

international
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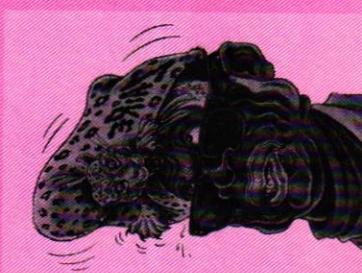
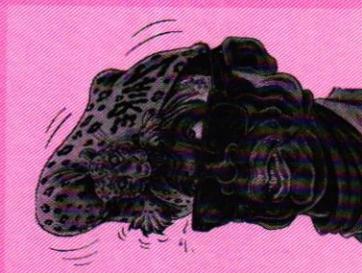
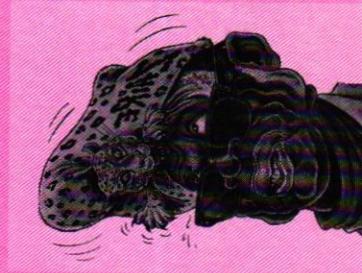
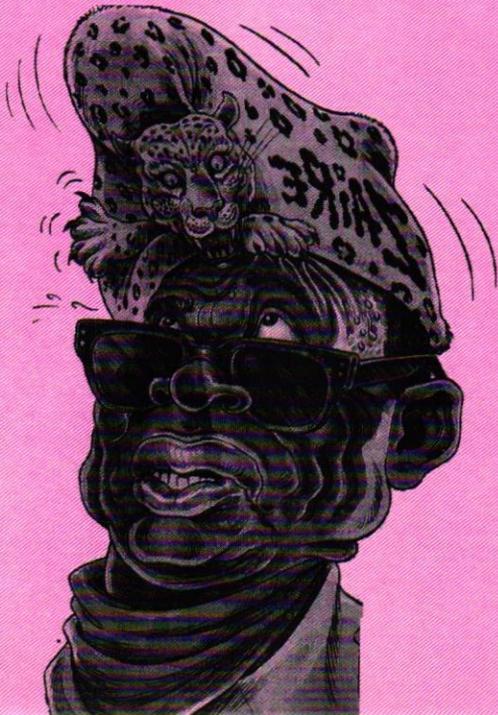
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The Congo challenge

Laurent Kabila says his new government will prioritise the social needs of the population, while respecting market forces and the global neo-liberal economic context. **Eric Toussaint** and **Denise Comanne** consider the possibilities.

The reconstruction of Congo-Zaire is a huge task. The country ranks 141 out of 174 in the United Nations Development Programme index of human development for 1996. Over 26 million of the country's 40 m. inhabitants have no access to health care; and 27 m. lack access to clean water. Life expectancy is 51.6 years and falling (down from 53 in 1990). Most of these statistics are probably outdated: the decline of the state apparatus in recent years was so severe that statistical

series were no longer published.

At the same time, Alliance leaders are right when they say that Congo-Zaire has colossal material and human resources. This gives the new regime the possibility to impose some conditions on international capital, which is desperate to "come back and do business." A series of progressive measures could be implemented, benefiting from the legitimacy earned by overthrowing former president Mobutu Sese Seko.

First could come a monetary reform, with the aim of reducing the country's catastrophic inflation rate, so as to protect the buying power of the population and encourage the re-launching of economic activities.

Monetary reform is never socially neutral, since it almost inevitably redistributes wealth. A progressive reform would involve exchanging old *Zaire* bank notes for a new currency at a fair exchange

rate for a sum reflecting reasonable personal savings. Those with more cash than this would have to deposit their *Zaires* in a blocked bank account, until they explained where the money came from. Wealth that cannot be justified could simply be confiscated. The rest could be exchanged for the new currency, but at a lower exchange rate.

The Sandinistas introduced a reform of this type in 1985. Belgium did so after the Second World War. For obvious reasons, this kind of reform is a harsh blow to speculators, who will find it very difficult to exchange their mountains of *Zaire* bank notes for new money, or anything else of value.

Such a bank note exchange would represent an extraordinary tax on personal fortunes, and the confiscation of part of the most illegitimate private wealth. It would favour those with little or medium wealth, at the expense of those who enriched themselves during the Mobutu regime. And by

reducing the amount of money in circulation, the regime would also reduce inflation.

Cancel the debt!

Congo's foreign debt is about US\$12 billion: \$275 for every man woman and child, or rather more than the average yearly per capita income, \$242. About 1/3 of the debt represents overdue interest payments. Three quarters of the total is owed to foreign governments, mainly the USA, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Japan.

The new authorities could simply suspend debt repayments, and begin negotiating with the country's creditors to establish what part of the debt should be cancelled as illegitimate. This would allow the regime to use some of the country's export earnings in a vast programme to improve the living conditions of the majority of the population, rather than continuing to see these revenues diverted into the pockets of the country's first world creditors.

Congo-Zaire has enormous resources. Its main exports are copper, diamonds, cobalt, oil and coffee. The country also has important deposits of other strategic minerals, of particular interest to the aerospace industries. Re-starting these export-oriented sectors will generate significant income. Part of the surplus could be used to improve the country's dilapidated mining and processing equipment

The new regime should demand that the country's commercial partners and creditors confiscate the Mobutu clan's wealth and property abroad, and return these resources to the country's new authorities, as contributions to a national social development fund, under the supervision of the new authorities and popular groups.

When dictators are overthrown, there is usually a need for massive literacy and vaccination projects, and the development of a basic health care system covering the whole country. Congo is no exception. The adult illiteracy rate is 74%. At least 6.2 m. children do not go to school. The infant mortality rate is 93 per 1,000 (ten times higher than in Cuba). Every year, about 350,000 children aged under five die. The country has one doctor for 14,300 inhabitants and one nurse for every 1,350. Under Mobutu, health spending represented only 0.8% of GDP.

No privatisation of land or mining

The state is still the main shareholder in the country's huge mining companies. This leading role should be preserved. The state should negotiate with foreign capital to guarantee a flow of investments for the modernisation of industry and infrastructure.

Seventy percent of the population is rural, and agriculture represents 38% of the country's GDP (the total value of goods and services). Over 25 million rural Congolese live below the poverty threshold. The new regime should guarantee those who work the land continued, or improved access to it. Land should not be privatised, as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are urging. South African agribusiness has clear plans to expand northwards, and the richer

members of Congo's *émigré* communities may also be tempted to buy up tracts of land.

A democratic and pluralist Congo

The new regime should guarantee complete liberty of expression and association, except for "Mobutu nostalgic." The country is fortunate, in that it already has a variety of independent publications, and a very rich tissue of community and civic groups (trade unions, district associations, Christian base communities, and so on.)

A multi-party system should also be guaranteed. The effervescence of political life a few years ago, in the opposition-dominated Sovereign National Conference, has declined, but has not been forgotten. Political debate at the national level requires the comparison of opposing political programmes, generated by parties which are truly different from each other.

If fundamental liberties are guaranteed without restriction or delay, the new regime will be able to take the necessary time to prepare the first elections.

There are worrying rumours that all or part of the Mobutu regime's armed forces are to be integrated into the Alliance's rebel army. It is very important that all sections of the former regime's repressive apparatus should be completely dissolved. Key Mobutu supporters should be purged from the civil service. Once the country is pacified, the armed forces should be used for a massive public works programme.

Those suspected of crimes against the population should be tried. But the death penalty should be abolished, and measures taken to avoid summary executions, corporal punishment, and local terror campaigns.

The tragic Rwandan refugee crisis was not created by the Alliance. But allegations of attacks against refugees by Alliance troops should be investigated, and those responsible judged. The refugees should be returned to Rwanda in the best possible conditions.

Those among the refugees who are suspected of participation in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda should be arrested and handed over to the Rwandan authorities for judgement. The international community does not just have a responsibility to come to the aid of the refugees. It has an equal responsibility towards the local population.

Solidarity

The anti-imperialist left in the North must defend the sovereignty of the new Congo. It should campaign for the immediate and unconditional cancellation of ex-Zaire's foreign debt, and the confiscation of the Mobutu clan's wealth abroad. The foreign troops which the Northern powers have gathered just outside Congo's frontiers should be withdrawn immediately.

Our solidarity with the people of Congo-Zaire did not start yesterday. Nor will it end tomorrow. It will continue as long as there is a struggle to rebuild a democratic and sovereign Congo. ★

1. For more information about "odious debt," see "South Africa book notes," in last month's issue of *International Viewpoint* (#288 p.31)

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Imperialist contradictions

by Eric Toussaint and Denise Comanne

The double defeat of French and Belgian imperialism is cause for celebration. This is France's first major defeat in Africa since Algeria won its independence in 1963. As for the former colonial power (remember the "Belgian Congo"?), Brussels had just managed to re-build its cosy relationship with the Mobutu dictatorship, when it imploded like a rotten fruit.

Throughout the 1990s, France has repeatedly intervened in its African "backyard." Presidents Mitterrand and Chirac supported Rwandan leader General Habyarimana, despite knowing that his regime was planing this century's third major genocide. The French army trained the Rwandan army and the *interahamwe* militia. When the FPR rebellion started, Paris repeatedly intervened to save Habyarimana.

The summit of this shameful interventionist policy was Operation Turquoise in July 1994. The French army interposed itself to allow the orderly withdrawal of the defeated regime's army and the genocidal militias, which set up a state-within-a-state inside the refugee camps of eastern Zaire.

From July 194 until November 1996, France hoped to use these refugees as a tool for the creation of a new pro-French regime in Rwanda. The spinal column of this new regime could only be Habyarimana's defeated genocidal army.

With French support, this rump regime used one million hutu refugees as a human shield, and a source of new recruits. Those media crying so bitterly about the fate of the remaining Hutu refugees in Zaire are silent about the grand "humanitarian operation" which created that exodus.

Paris supported Zairian dictator Mobutu Seke Seko until the last minute. France helped Mobutu recruit Bosnian Serb mercenaries, apparently through the "good offices" of the National Front of Jean Marie le Pen. Hundreds of French soldiers were disguised as mercenaries, and thrown in to the regime's last desperate counter-attack. Switzerland and Belgium finally decided to deny Mobutu entry. France let him run Zaire inc. from his luxury home on the Côte d'Azur.

Who's counting on Kabila?

With the regional *gendarme* backing Mobutu, where did Kabila get sufficient international support for his lightning offensive across the heart of Africa? Mainly from Congo-Zaire's neighbours: Angola, Uganda, and the new regime in Rwanda.

The Mobutu dictatorship was a menace to the security of all three countries. Jonas Savimbi of Unita was threatening to bring his Angloan rebel troops out of their Zairian bases, and resume hostilities. In the East of Zaire, Mobutu provided bases for guerrillas fighting the Museveni government in Uganda, and, of course, the remnants of the genocidal Rwandan regime.

The early victories of Laurent Kabila's Alliance forces in the Goma and Bukavu region were partly due to direct and indirect support from the Ugandan and new Rwandan governments. We can only approve of their aid.

Once the Alliance had taken the initiative, and started making quick headway against a Mobutist army that disintegrated and fled, the United States decided that they were more likely to benefit from supporting the Alliance and Zaire's neighbouring countries, than a dictator who's days of were

clearly numbered. Uganda and Rwanda were already priority states for American diplomacy in the region.

The South African connection

South African capital found a common interest in supporting the American initiative. South African mining companies and banks have long had their eye on the copper belt to the north, and Congo-Zaire's Shaba province in particular. South African capital was more than ready to invest in Congo-Zaire, as soon as stability could be guaranteed.

President Nelson Mandela, who's rule is based on a historic compromise with the white capitalist class, was also determined to see Mobutu fall. Partly because of the dictator's co-operation with the Apartheid regime in supporting the Unita rebels, and partly because the corrupt, sclerotic Kinshasa regime contradicts the new image of Africa which Mandela wants to promote, so that the continent can reduce its isolation from the global economy, and benefit from it.

Thanks to the compromise between Mandela and South Africa's white capitalists, the United States now has the possibility of exercising considerable influence over a large part of southern and central Africa.

The Alliance is by no means a puppet of the United States. But Washington will clearly have considerable weight in Laurent Kabila's deliberations in the coming months. Unlike France, the US recognised, and declared, that Mobutu should retire, at a sufficiently early point in the conflict to be (almost) credible. Kabila also knows that it was Washington which blocked France's plan to deploy a multi-national military force in Zaire in November 1996, to prop up the dictatorship. ★

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The people are ready for change

Interview with Congo-Zaire's new Minister of Health, Jean Baptiste Sondji

Under the Mobutu dictatorship, Jean Baptiste Sondji was a leader of the Patriotic Front, the main radical left party in the Kinshasa-based opposition.

The Front distinguished itself from the rest of the opposition parties by refusing to make compromises with the regime. In 1992, when Mobutu invited opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi to form a government, the Front refused to participate. When it realised that the "transitional parliament" was a farce, it withdrew. In the end, it was Laurent Kabila's eastern rebel Alliance which dislodged President Mobutu, not the opposition in Kinshasa. But the democratic struggle in the capital has marked popular consciousness.

In this interview, recorded in April, before the Mobutu regime fell, we asked Jean Baptiste Sondji about the opposition movement in the capital, his perception of Kabila and the Alliance, and his hopes for the future

In the early 90s, Zaire, like many other African countries, entered a phase of "democratisation." Seven years later, we have a civil war. Isn't this a consequence of "democratisation,"?

The civil war was a consequence of the particular "democratisation" which was introduced. This country had lived under a dictatorship for many years. When the regime felt the wind of change in the air, it organised a mechanism to resist change. Mobutu's whole "democratisation" programme prevented a real democratic development. The regime's constant, bitter resistance to change exacerbated the contradictions in society, creating the conditions for a civil war.

A few years ago, Mobutu organised a "popular consultation," because he needed to know what the people really thought. The majority expressed a desire for profound changes. Convinced that he could control events, Mobutu began planning a custom-made democratisation... authorising just two opposition parties. But popular resistance im-

posed a multi-party situation. Then Mobutu proposed a "constitutional conference," rather than the "sovereign national conference" demanded by the opposition. Finally, the "sovereign national conference" did take place (in 1992). But the regime blocked so much of its work that its recommendations were never implemented. Nor were the proposed "hearings" on the people's need.

In August 1992, the Sovereign National Conference elected Etienne Tshisekedi as Prime Minister. Mobutu later sacked him. But with Kabila half-way to the capital, Tshisekedi accepted the dictator's side with him against the armed rebels. Why?

This shows the contradictions of the whole "sovereign national conference" scheme. That body recognised the overwhelming responsibility of Mobutu and his system for the disintegration of the state in Zaire. Most of those present wanted to remove Mobutu from his positions. But the US stressed that the dictator must be offered an honourable exit, because of services rendered to them [during the cold war]. US envoys proposed to the Kinshasa opposition that Mobutu surrender real power, but remain as symbolic head of state.

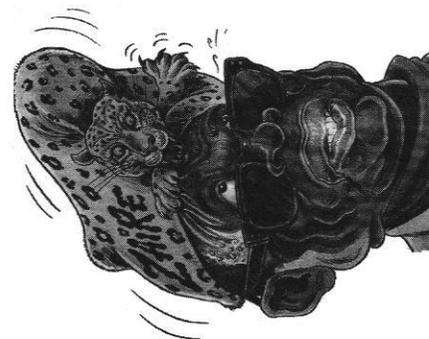
The "radical" opposition around Etienne Tshisekedi lapped up this idea, and began repeating it like parrots from the tribune of the "sovereign national conference." Our party, the *Front patriotique* (Patriotic Front) disagreed, saying that Mobutu should be removed completely, and should stand trial.

Everyone agreed that Mobutu must go, sooner or later. The "sovereign national conference" wanted to reach this objective by gentle means. This didn't work. Mobutu did not become a symbolic head of state. He continued to rule, with an iron fist. He prevented the continuing democratisation of the country.

This blockage is at the root of the emergence of the armed struggle towards the end of 1996. All patriots should support this action, to reach the goals which we have supposedly proclaimed. But strangely, Tshisekedi wanted to throw Mobutu a life-belt, by imposing himself between the dictator and Kabila. He even invited Kabila and the Alliance to join a government, with himself as Prime Minister. The rebels accepting posts in another Mobutu government! Grotesque!

French media say Kabila is a puppet of US interests in the region.

When the civil war started, the media talked about the rebellion of "Banyamulenge" Tutsis, and warned against the implosion of Zaire in ethnic conflicts. The conflict in Rwanda, and tension between residents of Eastern Zaire, some of distant or recent Rwandan origin, certainly contributed to the



rebellion in the East of Zaire. But the conflict cannot be reduced to an ethnic conflict.

As the rebellion progressed, the ethnic thesis was forgotten, and replaced with warnings against the struggle of anglophone interests against France. Everyone knows that this country's enormous resources have always made it an object of desire for the great powers.

But when the USA decided that their old ally Mobutu was a bad thing for the country, and that it was time to get rid of him, what were we to do? The new US position coincided with that of the majority of the people of Zaire. We could only welcome the change in US strategy. Mobutu only stayed in power for so long because of the support of the great powers. So if some of them now wanted to offer military or other aid to get rid of him, fine!

To deduce from this that Kabila is the puppet of the US and other powers is to ignore the level of political consciousness among the people of Zaire. We have been deeply traumatised by 37 years of Mobutu, and similar neo-colonial regimes. We have become well aware of the negative role of the foreign powers. The people of Zaire will never again accept to be ruled by puppets. I am convinced that Kabila is aware of this.

The conflict between the USA and France doesn't concern us. We aren't French, and we aren't going to become Americans. Independently of whether we use French, English or both to communicate.

Where Zaire is concerned, the western powers are navigating without a map. They haven't been very good at managing the situation in Zaire. The US, France and Belgium made an enormous effort to impose Kengo wa Dongo as Prime Minister instead of Tshisekedi, ignoring the clear wishes of the "sovereign national conference." But although he had all the resources at his disposition, Prime Minister Kengo wa Dongo failed miserably.

If the western powers can't ensure their rule through a perfect agent of neo-colonialism like him, why should they be able to rule through Laurent Kabila?

★ the event

Kabila's success depends on his ability to commune with the aspirations of our people: better living conditions, in a context of liberty and true democracy. A context in which the common interest is more important than individual interests. These aspirations could take the form of better education for all, full employment, access to quality health care, better housing, and so on.

Does the Alliance have a plan which can satisfy these social aspirations?

If the Alliance wants to succeed, if it wants to enter into communion with our people, it has no alternative but to put into place a policy which aims above all to satisfy these aspirations. If it does not, then the civil war will have been for nothing. This might sound idealist. But the central question is precisely this. Does the alliance have a global project which goes in the direction of satisfying the aspirations of the people?

The Alliance is a young organisation, formed in autumn 1996. As such, it is not easy to develop a coherent project. But it could orient itself by analysing our country's recent past, and identifying the factors which led to the current collapse.

Our economy is completely outward-turned. It meets the needs of the west for raw materials much more than the needs of the people of Zaire. This is what has led to the current situation. So the first thing we must do is reverse this economic situation. To build up an economy which has as its central goal the satisfaction of the needs of the population.

Nowadays, humanity is shocked by the neo-liberal currents which, in this part of the world, are imposing the privatisation of public sector enterprises, on the grounds that they are badly managed. As far as Zaire is concerned, we have plenty of badly managed private companies too. Plenty of bankrupt private sector companies too. The solution to bad management is not privatisation, but good management.

In the industrialised countries, the second World War was followed by three decades of constant growth, and practically full employment. These sustained levels of growth and employment were only possible because the state controlled whole sectors of the economy, and was able to orient these sectors in a direction which benefited the community.

What do we see today? The state is totally withdrawing from sectors which it once controlled. Not because they are badly managed, but just because neo-liberal ideology says so. We see social crises, growing unemployment, and poverty. Surely, an economy which is not at the service of the community can only be a source of troubles.

All this means that our country, and the Alliance in particular, should draw these lessons, and firmly reject the structural adjustment policy being imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This is a fundamental choice. It will determine the direction events in our country will take.

How widespread are your views within the Kinshasa opposition?

You have to distinguish the leaders of the political parties from the ordinary people. 95% of the politicians in Zaire are agents of neo-colonialism. For these people, Zaire's problems are a simple problem of bad management. They think we just need to improve the management of the country, and inject a dose of morality, and the splendour of the good old days will return.

This is quite obviously false. But it is this type of analysis which leads Zairian politicians to opt for reformism. Many even envisaged some kind of harmonious cohabitation with Mobutu. They considered the armed struggle against the Mobutu regime as something opposed to good behaviour, even anti-democratic.

All of these politicians are frightened of the real changes which our country needs. Because they know that if those kind of policies are implemented, they and those like them will disappear from the political scene.

The political blockage in Zaire [in the months before Kabila took power, Ed.] is largely the fault of this political class.

What other types of political activism are there?

The "parliament on its feet" (*parlement debout*) is a phenomenon of the 1990s. Its name stresses its difference from a regular parliament, where the deputies are comfortably seated, and therefore less alert. During the Sovereign National Conference period, the population followed the debates with great interest. Whenever a participant said something which was against the interest of the population, the sanction was immediate. The politician's house was identified, and totally destroyed by the crowd. The villa of one of Mobutu's Ministers of Health was destroyed in four hours. Even the walls were dismantled, by hundreds of angry people.

Later, "parliaments on their feet" began to meet at newspaper stands. Political activists were invited to come and discuss with

them. The movement had a semi-clandestine organisational structure. But it was efficient enough to be able to survey any state representative or politician, anywhere in the country. I remember once, when Tshisekedi was prime minister, he received a European Union delegation, mainly German-speakers. When they emerged from Tshisekedi's house, the "parliament on its feet" was waiting, with a message in German which they passed to the delegation. As you can see, the eyes and ears of the people are organised!

There are almost as many trade unions as political parties. Some were only created so that their leaders could participate in the Sovereign National Congress. There is not, in these groups, a sense of struggle in defence of workers' interests.

Of course, given the extreme poverty of Zairian workers, you can imagine the enormous difficulties which those few unions which do try to organise themselves face.

