

international

# VIEWPOINT

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## Ernest Mandel 1923-1995

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# Free these Vietnamese democrats!

On 14 June 1995 Vietnamese authorities in Hanoi arrested Hoang Minh Chinh for the third time since 1974. A veteran of the Vietnamese revolution, Hoang (75) is accused of "propaganda against the socialist regime". The same charge has been made against Do Trung Hieu (57), arrested in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) the same day.

Hoang has already spent 11 years in prison and 9 more under tight parole as a result of his 'thought crime'.

We the undersigned, who have always acted in solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence, demand the immediate liberation of these two prisoners. All they have done is express their ideas in public.

International protest secured the release of the dissident novelist Duong Thu Huong in 1991. It will win the release of Hoang Minh Chinh and Do Trung Hieu in 1995!

Paris, 10 July 1995

Signatures and contributions to the solidarity campaign can be sent to Dr Jean-Michel Krivine, 97 rue de Sannois, 95120 Paris, France. Make cheques out to FORUM — Hoang Minh Chinh campaign

[Signatures so far include HA Duong Tuong, HOANG Khoa Khoi, Jean-Michel KRIVINE, Yves LACOSTE, Gilles PERAULT, Madeleine REBERIOUX, Laurant SCHWARTZ, Léon SCHWARTZENBERG, and Pierre VIDAL-NAQUET].

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## *Stop the French nuclear tests in the Pacific!*

The campaign against the series of test explosions planned for September continues to grow. Jean-Louis Michel of the French weekly *Rouge* comments from "the belly of the beast" on the character of this new movement.

**THE CAMPAIGN** is characterised by an original combination of different kinds of action. This is its strength. Mass movements here, spectacular "happenings" there, economic and institutional pressures elsewhere.

The Pacific is, obviously, host to the strongest and most significant articulation of forces. The initial focus was the departure of [the Greenpeace ship] *Rainbow Warrior II* from Papeete and its return after being boarded by French marines. The current focus is around the Peace Flotilla. But wherever you look spectacular initiatives are developing in parallel, controlled directly by those involved. There is both an unitary mass movement and an intense lobbying activity directed at parliamentary and governmental bodies. The result is an effervescence of activities,

competing to affirm an authentic movement of public opinion. This opinion necessarily expresses itself in very diverse ways. Which means every political and cultural current, every individual can easily find a place.

Another strong point of this movement is the way it permits the co-existence and interaction of what were originally quite separate preoccupations. The anti-missile campaigns of the 1980s managed (not without difficulty) to find a point of balance between the pacifist aspirations of a section of young people, and an anti-austerity, anti-cuts and anti-American mobilisation of the traditional political forces. The current campaign has three sources

★ Pacifism. No longer essentially the preoccupation of young people, pacifism is re-emerging as a reaction of those "from below" to their discredited governments and the discredited United Nations. After Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, the pacifist current can only grow in numbers.

★ Ecology. Present everywhere in the movement, but in very different intensities and forms. Its growing stronger can be seen in the way cold scientific argument and boycott strategies are becoming central to the campaign. These two tactics are being borrowed from the environmental struggles of recent years.

★ Democracy. The democratic aspect was already present in the [French] anti-nuclear mobilisations of 1982-3. But this time round democratic demands have appeared as the horizon with which the French government cannot tamper. The pro-independence currents in the Pacific colonies (Polynesia and Kanaky/New Caledonia) and the governments of the Pacific Forum countries have placed democratic demands at the centre of their demands. How else could it be? How to evade the conclusion that the populations most directly concerned should have their say about any tests planned for their territory and region. In the current context, the "subversive" content of these democratic demands is very real.

If it continues to insist on the tests, the French government will expose itself to a series of considerable risks. The anti-bomb campaigns will grow in intensity throughout any series of tests. This will create an international climate which the government will not be able to ignore indefinitely. Government meetings, cultural and sporting events, each will be seized as a moment to accuse the Chirac government.

The industrial and commercial milieu is increasingly concerned about the boycott of French products and companies under way in several countries. And on the home front, each budget cut demonstrates the waste represented by investment in the bomb and nuclear tests, at a time when austerity is supposedly the order of the day.

All this leaves little room for manoeuvre for the French government: give way quickly in the face of the wave of protests, or continue being obstinate, and go down to a humiliating defeat in a few months from now.

*This piece forms a fragment of a longer article appearing in this month's edition of Inprecor, our sister publication in French. For a full version of the article, contact us at the address on page 2.*



## New Zealand

Keith Locke, foreign affairs spokesperson for the New Zealand Alliance, told *Green Left Weekly* that the Alliance "supported calling an urgent meeting of the South Pacific Forum countries to co-ordinate a response to end all military ties with the French". The recent cross-Tasman exercises involving the Australian navy, four French and six NZ navy ships was evidence of expanding military relations that ought to be cancelled, he said.

Apart from supporting the Rainbow Warrior, the Alliance has also been involved in various protests, including organising one in Palmerston North outside the rugby test between NZ and France on June 16. "With a lot of working class support, we are trying to make an appeal to French workers and link up with protests there."

