

At the end of February this year Ferdinand Marcos, the dictator of the Philippines for twenty years, was forced to flee the country. A million people took to the streets of Manila, the capital city, to confront his columns of troops and tanks. The masses had had enough of poverty and undemocratic government.

An American imperialist puppet, Marcos has been faithful to only one thing - the lining of his and his friends' pockets with the profits of misery and death.

In September 1972, Marcos declared martial law to "save the Republic and to reform it". Martial law put all power in the hands of Marcos. Thirty thousand people were arrested and Marcos himself admitted to holding 50 000 political prisoners in 100 detention camps in 1975.

## Elections

Last year Marcos announced that "fair and free" elections would take place on February 7. The elections were intended

on the shoulders of Cory, the widow of Benigno Aquino. She was popular with the people and could command the confidence of the ruling class. Cory Aquino's decision to stand for elections was made after discussions with the U.S. ambassador and the archbishop of Manila. Cory, together with Doy Laurel, stood for elections under the banner of the "People's Party" and campaigned under the slogan "People's Power".



A demonstration last year to protest at the acquittal of the alleged murderers of Benigno Aquino—the main opposition leader. Now his widow is standing against Marcos in the election

In 1969, Marcos was "re-elected" president after he spent millions of dollars to win support and crush political dissent. The country was plunged into chaos. Inflation soared, the money (Peso) lost 60 percent in value and there were major food shortages. Marcos tried "reform" through the Constitutional Convention, but this was rejected. Fighting increased on the streets, with every demonstration ending with deaths. In the countryside, the army had to deal with the National People's Army (NPA), the military wing of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines.

to allow Marcos to legitimise his dictatorial rule, which was being questioned more and more inside and outside the Philippines. Marcos tried hard to win - bribery, fraud, assassinations.

The crisis which led to the election was sparked off by the assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983. This incident split the Filipino ruling class. Opposition to Marcos became widespread. It cut across all classes! United States imperialism and the local bourgeoisie had to find a replacement if they wanted to keep the Left out. This fell

The left was divided. Bayan, a militant organisation of radicals, trade unionists, students and community organisations, initially boycotted the elections, but the right wing split and supported Aquino.

After the fraudulent election results were announced, the people once again took to the streets. Important sections of the military refused to support Marcos, instead supporting Aquino. Marcos was forced to flee. The People's Party took office.

# PHILIPPINES



MARCOS

Cory Aquino is a very rich landowner and is surrounded by a "mafia" of upper class intellectual advisers. Many of them have been loyal supporters of Marcos and have a vested financial interest in stability in the Philippines. These friends of Aquino have been courted by the U.S. which has over 2 billion dollars invested in the Philippines. Aquino has dropped her commitment to get rid of U.S. military bases, and to redistribute the land.

get rid of Marcos will have their aspirations met. Yet the ordinary Filipino people have felt their power in the factories and on the streets. What is heartening for socialists the world over is to see the embryo of a workers' power that can get rid of not just Marcos, but the Americans, and ultimately, every single one of the bosses and bureaucrats who run and ruin our lives.



Anti-government and US demo

Doy Laurel, who is now Prime Minister, was for years one of Marcos's henchmen. He is also the owner of some of the biggest mines in the north of the country. One of Aquino's closest economic advisers, Jamie Ongpin is president of one of the Philippines' largest mining corporations, the Banquet Corporation. Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos, a distant cousin of Marcos and the Acting Chief of Staff of the Filipino armed forces, is now a key figure in Aquino's government. He complained two years ago that he didn't have enough power to crush the "communist insurgents".

With leaders such as these, we doubt whether the Filipino peasants and workers who sacrificed so much to

★ Marcos's personal wealth runs to billions of dollars. The majority of the 43 million Filipinos earn less than £2.50 a day—less than it costs to feed them

The Americans de-colonised the conglomerate of 7,000 islands in South East Asia in 1945.

Over half the population live in

rural areas.

In the mid 1970s the Army, the navy and the air force were doubled from 31,000 to 78,000 and the para-military Philippines Constabulary grew from 23,000 to 35,000.

In four years defence spending leapt from \$92 million to \$410 million and real wages dropped 30 percent.

## LESSONS FOR US

We have seen the treachery of the bourgeoisie in the Philippines. In South Africa, we also have the liberal bourgeoisie who are anti-apartheid. But what they want to replace apartheid - capitalism with is a reformed capitalism. Exploitation will

continue. The imperialists around the world are also looking at South Africa. They also want reforms, but reforms where the capitalist system will remain. We must not be fooled. Only a socialist society will bring in a society we all desire.