Among those which have managed to organise the workforce, and oblige the authorities to renounce certain practices are the union at ONATRA, the company which controls Matadi, Kinshasa and some other ports, and the Matadi-Kinshasa railway. This union forced the Kengo government to abandon its plans to privatise ONATRA, through a strike which almost suffocated the country, particularly the capital, Kinshasa.

The civil servants' union has also managed to organise strikes, though it is a weaker organisation than the ONATRA union. Another serious union exists at Gécamines, which has a monopoly on the exploitation and sale of Zaire's copper and cobalt. Workers there went on strike recently, to reclaim several months unpaid wages, which Mobutu wanted to allocate to the "war effort."

Is there any kind of revolutionary left in Zaire?

This is a country with enormous human and natural potential, but characterised by extreme poverty. The situation is explosive, and the contradictions are so sharp that a radical change is overdue. And yet, there are no well structured, well implanted revolutionary political organisations, which could respond to this situation.

This is for historic reasons. Zaire's intellectual elite was mainly trained by the Mobutu regime, and most of the education system is controlled by the Catholic church. All this has limited the penetration of revolutionary theories and ideas into the country.

But, in our opinion, the current situation, which is obliging a growing number of Zairians to adopt a revolutionary praxis, can only facilitate the rapid assimilation of revolutionary theories by the masses. ★

Note

Jean Baptiste Sondji was interviewed in Kinshasa by our equatorial Africa correspondent Jean Nanga. This interview was first published in the May 1997 issue of our French sister publication *Inprecor*.

In the coming days we will interview Mr. Sondji again, concentrating on the situation since Laurent Kabila's troops entered Kinshasa. That interview will be printed in the July issue of *International Viewpoint*.



More than Blair will give

The defeat of the Tory government after eighteen years in power, and the election of Tony Blair's New Labour party, will lead to major changes in British politics. But most of these changes will not be thanks to the new government, but in spite of or in response to it.

Roland Rance

The huge Tory defeat, far greater than anyone had expected, has left the party demoralised and directionless. More than half of the Conservative MPs were defeated, while those remaining are fighting bitterly over leadership of the rump that is left. Seven members of John Major's cabinet lost their seats, including Michael Portillo, a potential right-wing contender for the party leadership.

The Tories now have no MPs in Scotland or Wales, and very few in urban England. The divisions and recriminations in the party are likely to leave it unable to bid effectively for a return to power for many years.

Although the Labour party was the main benefactor of this crushing defeat, winning an unprecedented 419 seats, other parties also benefited from the Tory collapse. The Liberal Democrats doubled their parliamentary representation to 46, the Scottish Nationalists doubled theirs from three to six, and Sinn Fein won two seats in Northern Ireland.

Journalist Martin Bell, standing as an independent with backing from Labour and the Liberal Democrats, defeated corrupt Tory incumbent Neil Hamilton in an archetypal Conservative seat in suburban Manchester.

Left of Labour

The parties to the left of Labour had mixed results. In Glasgow, community activist Tommy Sheridan, a member of the Socialist Party (formerly Militant), standing for the Scottish Socialist Alliance (SSA), received 11.1%. Other SSA candidates fared less well, with an average vote just over 1%. Former Labour Member of Parliament Dave Nellist, standing for the Socialist Party in Coventry, received 6.5%.

Miners leader Arthur Scargill, standing for the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) in Newport, Wales, received 5.2%. A handful of SLP candidates did even better. In Cardiff Central, Terry Burns won 5.3%, with an explicitly revolutionary platform.

In East Ham (East London), lawyer Imran Khan recorded the party's best result, winning 6.8% in a constituency where the Labour party was accused of not paying attention to the demands of a large Asian population. Khan is a well known local activist, and ran a very active campaign in



opposition to the far-right British Nationalist Party (BNP), which received 3.2% in that constituency. The combined vote of left-of-Labour candidates was about 70,000.

Right wing extremists

The fascist National Front polled over 1,000 votes in a number of London seats. In the East London area of Bethnal Green, where all three main parties stood black candidates, they took 7.5% of the votes.

Anglo-French businessman James Goldsmith's anti-Maastricht Referendum Party gained over 80,000 votes. Since he is believed to have spent £20 million of his vast fortune on the campaign, this works out at about £25 (US\$40) per vote.

Single-issue anti-abortion candidates did badly everywhere they stood. And, as is traditional, neither the Natural Law Party nor the Monster Raving Loony Party gained high votes.

Labour's first steps in government

Following the results, Blair stated: "We ran for office as New Labour, and we will govern as New Labour." He lost no time in making his intentions clear. Labour right-winger Frank Field, who has for many years attacked the benefits system, was appointed minister for welfare reform.

The head of BP, who is not an elected member of parliament, was appointed as a trade minister. Another wealthy businessman is to head a commission enquiring into a minimum wage.

The government has repeated its intention not to raise income tax, not to repeal anti-union legislation, and not to take back into public ownership the utilities sold for peanuts by the Tories.

But there have been a few welcome reforms. Some of the more vicious aspects of immigration policy have been relaxed. The government has promised to end the sale of land mines, and local government will be restored in London.

Constitutional changes

In constitutional matters, there will be major changes, with the near-certainty of a Scottish Assembly, with tax-raising powers, within two years, and the likelihood of a Welsh Assembly. It is also likely that there will be a change in the electoral system in Britain, with a move to a more proportional system.

The Tory wipe-out in Scotland and Wales followed an election in which they attempted to play up fears of the future of the United Kingdom; they therefore have little legitimacy for strenuous opposition to these assemblies.

A further welcome result of the election is the large increase in women members of parliament. This is largely the result of a Labour policy (later banned by the courts) of reserving certain seats for women candidates. There are now more than 100 women on the Labour benches. This is still only a quarter of the party's MPs, but it represents a significant, positive change.

What do the rich and famous expect from Blair?

On the whole, Labour offers more a change of style than of policy. Chancellor of the Exchequer (Finance Minister) Gordon Brown chose to wear a normal grey suit, rather than formal evening wear, when he addressed a meeting of bankers in the City of

★ Britain

London.

Tony Blair has been welcomed across Europe as a less abrasive leader than his Tory predecessors. But many must have been alarmed to learn that he was briefed by Margaret Thatcher before the recent EU leaders' summit.

...and the rest of us?

Blair is mistaken if he believes that this massive rejection of the Tory party can be seen as positive support for his "New Labour" project. Exit polls at the polling

booths showed that 60% of first-time Labour voters favoured redistribution of wealth, while 75% opposed any further privatisation. And yet, these are precisely the policies which the Labour leadership has spent months promising *not* to follow.

Millions of workers voted Labour despite, rather than because of, Blair's promise not to increase spending on education, the health service, pensions, welfare benefits, housing and public sector wages.

The demand for change is strong, and it

will not be long before this leads to a confrontation with the new government. Any attempt by the government to further cut welfare spending, or to impose a public sector pay freeze, in order to meet the convergence criteria for a single currency, will be strenuously opposed by a working class which has gained in confidence with the massive defeat of the Tories.

Abdication to the bankers

The decision by Chancellor Brown to surrender control over interest rates to the Bank of England – in effect establishing an independent central bank – can be seen as a first step towards acceptance of a European central bank.

It indicates that this government, like the Tories, is more concerned with combating the threat of inflation than controlling the bankers and creating jobs. Under the new system, the banks will find it much easier to sabotage any economic policies not in their interests.

Although their massive parliamentary majority of 179 seats should enable Labour to disregard attacks from the right, it is more likely to be used as a threat against any left wing MPs who break ranks and demand increased public spending.

Left-wing MPs must start work

Before the election, many left Labour MPs argued that it would be a mistake to rock the boat, and be accused of threatening the election strategy.

This excuse no longer holds water. These MPs must now be challenged to fight Blair's programme, even if this leads to expulsion



Northern Ireland Another day in Castlereagh

On 4 May the *Sunday Business Post* carried a major article by the British journalist and television producer Lin Solomon. The piece exposes three of the crucial weaknesses in the German warrant which seeks the extradition of Roisín McAliskey in connection with the IRA mortar bombing of a British Army Barracks in Osnabruck on June 28 1996.

Key witness, Manfred Schmidt, owner of the holiday cottage which it is claimed was rented out to the IRA unit, has "unambiguously asserted" that he had never identified Roisín as the woman 'Beth'.

2. The warrant claims that fingerprints, allegedly Roisín's, were found in the holiday cottage. The German authorities now claim however that the fingerprints were actually found 90 km. away at the site of the IRA attack in Osnabruck.

3. The warrant states that some of the IRA unit returned to Ireland aboard the Roscoff-Cork ferry arriving on July 1 1996. But as Solomon points out, "a check with the ferry company... reveals

that there was no ferry which made the Roscoff-Cork crossing on the June 30. No ferry which could have arrived at Cork from Roscoff on July 1."

In fact, Roisín was not arrested in connection with the Osnabruck bombing at all. For the first days of her interrogation there was no mention of Germany. She was questioned about events in the North in the preceding weeks.

Woman Detective Constable, Douris, is said to have told Roisín that the problem with the cease-fires and the release of prisoners was that "republicans are breeding like rats, breeding like shit". This RUC officer is alleged to have told Roisín which parts of her body were most vulnerable to blows which would induce a miscarriage without any evidence showing afterwards. She is also alleged to have given Roisín a vivid description details of the haemorrhage suffered by another female detainee from Belfast.

Detective McRoberts allegedly told Roisín on the fourth or fifth day that

Derek Martindale, the head of RUC Special Branch, had gone "on a wee holiday" and would be bringing back "a package deal". It is thought that Martindale travelled to Germany at this time knowing that the German authorities wanted a woman suspect in the Osnabruck case and hoping to put Roisín 'in the frame'. In other words, the German interest in Roisín was aroused by the *RUC Special Branch*, having failed to pin anything else on the daughter of that "republican bitch".

Roisín's abusive treatment is no accident. Louis Blom Cooper QC, appointed by the British Government to oversee conditions in the interrogation centres, recently found that "complaints continue to be received alleging psychological abuse, personal threats and threats concerning the detainee's relatives. Not infrequently, detainees have complained of the demeaning, degrading and insulting remarks made about them, their spouses, partners or relatives." ★

Source: "No case to answer - Federal Republic of Germany Vs Roisín McAliskey," *Sunday Business Post*, as reported in *Ireland News Update* (from the Pat Finucane Centre, Derry), 4 May 1997

from the party. One thing is clear. If Blair acts against them, their strongest defence will be though linking up with party members and trade unionists in building a strong and campaigning left.

Activists have already planned a series of conferences over the next few months in order to discuss the way forward for the left. The first of these will be the conference of the Network of Socialist Campaign Groups, in London on 31 May, which will be attended by party and union activists and several left MPs.

As well as discussing the way to fight in the wake of the election victory, this meeting will focus on the way to oppose proposed changes in the Labour Party constitution, which would virtually eliminate its democratic structures. Further conferences are planned by the Network of Socialist Alliances in Coventry in June, and the Welfare State Network in Liverpool in July.

Together with the successful Euro-marches in Britain, and the forthcoming annual conferences of many trade unions, this will ensure that the real issues will not be ignored in the euphoria of the massive Tory defeat. ★

Note

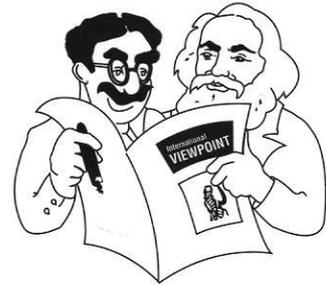
1. In Dudley (near Birmingham) Mark Atherton gained 4.5%. SLP candidate Harpal Brar, secretary of the Indian Workers Association, won 3.9% of the vote in Ealing Southall. The sitting MP, Piara Khabra, is also of south Asian origin. Other SLP candidates included Trevor Wongsam (1.4% in Manchester Gorton), Patrick Sikorski (1.1% in Hornsey & Wood Green) and Paul Davidson (1.4% in Sheffield Brightside).

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Albania

Fourth International United Secretariat declaration, 13 May 1997

In recent years, Albania was presented by the international institutions and imperialist propaganda as a country which served as an example to its neighbours, because of its economic growth, and its spectacular progress in the construction of a "market economy."

In just a few days, a powerful popular movement swept away this myth, exposing the perverse mechanisms, the savage exploitation, and the financial fraud by which these alleged results were obtained. And against which wide sections of the Albanian population had revolted. They also rose up against the political regime symbolised by President Sali Berisha. A regime which hid its profoundly anti-democratic, police-state nature behind the facade of largely fraudulent elections victories.

Spokesmen for the imperialist countries presented the protagonists of the Albanian mass movement as (at best) inspired by clan allegiance, or (at worst) criminal or mafia gangs.

In fact, the insurrection covered the whole country, thanks to massive, active popular participation. The criminal gangs, which exist in Albania like in all other countries, only exploited the conditions created by the rotting Berisha regime: consolidating their links with the mass of international traffickers, and shamelessly exploiting all those who saw a passage across the Adriatic sea to Italy as their (illusory) salvation. By crude mystification, these bandits have been falsely presented as the main actors of the Albanian drama.

In fact, the mass movement put forward completely legitimate demands: the restitution of the money stolen through "pyramid" operations authorised by the government, Berisha's resignation, the dissolution of the secret police, and fair elections. The democratic revolutionary character of this movement was expressed in the formation of popular committees, in open session, co-ordinated in a National Public Salvation Committee.

These committees did not become organs of a real dual power, challenging the regime. They demanded Berisha's departure, but limited themselves to playing the role of pressure-group on the new Fino government. The committees also accepted the deployment of the "Alba" multinational armed force. This is largely due to their lack of experience, the widespread illusions in the existing political parties, and the absence of political kernels with a general overview of the situation.

The Fourth International expresses its militant solidarity with the insurrectional movement which has shaken Albania. It calls for mobilisations in support of the following demands, particularly in those countries which have launched the military intervention.

- Immediate, unconditional resignation of President Berisha.
- Dissolve the secret police.
- Reimburse the money stolen in the financial scandals
- Recognise the popular committees.
- Withdraw the multi-national force, since its main goal is the reconstruction of a repressive, anti-democratic state structure, and the maintenance of Albania's "market economy." ★

The trouble with youth

Most of the Russian Communist Party's few young supporters have just left.

Boris Kagarlitsky and Renfrey Clarke

The Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), held in Moscow on April 19 and 20, looked like a triumph for party leader Gennady Zyuganov. He managed to avoid having to explain the loss of last year's presidential elections, or the more recent decision by the party leadership to back a state budget, which even the government now admits was unrealistic. Nor was Zyuganov called to account for the party's decision to endorse Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister. In the concluding stages of the congress, he was re-elected as general secretary with, he boasted, only one delegate voting against.

Zyuganov's triumph was a victory for bureaucratic gagging and arm-twisting. In no sense was it an advance toward building a united, massive opposition to the Yeltsin regime. This became clear in the week after the congress. At the end of April, leaders of the 21,000 member Russian Communist Youth Union (Komsomol) declared their organisation politically and organisationally independent of the party.

Zyuganov had been under heavy criticism from left-wing elements of the KPRF for several months. Representatives of regional party organisations were particularly dissatisfied; many deputies who had been elected from territorial constituencies defied party discipline and voted against the budget.

Tight control

Virtually none of this dissatisfaction emerged in the congress. As far as possible, delegates who were thought likely to raise awkward questions were first "sifted out" at provincial conferences. Then, almost all the dissenters who made it to the congress were blocked from speaking. Known dissidents were kept off the new Central Committee.

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Zyuganov's main response to discontent in the ranks was to call on KPRF members to turn out massively for anti-government demonstrations planned for May 1st, Victory Day (May 9th) and the November 7th anniversary of the 1917 revolution. With large numbers of the KPRF's worker and pensioner members living in semi-starvation, Zyuganov could not afford not to support these protests.

But any illusion that the party leaders were really seeking to lead mass struggles against the government's policies should have been dispelled in the days after the congress, when representatives of the KPRF *Duma* (parliamentary) fraction met with Vice-Premier Anatoly Chubais to discuss amendments to the state budget. Chubais was demanding further cuts to spending on social needs, health and education, while rejecting measures to support industry and agriculture. The Communist fraction agreed to most of his proposals.

Parliamentary cretinism

Zyuganov and his colleagues do not deliberately serve Chubais's goals. But the KPRF leaders fail to mount serious resistance to the government's attacks because they have driven themselves into a strategic dead-end. Without experience of working with mass movements – and with little wish to do so – the KPRF leaders are showing all the symptoms of "parliamentary

cretinism." Fearful of losing their *Duma* mandates and places in the various parliamentary committees, they are accepting any compromise so long as the dissolution of the parliament is avoided. This submissiveness is undermining the Party's influence and reducing its chances should early elections be held. This in turn multiplies the party leaders' fear of elections and their weakness in the face of government pressures.

Ironically, pro-business news organs are often ready to point to the confusion and spinelessness of the supposed Red menace. "The gulf between the radicalising masses, who are demanding prompt improvements in their situation, and the mild, ineffectual actions of the KPRF leadership is creating a deep crisis in the left opposition," the newspaper *Vek* observed recently.

For the KPRF leaders, the "triumph" at the congress is already looking more like the prelude to catastrophe. On 29 April, Komsomol leader Malyarov told the English-language *Moscow Tribune*, that the Komsomol had "an independent position", and was not "an appendage of the KPRF". "The conflict is expected to grow," he said.

At the same press conference Anatoly Baranov, deputy editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, attacked the KPRF for failing to carry out its role of opposing the government's strategies. "The official opposition, represented by Gennady Zyuganov, has lost its spirit and can no longer fulfil its function," he complained,

adding that there had been "a serious split within the opposition."

Patriotic pensioners

The defection of the Komsomol is likely to prove crippling for the KPRF. Burdened with a reputation as a "party of pensioners", the KPRF has had little success in attracting new activists except via its youth wing.

One of the main factors sending the Komsomol off on an independent track is younger comrades' distaste for the "national-patriotic" thinking KPRF leaders have enthusiastically embraced, seeing it as their key weapon for broadening their support and ensuring electoral success. Nationalist ideology, especially as formulated by Zyuganov and his colleagues, holds little appeal for most young Russians.

Older people in Russia are often suspicious and resentful of foreign influences, but relatively few of the country's youth share these feelings. For those who do, the most natural course is not toward the Communists but toward fascist groups; there the nationalism is purer and the aesthetic more modern.

Young people who are ready to align themselves with the left are attracted by socialism, not by "state patriotism"; they want resolute political action, not parliamentary moderation and behind-the-scenes deals with the government.

Some left intelligentsia, including Anatoly Baranov and Boris Kagarlitsky, have declared support for Malyarov and the Komsomol 'dissidents.' Together they have signed a set of "New April Theses" — a minimum programme for the revival of the left.

The "New April Theses" represents the third attempt since 1993 to create a left alternative. The first attempt was undertaken by non-communist leftists in 1994, against a background of growing opportunism by the KPRF. Their effort failed because the socialist groups were not mature enough for a serious unification.

During the lead-up to the 1995 parliamentary elections, the KPRF leaders made a rhetorical turn to the left, encouraging leftists to hope that a "reformed" and "renewed" KPRF might become the main element in a broad united front. But as the KPRF leaders lost their hopes of taking control of the Kremlin, they lost interest not only in their allies on the left, but also in their own supporters and activists. This set the scene for the present "mutiny".

Malyarov and his co-thinkers have now begun a search for allies. The coming months will show whether their declaration of independence will help the emergence of a new political force on the Russian left. ★

Denmark

Bosnian democratic opposition speaks out



Selim Beslagic (left) presents the Bosnian democratic opposition's viewpoints to OSCE chairman (and Danish Foreign Minister) Niels Helveg Petersen (right).

A spokesman for the multi-ethnic and democratic opposition in Bosnia recently visited Denmark, thanks to the efforts of a new NGO which seeks to support education and trade union projects in Tuzla, Bosnia.

The initiative to invite Selim Beslagic, president of the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats, and mayor of the multi-ethnic town of Tuzla, came from the **Stoet Tuzlas Skoler** (Help Bosnia's Schools) group.

Beslagic was received by the foreign committee of the Danish parliament, and Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Petersen is also chairman of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. This was the first time the OSCE accepted to meet with a representative of the Bosnian democratic opposition.

Beslagic said that until Bosnian refugees had the right to return to their home towns, western Governments should not push them to return. Otherwise they would only return to the "Muslim" part of Bosnia, "becoming refugees in their own country." He stressed the changing mood among Bosnians, pointing to a recent meeting in Banja Luka (controlled by the Bosnian Serb authorities) where 5,000 ethnic Serbs repeated their desire to return to their homes in the Muslim-Croat Federation.

The meeting was organised by the "shadow government," established by democratic forces from all parts of Bosnia.

Meetings with the Danish left parties were also productive. Until this trip, active support for progressive groups in Bosnia was more or less confined to the far left in Denmark. But representatives of the (ruling) Social Democratic Party and the (left reformist) Peoples Socialist Party pledged to give a higher priority to contacts with their Bosnian counterparts.

Help Tuzla's Schools will contribute to the running costs of a sister-office in Tuzla, which will co-ordinate international support for Tuzla's school system. It will also serve as a support centre for the Tuzla teachers' union, other trade unions, and democratic and multi-ethnic organisations in general. It will organise holiday projects for Bosnian children, in co-operation with a Belgo-Slovenian project based in Ljubljana. ★ [JD]

Notes
Selim Beslagic visited Denmark from 8-11 April 1997. Help Tuzla's Schools (Stoet Tuzlas Skoler) is a spin-off from International Workers Aid, a solidarity NGO in which Danish Fourth International supporters are particularly active. The new group is supported by all Denmark's teachers unions, and represents a wide range of political views. It has about 500 members.
For more information contact: **Stoet Tuzlas Skoler**, Borgegdet 23, 4000 Roskilde, Denmark. Tel +45 42 37 06 73, E-mail <vagn-ras@cybernet.dk>

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by Catherine Samary

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The right wing Afrikaner Freedom Front plans to develop a "Food Corridor" extending across the Southern part of the continent from Angola to Mozambique.

The objective is to set up White-owned farms beyond South Africa's borders. Afrikaner agribusiness will extend its grip into neighbouring countries with large scale investments in commercial farming, food processing and eco-tourism.

