

International VIEWPOINT

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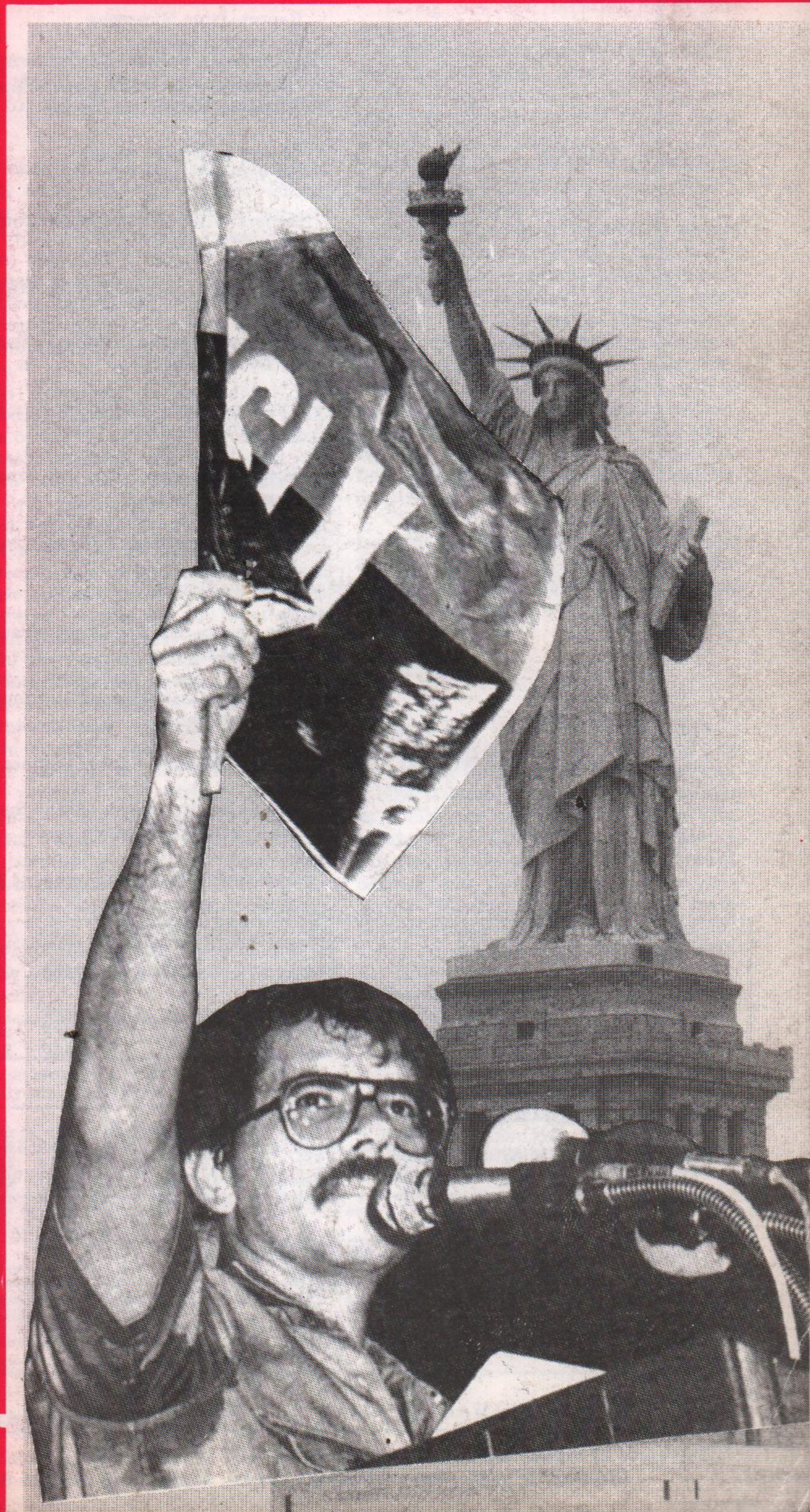
26 November 1984

**Reagan's
vote —
mandate
for war ?**

**Nicaragua on
the alert**

**Grenada :
revolutionary
spirit revives**

**British miners
stand firm**



International Viewpoint

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Reagan's election and world peace

The major press around the world that represents the major powers in international politics was quite clear about the fact that the Reagan win in the US did not represent a mandate for more aggressive imperialist policies.

Gerry FOLEY

Izvestia's "political observer," S. Kondrashov, wrote from Washington: "The elections were held in the heat of the 'new patriotism.' America first and better than everybody....The 'new patriots' are ready to applaud the crude seizure of Grenada, but at the same time they were quick to accept the withdrawal of American Marines from Beirut after only a couple of hundred of them were killed in a terrorist bombing.

"They love to display American military muscle, but they prefer that this be done without any casualties. They support a policy of peace from a position of strength but they are against this leading to the threat of nuclear war."

The superficial character of big swings, or "landslides," in the context of US bourgeois politics was no secret for Kondrashov:

"As the experience of recent decades shows, even stunning victories are short lived. Lyndon Johnson had to face that fact when, after his triumph in 1964, he refused to run in 1968, after having become mired in the Vietnam quicksand. Richard Nixon was also elected by a landslide in 1972 and after only two years he was sent into an inglorious retirement by the Watergate scandal."

The London *Economist*, which has expressed nervousness about the triumphalism of the Thatcher government, also found cause for worry in the big Reagan victory:

"Reversals, big or small, have swiftly followed the triumphs of the past four American presidents to be returned to office with smashing majorities....

"History need not repeat itself, but it is not difficult to see how it could. Old age, bad advisers, bad judgment, bad luck, any of these could turn Mr Reagan's second term sour. A recession will not be easy to avoid. Mr Reagan has already presided over the hardest economic times since the great depression, as well as the most spectacular recovery since the Korean war. Subtler management by the Federal Reserve and by a re-elected Mr Reagan are going to be needed if the free lunch provided by tax cuts and defense spending is not to be found to have been rather expensive after all. Mr Rea-

gan's campaign this year has been waged chiefly on his dual claim to have restored the economy and the national esteem. Yet without the economic success, the slogan, 'America is back' would hardly have been persuasive. It would certainly not have been in 1982, when Mr Reagan's standing in the opinion polls was lower than Mr Carter's two years into his presidency."

The *Economist* in an indirect way pointed to some of the underlying weaknesses of the US upturn: "All the secular economic problems that Mr Reagan was able to push under the rug in his first term will re-emerge before his second term is half done. The financing of what America pays to its increasing army of old people, and of its soaring health and defence bills, the propping up of its banking system — these are not tasks which the Europeans, Japanese and poor countries of the third world are going to perform forever for rich America."

This list of problems of course included the international capitalist agenda for welfare spending cuts. But the fundamental problem is that the boom has been propelled by deficit spending on arms, which has been financed by bleeding the rest of the world of capital and undermining all sectors of the international capitalist economy. In its November 7 issue, the most prestigious French daily, *Le Monde*, published the following table showing the evolution of the key economic indicators over Reagan's first term:

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Unemployment (% of economically active population)	7%	7.5%	9.5%	9.5%	7.5%*
Growth in volume of GNP	-0.3%	2.6%	-1.9%	3.4%	6%*
Consumer prices	13.5%	10.4%	6.1%	3.9%	4%*
Budget deficit (in billions of dollars)	60	60	110	195.4	175.3
Balance of trade	-25.3	-27.9	-36.3	-69.4	-130*
Current account (in billions of dollars)	0.4	4.5	-11.21	-41.6	-90*
Dollar (annual average rate against franc)	4.22	5.43	6.57	7.62	8.61

* Estimated figures

In the November issue of the British *Financial Times* Samuel Brittan pointed to the dangers, while trying not to sound alarmist:

"The rising dollar has enabled the US to 'import' a lower inflation rate from the rest of the world, via cheap imports and downward pressure on the prices of traded goods. A mere standstill in the dollar could easily add 1 per cent to the US inflation rate; and a modest downturn could have an impact effect of 2 per cent — taking recorded inflation to 6 per cent....

"All the same, a continued high dollar would be still worse. For it could set off a time bomb which would ultimately raise both nominal and real interest rates to scare levels not seen since 1981....The bomb ticking away is the staggering and ever growing US current account deficit."

Brittan went on to explain:

"There is nothing inherently wrong with most kinds of deficits if they facilitate additional investment which will pay for their own servicing. In the US case, however, they may also be the symptom of something much less healthy, namely a basic imbalance in internal US policy between a highly stimulative fiscal, and a moderately restrictive monetary policy. The practical effect is that the US is conducting a raid on world savings, to finance both its budget deficit and its domestic investment....

"The 64-trillion dollar question is how far US indebtedness can grow before overseas holders of dollar assets take fright as they previously did in the case of Latin America."

Basic problems

There were two ways the spiral of debt could be stopped, Brittan wrote, one was by cutting the budget deficit and paying a high political price, the other was loss of confidence by overseas investors. He expressed confidence that some mix of the two would stop the course toward disaster, but that it would not be predicted "whether there will be soft landings or bumpy corrections; and I am not trying to make people's flesh creep with the more pessimistic possibilities."

Interestingly, although Brittan pre-

sented a detailed and rather narrowly focused analysis of Reagan's economic dilemma, he began his article by mentioning factors that are more political, in the sense that they are not directly or simply the product of immediate economic problems.

"It would not be surprising if the real troubles of the Reagan administration were to begin now that the President has secured a spectacular victory. Mrs Thatcher's banana skins started to accumulate within weeks of her re-election; and in somewhat lower key Helmut Kohl began to reap his full crop of scandals and policy problems after re-election."

The fact is that aggressively right-wing regimes in general suffer from some inherent political disadvantages. One is that since they are normally more directly connected to big business than liberal bourgeois or Social Democratic governments, they tend to be more subject to financial scandals, as in the case of the Flick bribery affair in West Germany.

Secondly, a hard-line rightist course, while it may score temporary victories, tends to build up the potential for unexpected and uncontrollable blowups, as happened, most notably, under the de Gaulle regime in France, and is now threatening to happen under Thatcher.

Thirdly, such governments, because of their need to demonstrate "toughness" are prone to adventures with unforeseeable long-term costs, as in the case of Thatcher's Malvinas war.

Fourthly, rightist governments obviously need rightist personnel, and in the present world such types tend to be people with pretty strange notions of political reality, as Nixon learned to his cost. This species, including one individual who consciously tried to live up to his image of a Renaissance mercenary, got him into the Watergate scandal.

Fifthly, rightist regimes today depend on, and foment obscurantist, retrograde movements, such as the bible-pounding demagogery that is a conspicuous part of Reagan's new right. This development seems already to have cost him the vote of the Jewish community, which was apparently more worried by the shrill cries of the preachers than comforted by Reagan's support for a strong Zionist state.

Polarization nationwide

In fact, the size of Reagan's victory in the electoral college is in the long term an indication of weakness rather than strength, because what it reflects is greater national polarization, the fading of regional differences. His majority in terms of the popular vote was, in reality, less than that of Lyndon Johnson in 1964 or Richard Nixon in 1972.

The achievement of basic civil rights for Black people in the South has led to the replacement of the "solid" South by a stark racial polarization of the vote, with the overwhelming majority of Blacks voting Democrat and the overwhelming majority of whites voting Republican at

the national level. In the short run, that led to Reagan carrying every Southern state, but in the long run it could pose some fundamental problems for the US bourgeois political system.

After this election, the national Democratic Party does not have a lot to offer Blacks, and they are the hardest hit by capitalist austerity. In the Democratic primary campaign, for instance, the Black politician Jackson made foreign policy statements and moves that brought a howl from the entire bourgeois political establishment. A few figures show the sort of pressures there are now even on Black leaders with bourgeois loyalties and aspirations.

Since 1981, the number of those officially classified as "poor" in the US has increased from 25 million to 35 million, the latter right in the middle of what the *Economist* hailed as the greatest boom since the Korean War period. The rate of poverty among the Hispanic population, which is historically placed in the position of a racially mixed people in the context of the US racial caste system, 28.4% were officially "poor" according to 1983 statistics. Among Blacks, the rate was 35.7%. The rate for the society as a whole is 15.2%

Notably, leading organs of public opinion in Western Europe expressed more worry about the effects of Reagan's victory on US foreign policy than *Pravda* or *Izvestia*. For example, in its editorial on November 8, *Le Monde* wrote:

"For the allies of the US, the message is clear. The Americans have given a mandate to a man for whom unashamed egotism is a component part of patriotism. Europe cannot expect any favors or special attention. Today, as yesterday, it will be listened to only to the extent that it demonstrates strength and resolve."

The West German magazine *Der Spiegel* interpreted Reagan's election as a go-ahead for the "Star Wars Plan," the scheme for winning a nuclear war in space

through the new electronics technology. From this, it drew two conclusions: One, the US would proceed with a long-term strategy of preparing for war. Two, this would condemn its capitalist allies to perpetual subordination. In the latter regard, it quoted Hans Mark, former US air force minister:

"Japan is an example. Despite our economic conflicts, we have maintained a certain influence over it because the Japanese know that their security...depends on our nuclear shield. The same goes for Germany. If the Germans or the Japanese thought that they could defend themselves against nuclear attack, a completely new situation would arise."

Der Spiegel commented: "So, the implication is that the 'Star Wars' system is to be built up to defend the US's great power position toward its allies."

The most immediate international sequel to Reagan's election was stepped-up threats against Nicaragua. The November 13 *Financial Times*, and other major capitalist papers interpreted this as a calculated bluff.

On the other hand, the sort of government Reagan heads, like the other rightist governments that have come to power in this phase of the economic crisis, has by its nature a more unsteady finger on the trigger than the capitalist governments of more stable times.

The underlying threat to peace

In this respect, while it is important to understand the limitations of Reagan's victory, that does not mean that the result of the US elections is not a danger to peace. The fact that in a period of capitalist crisis there is still no mass alternative to the bourgeois parties in the world's most powerful country is an increasing danger to all humanity. This point was notably lacking in the Soviet press coverage, for which the only issue was "peace" as such, in isolation from the general dangers created by the crisis of the world capitalist economy.

However, at the same time as the US elections-without-an-alternative, there was an election with an alternative, a real choice in Nicaragua. And the Nicaraguans demonstrated that, even facing economic hardship and the threat of war, the great majority of working people will give enthusiastic support to a leadership that has proved its genuine devotion to their interests and its respect for their democratic rights.

By the same token, the Nicaraguan elections were the most effective answer to growing US military threats. When the masses of American people see their society decaying around them, their economic security increasingly precarious, their standard of living dropping, and a looming threat of nuclear war — and they had not alternative in these elections — how can Reagan get them to accept war against a people that did have an alternative and freely and courageously took it? ■



Massive vote for the Sandinistas followed by new war moves by the US

Vincent KERMEL

Although the bourgeois press generally described them as the first elections since the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, the democratic and pluralistic poll held on November 4 was in fact the first free election in the entire history of Nicaragua.

The withdrawal of the candidates of the Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinating Committee (CDN), a reactionary coalition including bourgeois parties and the employers' organization, COSEP, headed up by Arturo Cruz has been used by the imperialist propaganda machine as a basic argument for disputing the legitimacy of the elections.

However, after 80% of those eligible to vote did so and the FSLN got about 67% of the vote, the CDN has been shown up as a media event, made to look as if it represented more than it actually did in order to suit the needs of US strategy.

Some leaders of the Socialist International, including figures who endorsed the election of Napoleon Duarte in El Salvador without a qualm, nonetheless used the CDN boycott as a pretext for lamenting, as the Spanish premier, Felipe Gonzalez, did, the fact that "the Nicaraguans have not been able to make a real choice."

When you consider that the elections organized last spring in El Salvador by the US embassy and the Salvadoran dictatorship were generally presented as an expression of the regime's desire to democratize, the bias of the capitalist press becomes striking.

The lesson in democracy shown by a mass electorate giving a large majority of its votes to the revolutionary organization that is leading the process underway in Nicaragua and holding state power there, could not get anything like the same generosity from the international press.

Of course, it is not surprising to see the big press violently opposing the march of a people toward national independence and socialism. But it has to be understood as well that this disinformation campaign is preparing international public opinion for stepped-up military pressure against Nicaragua and for the possibility of a US intervention against the Sandinista revolution.

Several lessons can be drawn from the election results. The first is that none of the groups that claim to represent a socialist alternative — the PCN, the PSN or the MAP-ML — nor even all three of them together, since their combined vote was under 4%, is in a position to challenge the FSLN's political hold on the working masses. Their electoral score shows quite well the relatively marginal role they are playing in the revolutionary process.

Secondly, the abstention rate of around 20% on the average, but going as high as 30% in some regions inhabited by Miskito Indians, was the result of a combination of factors: Firstly, the problems of holding an election in a country at war; Secondly, the lack of democratic traditions and the opposition of some strata that are relatively rather small.

Finally, the three bourgeois parties that stood in the elections — the PCD (14%), the PPSC (about 6%) and the PLI (about 10%) — got a total of around 30% of the votes cast. These results show the democratic character of an election procedure that allowed a not insignificant fringe of certain sections of society to express their discontent over the economic problems engendered by the imperialist boycott and the aggression of the contras.

However, the fundamental lesson of this election lies elsewhere. It rests in the fact that the great majority of the working people of Nicaragua, and especially of the youth, who represent

more than 50% of the population, clearly demonstrated their support for the process of national and social liberation that is underway and for the FSLN, which is leading it.

Thus, when Daniel Ortega, the newly elected president of the country, declared on the very eve of the election, "we have to be ready to fight in the streets of Managua against the Americans with guns, stone or machetes," he was only expressing a profound popular feeling.

