
United Nations

Real issues ignored at 38th session

by Nancy Spannaus

Only a utopian would have expected real progress at a session of the United Nations, especially one devoted to Bertrand Russell's favorite subject—disarmament. But when Indira Gandhi, prime minister of India and president of the 100-nation Non-Aligned Movement, issued a call for an informal heads of state meeting for the period of the U.N.'s General Assembly, hopes were raised that at least the issue of a new world economic order and its relationship to obtaining world peace would be at the center of deliberations.

Unfortunately, that was not the case. Mrs. Gandhi has had two informal meetings with 24 heads of state, and the empty rhetoric about "communication," "dialogue," and "understanding human needs" still dominates the environment. And while the Third World is avoiding the concrete issues of building a new monetary system for economic development, an opening has been left for the Russellites to push their primary agenda—a Malthusian attack on President Reagan's beam-weapons defense policy.

Off on the wrong foot

The election of Jorge Illueca, vice-president of Panama, as head of the General Assembly had augured well for the session. Illueca gave an interview to the Mexican daily *Excelsior* the day before the United Nations opened, in which he warned against "the tremendous pressure that the IMF exerts and . . . the tremendous internal destabilization derived from that." He also declared that "only with joint action . . . can there be a realistic and objective strategy. . . . There must be in this period global negotiations for a New International Economic Order." Yet Vice-President Illueca's opening speech on Sept. 26 did not take this issue further.

Nor did the presentation of Mrs. Gandhi herself, given on Sept. 28, advance the discussion. After beginning with a strong statement from the Non-Aligned meeting's final communiqué on the current crisis of civilization, Mrs. Gandhi assiduously avoided attacking the IMF, barely referred to her call for a global monetary conference to be held outside the IMF auspices, and failed to mention the Non-Aligned Move-

ment's firm call for the transfer of nuclear energy to the developing sector.

Her lack of aggressivity undoubtedly reflected the lack of support from both advanced sector nations and the Third World countries who attended the informal discussions of heads of state. Key to the advancement of a debtors' cartel that could negotiate a policy of capital-intensive growth for the world economy would be the linking up of the leading Ibero-American debtor countries with the Non-Aligned Movement. Not only did the major Ibero-American debtors boycott the Non-Aligned meeting last March, but only Ecuador, Peru, and Nicaragua—all relatively small debtors—attended the Sept. 27-28 meetings hosted by Mrs. Gandhi.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Ecuadorian President Osvaldo Hurtado Larrea followed up Mrs. Gandhi's concerns with forceful presentations of the depression crisis. Both angrily attacked the high interest rates which have brought on the world debt crisis, while noting that obedience to IMF conditionalities had done nothing to prevent "negative development rates of growth" or brought any "noticeable signs that the subcontinent's recovery has begun."

President Hurtado, who will be presiding over the next major meeting of Ibero-American debtor countries to be held in his capital, Quito, on Jan. 8, 1984, included a sharp attack on the U.S. banks. The top 10 brought in half of their profits in 1982 through their international operations, he noted—in other words, from usury. In language reminiscent of the Caracas Declaration of the Andean heads of state, Hurtado demanded less stringent conditions in the course of debt renegotiations, more lending by developed-sector governments—rather than international financial institutions—and lower interest rates. Both Presidents Hurtado and Mubarak, however, sidestepped the colonialist reality of the IMF, and demanded higher quota increases for that Malthusian institution, rather than its deserved demise.

President Reagan himself did not take advantage of his forum to push the beam program, and its essential contribution to ending the threat of thermonuclear war. His opposition did not avoid the issue. French President Mitterrand made a sharp attack against "space wars" and called for passage of a resolution that would ban all military uses of space. Many of the Third World leaders also felt themselves compelled to genuflect before the Andropov formula and attack the extension of war to space.

It was in this context that *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. issued an open letter to the U.N. delegates drawing attention to "the most promising development" for world peace, President Reagan's March 23 offer of negotiations with the Soviet Union on "making ICBMs obsolete." The Soviets have so far turned down the President's generous offer, LaRouche notes. But "if the Soviets can be induced to change their views, we can get out of the current strategic mess, and create a world no longer dominated by spheres of influence, but rather by sovereign nation-states."