This "Food Corridor" does not mean food for the local people. On the contrary, local peasants will lose their land. African small-holders will become farm labourers or tenants on large scale plantations owned by the Boers.

Michel Chossudovsky*

The South African Chamber for Agricultural Development (SACADA) which acts as an umbrella organisation is integrated by several right wing organisations including the Freedom Front (FF) led by Viljoen and the secret Afrikaner Broederbond. As South African Defence Force (SADF) Commander in Chief during the Apartheid regime, General Viljoen personally ordered attacks on so-called "African National Congress Targets" including the blowing up of suspected anti-apartheid activists and critics.

Former spy Craig Williamson recently produced classified State Security Council documents indicating that Viljoen was also responsible for Stratcom (Strategic Communications), a covert organisation involved in frame-ups, political assassinations, bombings, torture, covert propaganda and "dirty tricks campaigns".¹

The Freedom Front is "moderate" in comparison to Eugene Terre'Blanche's far-right Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB). But the Front is still a racist political movement committed to the ideal of a separate Afrikaner state.

The SACADA-Freedom Front initiative has nonetheless the political backing of the African National Congress as well as the personal blessing of President Nelson Mandela who has delegated Mpumalanga (East Transvaal) Premier Matthews Phosa to the SACADA Board. All the other governors are members of the Freedom Front.

Premier Phosa, a distinguished ANC politician and among the most prosperous black businessmen in Mpumalanga province, is the architect of a proposed "regional economic block" between Eastern Transvaal, Mozambique and Swaziland. Premier Phosa is not only firmly behind the SACADA-Freedom Front initiative, he has also contributed to laying the political ground work for the ex-

pansion of White Afrikaner business interests into neighbouring countries. Phosa informed the provincial legislature in 1995 that "he is communicating with General Viljoen to ensure that their separate initiatives are complementary".²

In discussions with President Mandela, General Viljoen had argued that: "settling Afrikaner farmers would stimulate the economies of neighbouring states, would provide food and employment for locals, and that this would stem the flow of illegal immigrants into South Africa".³

Viljoen has also held high level meetings on Afrikaner agricultural investments with representatives of the European Union, the United Nations and other donor agencies.⁴ SACADA has approached some 12 African countries "interested in White South African

farmers".⁵ Meanwhile, the government is negotiating with several African governments on behalf of SACADA. The ANC government is anxious to facilitate the expansion of corporate agri-business into neighbouring countries. President Mandela has endorsed a venture set up in 1994 under the South African Development Corporation (SADEVCO), under which the government of Congo-Brazzaville granted Boer farmers 99 year leases on agricultural land. Mandela called on African nations "to accept the migrants as a kind of foreign aid".⁶

An earlier trek of White farmers to Zambia and Congo-Brazzaville in the early 1990s met with mixed results. But the impetus of that scheme was based on the resettlement of individual (often bankrupt) Afrikaner farmers without political backing,



Exporting Apartheid



financial support and the legitimacy of the New South Africa. The SADACA plan is tied to the interests of corporate agribusiness.

African countries have on the whole welcomed the inflow of Afrikaner investments. They don't have much choice. Nowadays, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) call the shots, invariably requiring (indebted) countries to accept an "open door to foreign capital" policy. In this context, the liberalisation of trade and investment under donor supervision, tends to support the extension of Afrikaner business interests throughout the region. And in the sleazy environment shaped by trans-national corporations and international creditors, there is no shortage of corrupt politicians and senior bureaucrats who can be co-opted or invited to become

the "business partners" of South African and other foreign investors.

Expropriation of peasant lands

If carried through, the "Food Corridor" project could alter the rural landscape of the Southern African region, requiring the uprooting and displacement of small farmers over an extensive territory. Millions of hectares of the best farmland are to be handed over to South African agri-business. The Boers will manage large scale commercial farms using the rural people both as "labour tenants" as well as seasonal agricultural workers. The "Food Corridor" will displace the pre-existing agricultural system. It will probably be a fatal blow to subsistence agriculture and the peasant cash crop economy. It will displace local agricultural markets and

aggravate the conditions of endemic famine prevailing in the region. While the project is meant to "bring development", and "transfer much needed agricultural expertise", it is much more a process of "exporting Apartheid" to neighbouring countries.

This process fits into the package of IMF-World Bank sponsored economic reforms being imposed across southern Africa. The expropriation of peasant lands is often demanded by Africa's creditors as a condition for the rescheduling of Paris Club debts. Peasant lands (which formally belonged to the State) are sold (at very low prices) or leased out to international agribusiness (on 50 or 99 year concessions). The meagre proceeds of the land sales will be used to service the external debt.

The World Bank has put forth land legis-

★ South Africa/Mozambique

lation in Sub-Saharan Africa which abrogates the right to land of millions of small-holders. Identical land legislation is enforced throughout the region, drafted under technical advice from the World Bank Legal Department. "The constitution [in Mozambique] says that the land is the property of the State and cannot be sold or mortgaged. There has been strong pressure particularly from the United States and the World Bank for land to be privatised and to allow mortgages." ⁷

South African companies and banks are also participating in neighbouring countries' privatisation programmes (a central part of World-Bank sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes). Johannesburg and Cape-town investors are acquiring, at rock bottom prices, the ownership of former state assets in mining, public utilities and agriculture in a number of "front-line" states. Experimental farms, government research stations, State-owned plantations and seed producing facilities have been put on the auction block. With the deregulation of agricultural markets under World Bank advice, state marketing systems for agricultural produce are either closed down or taken over by private investors.

Derogating customary land rights

Both SACADA and the World Bank stress their desire to "protect traditional land rights." The small peasantry is to be "protected" through the establishment of "customary land reserves" established in the immediate vicinity of the new white commercial farms. In practice, under the new land legislation, the majority of the rural people will be caged into small territorial enclaves ("communal lands") while the bulk of the best agricultural land will be sold or leased to private investors. Cattle herders, and peasant communities which practice shifting cultivation over a large land area, will henceforth be prosecuted for encroaching on lands earmarked for commercial farming, often without their prior knowledge. Impoverished by the macro-economic reforms, with no access to credit and modern farm inputs, these customary enclaves will constitute "labour reserves" for large scale agri-business.

Afrikaner farms in Mozambique

SACADA has plans to invest in Congo-Kinshasa (ex-Zaire), Zambia and Angola. But Mozambique is the test case. President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique and President Nelson Mandela signed an inter-governmental agreement in May 1996 which

grants Afrikaner agri-business territorial concessions and development rights covering eight million hectares in six provinces.⁸ According to one South African official,⁹ "Mozambique needs the technical expertise and the money, and we have the people. We favour an area which is not heavily populated because it is an Achilles heel if there are too many people on the land. For the Boers, Land is next to God and the Bible."

The "socialist" Frelimo government will ensure that there is no encroachment on SACADA's concessionary areas in Mozambique. Rural small-holders and subsistence farmers (who never possess legal land titles) will be expelled or transferred onto marginal lands.¹⁰ In contrast, senior military personnel and government ministers who seek to become "business partners" of international (Afrikaner) agri-business have already been granted concessions over millions of hectares of land which is already occupied by the peasantry.¹¹

Through the establishment of Mosagrius (a joint venture company), SACADA is already firmly established in the fertile valley of the Lugenda river. The Boers also have their eyes on agricultural areas along the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers as well as on the road and railway facilities linking Lichinga, Niassa's capital to the deep sea port of Nagala. The railway line is being rehabilitated and modernised (by a French contractor) with development aid provided by France.¹²

In Mozambique's Niassa province, the best agricultural land will be leased in concession to the Afrikaners for fifty years. "There are just so many beautiful, fertile places to choose from", said Egbert Hiemstra, who owns two farms in Lydenburg "and wants a third in Mozambique".¹³ At the token price of R0.6 (\$0.15) per hectare per annum, the land lease is a give-away.

In the initial stage of the agreement, concessionary areas in Niassa province were handed over to SACADA in 1996 to be settled by some 500 White Afrikaner farmers.¹⁴ "Our intention is to develop the [temperate] highveld areas in maize, wheat and beef cattle linked up with agro-processing and the export market. In the [sub-tropical] lowvelds we will plant a variety of tropical fruit trees as well as establish modern juice factories. Our agricultural institutes will establish research stations in the area with a view to supporting SACADA's initiative. Eventually we would also like to get into the cotton areas of Nampulo and Cabo Delgado provinces."¹⁵

The available infrastructure including several state buildings and enterprises will be handed over; several State owned farms in Niassa will be transferred to Mosagrius, the Technical College in Lichinga is already run by the Boers. The Agricultural Research Station is also to be taken over: "They want out", they are seeking Afrikaner investment to keep the Research Station afloat. Eventually Afrikaner agro-business is intent on taking over the government's seed producing facilities (SEMOC) in Niassa.

"The main thrust will come from the successful farmers in South Africa who are now

Mauritius

Globalisation: a concern of working people

Over 1,200 delegates attended the All Workers Conference on Globalisation, held on the Mauritian main island on 29-30 April.

Delegates from all the country's trade unions were joined by representatives of women's groups, and associations working for housing rights, blind peoples' rights, the environmental and consumer rights. There were participants from South Africa, and two other Indian ocean countries: Comoros Islands, and the French colony of Reunion. The French CGT trade union confederation, and the Brussels based Campaign to Abolish Third World Debt (COCAD/CADTM) also sent representatives.

The conference combined discussion of various aspects of globalisation as it affects different sectors with practical resolutions to oppose the Mauritian government's surrender before globalisation and its wide reaching privatisation plans [see "Privatising privatisation," IV#288, May 1997].

On 29 April, the Health Ministry said free medicines would now be distributed through private chemists, not hospitals. Delegates saw this as a step towards means testing, and the future introduction of charges for these medicines.

The government also threatened to privatise, within five years, Mauritius Telecom, Air Mauritius, State Bank,

SICOM (insurance) and the State Investment Company (SIC), which has shares in revenue-generating sites including the country's casinos, and the airport management company. Most of the shares will be bought by the Port Louis Fund, a no-risk investment fund managed by Banque National de Paris.

Faced with massive, dynamic opposition to privatisation, the Mauritian government is trying to make the privatisation process seem irreversible. As part of this anti-democratic strategy, the government has now agreed to "compensate" the new Port Louis Fund if privatisation is not completed within five years.

This was the fifth event organised by the "All Workers Conference," an all-union (and workers' associations) grouping which, in only 12 months of activity, has become the main forum for anti-austerity and anti-privatisation networking and debate in the island.

One impressive feature of the All Workers Conference is that its deliberations have always led to action. Whether it was resolved to hold demonstrations or produce workers' White Papers, delegates ensure that all resolutions are put into practice. ★ [RL/AN]

seeking for new lands, and who are able to mobilise considerable financial resources".¹⁶ They will operate their new farms as part of their business undertakings in South Africa, dispatching White Afrikaner managers and supervisors to Mozambique. "Family farms with a good track record but without funding capabilities are also eligible. They will rely on SACADA for funding". No provision is made, however, to help Afrikaner farmers driven into bankruptcy as a result of Pretoria's economic liberalisation programme. These farmers may, nonetheless, be hired to work as managers in Mozambique.

In turn, the Boers will bring their Black right-hand men, their tractor operators, their technicians. "Each and every Afrikaner farmer will bring his tame *Kaffirs*," who will be used to supervise the local workers. The number of White settlers in the concessionary areas in Niassa is likely to be small.

The World Bank together with bilateral donors will organise a system of land registration including the extensive mapping through aerial photography, in view of generating digitised maps.¹⁷

SACADA has carefully mapped out the designated areas by helicopter. South Africa's agricultural research institutes have surveyed the area, providing an assessment of prevailing environmental, climatic and social conditions. Agricultural scientists have not limited their focus to the analysis of soil samples, human settlements in the area have been studied; South African demographers have been called in as consultants to evaluate the implications of displacing the rural people.

Creating "rural townships"

Under the SACADA scheme, the rural communities in Niassa which occupy the Afrikaner concessionary areas are to be regrouped into "rural townships" similar to those of the Apartheid regime: "What you do is to develop villages along the roadside close to the [White] farms. These villages have been planned very carefully [by SACADA] in proximity to the fields so that farm-workers can go back and forth; you give the villages some infrastructure and a plot of land for each household so that the farm-labourers can set up their food gardens".¹⁸

Unless customary land rights are entrenched within or bordering the concessions, the Niassa peasants will become landless farm labourers. On Boer farms in South Africa, "labour tenants" performed labour services (*corvée*) in exchange for the right to farm a small parcel of land. Formally outlawed in South Africa in 1960, "labour tenancy" remains in existence in many parts of South Africa including East Transvaal and Kwa-Zulu Natal.¹⁹ It has evolved towards the payment of a (very low) nominal wage largely to disguise the (outlawed) feudal relationship. Since 1995, it has been the target of the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Bill of Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom.

The rural townships established in the Mozambique concessions will constitute "reserves" of cheap labour for the White commercial farms. Wages, of course, are substantially lower than in South Africa. For

seasonal workers, the wage has been set at the statutory minimum wage, US\$18 a month. Although in 1995 IMF Representative Sergio Leite told donors that this was probably "excessive" and "inflationary."²⁰

These concessions don't just enable the Boers not only to pay their Mozambican workers excessively low wages. They also help the farmers oppose, or escape, the demands of Black agricultural workers in South Africa. It also allows corporate agri-

in 30 years". The EU Ambassador to South Africa Mr. Erwan Fouere met General Viljoen to discuss the project, and confirmed that if all goes well, further EU money could be made available to cover the costs of "settling Afrikaner farmers in South Africa's neighbouring countries".²²

The donor community consider this to be as a genuine development project which will benefit the peasantry in the host country as well as contribute to South Africa's Recons-



business investing in neighbouring countries to more effectively lobby the ANC government against Land Reform and "affirmative action" programmes within South Africa.

The Mozambican government will be fully responsible for land disputes and ensuring the expropriation of peasant lands "without prejudice or loss that may occur... to Mosagrius participants."²¹

Foreign aid supports the plan

South Africa's major commercial banks, the World Bank and the European Union have firmly backed the "Food Corridor" project, which has become an integral part of the IMF-World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programme for South Africa. In the words of SACADA Secretary Willie Jordaan: "SACADA is set to become an international development agency" with a mandate to contract with donor institutions and carry out "foreign aid programmes" on their behalf.

Western countries which, at least vocally endorsed the ANC's struggle against the Apartheid regime are now providing financial support to a racist Afrikaner development organisation. Under the guise of "foreign aid", Western donors are in fact contributing to the extension of the Apartheid system into neighbouring countries. The European Union has provided money to SACADA out of a development package explicitly earmarked by Brussels for South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme. According to an EU spokesman, the project "was the best noise out of Africa

in 30 years". The fact that the scheme derogates the land rights of small-holders and replicates the system of "labour tenancy" prevalent in South Africa under Apartheid is not a matter for discussion.

National investment priorities set by the donors in the host countries (under the World Bank sponsored Public Investment Programme), are increasingly tuned to meeting the needs of South African business interests. In Mozambique, for instance, "targeted investments" to rehabilitate port facilities, roads, water resources, river and lake transportation are tailored to the needs of foreign investors like SACADA.

Moreover, under the Mosagrius Agreement, Afrikaner investors "shall be allowed a right of first refusal" in privatisation tenders in concessionary areas under their jurisdiction.²³ In turn the country's investment legislation (drafted with the technical assistance of the World Bank) will provide for the free remittance of corporate profits and the repatriation of capital back to South Africa.

The SACADA scheme will also suck up a portion of Mozambique's meagre health and education budget. Under the terms of the Agreement the authorities must support the provision of Western-style health services as well as create a "sanitary environment" for white Afrikaners settling in the territory.²⁴ Part of the money provided by donors and international organisations for social programmes will also be channelled towards the concessionary areas, to provide these luxury services.

★ South Africa/Mozambique

Carving up the national territory

A "state within a state" is being developed in Niassa province; Mosagrus is the sole authority concerning the utilisation rights of land in its concessionary areas, overriding the national and provincial governments.²⁵ The territory is defined as a free trade zone allowing for the unimpeded movement of goods, capital and people (meaning white South Africans). All investments in the concessionary areas "will be free from customs duties, or other fiscal impositions."²⁶

As concessions are being granted to foreign investors in various parts of the country, the national territory is being carved up into a number of separate "corridors," reminiscent of the colonial period. This system of territorial concessions—with each of the corridors integrated separately into the world market—tends to favour the demise of the national economy.

In turn, the donors have required (in the name of "governance"), the down-sizing of the central State and the "decentralisation" of decision-making to the provincial and district levels. Rather than providing added powers and resources to regional and local communities, State revenues will be channelled towards servicing Mozambique's external debt. The "decentralisation" scheme is predicated on fiscal austerity under the structural adjustment programme leading to a weakening of both the central and regional governments.

Concessionary areas or "corridors" will increasingly come under the political custody of donors, non-governmental organisations and foreign investors. In Niassa, they already constitute a de facto "parallel government."

To make matters worse, in several areas in Northern Mozambique, the former rebel group Renamo is formally in command of local government. The pro-Apartheid group has established its own links to the "donor community." Since the end of the Apartheid-sponsored civil war, several Renamo leaders have become "business partners" of South African companies, including in the SACADA sponsored investments: "It would appear that there is a secret understanding as part of the [1992] Peace Agreement that Renamo and its backers will get land"²⁷

Land reform in South Africa

The ANC has championed the granting of "land to the Boers" in neighbouring countries without serious debate or discussion, supposedly as a means of relieving land pressures within South Africa. The policy is said to facilitate the ANC's land redistribution programme in favour of Black farmers.²⁸ Despite its merits, this Land Reform Programme is unlikely to succeed. Its implementation has been undermined from the outset by the ANC government's neo-liberal policy agenda.

In rural South Africa, the removal of agricultural subsidies, the deregulation of credit and trade liberalisation have contributed to the further impoverishment of Black small-holders and tenant farmers. These measures have also pushed numerous White Afrikaner family farms into bankruptcy.



Violent Afrikaner groups stand to recruit people in this situation.

The Boers "Second Great Trek" to neighbouring countries does not contribute to facilitating land reform within South Africa. In fact the policy accomplishes exactly the opposite results: it maintains Black farmers in marginal lands under the old system of segregation; it reinforces corporate control over the best farmland while also providing a political avenue to Afrikaner agri-business for "exporting Apartheid" to the entire Southern African region.

Moreover, the transfer of nominal political power by the Apartheid regime in 1994 rather than restraining the White dominated economic system, has in fact created the pre-conditions for its advancement both within South Africa and the region. In the New South Africa, the "export of Apartheid" is now tagged as "foreign aid".

The ANC's political motivations in this regard are unclear. The dominant ANC viewpoint, reflected by Nelson Mandela's statements, is that by diverting the Boers from the domestic arena, the post-Apartheid government will gain time and space for carrying out major social transformations within South Africa.

In our opinion, this position is largely mistaken. The application of "strong economic medicine" (devaluation, job lay offs, market deregulation, and other austerity measures) under the neo-liberal agenda,²⁹ has gone hand in hand with the de facto reinforcement of Apartheid as an economic system. In other words, the plight of the Black majority has worsened largely as a result of the post-Apartheid economic reforms.

South Africa's dominant economic and financial interests allied with international corporate capital are firmly behind these economic reforms. Moreover, the latter could not have been carried out during the Apartheid era with the same coherence, political legitimacy and international support. While Apartheid is officially defunct, its economic structures live on, now fused and blended into the structural adjustment programme. The international community has supported this process; the IMF and the World Bank which supported the government of Frederick de Klerck is now directly involved

in advising the ANC government on macro-economic reform:

"Democratisation" and "economic liberalisation" seem to go hand in hand. Despite the ANC's commitment to social transformation, the government's reforms under the neo-liberal policy agenda, are serving the economic interests of those who most actively supported the Apartheid regime as well as members of the Afrikaner political establishment who were directly involved in Apartheid's "dirty war". ★

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Undermining Fortress Europe

On July 19-26, revolutionary groups from 15 countries will organise the 14th European youth camp in solidarity with the Fourth International.

This year's camp focuses on the European integration process governed by the Maastricht and Schengen accords. The development of the "bosses and cops Europe" involves the looting of the public sector, privatisation of universities, attacks on women's rights, restricting entry across Europe's external frontiers, massive waves of redundancies, and the replacement of full time jobs with part time and precarious contracts.

Attacks on wage-earners, young people, women and immigrants are the same in all countries of Europe. And in most countries we can see the development of similar struggles: to defend the public sector, women's rights, and justice for immigrants. This camp is an occasion to share our experiences of these struggles, to co-ordinate our activities, and to come together in opposition to the bosses and cops Europe of Maastricht and Schengen. This camp is about preparing the social and political movements which are the only way to impose another kind of Europe: open, social, ecological and democratic.

For most of the organising groups, European capitalist integration is an important theme. "Belgium is in the centre of Europe, says Ataulfo Riera of the Belgian Young Socialist Guard (JGS/SJW). "Most of the EU institutions are based in Brussels. The country is also a cross-roads for European struggles. Protest against the closure of the Renault-Vilvoorde plant has demonstrated the need for another Europe, an alternative to the continental system proposed by the European bourgeoisie."

Women "particularly hit"

"The Italian government is using European integration and the Maastricht convergence criteria to justify a series of neo-liberal and austerity measures, which are destroying the social security system, and worsening living and working conditions," says Angelica Lepori, a member of the *Bandiera Rossa* current in Italy's Communist Youth (GC). "Women are particularly hit by these blows to the "welfare state," and increasingly forced to take on caring tasks previously guaranteed by the state. At the same time, the authorities have launched a massive ideological campaign celebrating the family's fundamental role in society, and women's "traditional" role. This is linked to challenges to fundamental rights won over the years. There are initiatives to

recognise the rights of the foetus, and "increase the status" of part-time work (without, of course, increasing the salary).

"Most of Italy's three million unemployed are women and youth," says Lepori, a politics student at Bologna University. "In some parts of the south, half those under 26 are out of work.

The Italian government proposes to "fight" unemployment by "improving flexibility of the labour market", with greater use of "apprenticeship" and "temporary" contracts, and a wider use of low-paid "socially useful" workers. Rather than reducing the underlying unemployment rate, these measures will increase the number of Italians in the marginal periphery of the workforce. For the first time, young Italians expect that their social situation as adults will be worse than that of their parents. Maastricht Europe also means strengthening institutional racism, xenophobia, and social exclusion. Italy's recent expulsion of Albanian refugees is the clearest example of the way Europe intends to deal with its southern and eastern neighbours."

Internationalist alternative

In Denmark and Sweden, large parts of the labour and radical movements are strongly opposed to the European Union, and plans for closer integration. "We find that it is very easy to get in contact with left-wing youth on these questions, says Anders Lange of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP). "After all, many young people get radicalised on questions with an international dimension, like imperialism, refugees, police powers and international police co-operation, and so on. Also, the EU as such is still a very important question in Denmark. Campaigning organisations created to oppose Denmark's

approval of the Maastricht Treaty still exist. For many young people, internationalism is a credible alternative to the EU."

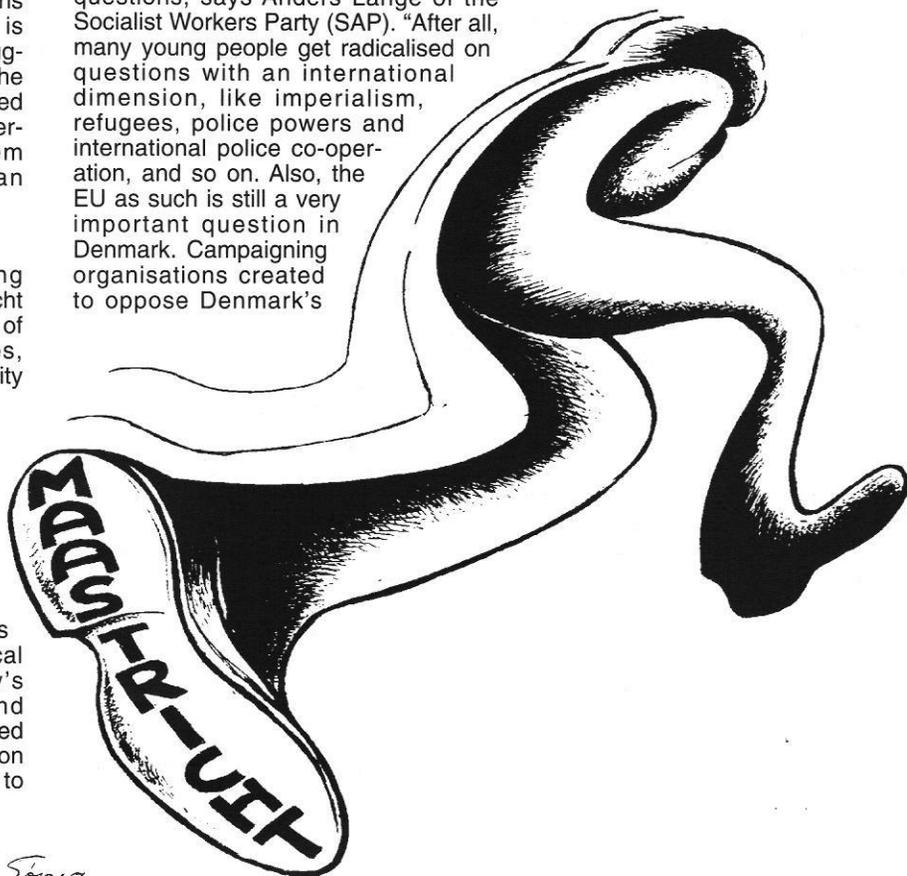
Not always an easy campaign theme

Portugal's Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) is also campaigning on Maastricht, and the need for a referendum on a common currency. But as Sérgio Vitorino admits, "many young people, including those who join the PSR, are indifferent to this theme. They are neither informed nor aware of the effects that this new Europe will have on the lives of Portuguese and European workers, on immigrants here in Portugal, or even on their own lives."

Nevertheless, he continues, "participation in the camp is very important for the formation of new cadre, and developing an internationalist conscience among younger militants."

Whatever the difficulties in campaigning on European themes, the choice of focus for this 14th Fourth International youth camp is unlikely to deter prospective participants.

"Participation in the camp would be a central priority for us, whatever the theme," stresses Ataulfo Riera of the Belgian SJW/JGS group. "It is a unique chance to live a week of political debate in the company of young militants from all corners of Europe and the world, in a self-managed, alternative context." ★



Sonia

Undermining Fortress Europe

France

There has been an increase in youth struggles in recent years, concerning both the defence of access to education and study conditions, and the struggles against unemployment and marginalisation, which hit young people most of all. After mobilising against the introduction of a lower minimum wage for young people in 1994, young people massively participated in the public-sector movement of November-December 1995, defending their future working conditions,

and the quality of the public education system. More recently, young people have been at the centre of protests against the racist immigration laws of Interior Ministers Pasqua and Debré, as well as struggles to support the "paperless" immigrants, and activities targeting the extreme-right National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The women's movement has been increasingly active these last two years, in response to attacks on the right to choose, and the discriminatory impact of the expansion of part time work. This spring, 2,000

participants, representing over 150 groups participated in the Assembly for women's rights, which established a common platform of demands for future mobilisations.

Participants

JCR-RED is an independent organisation in solidarity with the French section of the Fourth International. It has 300 members, mostly high school and university students, in almost all the country's major towns. ★

Italy

Over the last year, high school students have protested against education cuts totalling 4,600 bn Lira (US\$ 2.75bn.) over three years, the increasing obligation to choose a career path at the age of 13, and the centre-left government's favourable measures towards private (religious) schools.

Unfortunately, these struggles have been weaker than in previous years. And in some areas, right-wing groups have played a leading role in demonstrations and high-

school occupations. University student protests have concentrated on the imposition of entry quotas on some courses. But protests have been small and local, without a national dimension or national visibility.

Many young workers participated in last autumn's extended protests over the non-renovation of the collective agreement of metal-workers.

Participants

The delegation is organised by younger members of the *Bandiera Rossa* group, a

tendency and magazine within the Refounded Communist Party and its semi-autonomous Communist Youth organisation.

Non-Fourth International participants in the 14th Youth Camp include members of Communist Youth, and activists in high school and university groups and feminist collectives and international solidarity groups (mainly around Chiapas and Albania) with which *Bandiera*



Netherlands

Holland is one of the few countries which already meets the criteria for joining the single European currency. "Flexible" and "realistic" Dutch economic policies are broadly praised abroad. But there is a dark side to this success story. Never before have social security, education, health care, women's rights and the position of young people and migrants been deteriorating so quickly and profoundly.

The gap between the rich and poor has never increased as quickly as in these years of European convergence. But this has not sparked an upsurge in radical mobilisations. On the contrary, hardly anything is happening at all. All of the country's major youth movements have collapsed over the last three

years. There is no movement for the far left to intervene in, and since the far left is itself a victim of the decline in radicalism, there are no real possibilities to launch a new movement.

The main youth campaign at present concerns government proposals to restrict the validity of student travel passes. Only those who live with their parents would still be able to buy a card giving unlimited access to public transport on weekdays. Eighty percent of students living away from home would lose out, under these reforms.

The students benefit from wide public support, including even conservative voters, who have favoured past education cuts, but feel that this is "going too far." The transport companies too are lobbying intensively, since they anticipate a dramatic fall in use of public

transport if the cuts go through.

Otherwise, the youth militant calendar is dominated by international meetings: A European Youth Summit will be organised in Eindhoven on June 11-13, and a range of activities are being planned to coincide with the convergence of the European Marches against unemployment in Amsterdam on June 14th.

Participants

Rebel, the youth group linked to the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Dutch section of the Fourth International. ★

Denmark

There has been little generalised struggle on specific youth and student issues in recent years. Younger militants have, of course, been very active in general struggles, like the bus drivers strike in Esbjerg, anti-fascist activities, and opposition to the megalomaniac project to build a bridge from Denmark to Sweden.

The organised left has been in decline since the last wave of workers mobilisation in 1985. The once-strong Communist Party, and most of its trade union work, has collapsed. And although there has been an increase in strike activity these last three years, it has been very hard for the left to support these strikes, and spread them. For many of those in the Red Green Alliance (Denmark's main anti-capitalist formation) the ambition to do so is no longer supported by concrete experience. Some pin most of their hopes on

the Alliance's parliamentary work.

The decline is less marked among young people. But, because they have little experience of mass mobilisations, many youth currents consider an event a success if they manage to mobilise their own supporters!

In the last elections, the Red Green Alliance won 20% of votes among those voting for the first time. Rebuilding the left requires recruiting new layers of active young people to the Alliance. In the recent dispute over how to react to the social democratic government's proposed budget, most younger supporters coincided with the views of Fourth International supporters in the Red-Greens.

Participants

The Danish delegation is organised by younger members of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP), Danish section of the Fourth

International, with about 90 members, mainly in Copenhagen and Aarhus, Denmark's second city. Younger comrades participate in general party work, building and working in the Red Green Alliance (1,300 members), and the broad left weekly *Socialist Weekend*.

There is no plan to build a SAP youth organisation, and younger comrades are active in the broader socialist youth organisation Rebel, and in anti-racist work. Specifically SAP youth activities include the quarterly newspaper *Grænseløs*.

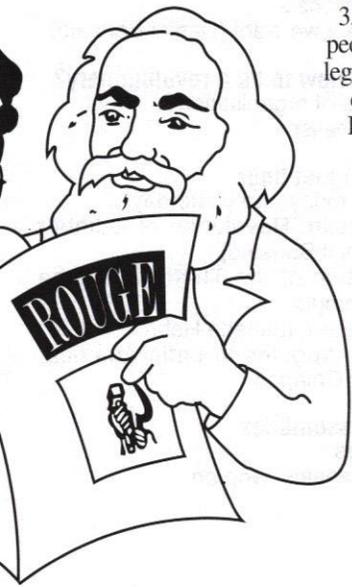
The camp is an opportunity for SAP members to show youth from Rebel and the Red-Greens what internationalism is all about, and what the Fourth International tries to do. The party as a whole will make a major effort to organise the 1998 youth camp in Denmark. ★

19-25 July 1997 Brioude, France

Belgium

French and Dutch-speaking Belgian youth live in increasingly separate social, cultural and political environments. The two linguistic communities are responsible for a growing amount of public administration, including education and culture. In 1995-96, French-speaking students demonstrated in huge numbers against attacks on the quality of education. In Flanders, the attacks were introduced gradually, and there was much less resistance. When the "Dutroux" child abuse scandal erupted, Dutch-speaking youth struck in large numbers, and joined the labour movement in denouncing the class character of the Belgian judicial system. This did not happen in the French-speaking south, largely because of the failure of the student and high-school movement of 1995-96.

There was a demonstration of 3,000 young people for the legalisation of cannabis in Brussels on November 16th, 1996.



On 3 May, some 4,000 people, 80% of them under 30 years old, demonstrated for lesbian and gay rights. For the first time in many years, there was a noticeable presence of French-speaking gay youth, and of women.

Participation

The Socialist Young Guard (JGS/SJW) has about 60 members, mainly high school and university students, in nine geographical branches. The group participates in the major youth campaigns (on education, for the legalisation of cannabis) and in wider social movements, like the recent White Marches, campaigns against unemployment and racism, and for lesbian and gay rights. It produces a French magazine *REDaction*, and a Dutch magazine *Teegenkrant*.

The differentiation of the two linguistic communities has had an effect on the far left. In the early 1990s the JGS/SJW was strong in Flanders, and almost disappeared in the French-speaking south. In 1995, the group grew in the French-speaking area, but faced an internal crisis in the north. Today, the French sections are in a stabilisation phase, while the Dutch-speaking sections are again growing.

The central campaign, north and south, has concentrated on the "scandles" which have shaken the country. The themes of struggle expose the class nature of justice, the police, corruption, fascism and the moral order, sexual liberation, and the exposure of the "personalities" who protected the child-abusers.

This campaign did not meet its goals, largely because there has been little autonomous youth mobilisation on these themes. As a result, many JGS/SJW militants have switched their energies to the labour movement, where militant struggles in recent weeks have affected the Clabecq steelworks, and the Renault plant in Vilvorde.

For the first time, the group has a significant input into the struggle for lesbian and gay equality, and for the legalisation of cannabis. The JGS/SJW argues for the legalisation of cannabis, and the decriminalisation of the consumption of other drugs. The group proposes that the sale of cannabis be organised through a non-profit consumer group, which would hold a legal monopoly. Distribution would be accompanied by an information campaign, and outreach to those consumers who abuse drugs. ★

Luxemburg

Social democratic leaders in tiny Luxemburg have been in coalition with the Christian Democrats for fifteen years. Their latest neo-liberal cuts threaten what for many years were unchallenged rights of the labour movement. This has contributed to modest growth in the activities of the young social democrats (generally to the left of their parent party), and the newly-formed "autonome" youth sub-culture, which concentrates on

ecology and animal rights. The recently-reformed JSR, linked to the Luxemburg section of the Fourth International, is the only far-left youth organisation. The JSR recently launched a bulletin aimed at high school students, 8,000 of who walked out last December, in protest at the increasing difficulty of the graduation exams. The protest did not develop, largely because neither the students, nor the leftist minority, had real experience of organising a democratic movement. Maybe next time...

Portugal

The "Socialist" government has re-introduced plans to charge course fees at the university level. In December, 5,000 students demonstrated against government policies, with Socialist Revolutionary (PSR) comrades making a visible contribution to the leadership of the movement. Unfortunately, this did not prevent right wing currents winning control of student unions at the main universities at the end of 1996. These groups are in favour of the student taxes, but are willing to lead protest, since the plans are now being introduced by a centre-left government.

PSR supporters, together with the larger Communist Youth, have created a Student Movement Against the Taxes (MECAP) outside the student unions. The aim is to win the campaigning in initiative away from the right, and, eventually, to challenge the right-wing dominance of the main student unions. The MECAP is the result of four years of student work by PSR supporters, and a growing willingness of the Communist Youth

to work with those from the Trotskyist tradition. MECAP is Portugal's first non-bureaucratic student movement. There is no president, and the only structure is a general assembly, open to all students.

Younger members of the PSR are currently recruiting in high schools, around the party's traditional themes: feminism, anti-racism, anti-fascism, anti-homophobia, ecology, legalisation of drugs and anti-militarism. As Christmas 1996 approached, a feminist youth group linked to the PSR launched a campaign against sexist and military toys.

The Party has been very active in the recent struggle to liberalise abortion legislation. No other left groups organised street demonstrations, which certainly made it easier for the Catholic-influenced right to block even these modest reforms.

The group is widely known in the country, as a result of its radical campaigning style. Dissatisfied with the traditional eggs and tomatoes, PSR supporters threw shit at French rightist leader Jean Marie Le Pen

during his recent visit to the Portuguese capital.

Participants

The delegation is organised by an autonomous youth caucus within the PSR, Portuguese section of the Fourth International. Last year's camp in Amarante, Portugal, consolidated PSR youth work, and helped the party create sections in a number of new parts of the country. The 10th PSR Congress in late 1996 elected a new central committee, with an average age of 26.

Eighty people attended the subsequent annual youth meeting, which fixed its current campaigning priorities as reinforcing the feminist work recently begun, and initiating a discussion on ecology and lifestyles.

The group will continue its campaigning on the legalisation of drugs, and its intervention in student politics. The party as a whole is campaigning for a national referendum on monetary union, as part of a campaign for a Europe of the peoples and of social rights. ★

19-25 July 1997 Brioude, France

This year's Fourth International youth camp is hosted by the French group JCR-RED in the Haute-Loire region, near the Mediterranean coast.

Over 600 young people from all parts of Europe will come together to exchange their experiences, discuss the social and political struggles in their countries, and to identify the possibilities for co-ordinated international struggle against the capitalist system.

Through our campaigns and struggles, we must show the way to build another Europe, respecting the interests of working people, youth, women and immigrants.

We will share our experiences of the struggle against the Debré immigration laws in France, the international protest of Renault workers against the closure of the Vilvorde plant, the recent mobilisation of university students in Portugal and high school students in Luxemburg, anti-fascist activities, opposition to nuclear power.

We will also discuss the European marches against unemployment, exclusion and precarity, in which participants from all countries will have participated.

We will also discuss European solidarity with those fighting the imperialist system elsewhere, particularly the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas.

As well as our current struggles, we will also discuss our project for a better society, the need to be a revolutionary today, and how to organise so as to bring about the changes we want.

But this camp is more than all that. For one short week, we will try to unite leisure, politics, and celebration. At this event, doing politics is also experimenting with a new way of life. Trying to put our ideas into practice. This is why the camp is self-managed (participants elect country representatives, who together form the camp co-ordination group). The camp is self managed because we want to create a whole self-managed society, in which everyone can part in decisions which concern them. The other aspect of our 'community' is the rejection of all forms of exploitation and expression present in the wider society. The aim is to make the camp a place free of sexism, homophobia, and economic inequality.

Each day will have two parts: a morning forum on a general theme, and a choice of afternoon workshops. As in previous years, dedicated women's and lesbian and gay 'spaces' will be a focus for ongoing discussions and activities.

The evening cultural programme includes videos, a nightly discotheque, and a special meeting on Che Guevara.

A week of encounters and debates, in the framework of the struggle for a society free of sexism and exploitation, and in a warm, celebratory climate. Register now, for Europe's largest international revolutionary festival!

Undermining Fortress Europe

Saturday 19th opening forum

- The political situation France (Alain Krivine of the LCR)
- Why Europe as a central theme? (JCR speaker)
- The Fourth International: the Europe we're fighting for

Sunday 20 : "Against the Europe of injustice, the Europe of resistance"

- Maastricht EU: against young people
- Fighting against unemployment
- Student struggles in Portugal

Workshops

Educational policies in Europe • cutting the working week • the struggle in Renault Belgium • Information, new technology and the reorganisation of the labour market • AIDS and health policies • "Pro-capitalist" changes in the Eastern European countries • Albania.

Monday 21: Racism, fascism, moral order, no pasaran!

- The far right and the new moral order
- The Schengen agreement
- The "sans-papiers" in France

Workshops

Local government by the far right • Workshops Fascism in Germany, Germany • Far right in the student movement • Racism against gypsies • Drugs and repressive policies in Europe • Struggles of lesbians and gays.

Tuesday 22: Women in the eye of the storm

- Attacks on women's rights
- Women and public life
- Hearings for women's rights in France.

Workshops

The right to choose • Women's rights in Poland since 1989 • Women in Algeria. • Sexual exploitation and capitalist crisis • Men and feminism • Cultural relativism and imperialism

Wednesday 23

Workshops

May 1968, re-foundation of the Fourth International (by Alain Krivine • Experiences of youth movement recomposition • mass consumption and the creation of new needs • Genetics, biotechnology and bio industries • The "white crisis" in Belgium • Repression against Kurds in Germany.

Thursday 24: Do away with this society

- The crisis of capitalism - the need for revolution.
- Ecological crisis
- The society we want (Daniel Bensaïd)

Friday 25 : How to be a revolutionary?

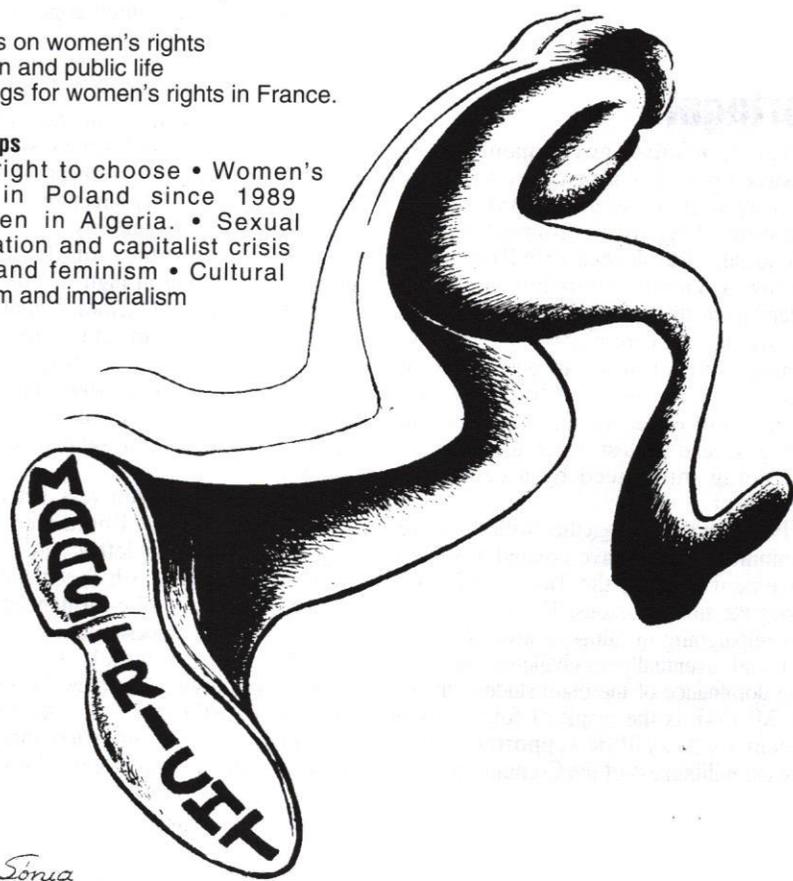
- What type of organisation?
- Internationalism

Educational meetings

- Fascism, today and yesterday
- The Russian Revolution of October 1917. (Daniel Bensaïd)
- Exploitation of the Third World, the African example
- Che Guevara. (Janette Habel)
- Current struggles in Latin America, particularly Chiapas

Women's assemblies

- Sexualities
- Violence against women



Give us your money!

Lots of important and worthy causes are seeking your financial support. But none of them do quite what we do.

The Fourth International is the largest international regroupment of revolutionary Marxists. We have members in over 40 states. In some, our comrades are one current in a larger party, like Italy's Refounded Communists or Brazil's Workers Party. In other countries we have independent organisations. Everywhere, we prioritise building the labour movement and liberation struggles. Our

annual European Youth camp is the continent's largest international gathering of young revolutionary socialists.

This world-wide network makes it possible to look beyond national preoccupations, and grasp the regional and global dynamics. We all learn in the process.

We help socialists, and all emancipatory currents facing repressive regimes to network internationally, to publish underground magazines, and to learn from comrades working in more open conditions. During the

1980s we helped print and distribute Polish and Czech samizdat, while our Arab publication **Al Mitraqua** linked struggles across North Africa, the Middle East, and immigrant communities in Europe.

Our monthly magazine **International Viewpoint**, and its sister publications in French, German and (soon) Spanish, are a unique forum for debate within and between socialist/marxist movements. A typical issue contains material from twelve countries, translated and annotated so that English-speakers can link up with Brazilian, Algerian and Korean counterparts.

Because we try to be the catalyst of change in the broader movement, rather than just wave our own banner like some other left groups, our efforts are not always recognised. That doesn't worry us, but it does make it hard to raise funds.

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Most of our work is done by volunteers, or by our various national sections. But there are some international activities that can't be done without cash, and which only your donations can make possible.

- \$10 supplies a group in Congo or Sri Lanka with our hard-hitting monthly magazine **International Viewpoint** (or **Inprecor** in French)
- \$25 pays one day's board and lodgings for a 111 world participant in our month-long training sessions for Arab militants, women's organisers and youth activists.
- \$100 buys a modem for one of our Latin American correspondents.
- \$500 brings a Senegalese or Philippine labour leader to Europe to build links with local colleagues, to learn, and to teach.

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You can send your contribution through your local Fourth International group, or directly to PECE, BP 85, 75522 Paris cedex 11, France. Make British cheques payable to "Outlook International," US and Australian cheques payable to "International Viewpoint," and Canadian cheques payable to "Socialist Challenge."

Time to act like a real Party?

Jane Slaughter discusses the challenges facing the Labor Party, one year after its founding convention in Cleveland, Ohio

When 1,367 delegates gathered for the Labor Party's founding convention in June 1996, they took a step toward transforming the political agenda of the U.S. trade union movement. This is the first serious attempt to build a labor party in the U.S. since the late 1940's. It is the first time that most active unionists and socialists have been able to discuss an independent, working class-based party in a tangible way.

When Tony Mazzocchi, a former dissident, now leader within the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW), founded Labor Party Advocates in 1991, the notion of independent class politics moved out of the realm of Trotskyist canon and into the light of day. Five years later, the new party was born. Today, locals and national unions with hundreds of thousands of members officially support a labor party. Deep disenchantment with the Democratic Party in some sectors of the union movement has helped to bring the idea of class political independence from the margins to the edges of the mainstream. And although this labor party is quite peculiar in some respects, it says most of the right things about why working people need class independence. The majority of its members want it to become a party that gives workers their own voice in politics. For that reason alone, it has the potential — no guarantee, but the potential — to foster class awareness and organisation.

No candidates yet

But this is a decidedly odd kind of party. The second point in its new recruitment brochure asks: "Is the Labor Party running candidates?" And answers, "No." This has led some on the left to wonder whether the Labor Party's leaders intend it to be anything more than a party on paper. The Progressive quoted a delegate from Pittsburgh: "I think some of [the national union leaderships] would be entirely satisfied if LPA just became a pressure group within the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party." Alexander Cockburn and Joanne Wypijewski speculated, in *The Nation*, that "what was founded in Cleveland may wind up as a faction of the Democratic Party." I would argue that the Labor Party's leaders do want an independent party — even though their strategy for becoming one is to conciliate those who do not yet want to be independent.

At the convention, some speakers on the floor called for the Labor Party to "break with the Democrats. Now!" Members of various small leftist groups repeat this phrase



over and over, implying that anything less than a dramatic walk-out is a sell-out. But as Ellen David Friedman, a leader of the Progressive Alliance party in Vermont, has pointed out, "breaking with the Democrats is something you do over and over and over."

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWEE) railroad union, for example, decided to support the labor party project because of their experience: successive strikes were broken by successive Democratic Presidents and Congresses. Those who "broke with the Democrats" before they were ever with the Democrats often fail to understand the ragged nature of this process. For socialists who were never interested in the Democrats in the first place, "breaking" with them is easy. For many others, including people in the Labor Party, it will be like the smoker who quits over and over again until finally the "break with cigarettes" takes and lasts.

Union support

The new Labor Party faces a number of problems. The party's "chapters" — local city-wide bodies made up of members of various unions — are somewhat segregated from the main endorsing unions. Local unions and international affiliates with the party directly, and, although the unions may encourage their activists to join the Labor Party, those activists are not required to join, much less be active in, the chapters.

The founding convention was called by four national unions — OCAW, United Electrical Workers (UE), BMWEE and the West Coast International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU). (Shortly before the convention, the United Mine Workers and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) also endorsed, but brought few delegates.) Members of an endorsing union are not very likely to be members of one of the chapters, and not much is asked of them beyond their dues. Many or most of the

delegates from the main endorsing unions had never attended an LPA meeting before the founding convention.

Integration of the two types of members, chapter and endorsing union, appears difficult: in large areas of the country the four relatively small core unions do not exist at all, or only barely.

At the convention, some votes showed a division between the "front of the hall" — the union delegates — and the "back of the hall" — chapters and individual members. The original draft of the party constitution contained no provision for chapters, which were added by amendment. Chapters held their own separate convention in March 1997, with no decision-making power, and selected five representatives (with a total of one vote) to the party's Interim National Council. The other votes are held by representatives of the main participating unions and by members added to promote ethnic and gender diversity.

Given that many chapters are not particularly habitable for non-leftists, the party has a problem. In many locations, chapters consist nearly exclusively of leftists, and sometimes sectarian leftists play a big role. As a result, many other progressives have decided that such a soapbox (or sandbox) is not worth their time. In other chapters, members who want to reach out have not succeeded in recruiting and retaining many non-leftist workers.

Given these problems, it is difficult to see how the chapters in many cities can be transformed, unless they develop projects that attract workers as members.

A non-electoral strategy

The Cleveland convention voted not to run or even endorse candidates now. Instead, it adopted "a new organising approach to politics [to] promote a new agenda by recruiting and mobilising hundreds of thousands of working people to engage in common non-electoral political activities throughout the year, not just on election day."

In spring 1997, the party launched its non-electoral political project: gathering petition signatures to amend the U.S. constitution to guarantee the right to a job at a living wage (defined, in 1997 dollars, as \$10 an hour).

At first glance, such a campaign seems perfect for the Labor Party. In this era of downsizing, the notion of the right to a job directly challenges corporate prerogatives. But the campaign also seems to be at odds with Mazzocchi's maxims that you have to walk before you can run, and that defeats are bad for morale (see below). Everyone remembers the failure of the most recent progressive attempt to amend the constitution, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) for women, which was raised in a far less conservative time and was far less threatening to corporate interests.

The "living wage" amendment is of course a propaganda campaign that has no chance of passage. Although many members initially regarded this project as make-work, designed to keep members busy and their minds off the question of running candidates, many have now decided to get on board and give the campaign a try. It remains to be seen how long the project will last.

Although this is the party's national campaign, heavily promoted by the Labor Party national office, chapters are also free to devise their own local projects, in line with the party platform, as long as they do not back candidates. But why should anyone join a new organisation calling itself a "party" in order to work on non-electoral campaigns? There are other organisations that do that. Jobs with Justice, a coalition of labor and community organisations, for instance, is an already-existing national organisation with chapters in many cities, that works on local campaigns of various sorts. Why would anyone not already convinced that a labor party is an important idea join the Labor Party to do non-electoral work, rather than Jobs with Justice, which has a track record?

In Detroit, for example, the Labor Party chapter has given a great deal of support to the unions in the town's newspaper strike. That work has won some recruits among strikers and a good name for some Labor Party members. But there are other organisations involved in strike support; the Labor Party was not needed to fill a hole.

Local living wage campaigns have been mentioned as possible projects for local Labor Party chapters. Campaigns initiated by the New Party and/or local trade unions put measures on the ballot last year in many cities and states from Missouri to Oregon, pressuring the city council or state legislature to set a minimum wage (usually \$6.50-\$8.00) for all workers in the jurisdiction, or at least for those whose employers have city contracts or who have received city subsidies.

But for the local activist who wants to achieve a living wage, the question again arises: why use the Labor Party as the vehicle, rather than the local AFL-CIO, with its far greater resources, or the New Party, which has more experience?

In some places a local Labor Party may

be able to play the role of a cross-union group that will undertake actions which the local Central Labor Council will not. In other places, though, activists will feel, "Why do I need another hat to wear to do the things I'm already doing?" In California, for example, the Labor Party supported the Patient Protection Act to rein in managed care corporations, but one didn't need to be part of the Labor Party to work on that campaign.

Those who are totally committed to the Labor Party as a long-term goal will want to channel whatever work they can into the Labor Party. Other activists will be indifferent. The challenge is to find projects that are not simply meant to keep Labor Party members busy or visible, but to attract people who are not already Labor Party supporters. The obvious choice is running candidates, but the party leadership, at this point, is firmly opposed to this step.



Elections: pitfalls and opportunities

The approach adopted in Cleveland says the party will rely on "building a movement that... force[s] elected officials and candidates to speak to our issues as we define them." In other words, rather than electing candidates of our own, we will build a movement so strong that existing politicians will be obliged to do our will. Mazzocchi often gives the example of the success of the anti-abortion movement and of the right, in general, in changing the context of American politics. In a pre-convention interview, he said, "I'm best informed by the success of the right in reshaping the whole national debate just by the use of language. They have re-framed the entire national debate. You create a climate." (Of course, the right has engaged aggressively in electoral politics, locally and nationally, as well as "creating a climate.") Mazzocchi argues that the only outcome of running candidates is either defeat and demoralisation, or victory followed by sell-out followed by demoralisation.

At the convention, we witnessed the rather odd spectacle of members of the revolutionary left arguing passionately that the

party should engage in bourgeois electoral politics in 1996, and higher-ups in the union bureaucracy arguing, at least ostensibly, for building a movement in the streets. But it was not only the hard left that wanted the Labor Party to run candidates in the foreseeable future. The UE and the ILWU both backed electoral action, although at the convention the UE supported a compromise formulation, backed by the OCAW, saying that political strategy would be re-discussed in 1998. And many local officers from the first four endorsing internationals also say that they want to run candidates.

Given the party's fledgling condition, the convention was right to decide not to run candidates at first. Nowhere was a chapter in good enough shape to do so. But in the long run, if the party is to grow, it will have to run in elections. Running candidates says something that no other type of political

work does. It says, "Our class should take power." When the Labor Party runs candidates for Congress and President on its (mostly excellent) platform, it will be saying, in effect, "We don't buy corporate competitiveness as the organising principle of society. Working people should take the wealth from the fat cats." Merely pressuring existing politicians and candidates does not say that. It says, "We're just another pressure group on the professional politicians, who will always be in charge."

It is unlikely that simply by engaging in creative grass roots actions the Labor Party can replicate the civil rights movement (as some members have suggested) and develop a crusade that progresses in a straight line till it has "hundreds of thousands of members." In the best of all possible labor parties, action in the streets would interact with the more top-down activity of election campaigns.

Softly, softly

So why isn't the Labor Party acting like a party? Because, for the time being, at least, the party leaders' growth strategy is to do nothing that would deter any national or local

union president from getting his or her union to endorse and commit funds. That means that the Labor Party should not compete with the Democrats, with whom most union leaders, at the national and the local level, are thoroughly entwined. For many Labor Party members who are local union officials, raising money for and asking favours of Democratic politicians is part of a well-established way of life, and they are not inclined to risk changing it. As Tony Mazzocchi has said, the idea of running candidates, for these officials, has "a chilling effect."

This is particularly true for public sector unions and in cities and states where a union is large enough to have some influence in internal party workings. The UAW in Michigan is a good example — and UAW local leaders have stayed away from the Labor Party in droves. AFGE's Political Director says he sees no contradiction in the

AFGE president's being on the Democratic National Committee and also endorsing the Labor Party. "The point where I'll see a contradiction is if they decide to run candidates."

Thus the Labor Party leaders' reason for refusing to run candidates is not that they fear annoying the Democratic Party bigwigs, as some critics have claimed. Labor Party leaders are pretty clear on the worthlessness of the Democrats. What they fear is alienating potential Labor Party recruits.

The Holding Tank

Under this approach, the Labor Party is to be a holding tank of progressive political sentiment. The leadership's strategy is to recruit unions into a larger and larger holding tank, based on the notion that you can be in the Labor Party and still do your regular Committee for Political Education (COPE) work, until there is a critical mass large

enough to actually act like a party — that is, to run candidates. Party leaders may well be looking toward the ascension of Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka—seen as more progressive than current president John Sweeney—to the AFL-CIO presidency in a few years, and aiming to recruit as many locals, intermediate bodies, and internationals as they can to pressure Trumka to start an official, AFL-CIO-backed labor party once he takes office.

It is hard to argue with the notion that a party should not take bold action until it is strong enough. The question is: how does it get strong enough? Under the Labor Party leaders' strategy, the rank and file of those unions is likely to be passive. Their main activity is going door to door getting petition signatures. When, suddenly, someone opens the floodgates of the holding tank, are the ranks supposed to rush out and give their all for the Labor Party? Over the last 20 years union members have been markedly resistant to their leaders' recommendations about how to vote. Without significant groundwork — and action — they won't be automatic converts to the Labor Party either.

The holding tank strategy presents other problems: There are no additional national union endorsers on the immediate horizon. The endorsing unions (which include the Farm Labor Organising Committee (FLOC), the California Nurses Association, and the California Carpenters) represent a small minority in the labor movement — more than a drop in the holding tank, but not big enough to drag the rest of labor in after them. Pointing out their smallness is not a criticism of those unions; nor is this movement insignificant because it starts on the margins of the labor movement rather than in the mainstream. That is to be expected.

During the next stage, Labor Party leaders are concentrating on recruiting local union endorsements, a positive step since it is work that is closer to the ground and which can involve rank-and-file union members, unlike top-level negotiations at union headquarters. But what is the Labor Party likely to do that would change the many non-endorsing union leaders' minds? The strategy has been "the less we do, the more likely they are to join" — and there is or was some truth in that, as the AFGE affiliation demonstrates. But what will persuade more unions to join now? The campaign for a constitutional amendment, itself, is unlikely to have much attractive power.

Pressure to act

For many current members, moreover, the holding tank conception has little appeal. They are likely to want more. We have already seen this in action. In LPA's first years, restive members were not satisfied with LPA as a mailing list/club. They transgressed leaders' wishes by forming local chapters whose de facto existence forced the leadership to accept and then encourage them. In late 1993, Mazzocchi noted, "It's difficult to recruit people, as many of our activists have pointed out, when there's really nothing for them to do." And that is what

Organising education

Graduate students have always been expected to work long hours for little pay, with the understanding that after a few lean years they would move from "apprentice" to professional lecturer or researcher status. But, as **Mathew Paymar** explains, this post-graduation scenario has become increasingly unlikely.

Universities have been replacing stable tenure-track positions with part-time and temporary teaching jobs that typically offer low pay and no benefits. As a result, graduate student-workers are becoming less willing to delay gratification for several years until they attain their doctorate, since doing so is not likely to yield a permanent job. Only one in three graduate students will land a tenure-track job, according to members of the Campaign to Organize Graduate Students (COGS) U.E. Local 896 at the University of Iowa. "If current hiring trends in academia persist, most of us are likely to struggle in lecturer positions with even lower wages and fewer benefits than those we endure in grad school," points out Steve Macek, a University of Minnesota graduate student.

Universities have been saving money by shifting teaching loads onto the backs of graduate students. In 1994, graduate students and temporary lecturers performed 51% of university teaching, compared to 25% in the 1970s, according to the American Association of University Professors.

Graduate student incomes have been stagnating, especially when rising tuition and fees are factored in. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, for example, has raised tuition by 20% in the last five years. As a result, even though Madison graduate students participate in the country's oldest student union and enjoy the highest gross pay in the Big Ten, they now have some of the lowest average incomes among these schools.

A net income of \$9,000 or \$10,000 may seem viable for a young, single

student. But the median age of graduate students is 34.1 years, and over half of them are married. It takes an average of 7.2 years to complete doctoral studies — an awfully long time to voluntarily remain at a poverty-level income.

Large teaching loads, low incomes and poor job prospects have made many students conscious of their status as employees. About 25,000 graduate students are members of a dozen officially recognised unions, and a new graduate student union has been formed or recognised each of the past five years. More established unions, such as the American Federation of Teachers and the Communication Workers of America, have discovered that the area is ripe for organising.

UE-COGS at Iowa won union recognition last year, and achieved a whopping 19% increase in the base salary. Iowa now has the biggest union in the Big Ten, representing both teaching assistants and research assistants. In the last two years provisional organising committees have cropped up across the US, at both public and private schools.

University of California administrators recently withdrew voluntary recognition of the union, sparking a series of well-organised strikes. Although the university has lost a lawsuit, it is refusing to honour the result. Illinois graduate students cannot hold a union election, until they challenge a state labour law that classifies them as "students." ★

For further information contact the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions (CGEU) at cgeu-taa@macc.wisc.edu
Source: March/April issue of *Dollars and Sense* magazine (www.igc.apc.org/dollars/index.html)

prodded leaders into holding a founding convention of a Labor Party when they had no intention that it should act like a party. But thereby expectations were raised. Now that it is a party, the pressure is on to act like one.

Leaders who share this view may be able to maintain the holding tank strategy (though such views are not unanimous among leaders of the four main unions). They may continue to win votes against running candidates at Labor Party conventions. But there will be greater pressure and fractiousness than ever within the party. Many, not just leftists but members of the endorsing unions, will want the party to run candidates at some intermediate stage, before the leaders decide that the holding tank is full enough.

Instead of concentrating solely on filling the holding tank, Labor Party leaders ought to be doing some serious research and sounding out this year, investigating areas where the endorsing unions, both local and international, might have the combined capacity to run credible local campaigns — for school board, city council, county executive, perhaps even Congress. Local unions or chapters that think they could run a worthwhile campaign should be pressing the leadership to let them try. The 1998 Labor Party convention could adopt such campaigns and prepare to go all out to win them. Given the weaknesses of the chapters, this would be a sounder approach than passing a resolution allowing any chapter anywhere to jump into the electoral arena.

It should be noted, that the holding tank strategy should not be equated with “restraining the workers.” The union rank and file were not and are not straining at the bit for a militant new party, with the leadership of the Labor Party the only impediment to such a welcome development. On the contrary, Mazzocchi *et al.* were out in front: they deserve praise for their boldness in birthing the project and bringing it this far.

Social issues

Many delegates predicted that the long-awaited labor party platform would remain silent on social issues, focusing instead on bread-and-butter economic planks. But the draft presented in Cleveland backed affirmative action, opposed “bigotry,” and took stands on women’s issues ranging from childcare to reproductive rights. When Clinton signed the welfare bill later in the summer, the party put out a detailed statement calling the bill an “attack on all working people.”

Nonetheless, it is clear that the new party intends to distance itself from automatic acceptance of the left’s full agenda. The platform takes positions and uses language meant to attract — or at least not put off — non-leftists. For example, the environment plank says the party will support steps to protect the environment “if and only if the livelihoods of working people endangered by environmental change are fully protected.” There is no call for open borders, as the Farm Labor Organising Committee had proposed in pre-convention discussions. The anti-bigotry plank opposes discrimination and in-

justice, but does not mention racism. The words “African American” found their way into the platform document only because the Black Caucus proposed an amendment opposing the torching of African-American churches. The reproductive rights plank does not use the word “abortion.”

This omission evoked one of the longer and more emotional debates at the convention. The California Nurses Association offered an amendment to support “safe, legal abortion.” Speakers stressed that the original language called for “a full range of family planning and reproductive services” under a single-payer health system: in effect the left’s old call for free abortion on demand. They proposed to omit the trigger-word, in the hope of mollifying anti-choice party members and potential members. Supporters of the amendment argued that, with abortion rights under attack, this was no time to appear to waver. They pointed out that feminists would not be attracted to a party that refused to openly support abortion rights. The amendment failed.

It is healthy that the new party had this debate. If the platform committee had called for abortion rights and everyone in the room had automatically raised their hands, it would have indicated that the new party was basically made up of the usual suspects. As it

was, the platform committee made an attempt to recognise that the working class (like the middle class) is divided on abortion. The pro-choice majority, in effect, held out an olive branch to the less-enlightened, saying, “We want you in our organisation since we agree on most things, so we’ll make a major concession on language. At the same time, we won’t modify our politics.”

Convention delegate Marilyn Clement, who is executive director of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, said she voted for the original language because “Building a party is not about thinking up the most radical language. We’ve been there, done that.” Although powerful arguments were made on both sides of this debate, perhaps the outcome signifies that the new party will reject the seductive but sterile “witnessing” model of activism in favour of one that says politics is about finding a way to work with people who do not already agree with you. ★

* Jane Slaughter is a member of the Detroit Labor Party chapter and a former staff writer for Labor Notes. An earlier, longer version of this article appeared in New Politics.

The newest issue of Labor Party Press is available on the Labor Party web site <www.igc.apc.org/lpa>. Included in this issue is a report on the national convention of LP chapters, discussion of electoral perspectives, and an update on the Labor Party’s campaign to make a job at a liveable wage a constitutional right.

Peru

The Lima embassy massacre

United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) declaration, 13 May 1997

The 4th International shares the indignation of all revolutionaries and democrats at the savage operation which the Peruvian government launched against the MRTA militants inside the Japanese embassy in Lima.

The guerrilla commando had killed no-one, injured no-one, and made no ultimatum. But President Fujimori decided on a massacre, using the combined forces of the army, air force and marines, with the aid of the USA, Britain and Israel, and with the complicity of the Japanese government. He wanted no prisoners. His goal was to exterminate all the militants inside the embassy.

The bourgeois media all over the world didn’t hesitate to express their satisfaction, and join in with the congratulations which their governments addressed to Alberto Fujimori. This sinister individual has succeeded in polishing his tyrant’s badge -- which the MRTA action had tarnished.

Fujimori and his gang have sent the Peruvian people a clear message: the state has a monopoly on force of what ever kind, and the “state interest” has priority, at any price. Those who challenge these “principles” will be punished mercilessly.

The framework of the capitalist system must be respected. Particularly in Latin America, those who are not disposed to accept this should know that they are not protected by any law or democratic guarantee. The “low intensity war” against them, which has already caused so much damage in Central America and elsewhere will continue. This is the other message which Fujimori and his imperialist allies wanted to send to the oppressed and exploited of the continent.

Each revolutionary organisation has the right to choose whether or not it adopts the same choices as the MRTA. To ask itself whether or not the methods used by its militants are useful. Whether they contribute effectively to the legitimate combat against “national” and foreign oppressors. But at a moment when the dominant classes in Latin America and their imperialist patrons are crying “victory!”, it is our duty to express our full solidarity with the MRTA in their mourning.

We also demand an end to the scandalous detention of political prisoners in Peru in unacceptable and inhuman conditions. International solidarity with all these prisoners is a must! ★

Garment workers revolt

Ken Davis describes the new labour movement in Asia's poorest country

The garment industry (which uses imported textiles) has been the fastest growing productive sector in the 1990s. About 40 factories employ over 20,000 workers. Last year, exports (mainly to Europe) brought in \$90 million, or 30% of national income. Wages make up only 6% of the sale price of these garments.

These factories are owned by investors from east Asia, using the opportunity of very low wages relative to other countries in the region, lack of any social protection, and eight-year tax holidays. Their home countries' quotas for garment exports to Europe are filled, so they take advantage of Cambodia's unfilled export quota.

Women make up 90% of the workforce in the garment factories. So it is no surprise that Ou Mary, a young woman garment worker, was proposed as leader at the 15 December 1996 founding meeting of the Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia, (FTUWKC).¹ The new union's initial objectives are a \$50 (US) per month wage, and a 44 hour, five and half day work week.

Two days later, a strike began at the Chinese-owned Cambodia Garments Limited factory on the road to the airport. Shots were fired against the rally of 3,000 workers. In a first for modern Cambodia, 4,000 workers marched to the National Assembly on 19 December. Workers returned to the factory on 22 December, following negotiations involving Rainsy which promised an increase of pay from \$35 to \$37 per month, and a decrease in hours from 72 to 47 per week, with up to \$1 extra pay for 4 hours overtime.

Strike leaders had been granted a sympathetic audience with the King on 20 December, and on 26 December the government announced an agreement with 36 garment companies for \$40 per month pay, and paid sick leave.

The Gennon factory reached a similar agreement on 30 December, after a six-day strike sparked by anger over the regular strip searching of young women workers. The Wing Hwa and Integrity factories signed agreements on 4 January.

On 30 December, the Prime Minister declared that "in order to defend the national interest – and interests of both investors and workers – the government will continue to prevent illegal demonstrations incited by politicians who are against the government."

Days later, the Wing Wha and Integrity factories signed agreements, but the (Hong Kong) owners of the Tack Fat factory threatened to move to Laos or Vietnam,



Sam Rainsy, the royalist finance minister until 1994, is now the worker's friend...

when all 1,000 workers at their Cambodian sewing plant went on strike on 3 January. The factory makes garments for C&A in Britain, and Sears in Canada. Minister of Labour Suy Sem accused the strikers of "destroying investment and the economy". On 9 January shots were fired at participants attending a rally at the factory. After 12 days of strike, an agreement was signed, but a few days later, 13 women strike leaders were sacked.

In early February there were protests at the Chinese-owned Bluebird factory (demanding an increase in the \$10 per month basic pay). Soldiers locked 150 workers at Broadland factory into the plant to end a strike over unpaid wages. Several weeks later there were similar protests at the United Faith (Hong Kong-owned) and Jin Chan factory.

Unions revive under new labour law

Garment workers have not been the only ones to strike. Although public sector workers do not have the legal right to form unions or strike, associations and beneficial societies do exist among teachers, nurses and civil servants. In some areas, such as in Bak-touk in January, teachers have taken strike action after long periods without receiving their \$20 per month salaries.

On 9 February workers at the Sanye tire factory locked up Chinese managers and Embassy officers, and began selling factory products. They had begun their strike on 11 January, in protest at the small amount of money paid to lease the factory and its

stocks; until 1993 the factory was a state enterprise partly owned by its 200 workers.

In the coastal province of Kampot, 400 young workers, without any prior union allegiance, occupied the Chakrey Ting Cement Factory for one month, beginning 19 March, defying surrounding police and military. They were protesting disciplinary action against eleven workers, by a new American boss from the Naga Cement consortium. They returned to work after winning their demands.

Trade unions

Responding, a little too slowly, to the garment workers' struggle, the Cambodian Federation of Trade Unions began to reorganise itself. It was formed in 1979, after the defeat of the Khmer Rouge regime, which had sought to eliminate all industry and all urban classes, including workers. Until its last congress in 1989, it was the instrument of the Communist Party and government among workers in the state owned sector. Through the reintroduction of capitalism in the early 1990s, it retained its staff and building, but was unable to recruit and build itself as a union federation that could represent workers in confrontation with the new, mainly foreign, private employers.

CFTU is represented on official bodies, such as the National Training Board. Its former links with the World Confederation of Trade Unions have atrophied, due to lack of finances, though it still manages a few exch-

ange visits with the Lao and Vietnamese union federations.

The CFTU, which is led by Men Sam An, the most senior woman politician in the CPP, has begun to reissue membership cards, mainly to winery, port and transport workers. It is trying to recruit in some of the garment factories, and plans to reorganise among workers in the moribund, (and about to be privatised) rubber plantations.

Worried about the prominence of Sam Rainsy among the garment strikers, Interior Minister, Sar Kheng, has lent his support to the new Cambodian Union Federation, led by Chuon Mom Thol, which claims 2,000 members in 30 factories.

An Independent Free Democratic Union of Cambodian Factory Workers has also been formed, rejecting the political allegiance of the FTUWKC to Sam Rainsy and his party. It is based in the Cambodia Garments Limited factory at Pochentong, where it claims to represent 1,800 of the 4,000-strong workforce. Another "non-aligned" union was formed on 19 January at the Ming Cheong factory, recruiting about a third of the 750 workers after the company demanded production increases without raising the \$1 per day pay. This union has gained support from the Asian-American Free Labor institute.²

Also recently formed is the Cambodian Labour Organisation, an independent Cambodian NGO, led by Seng Pholly, and a group of refugees who returned from camps in Thailand in 1993. CLO has had some financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It provides Sunday training sessions, and research on industrial issues. Its activists were badly beaten by guards at during the strike at the United Faith company on 26 February.

Under Cambodia's new labour law, passed on 10 January, workers will now vote for a single union to represent their workplace in negotiations with employers. It is still unclear about how each union can legally register, and when these workplace elections might be held. While a "living wage" for Phnom Penh is set at \$70 per month, legal wages in garment factories are to be raised only to \$40. Many workers are forced to work 84-105 hours per week, often for only \$25 per month. The new law mandates a 48 hour week, with no compulsory overtime, and paid annual leave. A second labour code, to cover workers in the public sector is being drafted.

Union fees are set at the equivalent of 20-40¢/month, but very few "members" of any of the unions can afford even this. More often, workers "join" at launch rallies, where politicians and already designated union leaders distribute presents, such as radios.

In these difficult conditions, young women garment workers are leading a labour

upsurge which is unprecedented in Cambodia. It is a revolt by the country's most oppressed workers against intolerable conditions, severe discipline, and extraordinarily long hours.

These young workers are increasingly frustrated at lack of change of their conditions, and are seeking new dynamic worker-leaders. Because of Cambodia's traumatic past, and present poverty, most of the militants have basic, but very incomplete education.³

The militancy and leadership of so many young women is striking, given the exclusion of women from most political and administrative positions since the 1993 elections.⁴

One problematic aspect of the early days of this labour radicalisation has been the willingness of many ethnic Khmer workers, and Sam Rainsy, to echo traditional anti-Chinese rhetoric, while chanting slogans about workers' internationalism. Some of the new unions have excluded the super-exploited ethnic Vietnamese minority workers from their struggles. ★



Notes

1. The FTUWKC held a congress on 2 February, with 1,000 workers from 15 factories. On the basis of messages to this meeting, the Union claims support from ICFTU, the ILO, France's Force Ouvrière, and the AAFLI.
2. The Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI), is the Asian arm of the US trade union confederation AFL-CIO. AAFLI used to be a channel for the CIA to fund anti-Communist trade unions in Asia.
3. Schooling was only re-established in 1979-80, after the defeat of the Khmer Rouge regime.
4. Though Cambodia has the highest percentage of women workers in the world: 55% of the total workforce.

Illegal logging

It really does grow on trees

Cambodia is Asia's poorest country. After decades of war, its ten million people have the lowest standard of living in the region, in terms of health, education and income. The country's main income (excluding foreign aid) still comes from the sale of rare timber from the country's virgin forests. An incredible 70% of tax revenue comes from customs, compared to 32% in neighbouring Laos, and only 7% in Indonesia. Not surprisingly, this has created a government and business culture based on bribes and commissions, rather than long-term national development.

"Since it took office in 1993, the current government has parcelled up vast tracts of the country in concessions awarded to Thai, Malaysian, Taiwanese and Indonesian companies. It has even sold logging rights in areas controlled by the Khmer Rouges, whose long war has been financed in part by wood. Conservationists, and donors, even the King have lamented the consequences. Deforestation has been blamed for the worsening floods afflicting Cambodia in the rainy season. And the logging is not sustainable. One of the country's greatest natural resources is being sold off, cheaply and for ever. Little of the revenue appeared in government books. Most probably ended up with the loggers, middlemen, officials and politicians and their parties."

Much of the reconstruction of education, health, social and agricultural services is dependent on foreign and NGO support. "Lenders and donors have [increasingly] been linking their assistance

to the government's willingness to tackle the timber trade. But once international scrutiny is diverted, however, the exports may resume. Trucks piled high with freshly felled timber still ply the roads in many parts of Cambodia. Much is probably still smuggled out of the country by sea or through Vietnam."

Neighbouring Thailand "banned logging in 1989, after bad floods the year before. Thai companies have turned with gusto to cutting down trees in Cambodia, Myanmar (Burma) and Laos."

The Thai government, or more precisely the Thai military have been profiting a great deal from this illegal trade in both Cambodia and in Burma. In Cambodia they are happy to collaborate with the Khmer Rouge in selling their ill-gotten gains. In the border villages, the Khmers Rouges do exactly as they please, as long as the Thai military get their commission.

Source: Logging on, The Economist, 22 Feb. 1997 p.70

A bitter partnership is breaking down

Cambodia's weak coalition government is falling apart and political violence is increasing. National elections are scheduled for November 1998, but local elections have been delayed indefinitely. As **Ken Davis** explains, The economy is a disaster, with most of national income coming from illegal logging, smuggling, and foreign aid programmes.

The Cambodian Peoples' Party, now led by one of the country's two Prime Ministers Hun Sen, lost the 1993 UN-organised elections, (which cost \$2 bn.) But it refused to cede power, and joined a coalition with the winners, the royalist FUNCINPEC party, and the minority Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party.

Increasingly however both parties and both prime ministers present themselves as opponents. FUNCINPEC, led by First Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh, complains that the CCP has never really shared power. The royalists recently formed a National United Front, with smaller parties, including the Khmer Nation Party, led by Sam Rainsy, the most prominent of Cambodia's dissident politicians.

After invoking Cambodia's "eternal struggle" against the Vietnamese, even the ex-Khmers Rouges group led by Ieng Sary, gave support to the front. Sary, once Pol Pot's number two, but now amnestied, claims that only a few hundred people were killed during the Khmers Rouges period (1975-79), and that he knew nothing about it.

Support in low and high places

Meanwhile, the Cambodian People's Party benefits from strong bases of support in several provinces, in the state administration, police and army, as an inheritance from their decade as governing Communist Party. Party leader Hun Sen is a talented orator, who travels the country addressing large gatherings of poor peasants, denouncing his foes, announcing the building of schools and clinics, and distributing gifts. The CPP has also formed an alliance with small parties, and defectors from FUNCINPEC.

Hun Sen also has powerful backers in the Sino-Khmer bourgeoisie. Men like Theng Bun Ma, Cambodia's richest man, and president of the Chamber of Commerce. On 7 April, Theng shot out the tires of a Royal Air Cambodge plane after airport staff "lost" his \$5,000 excess baggage, to avoid an embarrassing drug search.



Tension between the parties

There was widespread fear of armed confrontation on 14 April (Khmer new year), when Prince Sirivuddh, ex-Foreign Minister, attempted to return from exile in France. He was exiled a year ago, after being accused of conspiring to kill Hun Sen (who says he will shoot down any plane trying to bring the Prince home.)

Two days later, troops loyal to FUNCINPEC surrounded the airport, guarding First Prime Minister Ranariddh against a rumoured coup by Hun Sen.

Grenades signal death of Coalition

The March 30th grenade attack on protesters outside the Silver Pagoda and National Assembly buildings drew world attention to the worsening confrontation between the main parties in the Coalition government.

The 200-strong protest for the independence of the judiciary was organised by Sam Rainsy, head of the Khmer Nation Party, and FUNCINPEC finance minister until his expulsion in 1994. Four hand grenades thrown by people on foot and on motorcycles killed 19 people and wounded over 100 others, many very seriously. Several were young women garment worker activists. That evening just metres down the road from the blood stains, Queen Monineath hosted a party at the palace for international guests at the South East Asian Biennial Film Festival.

Rainsy blamed co-Prime Minister Hun Sen saying that unidentified soldiers, presumably the Prime Minister's guards, allowed the grenade throwers to leave in the direction of the CPP leadership compound but prevented those trying to pursue them.

Hun Sen, while "vehemently condemning" the attack, threatened to arrest Rainsy for "provoking" the violence. Police even prevented mourners laying wreaths at the site of the attack.

Who will be King?

Adding to this instability has been the increasing tension about who will succeed the ailing King Sihanouk. Any prince of any of the three royal lines can be selected by the

six member Throne Council. The most likely candidates were FUNCINPEC leader Ranariddh (Sihanouk's son), and the exiled Sirivuddh (Sihanouk's half-brother). But in mid-February Sihanouk said he might abdicate (again), thus ending the monarchy.

Suspecting that Sihanouk might revive his own political party and run for office, Hun Sen then threatened to cancel the elections, or prevent members of the royal family from taking part in politics.

Prince Sirivuddh's attempt to return to Cambodia provoked a split in FUNCINPEC, with two governors and twelve parliamentarians joining the CCP alliance, giving Hun Sen majority support in the 120-member Assembly for the first time. Rumour has it that the defectors were given \$10,000 each, cars and other gifts.

The CCP has been able to strengthen its apparatus, and exacerbate the dissaray of ten right-wing parties, but it offers no programme for Cambodia's development, other than that of the free market and foreign investment.

From his Beijing home, King Sihanouk has now called for a "hard-line Revolution" to overcome the "division, corruption, governmental, administrative and military disorganisation, permanent deforestation, trafficking of all kinds, wild capitalism, the systematic destruction of national resources, the irreversible 'de facto' partition of the State, the decline of moral values at the heart of society, [and] the irresistible advance of AIDS."

Rainsy capitalises on workers' struggle

The King is not the only politician willing to rail against corruption and exploitation. In his war against "the Communists" [CCP] Sam Rainsy demands an end to foreign aid, which provides \$500 million each year, matching the national budget of \$580 m. He also called for the regional co-operation group ASEAN to delay the admission of Cambodia, which is planned to coincide with that of Laos and Burma in July, when ASEAN foreign ministers gather in Kuala Lumpur.

Sam Rainsy calls for an end to corruption capture deep levels of popular urban frustration. In an effort to establish a firmer electoral base, Sam Rainsy and his wife, Tioulong Saumura, have thrown themselves into organising and speaking for the garment workers. Rainsy, a former right-wing Finance Minister, and champion of the free market and Western interests, now pledges loyalty to downtrodden workers, and is attempting to re-position his Khmer Nation Party as social-democratic. ★

What about democracy?

After 150 years of British colonial rule, Hong Kong will return to China on July 1. What should be a day of celebration is spoiled by the fact that sovereignty will not be exercised by the people, but by the Beijing bureaucracy.

Since China's economic reforms started, Hong Kong has become the stepping stone across which international capital moves into China, and Chinese capital moves out of the mainland. Beneath the superficial glamour of prosperity, ordinary people in Hong Kong have suffered from high land prices, high rent, a high cost of living, and a decrease in real wages. Unemployment and under-employment is a growing problem, partly due to the move of the manufacturing sector out of Hong Kong and onto the mainland.

Beijing bureaucrats have announced their policies for the new Hong Kong. Their attempts to impose dictatorial control and repress political rights violate the basic principle that Hong Kong should be democratically ruled by the Hong Kong people.

Deng Xiaoping's guideline was for Hong Kong and China to be "one country - two systems". The possibility for Hong Kong people to choose their own social-political system was never considered. The setting up of the various committees to draw up the Basic Law and to form the 400-member "electorate", and the process of selecting the Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region and the members of the provisional legislature, have been conducted in an extremely autocratic manner. Power is being shared between pro-Beijing sectors and influential capitalists. Independents and Democratic parties are excluded.

Political rights and freedoms

The to-be legislators have proposed reverting to the more repressive laws and ordinances on civic rights (such as the right of gathering and rally, right of political association) which existed until the 1980s. Under strong resistance and opposition from the Hong Kong people, there have been concessions on certain issues, and some changes have been deferred, to be taken up later by the provisional legislature.

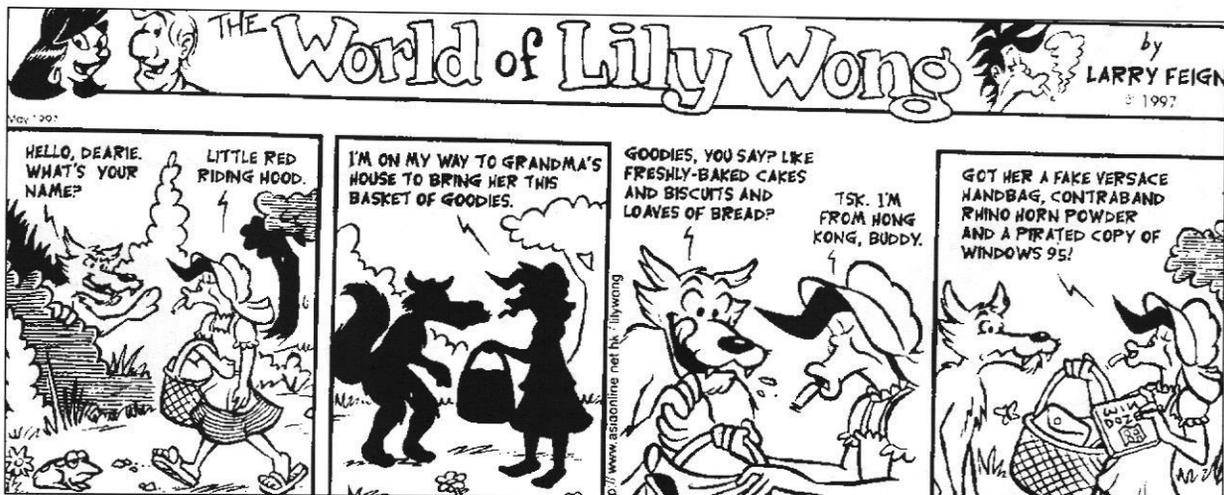
Despite the deterioration in the living

standards of the majority of residents, the Hong Kong government's revenues have increased in each of the last few years. By the end of June 1997, the total reserve funds will be HK\$330 billion (US\$42.5 bn.). This is more than 10 times the amount the British government had promised to hand over to China. The projected surplus for the year to March 1998 is HK\$31.7 bn. (US\$4 bn.).

Meanwhile, social welfare expenditure has been raised by only half as much as in 1996. Spending on public assistance this year will be even lower than in 1996. This budget was drawn up after 19 rounds of negotiations

demonstration, rally and association; to serve as an intermediary link, sharing the experiences of struggle between the outside world and the mainland, and fighting attempts of repression or isolation; and to develop theories and concepts of revolutionary socialism: for democratic socialism with the people as true masters. The revival of the democratic movement in China will be the strongest defence of the struggles of the people of Hong Kong.

Source: *October Review* Vol.24 Issue 2 1997. © GPO Box 10144, Hong Kong. e-mail <or@iohk.com>



between the Hong Kong and Chinese government. Opposition to spending on social welfare has come publicly and strongly from the Chinese government.

While being mean on spending on social welfare, no expenses will be spared as far as festivities to celebrate the transfer are concerned. The Hong Kong government has allocated HK\$200 million (US\$25.8 m.). Many events will also be sponsored by other bodies. The "walkathon" held in the name of "celebrating the Return and giving to charity" raised HK\$17 million. Only HK\$3 million goes to charity, and HK\$14 million to celebration festivities.

Hong Kong people will resist Beijing's control. The return to China, though under "two systems", will be an impetus to the linking of the struggles for democracy and better livelihood between the people of Hong Kong and the mainland. Both now confront the same oppressing forces of bureaucracy and capitalism. They will now be able to share their experiences in struggles.

The tasks of revolutionary Marxists in Hong Kong are to fight, together with the people, for political freedoms and better livelihood, guarding against bureaucratic repression of the rights of speech, publication,

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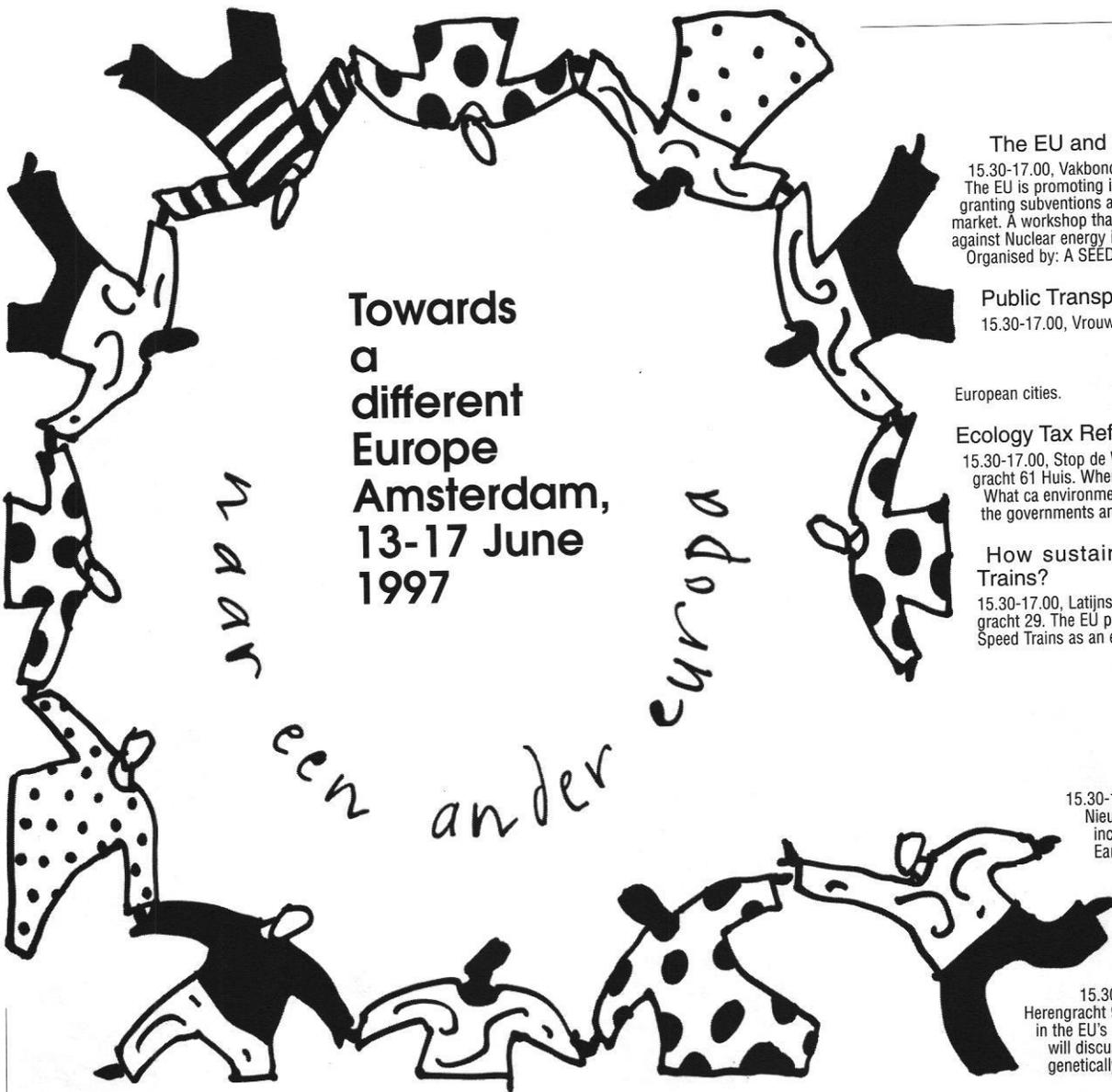
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Towards a different Europe Amsterdam, 13-17 June 1997

Friday, June 13

Social-economic consequences of EMU, towards a political-economic alternative

10.00-12.30, H. de Zwaan zaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Debate organised by the Dutch Coalition Towards a Different Europe, with the participation of Michel Husson (France, AC! Agir Ensemble Contre le Chomage) on "Social Impacts of EMU in Europe", Magnus Ryner (economist, Sweden) on "the EU and the crisis of the Welfare State, perspectives for change," and Geske Dijkstra (Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands), on "Consequences of EMU for women"

How Sustainable is the EU?

10.00 -12.30. Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. What are the consequences of EU-policies on the environment? What possibilities and strategies do we have to bring about a sustainable development in Europe? This debate, organised by the Dutch Coalition Towards a Different Europe, starts with the following speakers: Ramon Fernandez Duran (AEDE-NAT, Spain) on "EU Transport Policies - the Case of Spain", Christina von Weizacker (biologist, Germany) on "Biopolitics and the EU," and Sabina Voogd (Greenpeace Netherlands) on "The EU's Waste Policies"

Towards a green and feminist Europe

10.00-17.30, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Towards a green Europe, by ASEED • Young women's struggle for emancipation, equal rights and opportunities.

Transport Actions in Europe

13.30-15.00, Latijns Amerika Centrum, Nieuwe Herengracht 29. Everywhere in Europe resistance is growing to the construction of highways, High Speed Trains and other transport infrastructure projects. These projects, in many cases, are co-financed by the EU. Contributions by activist from different countries. Organised by: A SEED.

Agriculture in the EU

13.30-15.00, Vakbondsmuseum, Henri Polaklaan 29. Every year the EU spends hundreds of millions of ECU on polluting, animal-hostile industrial agriculture. Representatives from environmental- and alternative agriculture-organisations participate in this workshop Organised by: A SEED Europe

Air Traffic

13.30-15.00, Stop de Wapenwedloop, Nieuwe Keizersgracht 61 Huis. Everywhere in Europe airports expand in a money-absorbing and polluting race to become a European 'Main Port'. What is the EU doing, and what should it do to stop the growth of air traffic?

Building on a Different Europe

13.30-15.00, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. In this workshop different movements who fight for a Different Europe (ecological, in social, democratic) exchange experiences, in order to strengthen European collaboration. With the participation of Thomas Wallgren (Finland) and other representatives of EU-critical movements. Organised by: Alternatives to EU (Finland), Red-Green Alliance (Denmark) and others

The EU and Biotechnology: consequences for Central & East Europe

13.30-15.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Speakers: Iza Kruzewska (Poland) and Vera Mora (Hungary) Organised by: Working group Ecological Europe, Dutch Coalition Towards a Different Europe

Sustainability: environment & economy

13.00-15.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Speakers: Maartje van Putten (MEP PvdA, Netherlands) and Paul Metz (MKB) Organised by: Nationale Jongerenraad voor Milieu en Ontwikkeling (NJMO), NL

EMU

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95.

The EU and Nuclear Energy

15.30-17.00, Vakbondsmuseum, Henri Polaklaan 9. The EU is promoting its weak Nuclear Industry by granting subventions and liberalisation of the electricity-market. A workshop that deals with different campaigns against Nuclear energy in West- and Eastern Europe. Organised by: A SEED Europe and others

Public Transport Policies in EU-cities

15.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. This workshop will compare developments in Public Transport Policies in various European cities.

Ecology Tax Reforms and the EU

15.30-17.00, Stop de Wapenwedloop, Nieuwe Keizersgracht 61 Huis. When will there be a European Ecotax? What can environmental movements do to pressure the governments and the European Commission?

How sustainable are High Speed Trains?

15.30-17.00, Latijns Amerika Centrum, Nieuwe Herengracht 29. The EU promotes, and subsidises, High Speed Trains as an ecological form of transportation for the future. But how ecological are they? Organised by: Asamblea Contra el TAV (Basque Country) and others

Globalisation: a environmental disaster

15.30-17.00, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Speakers include Tord Bjork (Friends of the Earth, Sweden), Colin Hines and others. Organised by: International Forum on Globalisation (IFG)

European resistance to biotechnology

15.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Biotechnology plays a key role in the EU's economic policy. This workshop will discuss actions and campaigns against genetically manipulated food.

Towards a Social and Ecological Europe

20.00-22.00, Oude Kerk, Oudekerksplein 23. Discussion between Nicholas Hildeyard of *The Ecologist*, Vandana Shiva (eco-feminist, India) on "Europe and the global environment" and Christophe Aguiton, co-ordinator of the European Marches against Unemployment, Poverty and Social Exclusion, on "Strategies towards a Social Europe"

Saturday June 14

Biggest ever European Demonstration against Unemployment, Poverty and Social Exclusion

14.00, Dam Square. Women are asked to demonstrate dressed in white, to protest against the invisibility of women in this Europe. The official EuroMarch demo.

Sunday June 15

Fair-trade breakfast

09.30-11.00, Pier 10, behind the Central Station. Breakfast by the water, with Fair Trade products. Exhibition, information on the cacao-measures proposed by the European Commission, Theatre, Music. After breakfast, stroll accompanied by music to the Vrouwenhuis.

Tribunal against nuclear weapons

11.00-13.00, Latijns Amerika Centrum, Keizersgracht 29.

Arms Trade: weapon industry and weapon export, a European affair

11.00-13.00, Stop de Wapenwedloop, Nieuwe Keizersgracht 61. Organised by: ENAAT, AMOK

Civilian Peace Teams

11.00-13.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95.

Interlocking Institutions

11.00-13.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. The relation between the EU, WEU and NATO. Barbara Lochbihler, secretary-general of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

Free trade, protectionism and social clauses

11.00-13.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Introduction by Miriam van der Stichelen (Transnational Institute) about globalisation, policy of the EU in the WTO and effects for the South. Followed by a debate on alternatives. With: A member of the independent South Korean Trade Union • Rosa Virginia Hernandez (El Salvador) on the free-trade-zones in El Salvador and the position of women in the 'global economy' • Vandana Shiva (India), her alternative: protectionism • Marcus Aruda (Brazil, CUT, PT): supporter of 'international economic co-operation from below'

Gay and Lesbian strategy in Europe

12.00-15.00, COC, Rozenstraat 14. Organisation: Gay and Lesbian Association Amsterdam, Roze Links Information: GALA, tel. +31.20.616 19 79

Eutopia Queer 'Gay Rights Now!' Eurodance Party

12.00-24.00, Gay Monument, Westermarkt. Speakers include: Nel van Dijk (Dutch MEP, GroenLinks), Marian Oprel (co-chair egalité, a group of gay and lesbian euro-functionaries), Hein Verkerk (COC, Netherlands), SAD-Schorerstichting, IGLYO, SPANNER group Netherlands and others. Information: GALA, tel. +31.20.616 19 79

Demonstration on Europe

14.00-16.00, Oude Kerk, Oude Kerkplein 23

The Eurobomb

14.00-17.00, H. de Zwaanzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. This seminar will deal with two issues: 'Politics and Nuclear Bombs: time for a change?' and 'The Non-Proliferation Treaty and European Nuclear Bombs.' Various MEP's, Dutch, Swedish and German MP's and representatives from IALANA (International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms) have been invited. Organisation: PENN (Project on European Nuclear Non-Proliferation), which includes: BITS (Berlin Information Centre for Transatlantic Security), BASIC (British American Security Information Council), and CESD (Centre for European Security and Disarmament).

Africa's bleeding heart

14.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. With the participation of Anke Hintjes (CADCOD/Kodewes/CADTM; specialist on the former Zaire); Doh Kyth (South Africa); Carlos Castel Branco (Mozambique) Organised by: Dutch Stichting Grenzeloos Solidariteit, KODEWES (Belgium), Trans National Institute

Trade in Women

14.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. The trade in women in the Netherlands and Europe. What policies does the Dutch government adopt towards the trade in women, and what are the problems with it? How can the problem be tackled on a European level? The NGO 'Esperanza' will show a slide show on how women in Latin America are recruited, and how they live in Dutch prostitution. Organised by: STV (NL) and Esperanza

Encuentro Intercontinental "1 1/2"

14.30-17.00, Latijns Amerika Centrum, Keizersgracht 29. In 1996 thousands of people came to Chiapas for the First Intercontinental Meeting for Humanity and against Neo-liberalism. This workshop will give information on the results of this international network against Neo-liberalism, and a preview of the Second Intercontinental Meeting in Spain, in July.

Asia-Europe

14.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. With the participation of Waldon Bello (Thailand, author of 'Dark Victory'), Achin Vanaik (Journalist from India and specialist on WTO, SAP's and communalism in India) and others. Organisation: Trans National Institute, Stichting Grenzeloze Solidariteit

Biotechnology, patenting

18.00-19.30, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. With the participation of Ana Rosa Martinez (GRAIN)

Health care & drugs in the Third World

18.00-19.30, Latijns Amerika Centrum, Keizersgracht 29.

The effects of EMU & Euro on the South

18.00-19.30, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Organised by: Both Ends

Towards a Peaceful Europe in Solidarity with the Third World

20.30-23.00, Oude Kerk, Oudekerksplein 23. This debate deals with the shift in European policies concerning development aid. Has development aid become a tool to open up new markets? Are emergency help and peace operations something more than merely a sedative. Participants include Susan George (author of 'The Debt Boomerang'), Javier Elorriaga (Frente Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional, Mexico) and Barbara Lochbihler (secretary-general of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF)

Monday June 16

Towards a Feminist Europe

10.00-12.30, H. de Zwaanzaal, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Gisela Dütting, member of the Work group Feminist Europe, will speak about a feminist perspective on Europe. Afterwards, two other women will speak. The unification of Europe will have specific consequences black, migrant and refugee women. One of them will speak about 'women and the Fortress Europe'. Also: the demolition of social security and poverty among women as a result of European policies.

Towards a social Europe

10.00-12.30, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Criticism of the concept of globalisation of the European Union. The debate will touch protectionism, the feminist criticism of the EU's free trade policies, green alternatives to globalisation and strategies against globalisation from a feminist perspective. With: Friedrich Otto Wolf (European Greens in the European Parliament), Mariama Williams (Women in Development Europe), Jo Brew (WIDE/European Forum of Left Feminists), Colin Hines (International Forum on Globalisation)

Reproductive rights in Europe

14.00-17.00, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Strategies in the struggle for abortion, on population politics and on the right of self-determination in the EU. The workshop will attempt to place these developments in an international perspective and the context of technological and scientific changes, population politics and the increased role of multinational companies.

Feminist politics in elections and new democracy.

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Organisation: De Vrouwenpartij

The Exclusion of lesbian women

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95.

The Women's Movement and other social movements

14.00-17.00, H. de Zwaanzaal, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Women exchange experiences of organising women in trade unions and other social organisations. Organisation: Women Across, Norway

Links between East and W. European women and women from the South

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Visions, experiences and expectations in regard to the EU for Eastern European women, followed by a brainstorming session.

Young Women's Space

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. A meeting point where young women can meet and exchange experiences.

Beijing and the EU-Summit

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. The organisation of unemployed people: in or outside the trade unions? 14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95.

Dismantling Corporate Rule

15.30-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. The

economical and political influence of multinational companies is becoming an increasing problem. Speakers: Ulrich Duchrow (KAÏROS), Eric Wesselius (Corporate Europe Observatory) and others.

Towards a Social and Feminist Europe

20.00-22.00, Oude Kerk, Oudekerksplein 23. Debate, including Jane Pillinger (Forum of European Left Feminists), on "Strategies towards a social and feminist Europe" and Gail Pheterson on "Fortress Europe, migration and prostitution: the control over the female body"

Tuesday June 17

Greening the Future

10.00-13.00, Theaterzaal Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Speakers: Tony Long (WWF) and Louise Gale (Greenpeace Europe)

Building a different Europe

10.00-13.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. In this workshop movements that engage themselves for a different Europe (ecological, with solidarity, democratic) exchange experiences. Hopefully we will be able to enforce the co-operation! With representatives of several EU-critical movements. Organisation: Alternatives to EU (Finland), Red-Green Alliance (Denmark) and others

The other side of the Dutch model

10.00-13.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95.

Internal security/Europol

10.00-13.00, H. de Zwaanzaal, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. With the participation of: Claudia Roth (MEP Greens), and Tony Bunyan (Statewatch)

Why work?

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Peter Merry (Federation of Young Greens Europe)

European Union and the enlargement of NATO

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Discussion on the relationship between the enlargement of NATO and the enlargement of the EU, the aggressive expansionism of western powers in Eastern and Central Europe and the close co-operation between the United States and the Danish government in the Baltic states. Speaker: Ulla Klotzer (Finland). Organisation: Red-Green Alliance, Denmark.

Campaigns on NATO

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. Organised by: Spanish Movement Against the Europe of Maastricht

Building a different Europe

14.00-17.00, Vrouwenhuis, Nieuwe Herengracht 95. In this workshop movements that engage themselves for a different Europe (ecological, with solidarity, democratic) exchange experiences. Hopefully we will be able to enforce the co-operation! With representatives of several EU-critical movements. Organised by: Alternatives to EU (Finland), Red-Green Alliance (Denmark) and others.

Responses to the EU Summit

20.00-22.00, Oude Kerk, Oudekerksplein 23. The Coalition Towards a Different Europe will evaluate the Alternative Summit and gives its reaction to the outcomes of the official EU Summit. Discussion on the perspectives of a Euro-critical movement after Amsterdam and political alternatives to the EU.

Entry, food, info...

All daytime activities of the Alternative Summit are free, but it is best to register beforehand. Up till 15 minutes before an activity only ticket holders are admitted, afterwards the doors are opened. Evening debates cost f5. Evening debate and meal costs f12.50. Pass for all evening debates and all meals costs f40. Pre-booked tickets can be collected from the Vrouwenhuis (Nieuwe Herengracht 95). For more information call: +31.20 422 2712, 421 3942, or 421 3943

book notes

Psychology and Marxism - strange bedfellows or a necessary combination?

Psychology and Society, Radical Theory and Practice, Edited by Ian Parker and Russell Spears (Pluto Press, 1996).

reviewed by Rod Marshall.

Psychology and Marxism do not mix. This is a common view held by many who have come into contact with Psychology in many of its forms. For one thing, it is a science that is historically committed to the study of the individual human being and which eschews collective explanations or solutions (cf. Allport 1954). On many occasions Psychological theory and practice have been trumpeted by the far right (e.g. Eysenck's work on the connection between race and IQ) or have been used as heavy handed instruments of social control (eg. in the use of harmful drugs to contain psychiatric patients). Freud, although seen by some as a liberal in breaking taboos surrounding mental illness or sexuality, also talked of gay people as being "victims of this one fatal perversion" (1920 *Lecture*). The Institute for Psychoanalysis does not allow gay people to train as psychotherapists even today.

It is against this generally reactionary grain that *Psychology & Society* cuts with a blade sharpened on many decades work by psychologists on the left. In this one volume, edited by radical psychologists Ian Parker and Russell Spears, are many and varied attempts to show that a radical, emancipatory psychology is possible, that a mix of the unmixables can be useful for both Psychology and Marxism.

What is often ignored or hidden is the fact that radical psychologists have been around for nearly as long as Psychology itself. Like science generally, it is telling the fact that the more popular and respected of theories and approaches are those which are most rewarding to capitalism and which do most to try and secure its future. But as in all walks of life, the seeds of capitalism's downfall are continually sown: Martin Roiser and Carla Willig from Thames Valley University highlight the history of working class psychology from the time of Marx and Engels onwards.

The fact that there is this rich vein of pro-working class psychology was also highlighted last year at the 1996 Conference of

the Social Psychology Section of the British Psychology Society (BPS) where a special session on Marxism and Psychology was held. Research by Engels and Marx, for example, into the working conditions of the working class (eg. in *The Condition of the Working Class in Britain*) included a questionnaire for French workers, entitled the *Enquete Ouvrière*. Although most of the 100 questions were not 'psychological,' Roiser and Willig show how this work sits alongside Marx and Engel's work on class consciousness and alienation. It is also work which was taken up and given an extra psychological dimension in the work of Kautsky and Bernstein and it was in Germany that the radical Frankfurt School was formed in 1922.

European thinking

The Frankfurt School is best known for the work of Fromm, Marcuse, Weiss and Adorno and includes work on the causes of fascism both at the level of the state and at the psychological level in terms of the individual 'authoritarian' personality (Adorno et al 1951). The initial intent of the Frankfurt School was to explain the failures of German Social Democracy and this was done largely along Marxist lines and largely untainted by Stalinism. It is arguable in that portraying the effect of late capitalism as causing authoritarian personalities (that are slower to change than political views) Fromm (in the famous *Fear of Freedom*) drew overly pessimistic conclusions. Nonetheless the work on the authoritarian personality by Adorno et al in the US. became a highly influential work on the nature and causes of prejudice, albeit one which tended to reinforce notions of individuality by focusing on personality differences.

Radical Psychology reappeared strongly in Germany in the 1960s, centring in the Free University of Berlin and led by the influential Klaus Holzkamp (see Tolman 1994 and Chapter 7 in *Psychology and Society*). This movement, as part of student uprisings across Europe in the 1960s, made a huge contribution in renewing a Critical Psychology, largely through rejuvenating the application of Marxism to Psychology. It is striking how little of this work is covered in the curriculum of undergraduate Psychology degrees in Britain. More recently, the rise of post-modernist thought during the 1980s has allowed Critical Psychology to regain a foothold and to grow again after a barren period during the 1970s when many radical psychologists were forced out of Psychology departments in Britain and where the stranglehold of reductionism, in the form of cognitive psychology, became ever tighter. An important issue today is the extent to which the work of post-structuralist thinkers, like Foucault, can be used in a positive way in

developing a truly radical Psychology (see Gane 1986, Shotton & Parker 1990). This is also an issue which is dealt with both directly and indirectly in *Psychology and Society* (for example the chapter by Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Angela Davis on strategies for women prisoners).

The truly remarkable aspect of *Psychology & Society* is the variety of approaches that it contains. In the 19 chapters there are many more than 19 Psychological perspectives and more than 19 types of Marxism to match them! It is therefore not surprising that some of these versions of both Psychology and Marxism would not be recognised as such by some of those who define themselves as either Marxists or Psychologists. This is not a criticism of this work but is instead indicative of the many brave attempts to fuse Psychology and Marxism together that are found within it.

Take the chapter by Jerome Ulman. Behaviourism, as personified in the work of people such as Pavlov, Watson and Skinner, has been largely discredited within modern Psychology. For Marxists, the emphasis on the importance of natural selection as a driving force in the behaviour of animals and humans has often made behaviourist ideas (as with genetic reductionism) an area with apparently little basis for common ground. This is particularly true to the extent that Marxists have correctly broken with the stale Psychology which was the official doctrine under Stalin and which was heavily behaviourist and have instead taken up humanistic ideas in Marxism as explored by writers such as Gramsci and Novack.

Prozac for the proles

Ulman, for his part, prefers, as a 'behaviourologist', to see selection (there is less mention of the 'natural') as part of a "special dialectical law of the movement of living matter, from that of a single cell to a social formation composed of millions of people". It is worth wondering how dialectical such a relationship might be if neither the cell nor the social formation are aware of the function of the other (which is still the case for brain function where location for function is still a mystery. Prozac works because of a chemical change, but what does this chemical change actually represent in human, social terms?). After, all dialectical logic does not imply a dual determinism of the wooden variety that is favoured by empiricists. Ulman celebrates how "selectionism" has removed the focus from the internal cognitive states (such as memory and processing) but it is worrying that in doing so the concept of subjectivity may have been lost altogether.

The positive aspects of Ulman's approach involve the abandoning of Cartesian dualisms such as between the physical

and mental and the Kantian interpretation claim which is critically discussed in the first chapter by Edward Reed (things in themselves can never be known, only their interpreted appearance. Hence the need for a cognitive system to do the interpreting). It is these problems which appear to bedevil the attempt by R.D. Hinselwood to show possible convergence between psychoanalysis and Marxism. The convergence is shown to centre firstly on the Marxist notion of alienation (of the producer from the product) and Freudian ideas of depersonalisation.

Additionally Hinselwood argues that the notion of surplus value (based on the circulation of workers productive activities in the form of commodities) is similar to notions of social groups involving aspects of personal identity that are also being 'circulated'. This second convergence relies on the supposed dualism between the social and individual that has plagued attempts at a radical social psychology (see Turner 1987) and also reinforces the internal-external dualism found in much Psychology. While Hinselwood shows some fascinating insights into the possible overlaps between Freudian and Marxist thought the chapter as a whole flags up the fact that the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s, led by R.D. Laing, is completely omitted. This is a movement still present today (including in Laing's Philadelphia Association) and which has, at times, made real attempts to bring together aspects of Marxist and psychoanalytic thought (albeit with an existentialist thrust to it).

Almost inevitably therefore, it is possible to accuse Parker and Spears of leaving out certain critical traditions within Psychology. Despite covering a vast terrain, it is nonetheless a shame that Laing's contribution is not featured and that room was not found for the work of Tajfel and Turner on explaining the basis for prejudice and stereotyping (see Blackwell's *The Message of Social Psychology* for some excellent coverage of these ideas). This may seem picky, and it has to be said that the book contains some excellent chapters on the contributions psychologists can make for social change (by Ben Bradley and Jane Selby) and on empowerment (by Mark Burton and Carolyn Kagan). There is even a chapter by Ian Parker on Trotsky's contribution to a revolutionary psychology.

It is hard in some ways to critically assess a work that is so varied in its approach. *Psychology and Society* therefore represents a sounding board for those psychologists who are committed to socialist change and who are fighting the general reactionary tide in Psychology (as is in much of science). In that sense it is an exciting contribution that should be welcomed loudly by all Marxists and all Psychologists who care about the future of humanity. It is not surprising therefore, that Parker & Spears arranged for Ernest Mandel to write a concluding chapter for *Psychology and Society*, a contribution which was halted by his untimely death in July 1995. The book is dedicated to Ernest Mandel and it is a fitting testament to him.

Whither a Marxist Psychology? The

book gives no overall answer to this question and I suspect that any such Psychology, bereft of its formal logic and bourgeois conceptions would be Psychology, maybe, but not as we now know it. Until that day and as a step to getting there, Steve Reicher concludes *Psychology and Society* by discussing the ways in which radical psychologists are already fighting back now both in developing theory and in the practical aspects of their work. The organisation 'Politics, Psychology and Resistance' is committed to fighting the oppressive uses of Psychology and aims to "promote the development and dissemination of emancipatory psychologies in opposition to oppressive practices of all kinds". These are aims that all Marxists should support. As Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, in overthrowing capitalism we aim to create "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all."

References: Gane, M. (1986) *Towards a Critique of Foucault*. Routledge & Kegan-Hall. McGarty, C. & Haslam, S.A. (Eds.) (1996) *The Message of Social Psychology*. Blackwells. Parker, I. & Shotton, J. (1990) *Deconstructing Social Psychology*. Methuen. Tolman, C. (1995) *Psychology, Society and Subjectivity*. Routledge. Turner, J.C. et al (1987) *Rediscovering the Social Group*. Blackwells. Our reviewer, Rod Marshall, is a member of the editorial board of *Socialist Outlook*, and a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education, High Wycombe. This review is reprinted from *Socialist Outlook*, published monthly by British supporters of the Fourth International. Politics, Psychology and Resistance can be contacted at: PPR, Psychology, Bolton Institute, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB. Tel. 01204-528851.

Car mania: A critical history of transport

Winfried Wolf

This is a critical and analytical survey of the history of mass transport since the industrial revolution. It charts the early rise of the European canal systems, which were subsequently replaced by railways in the early 19th century. These were in turn replaced by the private road network in the 20th century.

Wolf [a member of the German parliament for the SPD, and a long time Fourth International supporter] links the development of these networks to the flows of capital and investment which were involved in their creation. For example, he points out that similarly large amounts of money were first used to build the canal networks, then to bid the railway tracks, then re-deployed for the creation of the road networks.

Car mania makes a very critical analysis of the growth of private road transport and society's current obsession with the private motor vehicle. In Wolf's opinion, the emergence and development of the private motor car has led to a deterioration in transport services for the majority of the population.

For example, he cites the involvement of the automobile manufacturing companies in the systematic destruction of tram systems in North America and Europe in the 1950s as proof of the fact that the car society is in fact a society which provides reduced mobility for those without car. Even in the most developed nations of Europe and North

America, car ownership is still limited to a (very large) minority, and not a majority of the general public.

Source: reviewed by Richard Flint, Communications Secretary of the International Transport Workers Federation, in *ITF News*, December 1996

Car Mania is an extensively updated and rewritten version of *Eisenbahn und Autobahn*. The English edition was published in 1996 by Pluto Press, 345 Archway Rd, London N6 5AA, fax +44 (181) 348 9133. Paperback £13.99, hardback £40

The sans papiers: a woman draws the first lessons

by Madjiguene Cisse

This is a remarkable account of the new movement of undocumented asylum seekers and immigrants in France, by their major spokeswoman, who comes from Senegal. In August 1996, the *Sans-Papiers* became internationally known when 300 undocumented African women, children and men were violently evicted by police from the St Bernard Church in Paris, where they had taken sanctuary for several months [see *IV* #281, October 1996].

Since then, the *Sans-Papiers* of St Bernard have organised several occupations, gone on hunger strikes and toured France in a caravan to mobilise support against deportations. They demand papers for all, an end to detention and deportation, the return of all deportees, and the repeal of all immigration laws.

Their movement has spread throughout France and beyond. Thousands of *Sans-Papiers* from 40 different nationalities have joined over 24 collectives across France. Following their example, immigrants in Italy and Spain have also occupied churches.

Cisse describes who the *Sans-Papiers* are, and how they have organised and kept control of their movement, imposing their autonomy from voluntary sector organisations while bringing together wide-ranging support from anti-racist, women's and community groups, churches, trade unions and celebrities.

women's energy and initiative

This pamphlet also highlights how dependent the *Sans-Papiers* movement has been for its survival and direction on African women taking their autonomy from the men. "Every time the battle lost momentum", she writes, "women met and found initiatives to restart it." Cisse traces the autonomy of the *Sans-Papiers* women to its roots in the work African women do, on which the survival of families and communities depend, and which has been crucial to the liberation movements in their countries of origin.

She also spells out why people emigrate: the exploitative economic and political relationship France has imposed on the people in its ex-colonies with the help of African governments.

Madjiguene Cisse's pamphlet is a tremendously exciting and uplifting introduction to the movement that has been rocking France, gathering support and giving leader-

ship for the opposition to the immigration laws of Fortress Europe, as well as to the new rise in fascism.

This pamphlet is a much needed weapon for everyone in the anti-deportation, anti-detention and anti-racist movements as we move into the 21st century. The translation is excellent.

Available from: Black women for wages for housework, Crossroads Women's Centre, PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU, Tel: 0171 482 2496, Fax: 0171 209 4761

The Ballad of the Sans-Papiers

This 90-minute video documentary with English sub-titles records the *Sans-Papiers'* famous church occupations and other actions, [see IV#281, October 1996] and includes news footage and interviews with the women and men who took part. The video is currently touring Britain as a fund-raiser for the *Sans-Papiers* International Petition.

For more information, check out the 'Sans-papiers' multi-lingual Website (French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Wolof and Saninke) at bok.net/pajot

conference reports

USA: Labour's Critical Voices

by David Finkel

It wasn't exactly the norm for a U.S. labour gathering: Nearly a thousand convention participants — led by strike activists from the Detroit newspaper unions — left the hall and marched through the city's downtown restaurant district, chanting support for local newspaper workers' 20-month struggle for justice and decent union contracts.

This wasn't a trade union convention, but rather a biannual conference sponsored by the activist newsletter *Labor Notes*. The event, held in Detroit on April 18-20, was the ninth such conference since the publication's founding in 1979. Long-time participants recall how miraculous it seemed when nearly 600 attended the first conference in 1981, under the banner of "putting the movement back in the labour movement." By 1997 the conference has doubled in size, and become a small but significant institution as a gathering place for a mix of labour activists.

Labor Notes conferences do not adopt resolutions. Instead, they offer a forum for critical analysis of the labour movement's direction; a wide assortment of workshops on everything from organising skills to racism, health care, welfare reform and cross-border solidarity; and opportunities for workers from specific unions to exchange experiences and create networks to dynamise or reform their union. Those in attendance included activist labour officials and staff as well as issue-oriented groups and a variety of labour radicals.

Participants came from ninety different unions, and from eleven countries—including Korea, Japan, Germany, France, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Argentina and the Canadian state. The *Labor Notes* conference was distinctive in other respects as well. No top-level AFL-CIO officials addressed the meeting, but the opening evening was dedicated to a panel debate and audience discussion assessing "the first year of the new AFL-CIO leadership."

Activists agree that the AFL-CIO's new emphasis on organising, after decades of a declining percentage of union membership, is a welcome development. They also note two severe deficiencies, however: the often

debilitating absence of union democracy and membership mobilisation, and the AFL-CIO's continuing effort to create "partnership" with the corporations. Indeed, such "joint" union-management schemes as "Quality of Work Life" and "Team Concept" have been the targets of critical analysis in books and articles produced by *Labor Notes* for over a decade.

The conference also heard a welcoming address, not from some bourgeois politician cultivating a friend-of-labour image, but from Kate DeSmet, a leader of the newspaper strikers and their action arm "Shutdown Motown."

"This is no time for obituaries on our struggle in Detroit," DeSmet stated, emphasising that supporters of the long and bitter strike must not fall victim to the view that the fight has ended in defeat. (Two thousand strikers have been locked out by the Detroit newspapers after the six striking unions offered an unconditional return to work. The unions are seeking a court injunction, under terms of U.S. labour law, to force the papers to re-hire all the strikers.)

Action Motown '97!

DeSmet and other newspaper strike activists urged conference participants to organise their fellow unionists for a return to Detroit on June 20-21, the dates set by the national AFL-CIO leadership for "Action! Motown '97," a mobilisation to show support for the newspaper workers and others who face the loss of their jobs to "permanent replacement workers" (strike-breakers).

For many labour activists, the June 20-21 mobilisation symbolises the positive, though limited, changes taking place in the structures of the union movement. The new leadership headed by AFL-CIO president John Sweeney did call the action — however belatedly — a step that probably would never have been taken under the former regime of Lane Kirkland.

Yet this leadership called for the action only after months of pressure from rank-and-file lobbying by the newspaper strikers and their supporters, and then after the striking unions had made the offer to return to work. Some of the militants regard the AFL-CIO's call for June 20-21 as a "consolation prize" in exchange for the unpopular return-to-work offer—but they are determined to make the most of the opportunity for a mass mobilisation.

Newspaper union activists who attended the *Labor Notes* conference viewed it as an important opportunity to spread the word among the activists who have the energy, commitment and connections to build the June action. A Network and Information Centre

In many other countries, the activists who attend the conferences and weekend

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coming events

schools organised by **Labor Notes**, and read the books it publishes, might be connected through some kind of political network, perhaps as a left-socialist group or the left wing of a social-democratic party. (Though even where labour parties exist, worker activists in this interconnected global economy are finding that they also need to link up through specialised organisations as the Transnational Information Exchange.)

Left labour projects

In the United States, where the labour bureaucracy remains loyal to the Democratic Party and the left is unorganised, the vacuum of co-ordination is even more complete. In this context, a project like **Labor Notes** offers an invaluable centre for exchanging ideas and experiences. Indeed, the newsletter came into existence because a current of activists with experience both as socialists and rank-and-file organisers recognised the possibility of filling this need.

Last year a new party came into existence, the Labor Party, organised under the auspices of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers and also sponsored by three other unions. Still in formation, this new party attracts the enthusiastic hope of labour radicals. Its leading organiser, Tony Mazzocchi of OCAW, has been a featured speaker at several **Labor Notes** conferences. Not surprisingly, the conference workshop on "The Labor Party: Prospects for the Future" was one of the best-attended at the **Labor Notes** conference.

The conference also heard inspirational addresses from such leaders as Horacio Romo of the Electrical Workers Union of Mexico and Marta Ojeda of the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras; Ken Paff of Teamsters for a Democratic Union; Baldemar Velasquez of the Farm Labor Organising Committee; and Ron Daniels of the Centre for Constitutional Rights and Campaign for a New Tomorrow.

The sentiment prevailing at this conference was one of cautious optimism that the U.S. labour movement, a "sleeping giant" for so long that many feared it was permanently comatose, is stirring — and not a moment too soon. The newspaper strikers who led the participants through the streets of downtown Detroit expressed the hopes of many with their closing chant: "We'll Be Back! We'll Be Back!" ★

(**Labor Notes**' forthcoming pamphlet on union democracy and why it matters, by Martha Gruelle and Mike Parker, will be available later this year. For information on subscriptions and books, write **Labor Notes**, 7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit MI 48210, USA. Telephone (313)842-6262, email labornotes@igc.apc.org)

[For more information about the Action! Motown '97 demonstration sponsored by the AFL-CIO for Detroit on June 20-21 e-mail ActMotown@aol.com Contact the Action Coalition of Strikers and Supporters (ACOSS) at 313-961-4480 or call the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO Hotline at 888-97MOTOWN.] May 1, 1997

Marxist answers to "globalisation"

(Marxistische Antworten auf die "Globalisierung") 21.-28.June, Vienna, Austria.

Contact: Sozialistische Alternative, Postfach 395, A-1070 Vienna, Austria Tel: 0043-1-5233578 Fax: 0043-1-5265083-4 or VSP, Dasselstr. 75-77, D-50674 Cologne, Germany Tel: 0049-221-9231196 Fax: 0049-221-9231197 E-Mail: <szoz@link-lev.dinoco.de>

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Raise your banners '97

31 Oct.-2 Nov. 1997, Sheffield, England

Following the enormous success of the '95 festival, plans are under way for a bigger, better, even more exciting celebration of political music.

Invitations have gone out to some of the best known British and international names in political music. An extensive programme of films, drama, performance poetry, workshops, children's events, exhibitions and discussions will complement the more than 20 concerts which are planned for city centre venues, large and small.

To receive a programme send a SAE to the Festival Office, RYB, PO Box 44, Sheffield, S4 7RN

Labor links, capitalist contradictions: activism, socialism and the "new" labor movement

Solidarity summer school, July 31 - August 3, 1997, Chicago, Illinois

This summer school is primarily labor-focused, with workshops including: History of the Labor Movement • TDU and the New Teamsters • Student Labor Activism (SLACs/Grad Unions) • Living Wage Campaigns • Third Parties, Labor Parties • Worker's movements in Latin America • Racism in the Labor Movement • Globalization and Restructuring

Other workshops include: The Rise of the Radical Right • Fighting for Environmental Justice • Women in the Global Economy • Music and Politics

Schedule and cost: Begins at noon on Thursday, July 31st and ends on Sunday afternoon, August 3rd. North Park College is centrally located in Chicago and accessible by public transportation. The cost for room and board per day is about \$35. A very limited amount of non-dorm housing is available. To reserve your place, send \$20 for registration. To Solidarity, 7012 Michigan Ave. Detroit, MI 48210, USA. E-mail: solidarity@igc.apc.org • Fax +1 (313) 841-8884 • Tel.+1 (313) 841-0160

Summit of the future

Wednesday, June 11-Friday June 13.

A three-day youth-conference in Eindhoven (Netherlands) organised by the Jongerenbond, Rebel and ASJV. presentations include: Europe in a globalising world, Robert Went • Overcoming national-populist xenophobia, racism and neo-fascism, Patrick van der Voort ("Unified against Racism" committee) • Restoring social protection, Jan de Rijk (board member of the Dutch Union in the Food sector) • European unification and the Third World, Wim Baltussen (Dutch SGS-Third World Solidarity group).

Participation costs 50 guilders. Information and registration: tel. +31.40.246 44 03

well read



Research in Critical Marxist Theory

Historical Materialism is a new US journal which seeks to play a part in the recovery and renewal of the critical and explanatory potential of classical Marxism. It will provide a forum for:

- The re-appropriation and refinement of the classical Marxist tradition for emancipatory purposes.
- A genuine and open dialogue between individuals working in different traditions of Marxism.
- Interdisciplinary debate and communication on an international scale between graduates, researchers and academics.

Historical Materialism wishes to encourage the new generation of Marxists. The advisory editors who support the project and will actively engage with this emergent intellectual community include Elmar Altvater, Robert Brenner, Terry Eagleton, Bob Fine, Istvan Meszaros, Tony Smith and Ellen Meiksins Wood.

The first issue will appear in Summer 1997, including • Ellen Meiksins Wood

'The Non-History of Capitalism' • Colin Barker 'Reflections on Two Books by Ellen Wood' • Esther Leslie 'Woman & Ware, Craving & Corpse in Benjamin's Arcade Project' • and John Weeks 'The Law of Value and the Analysis of Underdevelopment.'

For annual subscription (two issues, Britain 10 GBP, overseas 25 USD, institutions 30 GBP/60 USD) send cheque or international money order payable to **Historical Materialism** to 5 Gunton Road, London E5 9JT, UK. E-mail: SB264@CAM.AC.UK

UNRWA - Between Refugee Aid and Power Politics

A critical review of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees: its' history, programmes, facts, figures, budget, and practice in the post Oslo Era. Includes recommendations in support of UNRWA and refugee rights

Published as Memorandum 3/97 of the Alternative Information Center's Project for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights. Viewable at <http://aic.netgate.net>

Order from The Alternative Information Center, PO Box 31417, Jerusalem. (36 pages, English or Arabic, US \$7) Tel: +972-2-241159, 740585, Fax: 253151 E-Mail: aicmail@trendline.co.il

Socialistisk Information

May 1997 issue (in Danish) includes: Zaire — The dictatorship, the West and the rebels • Albania (editorial): Occupation or liberation? • (Soeren Soendergaard) • The road to "Social Europe": dialogue or euro-strike? • Denmark: Employers' backward view on education • Denmark: "Protected jobs", paying the private sector to be socially responsible • Legislation on corporal punishment up for debate • Globalization, EU and our answers (interview with Robert Went) • May fund drive for the Fourth International • SAP Easter Seminar

Monthly magazine of the Socialistisk Arbejderparti, Danish section of the Fourth International.

Contact: Box 547, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark. eMail socinf@inet.uni-c.dk

Inprekorr

The May issue (#307) of our German-language sister publication includes a theoretical supplement on "Red"-green reform alternatives (by Manuel Kellner) and a report on the 9th Conference of the Arbeitskreises Kritischer MarxistInnen (by Manfred Behrend) • Plus articles from **International Viewpoint**

Contact: Verlag Neuer Kurs, Dasselstr. 75-77, D-50674 Köln. Price: 5 DM (trial sub. 3 months for 10 DM. One year 50 DM. E-Mail: inprekorr@oln.comlink.apc.org. Articles are also available through CL-Datennetz: /CL/MAGAZINE/INPREKORR.



Transformation and regroupment

The collapse of Stalinism and the continuing capitalist crisis has contradictory effects. Myths and illusions connected to the restoration of capitalism in the post-Stalinist societies have dissipated, faced with the actually existing market economy. But reactions to the socio-economic crisis all too often take the form of reactionary tendencies of an ethnic, nationalist, racial or religious character. Hence the urgent need to rebuild a world-wide movement of anti-capitalist struggle, taking account of the recomposition of the workers' movement which is underway as a result of the double failure of social democracy and Stalinism.

Regroupments of forces determined to learn the lessons of the historical abomination that was Stalinism and to continue, against the winds and the tides, to fight against capitalism are being realised in a number of countries.

In all the countries where such possibilities exist, the organisations of the Fourth International are ready to be part of the re-groupment process. We consider this as an important step towards the recomposition of the anti-capitalist left on a world scale. At the international level, the Fourth International is an active participant in re-groupment, bringing with it the advantages of a long tradition of combat against capitalism and Stalinism.

★
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International Viewpoint

Our own website is hosted by the Swedish newspaper **Internationalen**. www.internationalen.se/sp/ivp.htm

Our English listserv provides the full contents of this magazine, and articles from our associated publications.

>> 100666.1443@compuserve.com

Cyber Picket Line

What claims to be "the world's biggest Internet directory of trade union web sites" was unveiled on May 1st. It boasts links to over 1000 trade union and trade union-related sites, "ranging from South African miners to Brazilian dockers; from council shop stewards in Sheffield to journalists in Hong Kong; from Croatian rail workers to Canadian loggers."

"It is now possible for rank and file stewards and branch activists to have access to the sort of information resource and research capacity that

was previously only available to senior full time officers," says Steve Davies, the web site co-ordinator. "The Internet is potentially one of the most powerful and democratic weapons at the disposal of the labour movement."

www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/union/

South Africa

The Capetown-based Alternative Information And Development Centre <aidc@iafrica.com> is now on-line at <http://aidc.org.za>

Brazilian union left

The Alternativa Sindical Socialista, a left-wing current in the CUT trade union confederation is now on-line, at <alternativa@base.com.br>. The Alternativa Sindical Socialista is supported by Democracia Socialista (DS), the current in the Workers Party (PT) which identifies with the Fourth International.

www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1765/