This election also highlighted what manifold and powerful pressures the Sandinista revolution has to face. For example, the representatives of the Socialist International mounted a vast diplomatic operation to try to open the way for the reactionary forces of the CDN to participate in the November 4 vote. Under their auspices, several meetings were held between the Sandinista leaders and Arturo Cruz without result.

So, it is important to expose the more subtle counterrevolutionary game of some of the components of the Socialist International, which want to take advantage of the polarization between Nicaragua and US imperialism and the tight corner into which the revolution has been pushed in order to advance their own proposals for regional compromise and to bring to bear their own pressures for "moderation."

Their objective is to prevent an advance of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua and a spread of rebellion throughout the region in response to the war policy of the United States.

Thus, the Sandinista leadership is continually forced today to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis that represent the two poles of imperialist strategy in order to continue its advance and defend the Nicaraguan revolution.

Nonetheless, the most immediate danger to the revolution is the military escalation of US imperialism. Reagan did not wait long after his reelection before launching a new provocation designed to step-up the pressure on the Sandinista revolution, threatening to bomb the country's ports if it accepted delivery of Soviet Mig aircraft.

The Sandinista's electoral triumph and the exposure of the CDN's lack of credibility, when it, along with the contras, is Washington's main card in Nicaragua, are factors that could lead US imperialism to increase its military pressure.

In this context, the US administration's recent declarations against Soviet aid to Nicaragua have two precise objectives. The first is to seek a pretext for an immediate escalation of surveillance and sabotage on Nicaraguan territory. Thus, US planes have for the first time carried out reconnaissance flights covering Nicaragua from one end to the other, while an American general has made an ostentatious appearance on the southern border of Nicaragua, where there is a big concentration of contras.

Moreover, the US diplomatic offensive is also designed to assemble the political conditions for direct imperialist military intervention and to step-up in the immediate period ahead the military actions of the contras and the sabotage actions of the CIA.

The Sandinista leadership has taken very seriously the escalation of aggressive acts and statements by the American government. Twenty thousand youth and trade unionists who were to participate in the coffee harvest have been kept in the capital. At the same time, a military alert has been declared, and Nicaragua has demanded a meeting of the UN Security Council.

The alert must also be sounded throughout the whole of the international movement in solidarity with the Sandinista revolution. It must prepare to oppose every new imperialist tightening of the squeeze on Nicaragua. ■

'We have won!'

The following articles from our correspondent in Nicaragua were written respectively in the capital of Managua and the northern city of Esteli in the first week of November. The contra plan for seizing Esteli and its importance is also taken up in the interview with Alain Krivine, a French Fourth Internationalist leader who was also in Nicaragua in this period.

Frede JAKOBSEN

MANAGUA — A boiling, seething, dancing sea of humanity — that is what downtown Managua was like Sunday night [November 4]. The city exploded in a frenzy of triumph. The first election results had not yet been announced. But what the hell. No one had any doubts about who had won the elections. It was the FSLN, the Sandinistas.

From all over the city, people streamed toward the new, gigantic Carlos Fonseca Square. From the big loudspeakers on the platform, there was a roar of popular samba tunes, varied once by Carlos Santana. There was very little beer or rum in evidence. The sale of alcoholic drink was banned for the whole of election day. But nonetheless there was intoxication. People were drunk on victory. Could anyone still say that the Sandinistas do not have the people's support?

A display of festive fireworks lit up the square. It had started already at noon, when people started to gather at the Sandinistas' main campaign headquarters. Since then, the bangs had continued almost without letup — it was as if the war had come to Managua. The people were in no hurry to go home. Monday had been made an official holiday, with full pay.

It took time to count the votes for president and vice president and for the ninety-member national assembly. But the vote in a single election district in Managua already gave a fairly good indication. Here the FSLN got 75%, or 150 votes. The conservative PCDN came in second with 50 votes; the liberal PLI, third, with 15 votes. The others got 10 votes or less.

The PLI had in fact decided to withdraw from the elections, after heavy pressure from the US embassy, which had put the heat on all three bourgeois parties. But a lot of PLI members opposed the party leadership and continued the campaign over the final two weeks. And the CSE — the Supreme Board of Elections — decided that those candidates that did not agree with the party leadership could remain on the ballot. A lot of them wanted to do that. And that forced the PLI leadership at the last minute to alter its decision and stand as a party.

For one night, the intoxication of victory drove away the dark clouds. As many people as there were in the streets Sunday night, there had been more a few days before. Last Thursday, the Sandinistas ended their election campaign with a giant rally in Carlos Fonseca Square.

Some 400,000 persons took part, the Sandinista daily, *Barricada*, wrote the day after. According to *El Nuevo Diario*, an independent daily that supports the Sandinistas, it was 300,000.

The CIA's mouthpiece in Nicaragua, the reactionary *La Prensa*, claimed that there had been nothing special. On the other hand, the paper printed a picture of two children at a bar with FSLN eye-shades and raised a hue and cry about it.

But there were a lot of people there. Thousands streamed into downtown Managua, from the most distant neighborhoods, from the many factories along the Carretera del Norte, the road to the airport.

The day after, the rally was broadcast by the Sandinista TV station. The program ended with a panorama shot of the square, under the caption, "If this isn't the people, where are they, then?"

Se siente, se siente, Daniel es presidente ("You feel it, you feel it, Daniel is president") the crowd chanted at the FSLN leaders. Spirits were high, but the

'We are people who live from the land...' (DR)

mood became more and more serious as Daniel Ortega's speech went on.

The speech was a direct appeal to the people of Managua. It was a warning, and a strong call to prepare for an American invasion, and, as an inevitable result of that, bombing of the capital city.

"Today the military defense of the revolution is the highest priority. And the second is defense of production."

Ortega enumerated the most recent provocations by the US. The day before, an FR-71 military plane had flown over most of Nicaragua. A cargo ship had been harassed by American warships and planes. The warships off the coasts had moved closer to Nicaragua.

Two days before, contras had attacked a peaceful rural town in the north, San Gregorio. They bombarded it with mortars. The first shell hit a house where six children were sitting and eating their breakfast. They were all killed on the spot. This ruthless attack, like so many others, brought the war home to the people in the north. But it is not always such an immediate thing for the people in Managua.

Barricada and *El Nuevo Diario*, of course, had full reports of the attack, with pictures of six small bodies. But *La Prensa* did not write a word about it.

The fact that the war is not always such an immediate thing in Managua gave Ortega's speech special force.

"We have to make sure that they don't catch us unawares. The US's criminal actions will cost them dearly. We will be able to put up the sort of resistance necessary to defeat the American invasion, no matter how much time it takes us. We will prepare to fight with bullets, with machetes, with stones, with anything we can get our hands on — to fight until we have driven them out of Nicaragua."

It was a grave speech, a speech that sobered the crowd of hundreds of thousands of people. A few days later, the FSLN won the elections. Now the vote is over, but the threat from the US is more immediate. Now the preparations are continuing for meeting an invasion. ■



'We don't sleep in Esteli'

Frede JAKOBSEN

ESTELI — Just before we reached Esteli, we saw the first sign of stepped-up preparedness. A helicopter was flying over the city. As we drove into the city along the Pan-American Highway, the cars were checked. The reason for this alertness was clear enough. The 'Esteli Plan' has been known for some time. It is a scheme by the contras to take a large town, Esteli, to show that they are worth the pay they get from Uncle Sam. Out in the mountains around Esteli, 3,000 contras have gathered.

Not only are the voluntary militia and the military ready. The revolutionary watch groups are also on the alert, all over the country but especially in Esteli.

We are touring the poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of Esteli. It is hot. But that is not why people are standing or sitting outside their homes. They are on the lookout for anything strange in the neighborhood. In the outlying neighborhoods, the vigilance network is very extensive. The committee members patrol the neighborhood at night with arms. And further outside the city, there are command posts with militia members.

Gloria Castillo is the leader of the vigilance committee in this district. She knows everybody, and everybody knows her. She is a vivacious and very popular 42-year-old woman. She looks older. Her life has been hard. She is blind in one eye. She has to wear glasses in order to see with the other. It was only after the Sandinista victory in 1979 that she learned to read and write.

In a house with a dirt floor, she looks out onto the road. There is a picture hanging there of her two sons. She lost them both. One died in the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. The other fell later in the fight against the contras. She still has her husband and a daughter or two. It is hard to find out who belongs to the house and who is just dropping in.

"We have war on one side and aggression on the other," she says. "But you see yourself, we can also have a good time. Our sense of humor never fails us.

"There are contras around the town, and naturally they want to come in. But we never sleep in Esteli. Women and men, everyone is ready. That's why the neighborhood defense committees have been armed. That's not necessary down in Managua."

"Is it easy to get people to do guard duty," I asked.

"When there's peace and quiet, we sleep soundly at night. But when there's

aggression like now, we are all on the alert. People come in on their own. Of course, not all of them get weapons. We know the people and who should not have weapons.

"Now, when the contras are putting on the pressure, there has been an influx of people that has surprised even me, from twelve-year-olds on up. But we don't give guns to twelve-year-olds or elderly people. We look after them, the same way we look after our revolution. Instead we have them look after the still younger children or the still older people, prepare food for others, and so on."

"What sort of effect does it have on people in the town that there are about 3,000 contras out there?" I asked.

"Obviously, some people are nervous. That's mainly the people who are not organized in some places. We are not frightened.

"At the moment, we are facing more of a threat here than we were after the US invasion of Grenada a year ago. We feared an invasion at that time. We dug trenches around the town."

Gloria has been politically active for eight years. She has quite a clear idea of who the contras are. She hardly needs any more experience.

"The contras are mercenaries, totally run by the CIA. They kidnap men and women here in the countryside. They put some of these people in their units and call it a civil war."

She has no doubt about the fact that the Nicaraguans are facing a powerful enemy.

"The contras' weapons and all their equipment is a lot more sophisticated than ours. And in general we are short of weapons. We have a lot more men and women to defend the city than we have weapons for. On the other hand, we have something the contras don't have. We have a cause to fight for. That gives us enough courage and will to fight."

While Gloria is talking, the TV is blaring a broadcast of Nicaragua's national game, baseball. It seems unreal that the war is only a few kilometers away.

"We stop a lot of people on guard duty," Gloria says, "but we see quickly whether they are contras or peaceable people."

Gloria gets more excited when she starts to talk about the latest atrocities by the contras and the CIA.

"They have started dropping toys and pencils from the air. When the children pick them up, they explode in their hands. They are filled with American explosive material. So far, fortunately, there have not been any too serious accidents here.

"We found out later from the *comandante* that these atrocious weapons have also been used further up north.

"There was a time when there was weariness, when people did not join in the activities," Gloria says. "For five years the Sandinista government has trusted the people. And the people have trusted the government. But they have not always been active. In this situation, it has been different. There has been support. Both we and the government want peace. But we are obliged to wage war in order to get peace."

Gloria tells about contras who accepted the government's offer of amnesty if they laid down their arms and came home.

Gloria and a lot of other mothers of soldiers killed in the fighting were very unhappy about the offer of amnesty. "Why should we forgive them? They killed my two sons. We discussed this with the government. And we became convinced that we should not think just about ourselves and our feelings. We have to think about the revolution as a whole. Our revolution is a generous one."

We went down to an old store that functions as a headquarters for the armed night patrols. Most of the people there are youngsters. Some of them are so small that their guns are almost bigger than they are. They do not get weapons until they are 14 years old, but some of them look younger than that. And some of them are still younger. They do guard duty, but without weapons.

"It may be that some of the contras will come into the city, but one thing is sure, if they come in, they will not go out again."

Wilma Olivas coordinates the guards in this neighborhood of 2,500 inhabitants.

"We are all Sandinistas here," she says. "If they take this neighborhood, they'll kill us all.

"What went on in Somoza's time was dreadful. We don't want to go back to that. They'll never force us to our knees. It's better to die on your feet than live on your knees.

"The people here are organized on a house-by-house basis. We have a big army," she says.

We go back into the city.

Gloria reports that the defense committees in Esteli, unlike many other places, are not new. They were started during the insurrection.

"But then it was with different sorts of weapons. We used what we had at hand — sticks, machetes, stones and molotov cocktails."

"No *pasaran*," they say in Esteli, "They shall not pass."

The people in Esteli mean it. And they know what they will face if there is a serious attack. Esteli is a heroic city. Somoza bombed it three times. That was only five years ago. The people can remember the sea of fire in the center of town. They can remember all the dead. And they want to maintain the liberty that cost them so many sacrifices. ■

'Eventually, the whole population will be armed'

Main Krivine, a leader of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League — LCR) and of the Fourth International, has recently returned from Nicaragua. A correspondent of *Rouge* (the LCR's newspaper) asked him for his views on what is happening.

Question. Can you go over some of the lessons of the Nicaraguan elections?

Answer. The elections had a double function. Externally, the aim was to break the economic and diplomatic isolation of Nicaragua in the face of the threatened American invasion. From this point of view the results were very positive. The attitude of the USA might not have changed, but the fact that the elections were completely free has helped legitimise the Sandinista revolution.

Internally, the elections attest to the popularity of the FSLN and have an educational value from the political point of view for the population. The revolution has shown itself capable of taking up arms but also of giving people back their dignity.

The elections also showed the complete absence of any alternative from the right-wing parties that stood. These people are not able to roll back the gains of the revolution. But they simply take up in a demagogic way any signs of discontent. In particular, they exploit the real difficulties in distribution and supply and compulsory military service.

Q. How is the relationship of forces shaping up inside the country under the invasion threat?

A. The real threat is more directly from the Americans than from the contras. This is polarising the country. The mobilisation against the US threat involves practically all young people and a large majority of the population as a whole. Faced with this, there is a significant minority who support the contras, mainly within the bourgeoisie but also amongst the peasantry, especially in the north.

This minority was expressed partly in abstentions and spoilt ballots. The votes for the right-wing parties is more an expression of discontent with the FSLN than support for the contras. It also reflects electoral traditions. Some forty kilometers from Managua I met a peasant militia man who explained to me: 'My family has always voted for the Democratic Conservative Party, but I have a rifle to defend the revolution.'

When it comes down to it, there are two right-wing opposition forces with a real infrastructure. These are the bosses' organisation, COSEP, and the hierarchy of the Catholic church. Following the murder of six children by the contras, one representative of the church stated that, 'acts of aggression against the body are less serious than acts against the soul'.

Q. What have been the consequences of economic sabotage on the progress of the revolution?

A. The government has had to face a number of difficulties. The contras are pursuing their policy of burning down co-operatives and centres of production. In response to this, apart from deploying troops, the Sandinistas are attempting to restrict the social base of the contras by pushing agrarian reform. This involves setting-up state farms and above all co-operatives.

In the towns they have to cope with the black market and speculation. The measures they have taken are to monitor the cost of production of essential goods and to guarantee minimum supplies. Contrary to what the press reports say, it is not 'ration cards' that have been issued but cards to guarantee supplies.

All these plans and proposals are tied to preparations for an invasion. The re-supplying of the troops has been severely interrupted and the government has to sacrifice 'everything for defence'. Coffee, the export which accounts for one third of the inflow of currency, has become part of the economic battle. Comandante Wheelock announced to 1,200 students and school students who were supposed to be using their holidays for the harvest

In memory of a friend

On November 4, Enrique Schmidt-Cuadra died leading a unit against the contra band that killed six children in a mortar attack on Esteli.

In exile in Cologne before the victory of the FSLN, he was a central figure in building solidarity work with the fight in Nicaragua. In this, he collaborated closely with activists of the German section of the Fourth International, the GIM. On his death, the GIM issued a statement, saying, among other things:

"We are proud to have known Enrique as a friend and a comrade. The Cologne group of the GIM will honor his memory...."

"It is a strange twist of fate that Enrique, who devoted himself entirely to the fight for freedom and equality, had to die on the very day of the first free elections in the history of his country." ■

that they were instead being mobilised to defend Managua.

It is a terrible blow. Half the harvest will be lost. But already a thousand American volunteers have arrived to do the harvest in the war zones on the Honduran frontier.

Q. How is the population being mobilised in the face of the threat?

A. Even during the elections, the response to the contras' antics were spectacular. The latter wanted to take possession of the town of Esteli, the day before polling day. The whole town was put on war alert and the inhabitants soon had trenches built... The contras were only able to attack eleven of the 3,800 polling booths.

The real threat comes from the preparations of the Americans. There are warships near the port of Corinto and daily flights of supersonic aeroplanes, both for spying purposes and to intimidate the population.

This very morning [November 12], the ministry of defence published a communique declaring a state of emergency. All the organisations of popular self-defence are in position, as are the first-aid service battalions. Tanks are in strategic places. Anti-aircraft batteries have been deployed and CDS members in all the towns are digging trenches and shelters.

Q. The invasion seems to be more and more imminent. How can it be prevented?

A. The US cannot tolerate this revolution. For Reagan the question is how to destroy it. Two obstacles could stand in his way. The level of popular mobilisation shows that Nicaragua will not be another Grenada. The population is ready to fight for 'every house' and 'every street corner'. Five hundred thousand arms have been distributed, and the entire population of Managua is going to be armed.

In addition, the FSLN has developed a fallback plan with guerrillas in the mountains, as they did under Somoza. Tomas Borge announced today that, 'If there is an invasion, the Americans should know that there will no longer be any borders in Central America.' An American invasion would set the whole of Central America alight.

The other decisive factor is international pressure, which the FSLN are counting on a great deal. Every action of solidarity is held up as an example. But here it is important to overcome the weakness of the support in Europe.

This revolution that they want to strangle provides a testing ground for the entire world. Nicaraguans do not understand the campaign of hate against them. Why should they be denied the right to defend themselves when the US is arming the aggressors?

The Nicaraguan people are aware that they are conducting an unprecedented experiment in democracy within a revolution under siege. The most important thing is to break their isolation. ■

Miners under new attack

The British miners' strike is now in its most critical phase. On the one hand, diminishing fuel stocks are bringing ever closer the prospects of power cuts. Leading government figures have always said that the moment the first power cuts start, the miners will have won.

On the other hand, precisely when victory is within reach, the labour bureaucracy is refusing to give the miners effective solidarity action or political support.

Steve ROBERTS

The latest phase of the strike began with the order of the law courts to seize the funds of the National Union of Mineworkers. The seizure of the funds came as a result of a legal action taken by two strike-breaking miners. The scabs asked the courts to declare the strike non-official. The judge said that the strike was illegal. The union was then found to be 'in contempt' of the court ruling after Arthur Scargill declared that the strike was and remained official.

The union was fined £250,000 in a move that was widely welcomed in ruling-class circles as a concerted bid to destroy the union.

After a similar fine was imposed on the print workers' union a year ago, the NUM had taken the precaution of transferring all its £8 million funds abroad, ironically enough using the exchange control regulations that Thatcher had introduced for her friends in big business! The courts ended up with only £8,000 towards their target. However, the funds cannot be used for day-to-day business and the union is now entirely reliant on donations made to the Miners' Solidarity Fund (see page 13).

This action is only one of a number now being brought by scab miners with the backing of big business under Thatcher's anti-trade union laws. However, the miners are not the only section of the British working class under threat.

In recent weeks there have been a rash of major strikes in Britain's car industry. Britain's carworkers have gained confidence from the miners' strike and from rising production.

Workers at Austin-Morris car plants who voted for strike action at mass meetings found their unions pulled in front of the courts under laws which require a secret ballot to be taken before strike action is legal. No other country in Western Europe requires similar pre-conditions for strike action.

The action taken by the courts over the Austin Morris strike presages the future for the unions if the miners are defeated.

The government is starting to claim victory in the strike, basing itself on the numbers of miners returning to work. The numbers of 'back to workers' took a sharp increase at the beginning of November as the coal board employers offered over £1,000 to every miner who returned.

With miners' families accumulating huge debts, some could not resist the bribe. The absolute numbers of those returning to work remains small in the vast majority of areas.

For example, on November 10, there were only 3.5 per cent of NUM members back at work in Scotland, 0.4 per cent in Yorkshire, 0.2 per cent in the northeast and less than 0.1 per cent in South Wales.

The back to workers have been used as an excuse by the police to attack picket lines trying to stop them returning.

TUC prepares sell-out

Some of the worst police violence of the strike has taken place in the first weeks of November especially at the Cortonwood colliery in South Yorkshire, where one man returning to work was used by the police to confront and batter pickets. Getting these miners back to work also will make it easier in the future for the police to gain access to coal stocks at the pit-heads — stocks which are now becoming desperately needed by power stations and industry as the cold weather begins to bite.

It is the running down of the stocks and its effects on power generation that give the miners their greatest prospect of victory.

Yet the Trades Union Congress, the 10-million-strong federation of Britain's major unions, has not delivered the solidarity promised by its September conference which overwhelmingly voted to support the miners.

The resolution passed at that conference voted that those unions with members in power stations would propose to their members to refuse to accept new supplies of coal or to allow stations to switch from coal to oil and to assist the miners in other ways. The electricians'

union and the power engineers' union are both on the extreme right wing of the trade-union movement.

Just how right wing can be gauged from the fact that some electrician union leaders have asked for membership of the bosses' organisation, the Confederation of British Industry! The employers, displaying more class consciousness than these union leaders, refused.

These unions have refused any assistance, with their leaders openly calling for the defeat of the miners. Other unions with important memberships in the power stations also have not given the type of support necessary to effectively support the miners.

Indeed members of these unions, like this year's chairperson of the TUC, a member of GMBATU, one of the biggest power station unions, have instead come forward to call for a deal to be imposed on the miners by the TUC and the coal employers — over the heads of the NUM leaders.

This has been the fear of NUM leaders from the beginning of the dispute, when they refused to ask the TUC for help for fear that just such a deal would be the result.

Although the statement was refuted by other leaders of the TUC, it was clear that this was the strategy now favoured by TUC and Labour Party leaders.

The miners struck back by calling a series of national solidarity rallies in the main mining areas and inviting Neil Kinnock, the leader of the Labour Party, and Normal Willis, the general secretary of the TUC, to speak to them.

In his most open act of treachery yet Kinnock refused, citing 'other engagements'. Kinnock's refusal was met with fury within the Labour Party. Some 45 left-wing Labour MPs signed a statement protesting at Kinnock's lack of activity in support of the strike.

Kinnock was unabashed, however, comparing Arthur Scargill's leadership of the miners' strike to a 'Gallipoli' (a reference to the massacre of British and empire troops during the first world war in Turkey which was attributed to disastrous 'generalship'.) When asked whether he thought the strike was crumbling, Kinnock replied that he would 'wait and see'.

The fury over Kinnock's statements was compounded by the fact that, after having been elected on a left ticket at the Labour Party conference of 1983, Kinnock has now moved firmly to the right playing a key role in a recent purging of the left in the party leadership, following the party conference of October.

At this conference Kinnock was completely routed in his attempt to denounce miners' violence on the picket lines and the conference voted without reservation to support the strike.

However, these denunciations of miners' violence were repeated by Norman Willis, when he *did* appear at one of the miners' rallies. Willis was almost drowned out by heckling and shouting at a rally he attended in South Wales, in an explo-

sion of anger from miners who have seen two of their numbers killed and over 8,000 arrested by police action on the picket lines.

Victory lies within the reach of the miners. Thatcher and the state have shown that they cannot smash the miners or their union. The 'only' obstacle is the treachery of the TUC and Labour Party leaders.

However, this obstacle may yet prove to be decisive as it did when the British miners struck in 1926 and a great general strike movement in their support was derailed and sold out by the TUC.

The degree to which the left in the unions and Labour Party can rise to the level of the occasion to defeat the betrayers will determine the fate of 1984's strike. ■

Miners' wives and Greenham Common women tour West Germany

In October four women on a delegation from Britain toured West Germany. Marie Collins and Kay Sutcliffe from the Kent miners' wives committees, and Lesley Boulton and Ilona Aronowsky from Greenham Common women against the missiles and miners' wives support committees.

The purpose of the delegation was to inform people about the strike, the political situation in Britain and the self organisation of the miners' wives and their links with the women of Greenham.

The four women were divided in two and sent on two tours during which they spoke at 12 meetings and addressed a total of 1,300 people (not including the anti-racist and the peace movement actions). They raised about 16,000 German marks (8,000 US dollars or £6,000) and were well received by male and female trade unionists and activists in the peace movement.

The following description of the tour and interview with the women at the end was taken from *Was Tun*, the paper of the German section of the Fourth International.

In Cologne, speaking to the wind-up rally of the March Against Racism, Kay stressed the support for the miners' strike by the Blacks living in Britain. Leslie gave greetings to the founding conference of Maulwurf [the German youth organization in solidarity with the Fourth International]. At a solidarity concert for the March Against Racism, money was collected for the miners.

The meeting two days later held by the Women and Work Group, in collaboration with the VHS (1) was the largest one of the tour (about 200 people). In Heuckelhoven, the discussion soon came around to Northern Ireland and the parallels with the miners' strike. A group of young Protestants and Catholics from Northern Ireland was there.

In Luenen, a mining region like Hueckelhoven, the meeting was organized by the women of the ASF, Miners' Wives Against Pit Closures and the Hoesch Women. (2) Despite the attitude of IG Bergbau [the right-wing led German miners' union], which is giving the strike hardly any official support, the British women were shown many expressions of solidarity. There is an effort underway to twin Luene/Dortmund with Leeds.

In Oberhausen, a solidarity committee organized the meeting, with the presence of a leader of IG Bergbau, who — against the official line of the union — has organized support in his area. Further solidarity actions were agreed on — collections at workplaces, invitations to speak to miners and especially the children of miners.

In Osnabrueck, the women of the IG Metall and the German Confederation of Trade Unions [DGB] issued the invitation. The local DGB organized a press conference in the afternoon. In Stuttgart, the IG Metall local women's committee

Lesley Boulton was calling an ambulance when this policeman charged at her (DR)



organized a meeting. In a very lively discussion with a well-informed public, there were continual comparisons of the experiences in the miners' strike and the 35-hour week strikes, in particular as regards the role of the police.

The local women's committee officially adopted the miners' wives committee in St. Helen's, Stuttgart's twin city, and appealed to the local IG Metall to do likewise for the NUM in St. Helens. These examples of twinning cities as a form of solidarity among workers seem to be being widely imitated.

Women's groups and left organizations set up meetings in Mannheim, Aachen, Karlsruhe and Ruesselsheim. In Tuebingen, a rally was organized by the women of Dru-Pa [the printing workers' union], the Postal Workers Union, the Railway Workers Union and the university workers' assembly. These meetings adopted resolutions calling for organizing further solidarity and building direct contacts with the miners' wives committees. In the long run, this will be the most important result of the tour. The money collected, which will immediately be followed by further funds from the mining regions, totalled 16,300 DM.

The close collaboration between the NUM and the British peace women was stressed by Lesley in her speech to the Stuttgart peace rallies and by Marie and Ilona in their speeches in Munich and Dortmund on the Women's Day that was set aside during the week of peace actions.

1. VHS is an adult education center. — IV.
2. The ASF is a women's organization of the Social Democratic Party (SPD); Hoesch is a steelworks. — IV.

Question. How did it happen that the miners' wives organized independently during the strike and that you have come now to speak on your own account at rallies in West Germany?

Kay. Most of the women started from the outset of the strike to organize in action groups. The problem of survival came to the fore very soon. The men weren't bringing home any wages or strike pay. Savings were used up quickly. And at the latest, when cars, TV sets and furniture were pawned, we had to start collecting money, food and clothing.

However, some of us were already involved in previous strikes, such as the one in 1974, when miners' wives committees were set up. At that time, we thought of ourselves as autonomous groups, but we were only concerned with supplies. We asked the NUM what we should do and dissolved the committees after the strike. At that time, we had no objectives that went beyond the strike.

Today, we think that that was a mistake. With our women's action groups, we want now to lay the foundations for building a national and international women's movement.

Q. How is that going?

Kay. We started very early making contact with the Greenham Common women. In July, we held regional marches jointly with them in Northern Ireland, Scotland and South Wales. A march through northern England went from the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at Capenhurst to Mansfield in the Nottinghamshire coalfields. Our slogan was "Mines not missiles." The Greenham Common women did picket duty with us. We held joint rallies. Afterward, we held a conference. Some 75% of those who attended were miners' wives, 25% were women from the miners' support committees, and there were also Greenham Common women there. We set up a national coordinating committee. As its first

goal, it decided to build a national women's demonstration in support of the miners' strike for August 11. About 20,000 women took part in the march, even though the press did not go to the trouble of reporting that it would take place.

We have become a political factor. The bourgeois press is trying over and over again to demoralize the strikers by focusing on housewives who supposedly or in fact are trying to get their husbands to go back to work. The workers' families themselves are supposed to be putting pressure on them. We have taken up the fight against this splitting tactic, with considerable success. The majority of the miners' wives are for the strike and actively support us.

Q. Is your work getting recognition from the men? Has anything changed in your relationship with the men?

Marie. In general, we are completely accepted by the men. You hear most of them saying, "It's the women who'll win this fight. They're fighting against hunger, and it's by hunger that Thatcher wants to force us back to work." We're not just bringing the men soup. We do picket duty with them, and like them, we get a very modest financial compensation for it.

Naturally, there are differences. In South Wales, for example, women are having difficulties in being accepted on picket lines. In Kent, where I come from, we have already gone a long way. The miners' wives committees participate officially in the daily meetings of the strike committees. Our proposals are considered by the NUM. It informs us regularly about the latest developments. The men come to us with requests for organizing demonstrations or to speak at rallies. We women are playing an important role in the publicity work. We often do things that the men can't.

For example, the men are often prevented from speaking at rallies or doing

picket duty in other districts having been arrested and released on the condition that they do not leave their own districts. So, we step in. We are more often invited because we get calls from those who are not for the strike but who are opposed to our children going hungry.

Since we also do picket duty, we can always report that we have seen with our own eyes what happens in the clashes with the police, how they attack us brutally, who starts the violence.

In the families, it is often the men who look after the children while we go to rallies. I have even had arguments with my husband about which one of us is going to stay home and watch the children, when we both want to go on a picket.

Q. Why are the Greenham Common women supporting the miners' wives?

Lesley. We have common demands. The miners are fighting against the government's plan for converting to nuclear energy. A secret government document that has come to light says openly that if that is done, the government will no longer have to fear that power can be cut off by the miners. The NUM is against nuclear energy, and shares with us the demand for unilateral nuclear disarmament. We are also fighting against nuclear energy, because it produces plutonium as a byproduct that will be used in the US and elsewhere to make atom bombs.

We have a common enemy — the government. It has been trying for a long time to break up the camp at Greenham Common by means of police violence. At the same time, it is using dogs, horses and clubs against the strike pickets. We have united because we know that if the miners win, then we will also have come a long way toward winning our objectives.

Q. Do you want to go on working after the strike, and if so, what do you want to do?

Marie. We want to bring together all the women fighting against Thatcher's reactionary policies. The government has already declared its intention to privatize more branches of the economy, health, for example. That will mean a loss of jobs for thousands of women. We can make contact with them, share our experience, and support them.

We also want to become active on other questions, for example, for unilateral disarmament. We want to throw our collective strength into the balance to bring the government down. In November we are organizing the second national women's conference.

We are delighted to have been able to make a lot of contacts with women in West Germany. We hope that these will remain active, that German women will come to Britain, where we can show them how we are living and fighting. We hope that the contacts will go beyond the strike and provide a basis for building an international women's movement. ■

Miners' wives in conference

A delegate conference of women representatives of all the coalfields involved in the miners' dispute met in Chesterfield on November 10 and 11. As a result of this highly successful conference, a national women's organisation has been established. Delegates endorsed the statement below and reaffirmed their total commitment to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in their struggle to retain pits, jobs and mining communities.

Statement of aims

- To consolidate the national women's organisation and ensure victory to the NUM in the present struggle to prevent pit closures and protect mining communities.
- To further strengthen the organisation of women's groups which has been built up during the 1984 miners' strike.
- To develop relationships between the NUM and the women's organisation at all levels.
- To campaign on issues which affect mining communities, particularly peace, jobs, health and education.
- To promote and develop education for working-class women.
- To publicise all activities of the national women's organisation at all levels.

NUM press release

International solidarity with British miners

In Denmark ...From Klassekampen, paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International, November 8, 1984.

'The government will use every means against the miners, including the army.' This was what miners' union president Arthur Scargill said in an interview in his office in Sheffield given to our correspondent, Finn Jensen, at the end of October.

Question. Do you think that the government is going to try to take the 21 million tons of coal stored at the pit heads while the strike is going on?

Answer. Yes, of course the government will do that. It may be difficult to declare a state of emergency in these areas. But the government will do anything to get coal.

Q. Will this lead to a general strike?

A. We will continue to get support for our policies, with the help of pickets we will try to stop the transport of coal, and we will demand that all the unions follow the guidelines laid down by the TUC.

Q. If they take all the NUM's money, how can the union go on functioning?

A. Our forefathers who founded the union had no money. It doesn't matter how much money the courts take from us, we will go on fighting based on our members' support.

Q. Will you get support from the TUC in the coming months?

A. Both the TUC and the international trade-union movement will support us generously as they have for the last eight months.

Q. Is there any danger that the money sent to you, from Denmark for example, will be seized by the courts?

A. Not if the money is sent to the Miners' Hardship Fund, which is independent of the NUM. Monies from this fund are used exclusively to relieve want in the mining communities. It is not used for union work.

Q. Have you considered calling an international day of action in support of the miners?

A. We welcome all support from the international trade-union movement, especially economic support. We are working with the TUC to get more physical support for the pickets, for example, at the power stations, steelworks and in the transport system.

We would also like to thank everyone for the incredible support we have received internationally. Our need is very great. So all economic contributions help us to meet the needs of the people who are taking part in this strike, which is a historic one in Britain and certainly also in Europe.

Q. So far, we have collected over a hundred thousand pounds in Denmark.

A. We know that. And we are very grateful to the Danish working class and the Danish people. We hope that they will do everything they can to help us. We will never forget it.

In Switzerland ...two miners and a miner's wife from the Lancashire pits went to Switzerland at the invitation of the PSO (Socialist Workers Party), Swiss section of the Fourth International on November 2 and 3. At a meeting organised by the PSO they raised 1,600 Swiss francs (£500). The follow-

ing day the two miners participated in a demonstration in support of the peoples of Central America in Berne. Altogether they collected the equivalent of about £1,000.

In the Netherlands ...from October 7 to 14 Nigel Bevan from Penrhwi-ceiber NUM and Hazel Jones from Mountain Ash women's support group (both in South Wales) toured the country seeking support. It was a big success and by the time they returned, the Dutch trade-union confederation, the FNV, had committed itself to launch an official solidarity campaign. At every meeting they attended there was a decision taken to set up a support committee in the locality. Nigel and Hazel discussed with miners in Limburg, with members of the unemployed union and with the Turkish solidarity movement in the Netherlands.

In the USA and Canada ...miner Steve Shukla, who had just completed a successful tour of Canada was denied the right to enter the United States when he tried to leave Montreal airport on November 5. Shukla was stopped by three US customs agents as he was returning for the second time to the USA after a previous tour there. After learning that he was a British miner, the agents subjected him to nearly an hour of political interrogation and harassment. They demanded to know his views on the strike, who had financed his tour, who he spoke to while on tour and whether he had a police record in Britain. The customs agents claimed that the grounds for excluding him were that he did not have a sufficient amount of money on him to establish that he would be able to leave the US. But the real motive was clearly political, an example of the US government trying to block international solidarity among trade unionists. It is important for miners, other unionists and all supporters of democratic rights to protest this attack.

Miners' solidarity conference

The mineworkers defence committee in Great Britain has called the first national solidarity conference in the miners' dispute for Sunday, December 2 in London. The secretary of the committee, Ken Livingstone (Leader of the Greater London Council), is calling upon all trade unionists, Labour Party members and all supporters of the strike to attend the conference and help to map out future solidarity work.

Tony Benn (the leader of Labour's left) and Arthur Scargill, NUM president, will be on the platform. International guests will be very welcome at the conference and, in fact, will be a vital component as they have been to the strike itself.

Why not get your trade union or labour movement organisation to send you as an observer to the conference? Or send greetings from your organisation? The miners are still desperate for money and presents for the children for Christmas. You could take collections and bring donations and greetings to the conference.

Details and registration forms can be obtained from Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N 16, England. Or phone (1) 981-3289.

In Belgium ...the Socialist Workers Party (POS/SAP), Belgian section of the Fourth International, has been organizing delegations to visit the striking coal miners in Britain. In its November 2 issue, *La Gauche*, French-language paper of the POS/SAP, interviewed some trade unionists from Liege just back from St. Helens in Lancashire.



Miners' rally in London (DR)

Albert, a shop steward in a big factory said: 'I had expected to find people sad, starving and shivering with cold, looking forward to a grim future. In reality, there were social activities for the people of the neighbourhood in the 'club', which is sort of a People's House comanaged by the union and mine administration. In the kitchen, a group of miners were counting the money that they had collected that day in a working-class neighbourhood in Liverpool.'

Josiane, a public worker, said: 'My first impression was of an "easy-going strike". But you soon realise that this is because of the extraordinary agreement among the people, the strong cohesion of the community, and the absolute conviction that they will win.'

Albert noted: 'It really got under my skin to see how the mine...was occupied by the cops. At Valfil [in Liege] the steelworkers were masters of the factory during the strike. You could see the cameras and spotlights behind the gate. It was a Chile in a "democratic country". I wonder if we won't see more of the same sort of repression soon in Belgium.'

Josiane said: 'When you see here in Belgium that the Socialist Party has no alternative and is basically for nuclear power and that the FGTB [the SP-dominated union confederation] has only a parody of an alternative...what a difference from the miners' fight.'

Andre picked up the point:

'Here the outcome of struggles is often a foregone conclusion. You know beforehand that the leaders are going to negotiate and capitulate because they don't have an alternative. So, you are defeated from the start.'

'In Britain, they are not playing that game. They are fighting to the finish.'

In Ireland...the following editorial was published in the November 8, 1984 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, a weekly paper published in Dublin that reflects the views of the Irish republican movement. The editorial comments on a Dublin High Court ruling, freezing British National Union of Mineworkers' funds in an Irish bank, at the request of British sequestrators. It was in the Irish language under the title 'Cloch chora' [Stepping Stone]. The translation is by *International Viewpoint*.

During the dispute in 1922 that arose over the treaty that set up the 26-County state [that is, partitioned Ireland, giving limited independence to the major part of it], this state was said to be a stepping stone to the republic [that is, a united Ireland

completely independent of Britain]. It is now clear of course that there was no basis for this argument.

Republicans know very well how the state operates to maintain the status quo. It has been quick enough to put republicans in prison, to intern them, and to put them to death. At the same time, it has proclaimed its independence of Britain.

But with every year that goes by, it is harder for them to maintain this claim. A hundred million pounds are being spent every year to maintain the border [for 'security' on the border]. As usual, they have republican prisoners. The 'Taoiseach' [the old word for 'war chief' that is now used as a title of the Irish prime minister] is a lackey. That was clear when Garret went on the plane with Thatcher recently.

The legal system here is no longer anything but part of the British legal system. This was shown when they started extraditing republicans [for trial under British jurisdiction]. We got a further confirmation of this when they froze the NUM funds at a bank in the 26 Counties.

The coalminers in Britain have been on strike for long months. It is an extremely sharp conflict between the British Coal Board and the miners. Workers in Ireland have given a lot of support to their fellow workers [in Britain].

So far, the High Court in Dublin has gone along with the British High Court, which is acting for the British government. There is every likelihood that it will continue to do so.

The 26-County state is a stepping stone, all right. It is a stepping stone to re-establishing British rule over the whole of Ireland.

In Luxembourg...the Luxembourg section of the Fourth International, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), has produced a pamphlet and a poster for distribution in the factories. On October 25, Jeff Gregory and Diane Gregory, from the NUM and the miners' wives support group in Bold, Lancashire, began a tour of the country, meeting with trade unionists in steel, rail and in the Good Year company. Many organisations have opened bank accounts for the miners, including the Women's Liberation Movement.

Send donations to the NUM to: Miners' Solidarity Fund, Co-op Bank PLC, West Street, Sheffield, Sorting code 08 90 75, Account No 30000009.

One year after the invasion – elections under US occupation

The invasion of Grenada by US forces under cover of a Caribbean joint operation was carried out in special circumstances that helped to assure its success. It put an end to the short-lived regime of the Military Revolutionary Council (MRC), which was universally hated. Headed by General Hudson Austin and supported by the Bernard Coard faction of the New Jewel Movement (NJM), the MRC was responsible for the assassination of Maurice Bishop and several others. It also took the criminal decision to impose a curfew and to disarm the militias. It is therefore hardly surprising that the vast majority of the island's population welcomed the arrival of US troops with a feeling of great relief.

Two to three thousand people were arrested by the occupying forces and taken to what were virtually internment camps, where they were interrogated and beaten up by the CIA. They were then presented with green cards that enjoined them in no uncertain terms not to get involved in any future political activity.

Meanwhile, the psychological warfare section of the US army started their vast machinery rolling to convince Grenadans that they had not only been saved from Bernard Coard but also from Cuban domination. The Governor-General of the island, Paul Scoon, pushed through emergency measures, in particular forbidding all public meetings except religious services or business meetings.

One might imagine that the US would try to make Grenada into a kind of regional showpiece of bourgeois democracy and prosperity by pumping in the dollars. One might also have assumed that the revolutionary movement would find itself without any prospect for reconstruction for many years to come. One year later, however, quite another scenario is before us.

Laurent BEAULIEU

In December 1983 the United States withdrew the vast bulk of the occupying troops, which then numbered six thousand for a population of 100,000 inhabitants. About 300 Americans remained, military staff for the most part, plus the same number of Caribbean soldiers provided mainly by Jamaica and Barbados. The foreign military presence is still very much in evidence today – with jeep patrols, helicopters flying over the country, soldiers posted at the police stations – even if it is not all-pervasive, except in the extreme south of the island, near the Point Salines airport. In general, the US soldiers are fairly discreet. It is rare to see them strolling arrogantly around the streets.

The occupying troops are primarily there as a permanent warning of the limits to which any possible opposition to the regime can go. They also act as a kind of intelligence network. The island is sufficiently small for the US embassy to be able to find out everything that is going on. They do not need to completely patrol the island with uniformed soldiers in order to achieve this. Furthermore, US imperialism is currently working toward the setting up of a regional military force based on the armies and

police forces of the various Eastern Caribbean islands.

Such a force would be based a few dozen kilometers from Grenada and would be equipped with means for rapid deployment. These troops will play the same role of dissuasion that the occupation force is playing at the moment, when and if the latter are withdrawn completely. This is not to mention the fact that the US green berets will be training an elite Grenadan force which will complement the 600-strong police force at present under construction.

The invasion has not, however, led to the complete crushing of the population. The US has not chosen a policy of repressing everything that moves, because it knows very well that such a policy would lead them into continual confrontations with the local population. Also, for the United States, Grenada is less important for its own sake than for the role it plays as an example of the US' determination to pursue its counterrevolutionary policy.

It was the image that Grenada gave of a revolution on the march that had to be suppressed. In contrast, the image that the country is supposed to project today is one of a democracy supported by the people. This is what led the US to set up, at least provisionally, a regime which

could be described as 'freedom on probation' and to fix the elections for the end of 1984, as had been envisaged immediately following the invasion.

This was despite the reservations of a section of the Grenadan bourgeoisie that would have preferred the US to govern the country directly. However, the Interim Council, which was set up a year ago, and the Governor-General Paul Scoon were too unpopular for the elections to be put off any further.

This policy of putting Grenada 'on probation' has not come off without incidents. For example, recently, in Grenville, a young Grenadan was killed by a US soldier. Acts of intimidation are by no means unusual. A few days after the formation of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (MBPM), a bomb was placed in front of the home of its president, Kendrick Radix. Thorough searches, supposedly for arms caches, are not unusual.

The point is that this policy of limited repression is very precarious and at any moment the mask of democracy could suddenly slip. An example of this came about recently with the replacement, overnight, of the person responsible for the elections, Roy Chasteau. The reason given was one of ill-health but in reality, Chasteau demonstrated a spirit of independence which the Americans thought made him unsuitable for the post.

In particular, he is said to have favoured re-opening the electoral register, which had been closed in the spring, when many people, especially the youth, had lost interest in elections. The affair did not end there either. After stormy discussions with Paul Scoon, the election workers went on strike. The majority of them were subsequently sacked.

US policy is so fragile that it has not been possible to turn Grenada into a showcase of Western prosperity. In fact,

The spirit of Maurice Bishop lives on (DR)



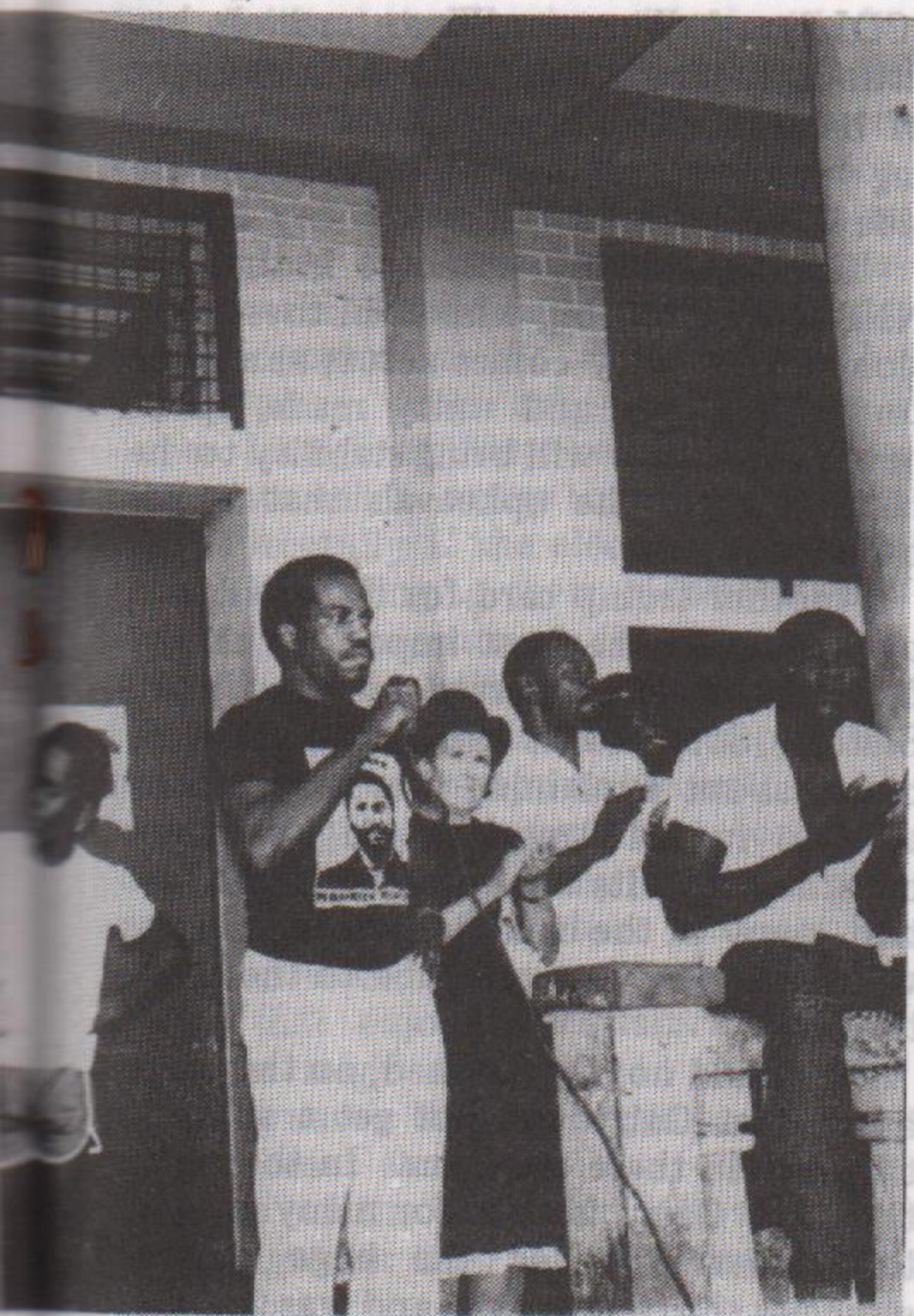
quite the contrary. Journalists who flocked to Grenada at the end of October this year for the first anniversary of the invasion and the inauguration of the new airport did not have to look very hard to get the picture. Because of power cuts half of the time, they had to write their articles by candlelight. The Interim Council did not dare, as it had a few months back, blame the power failures on sabotage by the left.

Through mobilising the workers, using foreign aid and building a dynamic public sector, the revolutionary government had managed to reverse the spiral of economic decline that started in 1973.

However, they also came up against considerable problems. For example, there was the problem of falling prices for the goods Grenada exports; the lack of infrastructures; the decay of industry and the glaring need for new managers. These were all problems they had to face. Since the private sector took back the reins of the economy the situation has again dramatically deteriorated.

Unemployment, which was not inconsiderable, but had been reduced by the revolutionary government which had created 5,000 new jobs, has now multiplied 3 or 4 times. More than 30 per cent of the active population are now without jobs. Several public enterprises have been closed, perhaps in the expectation that they will be taken over by private individuals.

The plantations that were either rented or owned by the state have been returned to their former owners. Some company chiefs are putting redundancy plans into action which they were unable to implement under the revolutionary regime. The number of cooperatives has been cut to half. And finally, there are 600 ex-soldiers of the revolutionary army who, as might be imagined, are hardly having an easy time finding work.



The standard of living has been badly affected by price rises and the ending of most of the social programmes brought in by the revolutionary government. Some of these programmes still exist on paper, but they have been emptied of all content. There are many examples of this. The public transport system still exists, but a lot of buses are kept in the garage, which allows for the growth of the private mini-bus services whose prices are much higher. Public health remains free, but many of the doctors who worked in the clinics were foreigners who were expelled a year ago. The public body that controlled imports of certain basic products, the Marketing National Importing Board (MNIB), no longer has the right to import directly and is therefore forced to sell at the same price as the private shops.

US attacks trade unions

The present authorities know that increases in unemployment present a huge threat to the political stability of the island. The United States Association for International Development (USAID) is trying to increase the number of schemes for creating temporary employment. But going around the island you cannot help wondering what happened to the 57 million dollars — a considerable sum for such a small country — which the US was supposed to allocate in 1984.

In fact the 'aid' policy of the US is governed by two considerations. Firstly the aid must not be too expensive because the USA would then be obliged, politically, to do the same for the regimes of the other small islands of the Caribbean that have demonstrated their allegiance by participating in the Grenadan invasion. On the other hand, the immediate objective was to finish the airport and create an infrastructure around it to attract US investment.

'Investors want elections, security and an infrastructure. We will give them all three, but this requires patience', a USAID representative in Grenada stated recently. The *New York Times* of July 29, 1984, was more explicit about the intentions of the Reagan administration. It revealed that the US was opposed to the international banks giving the needed loans to public companies in trouble, and that state-owned banks and hotels had already been classed as 'good bargains' for private buyers.

The daily newspaper added that the US 'was insisting on the value of a young, English-speaking workforce paid four or five dollars a day, which, although more than the three dollars a day paid in Haiti, still represents a bargain compared to wages in Central America, the far East and the other traditional centres of cheap labour'.

One of the objectives of US imperialism was to bring the trade-union movement to its knees. The trade unions have certainly come in for some rough treatment in the last few months, but the imperialists' aim has not been achieved to date.

The unions had already lost some of their leaders in October 1983 before the US invasion. Some were executed along with Maurice Bishop, such as Vincent Noel and Fitzroy Bain. Others were imprisoned later with Bernard Coard, such as Chalky Ventor, or else they were forced to go into exile. Recently, another trade-union leader, Humphrey, was imprisoned in Grenada. The United States demanded his extradition because he was accused of gun-running for the NJM before the revolution, when he lived in the US.

After the invasion the employers took a tougher line and sometimes refused to even talk to the unions, declaring that they no longer existed and throwing out the odd jibe to the workers like, 'Go and find Vincent Noel now!'

The American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) and the dockers' union, which is traditionally reactionary, concentrated their attacks, sometimes physical, on the two unions whose leaders had been involved in the revolutionary struggle. They made some small progress in this pursuit without entirely achieving their aims. In fact, one of these two unions, the Commerce and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU), has retained its level of membership, and has recently created a new section of the union. The other, the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU), which was more affected by the attacks, has recently led a strike.

As well as this, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which is the umbrella body of all the unions, has reorganised itself, and has so far adopted pro-working class positions. The continued activity of the trade unions has done much to boost workers' morale in the last year.

For many months the Grenadan population remained in a state of shock at the tragedy of the events of October 1983. People were even reluctant to mention it. They wanted it all buried and forgotten.

Moreover, the action of Bernard Coard and his accomplices, carried out in the name of 'communism', opened the way for a wave of anti-communism. And US propaganda was able to cause serious confusion. The old leaders of the NJM, such as Kendrick Radix and George Louison, were more or less associated in most peoples' minds with the crimes of a faction of the NJM or at least with the failure of the revolution.

The creation of the Maurice Bishop Foundation in January 1984, allowed these leaders to recommence their activity, to explain the reasons for the defeat and to revive the 'spirit of Maurice Bishop'. This work, which was carried out by a small team, did a lot to change the general climate and create the conditions for a rebirth of the Grenadan left.

Then came the launching of the weekly *Indies Times* and the creation, at the end of May, of a new party, the MBPM. At the same time the traumatic effects of the events of October 1983 were beginning to wear off. From the beginning of last

summer, a new spirit has begun to awaken in the population.

The occupying troops came to be looked on no longer with benevolence but with mistrust. In some cases, they were treated with open hostility by some layers of the population. Grenadans never had many illusions in the blessings the US occupation might bring, but they saw their situation getting worse and worse every day. On top of this, a section of the population began to get interested in politics again. Last May, for example, an opinion poll revealed that the majority of Grenadans were not interested in elections. The results of such a poll would be very different today. The relative size of election meetings is clear enough evidence of this.

Left reorganise

The turnaround in the situation convinced the MBPM to put up candidates in the December 3 legislative elections. For the MBPM, the elections present the opportunity to contrast the disastrous policies that have been pursued over the last year to the achievements of Maurice Bishop's revolutionary government. It also provides the chance to reestablish a dialogue with the people and to reestablish the links with former sympathisers of the NJM.

The MBPM, therefore, began to emerge as an active and dynamic force. On October 19, one year after what they call 'Bernard's shame', a meeting was held which attracted about 2,000 people. This was the most important political meeting that had been held for a year. This was not just a meeting to honour the martyrs of a year ago. It also marked the launching of the MBPM's campaign. The people present took up slogans like 'US go home', 'The people united will never be defeated' and 'Maurice Bishop', 'MBPM'.

Everywhere, throughout the day, people of all ages were sporting badges of Maurice Bishop and his comrades, and some even went into mourning. The Maurice Bishop Foundation's premises was constantly full of people looking for badges, photographs, posters and T-shirts. Some brought petitions demanding that the bodies of the martyrs be returned to their families or that the international airport be named after Maurice Bishop.

Two thousand leaflets were distributed in half a day. Five hundred people were present at a religious service alongside the families of Maurice Bishop and his murdered comrades. Four hundred people turned up at the cemetery for the unveiling of a bust of Maurice Bishop, even though this ceremony had not been announced publicly.

On October 25, 1984, the anniversary of the invasion, when the Chamber of Commerce closed all the shops so that everyone could participate in the religious ceremonies (which were not a great success) to give thanks for the American



Leaders of the MBPM: Einstein Louison (left) and Kendrick Radix (DR)

soldiers, the MBPM organised a homage in the cemetery to the soldiers of the revolutionary army who died defending their country.

On October 29, the MBPM organised, in a few hours, a meeting to support the election workers who had been sacked. Elsewhere, meetings were organised in several districts and MBPM posters were pasted up all over the island. Two MBPM premises were opened up to the public apart from the one in St. George's.

Among some young people, the MBPM seems to have made a significant impact. The enthusiasm that was shown for the recent MBPM initiatives proves that certain sections of the population have remained politicised.

The October 19 meeting was very impressive in this respect. The crowds there raised their fists and chanted revolutionary slogans with deep conviction. Moreover, the fact that, despite all the anti-communist propaganda that has been heaped on the Grenadan people for the last year, the name of Fidel Castro was acclaimed with great force, is indicative of the changes that are taking place.

When the airport was opened under the name of Point Salines on October 28, a group of Grenadans held up a banner with the words 'Welcome to the Maurice Bishop International Airport' and another in Spanish saying '*muchas gracias, companeros!*' This latter was addressed to the Cuban workers who had participated in the construction of the airport under the NJM government.

Apart from the MBPM, three other parties are putting up candidates in the December 3 elections.

The New National Party (NNP), is a political formation which is supported by the United States. Its creation is about the only successful thing that Washington has done in Grenada in the last year. It was founded at the end of August at a meeting between different parties held on the island of Saint Vincent, with the prime ministers of Barbados, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent in attendance.

The NNP is the product of a fusion of, firstly, Herbert Blaize's Grenadan National Party (GNP), an old bourgeois party which was in power before the

Gairy regime; the Grenadan Democratic Movement (GDM) of Francis Alexis, a party made up of exiles without any base; and finally the National Democratic Party (NDP) led by George Brizan.

The latter party was formed recently around a figure who was linked to the NJM by an electoral agreement in 1976. It aimed to attract people who had never been involved in politics before and might infuse some new blood into Grenadan life.

The NDP claimed to stand for the main parts of the policies brought in by Maurice Bishop, whilst at the same time supporting the American intervention. It is undoubtedly the NDP that will provide the public image for the NNP.

Even if Eric Gairy, the former dictator ousted by the NJM in 1979, is not standing himself his party, the Grenadan United Labour Party (GULP), will present slates in the majority of constituencies. Accusing the NNP of a lack of pro-American fervour, they seem to be well organised and have the support of a religious sect.

Between these two parties is the Christian Democratic Labour Party (CDLP) of Winston Whyte, which has little influence. The CDLP accuses Gairy of being a dictator and the NNP of having 'communists' like George Brizan inside it.

The most likely outcome is that the NNP will be the big winner in these elections. This party comes across as a force for moderation and unity made up of new people who will bring stability to the country after the upheavals that it has been through.

Another trump card for the NNP, and by no means the least important, is the fact that it is supported by the United States! Some of its candidates make no bones about explaining that they will be able to funnel American aid into their constituency. Its weakness lies in the fact that many of the candidates were emigres who have only just returned to the country.

It should not be assumed, on the other hand, that Gairy will not get a substantial vote in these elections. In the country areas Gairy is still, for many people, the leader who led the huge peasant struggles thirty years ago and was the first

to restore dignity to black people. Some people, deeply affected by the events of October 1983, will vote for Gairy's party because they are sure that he, at least, is anti-communist.

It is very unlikely that the election results will produce a very favourable score for the MBPM. There are several reasons for this.

Even though a wind of change has begun to blow across the island, disillusion ensuing from the events of October 1983, political confrontation and hesitation are still the most dominant attitudes among the majority of the population. This is so even amongst fervent supporters of Bishop, whose popularity is still considerable. Moreover, many people may wonder what would prevent any future revolution from ending as the last one has. And it is unfortunately true that the MBPM does not provide all the answers to these very understandable doubts.

The benefits that the revolution provided are numerous, but they did not change Grenadan life in a fundamental way, at least not in the countryside, where support for the revolution was always lukewarm.

Under these conditions, to present oneself as the party that will introduce the social programmes undertaken by the revolutionary government will not be enough to draw the immediate support of large sections of the population. This is especially true in the majority of constituencies where the MBPM has insufficient forces to conduct a really thorough propaganda campaign.

For a large section of the Grenadan population the most important goal in the elections will basically be to prevent the return of Gairy. The polarisation this will produce will lead a lot of people to vote NNP.

Finally, it is also necessary to underline one very important aspect. The elections will not be free and democratic. The electoral register is not going to be reopened, and this will affect, most of all, supporters of the MBPM who were not, at first, interested in the elections. The United States is taking measures to ensure that the electoral machine operates in accordance with their interests. Most importantly, the elections will be taking place while the country is still under foreign military occupation. The electorate will be aware that the US could react forcefully if the election results do not go according to their wishes. This is an additional pressure on the population.

It would be difficult today for the Grenadan government and its imperialist backers to openly repress the left, which is beginning to reappear and to organise itself. This is especially so in a pre-election period. But there is reason to fear that once a new government is in power that enjoys a certain authority, measures might be taken to put a stop to the dynamic that has begun to develop. After these elections, the courageous militants of the Grenadan left will have an even greater need for our international solidarity. ■

The peace movement in Western Europe at a crossroads

The opposition of the peoples of Western Europe to the deployment of American nuclear missiles and, more generally, to the militaristic policies of their respective governments, is far from abating. This was shown in the demonstrations in West Germany, France and Spain, which attracted hundreds of thousands of people in recent weeks.

However, there is no point in denying that the anti-war movement is going through a difficult phase in some countries at the moment. The recent demonstrations sometimes fell short of what the organisers had hoped and the police occasionally took advantage of this by physically harassing demonstrators, especially in the context of activities opposing the role of Nato.

Jacqueline ALLIO

The huge mobilisations in the autumn of 1983 were not able to prevent the deployment of the first missiles in Great Britain, West Germany and Italy. From that point on, peace activists in these countries have been forced to confront the need for new perspectives for action. The process of elaborating these has brought about deep political divisions.

In West Germany, several spokespeople of the movement, including the social democrat Oskar Lafontaine and the writer Heinrich Boll, came out explicitly against the demonstrations against Nato manoeuvres, which eventually drew 50,000 people in Fulda at the end of September. The aim of the action was to block the deployment of British, Belgian, French and German troops which were being assembled for the largest ever series of exercises.

For the reformist leaders such activity seemed to express an unvarnished 'No to Nato'. This, of course, is exactly what it did represent. But this strong medicine did not prevent these same people from taking part in the demonstrations one month later against the deployment of missiles, which attracted 400,000 people throughout the country.

In Bonn, Oskar Lafontaine proclaimed himself firmly for unilateral disarmament, while Heinrich Boll proposed that the German peace movement adopt a goal of bringing down the conservative government of Helmut Kohl and setting up a Red-Green alliance between the Social Democratic Party and the Greens capable of forcing the withdrawal of the missiles.

There is every indication that new and large mobilisations can be expected to tie in with the deadlines for the second phase of deployment of Pershing missiles in West Germany, planned for autumn 1985. In the meantime, the most advanced sections of the movement must fight for a hearing for their view. They

have to explain that there is no hope of a real victory in the fight against the deployment of the missiles without challenging the militarist policies of the present government in their entirety. The British and Italian peace movements face similar problems.

Despite the huge mobilisations in Italy last year, the Rome demonstration on October 27 this year only attracted 6,000 people, that is about a fifth of what was expected.

This mobilisation was, nevertheless, called by a broad spectrum of organisations, ranging from the coordination of the local committees to the three main union federations, and including several organisations linked to the Socialist Party (PS) and the Communist Party (PCI). Furthermore, the date fixed was the day of the meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) in the Italian capital. At this meeting the defence ministers of the European countries in Nato were to reaffirm their total allegiance to the military policies of the USA.

Furthermore, the peace committees in Italy, which have a long tradition of solidarity with the peoples of Central America, had stressed the importance of a massive mobilisation on this theme on the eve of the Nicaraguan and American elections.

A meeting called at the initiative of several delegates to the Perugia conference (1) had been organised for the evening before the demonstration in Rome, on the theme of the politics of the WEU and Nato. It was not a great success.

It has to be noted that the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was absent from this meeting, as they were from the demonstration. They made no secret of

1. See IV, No 61, October 15, 1984.

the fact that they consider the WEU could provide a useful framework for discussion aimed at allowing Europe a greater autonomy from the USA. It is understandable then, that they would not mobilise their supporters to demonstrate against an institution that they judge to be, 'on the whole, positive'.

Nato key issue

In fact, one of the major problems which has appeared lately within the Italian peace movement is precisely the difficulty that local committees have in putting into practice decisions of the national coordinating body, if the PCI happens to be opposed to them. This shows the weakness of the local committees, which allows the PCI room for its manoeuvres. Because they cannot deny the existence and the radical character of the peace movement, the PCI seeks rather to exercise tight control over it. The committees recently rejected the PCI's proposal to replace the existing secretariat of the national coordinating committee with a consultative body, which would give increased power to the political organisations and to individual personalities.

Instead they decided to organise a National Assembly for next January built on the basis of documents, so as to be able to have a thorough discussion on perspectives for the peace movement.

In Great Britain, the local committees of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament face a right-wing offensive by their leadership. The latter refused to support the call for a national demonstration on the fifth anniversary of the decision of the European parliament in 1979 to deploy Cruise missiles. Their alternative proposal was for a national action...against Soviet arms.

Moreover, the CND leadership did nothing to mobilise British peace activists for the Greenham Common women's initiative entitled 'ten million women for ten days against Nato manoeuvres'. This action attracted 40,000 women to the military base on the last day of the September 20 to 30 week of action.

The leaders of CND even refused to inform the press about the police violence to which the women had been treated. In Britain, as in West Germany, the refusal to support the mobilisation was due to its political message. Not only are the CND leadership not prepared to participate in actions against Nato, but they spread the illusion that it would be possible to convert Nato into a defensive pact based solely on conventional arms.

This offensive won a first round with the adoption of the document 'Defence and Security for Britain' at the annual conference of the Labour Party in early October. After very little discussion, this document was endorsed by four fifths of the delegates at the conference. Several left-wing delegates voted for it because it still contained the position for unilateral nuclear disarmament.



Nato protest (DR)

However, the real significance of the text lay in the fact that it strengthened the Labour Party's commitment to Nato, and reversed the position for cuts in military spending. All this was done in the name of a 'non-nuclear' Nato.

Several trade-union leaders argued against a reduction in defence spending on conventional weapons on the pretext that this would create unemployment for workers in the industries concerned. Far from criticising the increased commitment to Nato, the leader of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), Ron Todd, confirmed that a policy aimed to transform the Atlantic Alliance from the inside seemed to him to be 'much more fruitful than to leave it under the control of the USA, who are the ones with their finger on the button'.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the CND leadership rejected a motion from 19 local groups calling for a campaign against Nato, and that they also refused to put this proposal on the agenda for the annual conference of CND, which is due to take place at the end of November. About twenty local committees met in October to prepare a fight at this conference on the issue of 'Britain out of Nato!'

Today we are witnessing a process of political differentiation within the West European peace movements. The local committees determined to maintain a perspective of mass action and to integrate fully the issue of Nato into the struggle are increasingly running up against the reformist leaderships that are digging their heels in and advancing the perspective of negotiations between governments.

This is particularly striking in the case of the Netherlands today. Here the leadership of the Interdenominational Council for Peace (IKV) has refused, up until now, to take a position on the proposal for a mass demonstration in the autumn of 1985, the date when the first missiles are supposed to be deployed in the country. This has not come about through any lack of determination on the part of Dutch activists, especially those in the

Youth Against the Missiles, who have been arguing for the whole movement to organise an independent referendum.

From this point of view, the situation in Belgium seems much healthier. This is another country where the first missiles are due to be deployed in autumn 1985. The main peace organisation in this country, the Flemish VAKA, retains an unbending commitment to unilateral disarmament, in contrast to the illusions being peddled by the Walloon organisation, the CNAPD, which wants to play the negotiations card. The proposal for a huge demonstration on the streets on October 20, 1985, has nevertheless been maintained.

All those who are convinced that the future of the Western European movement lies in its capacity to integrate all aspects of the militarisation policy of the imperialist governments, must turn their attention, above all, to developments in the Spanish state.

After the spectacular mobilisations in the spring of this year, peace groups in that country have drawn up new plans for action in the struggle to force the Socialist Workers Party of Spain (PSOE) government to keep its electoral promise to organise a constitutional referendum on the question of American bases in Spain and on the question of the integration of the country into Nato.

Spain has participated in the policy-making bodies of Nato since 1982, but not in the integrated military structure. The government has just renewed this position. On December 2, there will be a day of action throughout the country, which has been being built since October through various decentralised activities, such as torchlight processions and 'puppet parades'. These activities have already attracted tens of thousands of people.

Everyone is agreed that these activities have been a great success, demonstrating the spread of the movement to new social layers.

It is important, for example, to underline the significance of the 'self-organised' referendum held in the Miniwatt factory in Barcelona. This was a test of the type of action that can mobilise workers around the peace issue. Of the one thousand workers in the factory, 70 per cent participated in the referendum and of those, 90 per cent answered 'yes' to the question 'Are you for withdrawal of the Spanish state from Nato and for the dismantling of the American bases?' The way for this result was prepared by intense propaganda work on the part of the 'Workers for Peace and Disarmament' group, which was set up in the factory at the beginning of October.

This is an example of the sort of initiatives that could be taken in all countries to link up the workers movement with the peace movement. This could also lay the basis for new developments in the peace mobilisations called for next spring and autumn, when the question of the deployment of the Nato missiles will again be posed concretely. ■

Striking for peace — the way forward

The following articles are the coverage of the end-of-October peace actions in Denmark from the November 1, 1984, issue of *Klassekampen*, paper of the Danish section of the Fourth International. The first is an editorial. It is followed by interviews with leaders of the actions. *Klassekampen's* introduction follows:

Once again the peace movement has demonstrated its power. Well over 100,000 people went into the streets throughout the country. It was a little less than last year, but nonetheless it was a very strong showing that gave the lie to claims that the peace movement is in crisis.

This year the peace movement co-organized their activity with other bodies. This did not come about without some conflicts. For example, the union district council in Roskilde made its own plans without contacting the peace movement. And in Odense, the district labor council split. The unskilled workers union (the SiD) took part in the big peace demonstrations. But the district council as such kept to the sidelines, organizing its own, sparsely attended, affair.

What did the week of peace actions show and how can we go forward?

More than 100,000 demonstrators showed that there is still life in the Danish peace movement. But there are no grounds for fostering illusions, as the Communist party paper *Land og Folk* did, in saying that we are "stronger than ever."

