef so far.' (August 8, 1984)

The Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) reported on the front page of the August issue of its bulletin *Fosatu Workers News* on its door-to-door canvassing campaign for a boycott, over the banner call 'Don't vote'. One of the targets for this campaign was four townships on the Eastern Cape. Canvassers reported that 'the majority of people visited were sympathetic to the Don't Vote call'. Along with this activity, enabling Fosatu to reach organised and non-organised workers, meetings

were held in factories, and Fosatu leaflets and Don't Vote stickers distributed.

On the Western Cape, Fosatu participated in a mass rally organised jointly by the independent unions and progressive organisations on August 6. Some 6,000 workers were bused in to the Fun City stadium in Athlone to discuss the new constitution.

Black students also played an active role in the campaign, boycotting classes in the high schools and universities, in protest not only against the racist constitutional proposals but also against the inferior educational system that they have to endure. Official estimates put the figure of student boycotters at 630,000.

The call for a boycott was also backed by the outlawed ANC. A speech broadcast by the president, Oliver Tambo, emphasised 'We must crush the August elections by the vigour of our united struggle and through an intensive campaign exposing the danger and treachery of the elections and reasserting the people's goal of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.'

The minister of law and order who authorised several hundred cases of 'arrest and preventive detention' because of the 'revolutionary climate which prevailed' made no mistake in his judgement of the situation. Such an intense campaign was thus obviously not allowed to pass without let or hindrance by the racist regime. For calling for a boycott of the elections to the Indian college 137 persons were arrested, 17 of whom will remain in preventive detention for six months. Several dozens of well-known figures were also arrested during the boycott campaigns, including one of the presidents of the UDF, Archie Gumede, and the presidents of the Indian Congresses in Transvaal and Natal. Also arrested was Kader Hassim, chair of the Maritzburg branch of the African Democratic People's Union (affiliated to the Unity Movement of South Africa) and a former Robben Island prisoner.

Besides arrests of campaigners there were violent confrontations in the black ghettos that continued into the early days of September. These uprisings in the black townships were provoked by the new constitutional proposals but given a new spark by the announcement of rent rises in the townships. The official reports of the Pretoria government put the death toll, on September 3, at 22 deaths and dozens wounded.

The attempted enticement of the black masses has failed, and the racist regime will be unable to avoid a confrontation with the black masses of Southern Africa, despite its more or less secret contacts with the ANC, illustrated by the recent meeting between a South African representative and Joe Slovo, an ANC representative. ■

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## NICARAGUA

# The peace camp – an important act of solidarity

An important act of solidarity with the struggle of the Nicaraguan people was undertaken in Managua between July 15 and 23 in the face of a mounting imperialist offensive. A peace camp was organised by the Nicaraguan Committee for Solidarity with All Peoples (CNSP) and drew together 600 people from 27 countries. The delegations present basically represented solidarity committees and brigades from Europe, Latin America and North America.

There were also delegations from other political organisations such as the JCR (Revolutionary Communist Youth – France) who had been expressly invited by the Sandinista Youth. They were representing all the organisations in political solidarity with the Fourth International, which had organised a European tour for the Sandinista Youth in May and June this year.

On this occasion the JCR had several discussions with the leadership of the Sandinista Youth and replaced some important photographic equipment for their journal, *Muchachos*. The participants in the camp were able to attend several talks and meetings with leaders of the FSLN, most notably with Tomas Borge and Sergio Ramirez. The closing speech to the camp was made by Comandante Dora Maria Tellez who spelt out for everyone the relationship between today's liberated Nicaragua and the future, post-capitalist era which is the historic destiny of humanity. She explained how the Sandinistas draw on previous revolutionary experiences and try to avoid making the same errors.

During the summer, several different solidarity committees who had come to Nicaragua to help with the reconstruction were able to meet each other. Nearly one thousand true internationalists gave up their holiday time to the Nicaraguan people and helped, in their own way, to consolidate the gains of the revolution, that is the schools, the health centres, the cooperatives, etc.

The work brigades brought invaluable help just at a time when the whole country had to be mobilised to support those at the front in the war against imperialist aggression. The *contras* understood this very well. That is why, on July 18, they chose to attack one of these brigades, deliberately, seeking to kill and to discourage international supporters and smash the concrete links that have been made in solidarity with Nicaragua.

An activist of the French solidarity movement, who is also a member of the JCR, was wounded in this attack along with three Telcor (Nicaraguan Telephone Company) workers.

The attack was condemned unanimously by the participants in the peace camp, and in a communique issued by all the French organisations present (MJS, JCR, MJCF, CSN (1)). 'Far from intimidating us, this attack has further strengthened the fraternal links which have bound us together in the last fifteen days of work. We are more determined than ever to return to Nicaragua and to explain to the French people the work that has been carried out and to tell the truth about the daily aggression to which the people are subjected and about the methods of the *contras* who purport

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

# Free Rafael Taveras and his comrades

'Rafael Taveras, known as Fafa, leader of the Frente Izquierda Dominicana (FID, Dominican Left Front) and the general secretary of the Bloque Socialista (BS, Socialist Bloc) was arrested on the evening of August 29, at the door of his home. [Five other leaders of the Dominican left were arrested several hours later.]

'Three days previously the military high command of the country had accused the left of conspiring together against the security of the state, and having received funds from Libya and North Korea for this purpose. These serious accusations, totally unfounded as they are, put into danger the life of the revolutionary leader Fafa Taveras, and mark the start of a new wave of repression against leaders of the popular movement.

'The repression, which has already brought about, on April 22, 23, and 24, more than 100 deaths, 500 wounded and 4,000 imprisonments, remains the only official response to the rise in popular protestations against the starvation policy imposed by the government on the recommendation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

'Given the seriousness of the charges made by the government, we call on world public opinion to demand that Fafa Taveras be set free and human rights be respected in the Dominican Republic.

'The representatives of the FID and BS in Europe call on democratic organisations and defenders of human rights, and ask for protest telegrams to be sent to the president of the Dominican Republic, Salvador Jorge Blanco, demanding the freeing of comrade Taveras.'

FID Delegation in France  
BS Delegation in Europe  
Paris, August 30, 1984.

Send telegrams to:

Salvador Jorge Blanco, President of the Republic, Palacio Nacional, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Send a copy to:

Periodico *La Noticia*, Julio Vernes 14, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic ■

to be the defenders of liberty and democracy.' This was the response of the brigade which was attacked. This is the response which must be given to all acts of aggression against Nicaragua. Solidarity must be strengthened and the mobilisation against US imperialism must be built. ■

1. MJS and the MJCF are the youth organisations of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party in France respectively. The CSN is the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee.