Eco-socialism

Environmentalists and socialists met together for a weekend discussion in late 1984 to critically evaluate their common interests and the possibilities for united action. Among the many issues raised was the need to develop an environmentally sound economic strategy based on broad-ranging community discussion.

The meeting ended with decisions to establish groups in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales which would both continue discussion around these issues and plan and organise future conferences and publications. Over the coming year the groups hope to organise state conferences leading up to a national forum in 1985.

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Linnell Secomb

Sandinista election victory challenges US

On November 4, the people of Nicaragua went to the polls to elect a president, a vice-president and a 96-seat National Assembly. The elections went ahead despite the serious counter-revolutionary threats to the country.

The CIA-backed contra attacks continued on the northern border and in the south from Costa Rica. Washington continued its barrage of misinformation about the Sandinista revolution and claimed the elections to be a farce.

However, international observers have concurred that they were impressed with the fairness of the election procedure.

Gaby Gottwald, an MP from the Green Party in West Germany observed that “contrary to the elections in El Salvador, those held in Nicaragua have been free, equitable and secret with no political control or pressure by the Sandinistas.

Nevertheless, US Secretary of State George Shultz told a meeting of the Organisation of American States that “we are still waiting” for free elections in Nicaragua.

Eighty percent of the eligible population voted in the November 4 poll and, of these, 66.9 percent voted for the Sandinista party, the FSLN.

As well as winning the presidency and vice-presidency, the FSLN won 61 of the 96 seats in the National Assembly, with the Conservative Democratic Party (PCDN) trailing by a wide margin and receiving 14 seats.

The electoral system is organised on a regional representative basis, but some seats are allocated according to the overall national vote that parties received.

Accordingly, a number of smaller parties also have seats: Independent Liberals 9; Popular Social Christians 6; Communist Party 2; Socialist Party 2; and Popular Action Movement — Marxist Leninist 2.

Since the elections there has been marked escalation in the activities of the US to overthrow the Sandinista revolution.

The day after Reagan was re-elected, two US ships were sighted in Nicaragua’s territorial waters near the Pacific port of Corinto trailing a Soviet cargo ship. They later withdrew after a fishing boat with US citizens on board sailed out to protest against their presence.

The Reagan administration has not ruled out military intervention and has received support from many Democrats.

The solidarity movement in the US is stepping up its efforts to avert such US intervention and meanwhile the people of Nicaragua are making preparations for the worst possible scenario.

With US manoeuvres in Honduras and naval exercises in the Caribbean to continue over the next few months, the Nicaraguans have good reason for such preparations.

David Wooster

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