Thousands of people struck for peace for five minutes on October 24 in an action that shortly before got the support of the National Labor Confederation (LO). This was the second symbolic strike against the step-up in the arms race in Denmark. The next time, people are going to ask, and rightly so, why should we strike again for only five minutes, when we have already done this twice without getting any results?

The reason for this failure does not lie in any lack of opposition to the step-up in the arms race. But the poor participation in the strike did highlight the ambiguity of the LO's commitment to peace work. If the LO had been serious about it and had called for a real mobilization and planned a hard-hitting general strike, say for a couple of hours, against nuclear weapons, there is no doubt that such an appeal would have gotten a major response. That would have offered a perspective.

The peace movement has to take new initiatives in order to move forward. In this respect, it is dangerous to heed the forces that claim that new mass demonstrations are useless. One example of such arguments was given by a "rethinking youth" in the latest issue of the Left Socialist Party paper, *Solidaritet*: "What if these forces were used instead for spontaneous actions and provocations. Thinking back, I can't distinguish one demonstration from another. But I can certainly do that as regards the actions."

There is no need for an elite corps of heroic super peace activists who can vault over the barbed wire at the Karup base. There is no need either for study

groups concentrating discussions with case-hardened Nato politicians.

The way forward is marching together with millions of people. No elite groups but only a genuine mass movement can stop the step-up in the arms race. That is why we are focusing our attention on the trade-union movement. In this movement a good two million wage earners [Denmark's total population is around 5 million] are organized. This is the biggest and potentially most effective means for fighting back. This is the force that can bring the society to a standstill until the demand for disarmament is won.

Our objective must be to work for a general strike on United Nations Day, 1985. This is not because this is some ceremonial date but because that is the time that deployment of Cruise missiles is supposed to start in the Netherlands. This is the most natural date to focus on. It should be a strike of 15, 30, 60 minutes, or more. A strike expressed in a mass demonstration that can be seen, not one that remains confined in the offices, institutions and factories.

The strike must be an international one. So, the Danish trade-union movement should begin now making contacts with other unions in other countries that have also been involved in peace strikes. This can be a step forward toward building a people's strike against the missiles throughout Western Europe. ■

...the European experience

Soren BECH

The decision of the West German trade-union Federation (DGB) to call a five minute-long general strike on October 5, 1983, against nuclear weapons was like a spark. A spark that ignited a series of warning strikes in the north of Western Europe. After West Germany came Finland, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and then again in Denmark. In Sweden a conference of trade unionists — representing 750,000 workers — demanded a peace strike on United Nations Day, October 24, 1985.

In West Germany only about one million of the eight million organised members of the West German trade-union federation supported the strike on October 5, 1983. But it was a reasonable success politically, as could be seen in the furious comments of the main bourgeois newspapers. For the first time in the history of the Federal Republic a political general strike had been called against the bourgeoisie.

The Finnish trade-union federation (SAK) with one million members out of a population of five million immediately followed the West German example with a peace strike on October 26, 1983. One hundred thousand participated in peace activities in the workplaces, and in the

afternoon there were 106 demonstrations throughout the country.

In Belgium on November 11, 1983, the social democratic-led trade-union federation (FGTB/ABVV), with one million members, called a peace strike, not for five minutes, but 15! The christian democratic trade-union federation (CSC/ACW), with 1.3 million members, did not participate, except for the metalworkers union.

The strike was a very modest success. The level of participation was very different from workplace to workplace depending on the activity of shop stewards and activists. The leadership of the FGTB/ABVV had done very little to mobilise people.

On October 10, 1984, the Dutch social democratic-led trade-union federation (FNV) organised a relatively big peace strike for 15 minutes. At least 90 per cent of the FNV members seem to have participated as well as a number of unorganised people, bringing the total to approximately 1.1 million, which is not so bad in a country of 14 million inhabitants. Sixty thousand striking school pupils who turned out in the streets were photographed more by the press as the rest of the strike was less visible.

At the beginning of October a conference in Stockholm decided to work for

a peace strike organised by the Swedish trade-union federation (LO) next year on United Nations Day. Until now trade unions representing 750,000 workers had been calling for a peace strike and the LO leadership argued that the 'time isn't ripe'. The day after the peace strike conference in Stockholm the main social democratic newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, carried a major article discussing the proposal. The leader of the painters' union, John Petersson, called the idea of a peace strike 'childish'. But the chief editor of the foodworkers' trade-union magazine, *Bror Perjus*, said that a coordinated strike

in several West European countries would be a precondition for the action to be effective.

Aftonbladet called upon its readers to phone the paper and give their views on the idea of a peace strike. Several hundred Swedes did so, and a lot of their comments were presented in the paper the next day.

Such experiences show clearly the possibilities in a strike for peace perspective. It is vital that the peace movements of Europe link up with the labour movement through mass actions of this type. ■

thing, does it mean if there are 10,000 people more or 10,000 less. The most important thing is not so much to make the demonstrations bigger, but to achieve a greater consciousness.

Q. So, what concrete demands should be raised?

A. There is the demand for a nuclear-free Denmark, on which I think everyone in the peace movement agrees. But the next step has to be to take up Denmark's role in Nato's nuclear strategy and the military reinforcement treaties.

Then there is the question of a nuclear-free Scandinavia. That is really more of a political step than a military one.

On the European level, we think that the question of division into blocs and detente should be highlighted. It was forgotten in the campaign against the 572 missiles, and this is what created the crisis in the West German peace movement.

We have to be careful not to make the same mistake but rather to look at issues as they interconnect. That is, not just to work with a few demands aimed against the missiles, but to take up the question of the division into blocs and Europe's role in general.

Q. But the division into blocs and Europe's role does not seem so concrete.

A. In reality, the demand for the removal of the 572 missiles is also a very complicated problem.

Now we have to formulate demands on the other questions that are as concrete as 'No to the missiles.' We have not yet really had the time to do that, among other things, because of all the discussions about demonstrations. ■

Next steps for the peace movement

Q. What did the week of peace actions show?

Pernille Jensen. [from Samarbejdskomite for Fred og Sikkerhed (Coordinating Committee for Peace and Security)] The union district councils were co-organizers of the peace demonstrations. But on the other hand, this did not necessarily mean that the union memberships were mobilized to come out. Indeed, it is a fact that less of them took part than last year.

Question. Why was that?

Answer. I think there were two reasons. The first is that last year the peace movement was more focused on opposition to the 572 missiles. The demonstrations took place right before the important Nato meeting in December. This year we tried to focus on the demand for a nuclear-free Denmark, but that proved less effective, at least so far.

A second reason is that the press played up the split in the peace movement so much. That certainly kept a lot of people from coming out.

Q. So, what's the next step?

A. We think that there are three important areas. The first is to demand that Denmark be declared nuclear free. We have, to be sure, a vague declaration of intent in the parliament. But the role of the peace movement has to be to bring more pressure to bear.

Secondly, we have to demand that Denmark take the initiative to get direct negotiations among the Scandinavian countries to declare Scandinavia a nuclear-free zone.

Finally, there is the question of the missiles. The Danish rejection of the missiles has to be followed up by concrete initiatives. One opportunity for this would be the Nato meeting to be held this December, where the demand should be raised for stopping the deployment of any more missiles.

Kai Bollmann from *Nej til Atomvaaben* (No to Nuclear Weapons) took a positive view about the extent of the demonstrations this year.

A. The mobilization has been maintained, and this shows that all the debates around the peace actions this year did not keep people from coming out — quite the contrary.

Q. But, the numbers were less than last year.

A. Not so much. Hardly at all in comparison with what happened in West Germany. We might have feared far worse, after the missiles have been deployed and so on. But I think that the debate showed people that the peace movement is still alive and developing.

Q. What is the next step?

A. In *Nej til Atomvaaben*, we take a rather reserved attitude toward the big demonstrations. That is, what, if any-

Interview with Flemming Bock, chairman of trade unionists for peace

Question. Doesn't it look as if the strikes this year involved as many people as last year?

Answer. It looks that way. But you have to remember that the actions this year did not have the same news interest as last year. Moreover, it would be wrong to judge them simply by the instances in which traffic was blocked.

It is important to stress two things:

First of all, this was an international action. We know that there were trade-union peace activities in Finland, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Secondly, the most important thing is the impact that the actions will have. Not the least important is what the LO intends to do.

Q. What role did the LO play?

A. In any case, it was no thanks to the LO that the actions got the support they did. First of all, it was only at the last minute that they sent out one solitary circular on supporting the action, and even then they messed it up, saying that the action should start at 11:55 a.m. and end at noon, instead of, as we proposed, starting at noon and lasting for 15 minutes. It sowed confusion.

We now have to work on two things for next year:

The strikes have to be longer and extended to other countries. So, I said in my speech at the demonstration on Saturday that the LO should take an international initiative to get a common trade-union peace action.

Q. Isn't that the same idea as that of the Campaign for a European People's Strike?

A. We should not pin ourselves down to one people's strike. We cannot foresee whether the strike will be for five minutes, for 15, or for an entire day. The main thing is to get international coordination.

The peace strike this year was more extensive in the provinces and the reason for thinking this is that the *Fagbevaegelsen for Fred* [the Peace Movement] was organized in more places this year than last. In Aarhus, Svendbor, Bronholm and central and western Zealand, the *Fagbevaegelsen for Fred* mobilized for the peace strike.

The next step is to build up nationwide coordination. ■

30,000 demonstrate in Bonn against US intervention in Central America

From Was Tun, paper of the German section of the Fourth International. November 11, 1984.

Despite driving rain at the start and chilly weather, about 30,000 responded to the call from the Coordinating Committee of the Peace Movement to demonstrate "For Peace and Justice in Central America" in Bonn on November 3.

Klaus DRAEGER

In three columns, the demonstrators marched toward Bonn's Hofgarten, after initial rallies at the assembly points.

The bloc formed shortly before the demonstration, under the title "Defend the Revolution in Central America," called on all "consistently anti-imperialist forces" to join in a separate contingent. It was this group that assembled most of those who opposed Willy Brandt's speech at the final rally.

This group faced the threat of massive harassment from the police. Decked out for war, hundreds of police blocked the street and searched almost all the demonstrators for weapons. They had to pass through a double line of police and submit to being frisked.

Although the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), as well as the SPD and the Greens backed the demonstration, most of the demonstrators were supporters of the Christian Initiative Group and the various organizations of the socialist left. Turkish and Kurdish organizations also mobilized more broadly than usual for this demonstration.

The Revolutionary Socialist Youth/Red Mole group, which was formed in mid-October, formed a common contingent with the GIM [German section of the Fourth International] of several hundred persons in the northern feeder march. This section of the march was kept in high spirits by the militant slogans of the youth group.

At the concluding rally in the Hofgarten Helmut Gollwitzer spoke for the Christian Initiative Group, Comandante Ana Guadalupe Martinez for the FDR/FMLN of El Salvador, Heriberto Incer for the Nicaraguan embassy in Bonn, Ilse Brusis for the DGB, and the final speaker was Willy Brandt.

For weeks before, having Brandt as a speaker had been a bone of contention in the solidarity movement and in the Coordinating Committee of the Peace Movement. Sections of the solidarity movement, including the majority of the Nicaragua Information Bureau in Wuppertal were against Brandt as a speaker, because the SPD has not taken a clear posi-

tion in support of revolutionists in Central America, and, for example, because it hailed Duarte's election in El Salvador as "democratic."

In a contested vote in the Coordinating Committee, it was decided by a 12 to 8 margin that Brandt should speak instead of the SPD left winger, Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul.

Against the backdrop of this conflict, there were disturbances when Brandt spoke. Interrupted by chanting and whistling, the target of rotten eggs and paint bombs and fireworks, Brandt called for an end to the bombing and death squadrons in El Salvador and to the genocide in Guatemala. He said that those who have rightly protested against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan cannot remain silent when the US is paying the contras in Central America, mining harbors and carrying out sabotage action.

This brought furious condemnations from the Christian Democrats. They claimed that the SPD had followed slavishly in the tow of a leftist demonstration led by the Greens, forces that wanted to express their hatred of the US.

In this campaign of abuse, the Christian Democrat deputy speaker Walter Brueckmann was joined by a "comrade" of Brandt, the head of the SPD slate in the Berlin Senate elections, Hans Apel. In Berlin, the latter denounced the common mobilization of Social Democrats and left organizations against Reagan's military policy as "an outright disgrace."

The following statement was published on the front page of the November 11 issue of Was Tun, paper of the German section of the Fourth International.

The threat of a massive direct invasion of Nicaragua or El Salvador by US troops is greater than ever. The CIA-directed international press campaign against the elections in Nicaragua is designed to prepare world public opinion for such an invasion. In connection with the reelection of US president Reagan, the US imperialists are looking for the right time to bring their military machinery to bear to crush the entire liberation process in Central America.

Therefore, the Central American Solidarity Committees and other third world groups decided to demonstrate together with the peace movement in Bonn on November 3 against US intervention and for peace and justice in Central America. In order to build a powerful demonstration here in the country that is the US's most important ally in Europe against Reagan's war policy in Central America, it was necessary to form the broadest possible united front.

The basis of this front could only be one central issue — rejection of direct US aggression. Moreover, positive support for the revolutionary process in Nicaragua and the armed liberation struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala could be expressed by individual components of the coalition.

The whistles, rockets and bags of paint directed at Willy Brandt in Bonn's Hofgarten went entirely against the objective of the demonstration. These disruptions harmed the fighting and suffering masses in Central America, whose resistance to the world's biggest military power was exploited here for the sake of local political differences.

The provocative action by the police against the participants in the southern feeder march of the demonstration was designed to enflame feelings at the demonstration. It was aimed at discrediting the solidarity movement through promoting as violent confrontations as possible.

If the Social Democrats are prepared to take a stand against the threat of US intervention, we have to grant them the right to have a speaker, as well as other components of the coalition. Moreover, Willy Brandt spoke out clearly in defense of the elections in Nicaragua and against the US's policy in the area. He even came out in public opposition to the Spanish premier, Felipe Gonzales [also a major figure in the Social Democratic Second International], who strongly criticized the Nicaraguan elections. In this way, in the present extremely critical situation, Willy Brandt took the side of the Sandinistas. This helped Nicaragua.

In view of this fact, it was a grave error for the Informationsburo in Wuppertal and some Solidarity Committees to mobilize opposition to Willy Brandt's speech. This disruptive action, which came out of the ranks of the "Anti-Imperialist Bloc," and was supported by the Wuppertal Buro, undermined the possibilities for united action. In the future, we must collaborate in every way possible to maintain the common goal of stopping US intervention in Central America.

The spectre of a Red-Green alliance

A spectre is haunting West Germany, the spectre of "Red-Green Chaos." Up and down the country, politicians from the ruling Christian Democratic Party are trying to stem the decline in their vote in state and municipal elections by raising the spectre of a Red-Green alliance that would take the country out of Nato and throw the economy into chaos.

So far, however, all the machinations of the capitalist parties have proved rather counterproductive. In the recent state and municipal elections, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has generally been able to hold its previous vote or increase it a bit, and the Greens have made clear advances. On the other hand, the Christian Democrats have lost, and their coalition partner, the small Free Democratic Party (FDP) has been able only very seldom to get over the 5 percent threshold required for representation.

In view of the fading of the FDP, it seems more and more doubtful that the Christian Democrat-FDP coalition can win a majority in the 1987 elections. Moreover, it seems quite realistic to expect that the FDP may disappear altogether from the next parliament. Therefore, given the growth in the camp of the SPD and the Greens, there is a growing discussion about an electoral alternative in 1987.

Klaus DRAEGER

Since it took office in 1983, the Kohl/Genscher government has lost a lot of its credibility. After the deployment of the Pershing II missiles against the will of the great majority of the population — which produced the first deep crack in the "consensus of democrats" — after the disillusion of broad layers of voters created by the government's brutal austerity policy and its lining up hard on the side of the bosses in the 35-hour week struggle, the Flick payoff scandal has been slowly but surely undermining the credibility of parliamentary democracy as such.

Already in the period leading up to the strikes for the 35-hour week, former minister of the economy, Otto Graf Lambsdorff, was obliged to resign his post because he had granted the Flick concern tax breaks worth billions of German marks in return for contributions to the FDP. In the context of these revelations, it also came to light that the FDP's slide from a coalition with the SPD to one with the Christian Democrats was greased with Flick money, and that this operation was prepared over a long period. Likewise, the information that came out in connection with the resignation of the parliamentary chairperson, Rainer Barzel, a Christian Democrat, reads like a Marxist textbook example of the way that the big companies manipulate parliamentary democracy under late capitalism.

The public debate over the new revelations in the Flick payoff case was launched by a rather brutal remark by Juergen Reents, a Green member of parliament with socialist views. He said, "the road to the top of his party [for



Petra Kelly, Greens Party leader (DR)

Chancellor Kohl] was smoothed by Flick's money." For this remark, Reents was barred from parliament for five days by the assembly chairperson, Richard Stuecklen, a Christian Democrat. Then the avalanche started to roll.

Today, it is clear that Rainer Barzel got 1.7 million German marks from Flick to sweeten his resignation from the post of chairperson of the Christian Democratic Union in 1973. Kohl then stepped into Barzel's place. It is also clear that the chairperson of the Christian Social Union, Franz-Josef Strauss got 1.25 million German marks; Foreign Minister Genscher of the FDP, 1.15 million marks, and that even Chancellor Kohl got 650,000 marks from Flick in return for

political favors (such as codetermination rules in the interests of management in the factories). If the investigating committee comes out with any more revelations about involvement of the chancellor in this bribery scandal, it could lead to the worst crisis yet for the Christian Democrat-FDP coalition.

The coalition government's continual failure to do anything effective to fight unemployment or protect the environment and its awkwardness in handling the Flick affair, as well as its failure on other issues, have led to a marked decline in the vote for the coalition parties in the state and local elections.

Despite its constant attempts to project a profile of its own, distinct even from the Christian Democrats, the FDP has to fear today even for its survival as a parliamentary party. Today, its vote is running between 2% and 4%. It is in danger of being squeezed out in the polarization between the Christian Democrats and the SPD. Its conservatively inclined voters see their interests being advanced just as well by the Christian Democrats. On the other hand, the FDP voters who remain nostalgic for the social-liberal coalition [between the FDP and the SPD] are going over to the SPD or even to the Greens.

Capitalists' choice

Facing such gloomy prospects, the West German capitalists today have four equally dubious options for keeping their coalition in a position to run the country:

— Since an overall majority for the Christian Democrats is unlikely, the FDP would have to be "lent" votes in order to get over the 5% barrier. This, however, could lead to something like what happened in the Hessen state parliament elections in 1983, where the Christian Democrats and the FDP together totaled exactly the same number of votes as the Christian Democrats had got by themselves before.

— Or the Christian Democrats might aim for a great coalition with the SPD. This would have the advantage that it would so weaken the SPD that it might even lead to a split. On the other hand, it would bring a dramatic increase in the strength of the Greens, sharper polarization and extraparliamentary mobilizations.

— Or they might change the electoral law. But after the bribery scandals, this would touch off an explosion of indignation and extraparliamentary mobilizations.

— Finally, they might let the CSU (1) run throughout the country. In this way they could hope to attract the ultra-

1. There are two Christian Democratic parties in West Germany combined in a sort of federal structure. The Social Christian Union led by Franz-Josef Strauss is a Bavarian party and inclined toward the ultraright. The Christian Democratic Union, which operates in the rest of West Germany, is a more respectable bourgeois conservative party. — IV.

right vote on the one side, and at the same time present a more moderate face through the CDU, and thereby prevent any swing by their voters to the SPD. This would create, however, major subjective problems in the coalition and in the two Christian Democratic parties themselves. In fact, in 1980, after prolonged wrangling, this proposal never got past the starting post.

The debate over which path to take will certainly flare up again and more hotly after the state parliament elections in the biggest of the West German states, Nordrhein-Westfalen, in the spring of 1985. So far, the bourgeois camp seems to be in a quandary.

In the camp of the opposition parties, the Greens have so far been the main gainers from the government's crisis. This started in the state parliament election in Baden-Wuerttemberg in April 1984, where they got 8% of the vote. Then they scored important gains, 3% to 4% on the average, in the European elections and in various local elections, getting 5.4% in Rheinland-Pfalz, 5.3% in the Saarland and 9.3% in Nordrhein-Westfalen.

The Greens have also managed to extend their influence among industrial workers, where their vote hitherto had corresponded to their general average, that is, 5% to 7%. In the local elections in Nordrhein-Westfalen, and in particular in the cities of the Ruhr, they got above their average. For example, in Dortmund, they got 10.7%, and 12.5% in Muehlheim/Ruhr. Their average in these local elections for the state as a whole was 9.3%.

Governmental alternative

In opposition, the SPD has not been able to garner much new support. And what it gained from the Christian Democrats on its right has been almost entirely cancelled out by what it has lost on its left to the Greens. With an indecisive policy, continually hopping from one foot to another, the SPD has not been able to gain much credibility. For example, it opposes deployment of the new missiles but accepts conventional armament and Nato. It is for shortening the workweek, but couples this with an austerity policy and wage reductions.

In the local elections in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the SPD did emerge as the strongest party, with 42.5% of the vote. But it lost about 250,000 votes to the Greens. In the Baden Wuerttemberg state parliament elections, with 32.5%, it kept its vote at the 1980 level. But in the European elections, it lost 3.6%.

While it is becoming clearer and clearer that the government coalition is in danger of losing its majority, the SPD is not heading toward an overall majority. So, intense discussion has begun both in the SPD and the Greens, but especially in the latter, about a governmental alternative.

The SPD is trying to dance around the issue. The majority position is to present "touchstones" for collaboration with other parties, without committing the party to any definite coalition option. Its four touchstones include the following points:

"Disarmament, reduction of arms expenditures and a policy of detente, based on a democratic army and integration in Nato.

"A fight against unemployment and to maintain the basic features of the welfare state.

"Modernization of the industrial society in accordance with the needs of the environment [whatever that may mean].

"Liberal domestic policy, culture for all, and defense of the European identity."

Since its convention in Essen in May 1984, the SPD right wing has been lying rather low. Only in Nordrhein-Westfalen is it openly expressing its dreams about the possibility of a great coalition with the CDU. (For example, the SPD right-winger and chairperson of IG-Bergbau and Energie [Mining and Energy Workers Union], Adolf Schmidt, has said: "We have to seek a basic consensus between the SPD and the CDU.") It is all too obvious what an explosive impact taking such an option would have on the party ranks, when you consider that about a third of the SPD membership is for collaborating with the Greens.

Younger Social Democrats identified with the SPD left wing such as Oskar Lafontaine and the former chairperson of the Young Socialists, Gerhard Schroeder, have taken a cleverer tack, one that offers more possibilities for success from the SPD point of view. As candidates at the head of the Social Democratic slates for the state parliament elections in Saarland (Lafontaine) and Niedersachsen (Schroeder), they have come out strongly for a Red-Green alliance, but only on the condition that the Greens participate directly in SPD-dominated governments.

In this way, they are trying to bring about a differentiation in the Greens and entrap them in a moderate Social Democratic reform policy. In Niedersachsen, the state leadership of the Greens has already accepted Schroeder's offer, and declared its willingness to accept ministerial posts in an SPD-led state government in 1986.

In the Greens, the main dividing line in the discussion is between those who advocate a coalition with the SPD and those who are prepared to "tolerate" an SPD government, under certain circumstances, which means voting for an SPD state premier or chancellor and for the budget such a head of government presents.

In the state of Hessen, the first experiment in "tolerating" an SPD government, in this case the SPD minority government of Holger Boerner, is already in danger of going on the rocks. In return for some small reforms in rights for for-

eigners, subsidies for alternative projects and women's centers, and environmental protection, the Greens voted along with the Social Democrats for a budget that included, among other things, financing out of tax money for a plutonium factory owned by the NUKEM and ALKEM companies in Hanau near Frankfurt.

This factory is soon to be authorized to start production, and the NUKEM firm, with the capacity for processing 6.7 tons of uranium, could also produce atom bombs. So, the Greens, under pressure from their ranks, are threatening to stop tolerating the SPD government. If the SPD does not give in, then the Greens in Hessen, who are known for being in favor of coalition, will have to let the alliance go aground on this question.

Active participation

The federal leadership of the Greens decided after Oskar Lafontaine's offer of a coalition to the Saarland Greens in general not to seek participation in governments. The spokesperson for the federal leadership, Rainer Trampert, explained the basis for this decision as follows in the illustrated magazine *Stern*.

"The general problem is that we would have to take responsibility. We would probably have about a 2 percent influence on the setting of policy objectives and have to share responsibility for the 98 percent of policy that we don't want. In this way, we would lose our function, which is to put pressure on other parties for reforms. This would also destroy our role in movements against militarism, ruining the environment, exploitation and oppression."

Against this there is the position of the former spokesperson of the Greens' parliamentary fraction, Otto Schily, who is aiming for a "share in framing reforms" as a junior partner in a Social Democratic government.

After the breakup of the current they built up around the magazine *Moderne Zeiten*, which was the only one that claimed to be socialist, Trampert and Thomas Ebermann of the Green-Alternative Slate in Hamburg set themselves the goal of blocking with the party center grouped around fraction spokesperson Antje Vollmer to halt the "creeping Social Democratization" of the Greens.

What they want is to escalate the political conditions for tolerating an SPD government and to justify a break with the SPD on the basis of environmental questions (e.g., no acceptance of any share of the responsibility for nuclear power plants). In December, a conference of the Greens is to decide the question of their attitude to the governmental question.

Without active participation in the discussion on the governmental question and the 1987 elections on the part of the most dynamic side in this debate, socialist politics will be doomed to sterility and insignificance in West Germany for at least the next two years. ■

Fight against slander suit continues

At its September meeting the United Secretariat of the Fourth International heard a report on the defence campaign being carried out by the Socialist Workers Party of the USA in a legal case brought against the party by Alan Gelfand and others.

The meeting decided to ask for an article written by the SWP explaining the situation in the case. The following article first appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, November 12, 1984.

Doug JENNESS

October 24 marked one year since the last hearing was held on a lawsuit filed more than five years ago against the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) — and still no ruling has been made.

The suit, filed in July 1979 by Alan Gelfand, a lawyer for Los Angeles County in California, is a major part of an international disruption campaign against the SWP and the Fourth International. This campaign has been the principal activity of the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and its U.S. branch, the Workers League (WL), for nearly a decade.

Gelfand, who entered the SWP in 1976 to disrupt it from within, was expelled from the party in January 1979 after he filed a legal brief in federal court charging that the SWP is a front for the FBI. This slander is at the heart of the WRP-WL disruption operation against the SWP.

After Gelfand's expulsion, the WRP-WL initiated the lawsuit against the SWP, asking a federal judge to remove the party leadership and reinstate Gelfand into membership. The spurious grounds for this demand is the claim that Gelfand was expelled by U.S. government agents who had taken over the SWP. He claims that his constitutional rights were violated, and the WRP-WL presents the suit as a significant civil rights case.

If the court were to rule in favor of Gelfand, it would mark a big blow against the constitutional right of freedom of association and the fundamental right of a political party to determine who its members are and to freely choose its own leadership. It would mean that the government can dictate to a political party whether its activities are in conformity with its stated program and historic goals. It would open the door to the government intervening in the decision-making process of unions, civil rights groups and all other similar organizations.

For four years U.S. District Court Judge Mariana Pfaelzer rejected every effort by the SWP to have the case thrown out of court. She asserted that Gelfand was entitled to his "day in court."

While Pfaelzer delayed setting a trial date, the SWP was forced to divert big financial and personnel resources to defend itself. For example, Gelfand's attorneys, the Los Angeles law firm of Fisher & Moest, subpoenaed many SWP members in order to take more than 350 hours of depositions. In addition to draining SWP resources, this harassment was designed to produce an "official court record" that can be selectively published at a future date.

The case finally came to trial in March 1983 in Los Angeles. During the days leading up to and during the trial, a nationwide campaign supported by unionists, civil rights activists and civil libertarians demanded that Pfaelzer halt the intervention by the courts into the SWP's functioning and throw Gelfand's case out of court. This public pressure contributed to Pfaelzer's admission at the conclusion of the trial that Gelfand had never produced "one shred of evidence" to support his slanderous charge that the SWP's elected leaders are FBI agents.

No ruling at trial

She declared to Gelfand and his attorneys: "You have not proved anything that you said you were going to prove. Nothing...I can only assume that there was a motive somewhere in here to paralyze the Socialist Workers Party. I don't know how much the rival political party [the WRP-WL] paid for your attorneys fees. I suppose in another forum that will come up as an issue...."

"The whole aura of facts in here leads me to question the motivation for the lawsuit. If I had been presented with one single piece of evidence that [the SWP leaders] are agents of the Government, that would be an entirely different matter. I haven't a single piece of evidence given to me."

Despite these statements, Pfaelzer made no decision on the case.

At a federal court hearing a couple of weeks after the trial, she stated that she would give favorable consideration to a motion by the SWP that she require Gelfand and his attorneys to pay the

SWP's legal fees and expenses. The SWP subsequently filed such a motion.

But Pfaelzer still has made no ruling on Gelfand's suit or on the SWP's motion for legal fees and expenses. In spite of her admission that Gelfand produced no evidence, she refuses to rule.

Government seizes opening

One critical aspect of the Gelfand suit is the attempt by the U.S. Justice Department to get Pfaelzer to issue a sweeping ruling that would give the FBI unrestricted legal rights to use informers and provocateurs against the SWP and other working-class organizations.

To bolster its claim that the Gelfand suit is aimed at government agents, the WRP-WL named the FBI and CIA as defendants. But they were only nominal defendants. The government lawyers sat for four years with their hands folded. They were satisfied that Gelfand, with the aid of Fisher & Moest and the connivance of Pfaelzer, was doing a good job of harassing the SWP. But after the March 1983 trial, when the disruption operation seemed to be coming to an end, the FBI and CIA mouthpieces jumped right into the situation.

They filed a document requesting that Pfaelzer issue a legal opinion affirming that the use of informers within political parties like the SWP "does not constitute a violation of individual rights," and "may not be enjoined." They asked her to rule that "the identities of informants who have conducted activities within the Socialist Workers Party are protected from disclosure by the informant privilege." More than a year later Pfaelzer has not issued an opinion on the government's requests.

In spite of their claim to be defending "constitutional rights" and their protests about government agents in the SWP, Gelfand and the WRP-WL have not condemned this attack on democratic rights.

The legal issues the government has put before the judge are exactly the questions at the heart of the SWP suit against the FBI, CIA, Immigration and Naturalization Service and other federal agencies. That case, known as *SWP vs. Attorney General*, has been pending since 1973. The trial in that case was held before Judge Thomas Griesa in 1981. Griesa has not yet issued his ruling and will not say when he intends to do so.

During the March 1983 trial, Gelfand admitted on the witness stand that he had collaborated with leaders of the WRP-WL for at least seven months before his expulsion from the SWP. He testified that Workers League leader David North promised to raise money for the suit. The WRP-WL also has been promoting the Gelfand case in its press.

Several decades ago the WRP, then called the Socialist Labour League, led by Gerry Healy, was a Marxist organization that belonged to the Fourth International. How did it degenerate into the

antiworking class formation that it is today?

Cuban revolution is touchstone

Key to understanding the WRP's degeneration is its repudiation of the Cuban revolution in 1959. Healy and his grouping contended then, and still do, that the team of leaders around Fidel Castro were not revolutionaries. They did not lead the Cuban revolution to overturn capitalist property relations; rather they established a capitalist regime like those of Chiang Kai-shek in China and Jawaharlal Nehru in India.

The Healyites maintained that socialist revolutions are only possible if they are led by Trotskyist parties. In other words, when the living class struggle turned out different from the Healyist schema — they solved the contradiction by denying reality.

The SWP and the Fourth International, in contrast, hailed the Cuban revolution and its revolutionary leadership as a historic step forward for the working class internationally.

The sectarian stance of the Healyites toward Cuba soon led them to sectarian positions on the Algerian revolution in the 1960s and the colonial revolution in general, the Labour Party in Britain, and the rise of revolutionary Black nationalism in the United States.

Their repudiation of the Cuban revolution was at the heart of their rapid degeneration. Opposing a genuine workers revolution cannot but throw a party claiming to speak for the interests of working people off the rails. By not correcting their erroneous position on the Cuban revolution and its leadership, but rather sticking to it over the years, the Healyites wandered further and further from Marxism.

Healy frames up Joseph Hansen

From the early 1960s the Healyites attempted to cover their break from Marxism by waging a vitriolic polemical campaign against the SWP and the Fourth International.

This campaign took an insidious new turn in 1975 when the WRP asserted that Joseph Hansen, a longtime leader of the SWP and the Fourth International, was complicit in the 1940 assassination of Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. Hansen was the author of many of the SWP's principal resolutions and public articles on the Cuban revolution.

He was serving as a secretary for Trotsky in Mexico at the time of the assassination, which was incontestably proven to be the work of Joseph Stalin's secret police. Assassination has long been one of the Stalinist methods for dealing with political opponents in the workers movement.

The Healyite charge paralleled the accusation the Stalinists made at the time of the assassination. In order to direct attention away from their own guilt, they asserted that Trotsky was killed by

one of his own followers.

When George Novack, another longtime SWP leader, wrote an article defending Hansen, he was also labeled an "accomplice" of the Soviet secret police.

The Healyites later added to their slander campaign the charge that Hansen was an FBI agent.

The Healyite presses rolled out article after article and pamphlet after pamphlet presenting "documents" and "evidence" to bolster their frame-up. But there was not one bit of truth to any of it. It was entirely a concoction of lies.

The WRP-WL's operation is based on the notion that if a lie is repeated over and over and broadcast wide enough some fools will be persuaded that there must be something to it. Yet when they presented their entire case in the courtroom, even Judge Pfaelzer had to concede that they had not presented her "with one single piece of evidence that these people are agents of the government."

From the beginning, the SWP has waged a counteroffensive against this slander campaign. Hansen wrote several major articles refuting each lie and exposing the entire frameup nature of the operation.

These articles as well as many statements and articles by other leaders and sympathizers of the Fourth International and by leaders of other groups considering themselves Trotskyist were published as a pamphlet, *Healy's Big Lie — The Slander Campaign Against Joseph Hansen, George Novack, and the Fourth International*. [This pamphlet is still available from Pathfinder Press, 420 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. 4 US dollars plus 75 cents for postage.]

A meeting of 1,200 was organized in London in January 1977, where Fourth International leaders and other speakers condemned the Healyite slander campaign.

When Hansen died in early 1979, the Healyites proceeded to charge that Hansen had recruited and trained a younger group of government agents and had "elevated" them into positions of leadership responsibility in the SWP. With this frame-up the Healyites have been able to keep their slander campaign against the SWP up-to-date. There has been no let-up in their barrage of lies. Their disruption operation against the Fourth International, the SWP, and other remains their reason for existence.

One of their methods of disruption against the Fourth International has been to tailor their slanders so as to echo and distort political discussion and debates going on among Fourth Internationalists.

For example, the extension of the Cuban revolution to Nicaragua and Grenada and the emergence of the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador brought a new acid test for revolutionists. This has led to an ongoing discussion — and new divisions among revolutionists — on the lessons to be learned from these revolutions and the orientation to take to their leaderships.

These lessons were the subject of a speech given by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in December 1982 entitled "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today." It was subsequently published in the fall 1983 *New International*, a magazine published by leaders of the SWP and the Revolutionary Workers League, the Canadian section of the Fourth International. A diverse range of opinions about Barnes' speech was expressed by members of the Fourth International, including some that were critical.

The WRP-WL, for their own antiworking-class purposes, immediately intervened by orienting their smear campaign to this discussion among revolutionists, seeking to disrupt it. The Healyite political arguments are designed to superficially echo some of the positions raised in the discussion by those who disagree with the SWP. But the WRP-WL twists its accusations to lead to the conclusion that the reason the SWP leaders are wrong is that they are FBI agents.

The Healyites published a pamphlet on the Barnes speech, *A Provocateur Attacks Trotskyism*, which charges that:

"An unbridgeable political chasm separates the present-day Socialist Workers Party from Trotskyism. Not a single programmatic conception upon which the founding of the Fourth International was based is still accepted by the SWP: not that of the permanent revolution, of the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism and the necessity for the political revolution, of the decisive historical role of Trotskyism. In its present form, the Socialist Workers Party is the antithesis of the party that was founded 45 years ago by James P. Cannon in closest collaboration with Leon Trotsky."

Their assertion that the SWP has substituted "Castroism for revolutionary Marxism" is a central axis of the pamphlet.

The conclusion reached by the Healyites is that "the political line of the SWP leaders does not contradict their role as government agents but confirms it."

It chides revolutionists who disagree with the views of the SWP for being "unable to explain the political evolution of the SWP."

Broad support for SWP defense

The fight to defend the SWP from the Gelfand lawsuit, which is presently at the center of the Healyite disruption operation, continues. At any time Pfaelzer could rule in favor of both Gelfand and the U.S. government, thus giving the green light to the courts and the Justice Department to step up their disruption of the SWP and other working-class organizations.

The SWP, aided by the Political Rights Defense Fund and other defenders of the Bill of Rights, is waging a campaign to defend its constitutional rights and to help deter similar lawsuits against other working-class organizations.

In the period around the March 1983 trial, broad protest rallies were held in

50 cities in the United States, demanding the judge halt the unconstitutional intervention by the courts into the functioning of the SWP and throw Gelfand's suit out of court.

Scores of union officials, civil rights leaders, farm protest figures, women's rights fighters, civil libertarians, and representatives of political organizations spoke or sent messages.

Among the union officials who stated their support for this First Amendment principle were Anthony Mazzocchi, former vice-president of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union; Victor Reuther, retired director of United Auto Workers International Affairs Department; and David Dyson, national staff representative of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and secretary to the National Labor Committee in Support of Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador.

Mazzocchi stated, "This case threatens to establish the precedent of government interference in any political organization, from the NAACP to NOW [National Organization for Women] to the Labor Committee for Democracy and Human Rights in El Salvador." He said that the claim that the SWP has been taken over by the government "flies in the face of all the activities of the SWP."

Georgia State Representative Julian Bond and U.S. Congressman Ronald Dellums also joined the defense effort.

Dellums declared, "Judicial interference in the internal affairs of a voluntary organization jeopardizes the right of free speech and assembly. The right of free people to organize politically independent of government intrusion is a basic right which must be preserved."

Ring Lardner Jr., one of the 10 Hollywood writers who were jailed during the witch-hunt of the 1950s, also declared his support.

In July of this year, William Smith, a Los Angeles attorney, sent a letter to a number of lawyers urging support for the SWP's fight. Smith is active in the fight to block reimposition of the draft and has handled the legal defense of men who have refused to register for the draft.

"Chances are," Smith wrote, "you may not have heard of [the Gelfand case]. And even if you have, if you are like I was, your reaction may have been to dismiss it as irrelevant. Or simply another unimportant struggle between sectarian groups. But I decided to take the time to look more deeply into this case. As I did I became convinced there are some very significant issues at stake."

After describing the case, Smith explained, "Gelfand had behind him some very powerful backers. Armed with seemingly unlimited funds, he was able to use the power of the court in an attempt to destroy a legitimate political organization."

Getting out the word about this case and the stakes involved remain a necessity if this attack on democratic rights is to be defeated and the Healyite disruption operation dealt a sharp blow. ■



AROUND THE WORLD



Defend South African trade unions !

The South African regime has just carried out a frontal attack on the whole of the independent trade-union movement. This has taken place after the failure of the regime's elections to the 'coloured and Indian' parliaments which were massively boycotted by the oppressed people of South Africa.

The 48-hour general strike, on November 5 and 6, which came after riots in the Transvaal and Port Elisabeth townships, was an important success for the mass movement. This strike was called by several organisations, on a united front basis. The call was made by the independent trade unions as well as by political organisations such as the UDF — United Democratic Front and the National Forum (see IV, No 60, October 1, 1984).

The call for a further general strike in the Transvaal for November 12 and 13, confirms once again the vital role of the workers' movement and within that, the role of the trade unions in the struggle against the apartheid regime.

The regime has straightaway reacted by attacking the main trade-union federation FOSATU, which has 130,000 members. The president of the federation, Chris Dlamini, was arrested on November 9, and the president of the textile workers' union affiliated to FOSATU, Bangi Solo has also been arrested. Thousands of strikers from the state-owned SASOL factory (liquifying of coal) have been sacked en masse. They are mostly members of the FOSATU chemical workers' union.

The international workers' movement has a heavy responsibility to show solidarity with these workers in struggle. These trade unionists have already made several international links. Dlamini was a guest of the British TUC at its congress in September. FOSATU itself sent a delegation to the last congress of the French CFDT (SP-led trade-union organisation), that was held in Metz. FOSATU also has official contact with the German trade-union confederation, the DGB, and with the Swedish and Danish confederations.

Action must be taken by trade unions and political parties worldwide. Protest telegrams should be sent to the South African embassy in your country or to the South African government in Pretoria.

In attacking the trade unions, the regime is attempting to role back the gains

of the entire independent trade-union movement. Messages of support and links should be made internationally with all the main unions and political organisations fighting for their rights. We publish below a list of such organisations inside the country.

Main Unions

Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), 2-5 Central Court, 125 Gale Street, Durban 4001 or 31 World Center, 48 Railways Street, Jameson, Johannesburg.

Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), Lekton House (7th floor), 5 Wenderes Street, 2000 Johannesburg.

General Workers' Union, Benbow Building, 3 Beverley Street, Athlone 7764.

African Food and Canning Workers' Unions, P. O. Box 2678, Cape Town 8000.

South African and Allied Workers' Unions (SAAWU), 94 Tasman Centre, 122 Victoria Street, Durban 4001.

Black Municipal Workers' Union, P. O. Box 23027, Joubert Park 2044.

Cape Town Municipal Workers' Association, P. O. Box 49, Athlone 7780.

Political Organisations

United Democratic Front, P. O. Box 274, Salt River, Cape Town.

National Forum, 115 Fleetway House, 208 Bree Street, Johannesburg 2001. ■

Defend the Balangoda 18

In Sri Lanka, the case of the Balangoda 18 continues (see IV, No 60, October 1, 1984). The case came up for a hearing on October 4, but was postponed till December 13 because the Attorney General had not decided what to do with these suspects! Meanwhile, they have to continue to report to the Balangoda police station once a fortnight.

Letters of solidarity and protest to the government are now coming in.

In Denmark, about thirty prominent trade unionists and labour movement activists, including ten MPs and the

mayor of Copenhagen signed the following statement:

'We the undersigned have been informed about the arrest of T. Upali Cooray and 17 others on June 15 in Balangoda and about the approaching case against them. We want to protest against the arrest and the arbitrary use of the emergency regulations that infringe on the legal protection and democratic rights. We want as well to protest against the undemocratic harassment of plantation workers, who should have full rights to meet and to discuss problems regarding their work and trade union affiliation.'

A similar statement calling for the dropping of the charges was supported in the USA by several trade unionists, civil rights leaders and antiwar activists including, most notably, Professor Noam Chomsky and Rev. Ben Chavis (Director

of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice). Congressmen John Conyer, Walter Fauntroy, Charles Hayes and Morris Udall also signed the statement.

In Australia, Andrew Honey, State Secretary of the Western Australia region of the Federated Rubber and Allied workers union has protested to the Sri Lankan government.

And in West Germany the head of the protestant church and the South Asia Bureau in Kassel have sent their support.

Letters of protest should be sent to President J. R. Jayewardene, President's House, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Copies of these letters and messages of support and donations should go to Balangoda 18, 53 Rajamalwatte Road, Colombo 15, Sri Lanka. ■

Advance in campaign to defend Basque national movement

The first united mass demonstration in Bilbao on October 20 to protest Mitterrand's turning over Basque political refugees to his Social Democratic colleague Felipe Gonzalez was a powerful success.

The October 26 issue of *Zutik*, the paper of the Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (LKI — Revolutionary Communist League, the section of the Fourth International in the Basque country of the Spanish state) reported:

"There is no reliable way to calculate how many people were in the human flood that filled the streets and sidewalks of Bilbao on Saturday. *Egin* [the radical nationalist paper] said 30,000. *Deia* [the moderate nationalist paper] said "tens of thousands." *El Pais* [the liberal bourgeois paper published in Madrid] said "anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000." The organizers wisely did not try to give a figure but only said that it was "perhaps the biggest demonstration in recent times."

"The warm, enthusiastic welcome accorded the groups that came from Catalonia, Madrid, the Valencian Country, Galicia, Cantabria, Andalucia and other regions was perhaps the most striking feature of the October 20 demonstration."

The demonstrators faced problems, however, similar to the ones faced by participants in the Irish H-Block demonstrations:

"Dozens of buses were held up on the access roads to Bilbao at police checkpoints, probably long enough to keep thousands of people from participating in the demonstration."

Lucio Gonzalez wrote: "I talked with political leaders, unionists, young people, old people, with the women who come out every Tuesday on the Plaza de Mayo to demand the release of their children and that the 'missing persons' be produced. They are known as the 'distraught mothers of Euskadi' [by analogy with "Las locas de la Plaza de Mayo," the

Argentine women who protested the "disappearance" of their children throughout the dark years of the murderous dictatorship]."

A representative of Auzolan, a coalition including the LKI and a radical national current that ran in the last elections for the Basque parliament, said:

"It's a good thing to have united-front actions such as this; they bring together more people."

Herri Batasuna, the political organization supporting ETA-Militar has in the past been reluctant to accept a broad united-front framework, arguing that it is *the* front.

A unionist from ELA, the trade-union organization associated with the moderate Basque nationalist Partido Nacionalista Vasco, said:

"The workers want to live in freedom, and the working class of this province is in the streets today demanding a free and Basque-speaking Euskadi." He asked that Lucio Gonzalez take note that "the PNV, Euskadiko Ezkerra [another moderate formation] and the Workers Commissions [CP-dominated] have given their members the go-ahead to come out to the demonstration."

Lucio Gonzalez continued: "I was especially impressed by the women between the ages of 45 and 65 who claim to have been fighting for freedom for Euskadi since time immemorial who were demanding 'peace and work and our ancient independence.' Instead of providing jobs, they are building jails...the soldiers of the people are not terrorists but *gudaris* [Basque warriors]...."

"There will be another rally on November 11 against the extraditions in the Cine Acteon of Valencia, like the one held last Sunday in Santiago de Compostela. The campaign is continuing in Europe and the Americas and an International Congress on the Identity of the Minority Populations of Europe is being built, which will probably be held next March." ■

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major concerns that people have. But the wounds that the people have suffered are deep. The killing of Maurice Bishop and others is an inexcusable and inexplicable event, which has nearly fatally wounded the progressive movement.

We are going to struggle, we are going to fight. We are fighting not only local reaction, but we are fighting United States imperialism, which is directly interfering in the affairs of our country, by establishing the New National Party and providing tremendous economic resources and manipulating the state to ensure the neo-colonialist approach and outcome to the general elections.

We are not a temporary phenomenon. Maurice Bishop's spirit will guide our work in proletarian internationalism. It will guide our work as patriots. It will guide our work to see to it that the working people come to realise that United States imperialism does not have any of the solutions necessary for our country. They have failed in Salvador, they have failed in Jamaica, they have failed and are failing in Grenada. It will take us some time to be able to get the working class movement together but we will win without a doubt.

Q. Would you like to add anything? For example, in relation to international solidarity?

A. Of course, during our visit to Paris and to Europe last February, we were able to cement friendships and cooperation with the people of Western Europe. Of course, you in Europe recognise that the policies pursued by the United States in Western European countries are threatening the peace and security of your own countries. At the same time, you realise that in pursuing our policies, we have recognised the important and pivotal role that Europe can play, in acting as a buffer, as a shield and guarantee from being swallowed up by the United States.

We ask you to stand firm with us for the real human rights of our people. We ask you to stand with us so that you can help us to build our independence. Stand with us so that we can ensure that we do not fall victim of United States hegemony. Stand firm with us because as a people fighting to build our country, in our own image and in our own likeness, we are doing no more, or no less, than is the right of all nations according to the charter of the United Nations.

We ask you to celebrate our important days with us; organise rallies, to try to influence the ordinary worker, the student, the intellectual, the professional elements, all democrats and progressives to rally behind the tiny country, Grenada, one of the tiniest countries in the world.

We do not love liberty the less because we are small; because we are poor does not mean that we do not know what freedom is. In this our greatest danger, we ask for your militant solidarity and support. ■

Revolutionary leaders resume the fight

The left in Grenada is slowly rebuilding itself. One of its main leaders, Kendrick Radix, an ex-official of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) and ex-minister of justice in the revolutionary government agreed to do the following exclusive interview for *International Viewpoint*. The interview was conducted on October 26, 1984. (See also inside pages.)

Question. The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement hesitated a long time before finally deciding to participate in the December 3 elections. What will be the main themes of the election campaign and what are the objectives of the MBPM?

Answer. The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement was established on May 29. It was to mark the fourteenth anniversary of African Liberation Day being celebrated in Grenada, as well as marking the fortieth birthday of Maurice Bishop. A number of things had to be done before the party was established. In January of this year we set up the Maurice Bishop Memorial Foundation. This foundation had the task of creating a climate once again that was favourably disposed to revolutionary tendencies as well as to hold the ground in the face of the propaganda onslaught which was organised by the CIA in Grenada consequent to the invasion of our country.

At the same time there was the campaign of slander against the former revolutionary leadership including the prime minister, Maurice Bishop, the other ministers and other leading revolutionaries. At the same time negative propaganda was being directed at the life and work of the revolution. So the balance of opinion in the country turned decidedly

Kendrick Radix addresses election workers (DR)

against the revolutionary experiences of the people.

During that period also we spent some time in establishing our newspaper, the *Indies Times*, a progressive left oriented newspaper aiming to provide, once again, a vehicle through which the movement could speak.

We saw three steps: the building of the Foundation; the establishment of *Indies Times*; only as a third step did we see the establishment of the Patriotic Movement as it came about. Therefore, we moved to the third step which was the establishment of the political party on the date which I have already given. Therefore, we do not believe that the party has been long or tardy or slow in moving to the polls.

What was necessary was careful preparation, creating the right climate, so that we could salvage something from the wreck, from the havoc, from the infantile disorder that was precipitated by these ultra-leftists in setting back a process that was gaining ground inside our country.

The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement at this time has a very limited objective. First of all, as a result of the invasion of Grenada, its loss of sovereignty and independence, to struggle hard to recapture the sovereignty and independence of the country. Secondly, to strug-

gle hard to redeem the name of the progressive movement in the eyes of the people and to recover the social and economic gains the revolution brought to the people of the country. Thirdly, of course, as a part of our independence we want to rid ourselves of foreign military occupation forces in the country and establish the political life of the country once again.

To someone who has lived in Grenada, has experienced the life of the revolution and also the death of the revolution, where people were so turned off, so disillusioned with politics, where people were no longer prepared to struggle, it is obvious that we have come a long way. We believe that it will take a little while but we believe that we will build a strong national movement in Grenada that will take power in the interests of the working people.

Maurice Bishop remains a hero and martyr in our country as are the other outstanding people who were killed with him. We find we have been greatly encouraged because on October 19 last, we were able to mount the biggest ever political meeting to take place in Grenada since the invasion.

Q. In this meeting, in fact, you stated that some important errors were made during the revolution. What were these?

A. As to your question about freedom, about what errors we committed. I think of course no new mechanism is perfect, humanly perfect. Therefore, as people and as systems we always learn by our errors. If we admit our errors honestly, we will be able to go forward with greater clarity.

In this connection, we regard the fact that we maintained a rather restricted membership structure within the New Jewel Movement, made it more susceptible to ultra-leftist tendencies. So, with the MBPM we are going to ensure that the membership is open to all democrats, all workers, all progressives, all revolutionaries, and even some of the people who were instrumental in overthrowing the revolution in the sense that many of the people did not have the information; they instinctively followed the line of the party (the NJM) at the time.

Membership will be open on one condition: that they did not commit any vulgar crimes against the people, at the time of the most difficult period. Only then, will they be able to participate in the democratic struggle to rid ourselves of the invaders as well as trying to struggle for the restoration of democracy and national unity.

Q. How do you see the period after the elections? What is the MBPM's perspective for action?

A. The period after the general election, irrespective of its outcome, will be a very, very difficult period. Of course, I cannot pontificate or predict the outcome, or the future. But what I do know is that we are working hard, assiduously, to put on the agenda once again all the

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