The national trade union federation is backing a campaign to boycott French goods and companies.

## Background

French nuclear testing in the Pacific goes back a long way. Between 1960 and 1989, France staged 184 nuclear tests. Prior to 1966, when testing in the Pacific began, France used another of its former colonies, Algeria, to stage 17 tests - four atmospheric and 13 underground blasts.

From 1966 France moved its tests to the Pacific, conducting 44 atmospheric tests over Moruroa and Fangataufa Atolls before international pressure forced an end to the blasts. Part of the success of that campaign was due to the New Zealand government's dispatch of a frigate to Moruroa, with support from the Australian government which sent a ship to refuel it.

From 1974, French tests were conducted underground at both Moruroa and Fangataufa. The last test took place in October 1991 before the government announced, in April 1992, that it was joining the unilateral Soviet moratorium begun in the mid 1980s. Altogether 123 underground tests has been carried out, almost all at Moruroa which, by 1989, had been the site of 118 underground blasts.

French governments have not only refused to take responsibility for the environment and health consequences of the underground tests, they have actively tried to obstruct scientific research into the effects of radioactive contamination.

Source: *Green Left Weekly*, 21 June 1995

# Anti-nuclear protest in the Pacific

## The left response

### Fiji

Lopeti Senituli, director of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) in Fiji, has called on all non-governmental organisations to join in the campaign. He wants the immediate suspension of the French government's partner status in the South Pacific Forum. By doing so, "the Pacific governments will prove to France and the rest of the world that they mean business when they oppose French nuclear testing in the South Pacific Forum's annual communiqué".

He urged Pacific Island countries to boycott the South Pacific games scheduled for August in the capital of French Polynesia, Papeete. The boycott is being supported by the indigenous Māohi people of French Polynesia. "I have spoken to Oscar Temaru, the leader of the largest pro-independence and anti-nuclear political party, who is also mayor of Faa, the largest city in French Polynesia and he has expressed their total support for the boycott."

The PCRC, which is the secretariat of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement, wants to be kept in touch with regional campaign actions. It can be contacted on (+679) 304 649, fax (+679) 304 755.

### Australia

The main enemy is always the one at home, and the Australian uranium mining programme has come in for a thoroughly justified bad press. Australian uranium may well end up in the French weapons program, says Max Lane, Democratic Socialist Party senate candidate in New South Wales (NSW). It may also be sold to Indonesia and other countries in the region. "The Keating government is also firmly linked into the nuclear cycle through its hosting of US military bases which are key communications installations for the targeting of nuclear and other weapons". Western Australia Greens (WA Greens) Senator, Dee Margetts agrees. "The community must demand that the Australian government not sell our uranium stockpile to France when it is being made into nuclear bombs and tested in our region!"

Dockers are refusing to unload French ships, postal workers have refused to handle French embassy mail, and some French planes have been boycotted by airport workers

(based on report in *Green Left Weekly*)



President Chirac's choice: the bomb or the putsch?  
The tattoo on the soldier's arm refers to many career soldiers' support for the National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen

### Kanaky

As in Polynesia, the independence movement in this French colony ("New Caledonia") refuses to separate the nuclear issue from the other institutional, political and economic effects of French colonial government. "The Kanaks and other peoples of Oceania experience this decision as a pointless provocation," says Paul Néaoutine, President of the FLNKS (National Liberation Front for a Socialist Kanaky). "This will impact on the relations of our territories with the neighbouring countries"

# China

## UN Conference on Women

In September 1995, in Beijing, the fourth UN world conference on women will take place. It was preceded by conferences of the different "economic regions" of the UN. As has become usual, an NGO conference will take place parallel to the official one. During the first three conferences, this type of forum brought together many women. Will this be the same this time, and what can be expected?

by Marie-Annick Vigan  
*Cahiers du Féminisme, Summer 1995*

**THE FIRST UN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN** took place in Mexico, during the international year of the women, in 1975. This allowed the adoption, in 1979, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: of the 180 members of the United Nations, 138 are now signatories. The following conferences emphasised more strongly education, work, and health (in Copenhagen), promotion, liberation, and the use of their human rights (in Nairobi). This time the objectives defined are the following: to adopt a platform for action centred on some major problems that delay the promotion of women in the world: education, health, economic, social, and political life, women's image in the media, elimination of violence against them. The representatives of the whole world, from September 4 to 15, will attempt to agree on a platform of action in favour of the promotion of women, under the motto "Equality, Development, and Peace". In the light of the situation of women 20 years after the first conference, one can only be very doubtful of such top-level summits. Ms. Mongella, secretary-general of the conference, has herself warned against a platform of action that would be a fictitious victory for women, if the financial means and the appropriate mechanisms were not set up for its implementation: "If the institutions... are not adopted and do not establish a mode of implementation, it will have no result. In institutional terms, there has been almost no follow-up to the Nairobi conference and... a lot of the lack of progress

comes from there." Today, more than ever, it is clear that women are a political, economic, and ideological issue, and "the interest of the state" come first. For France, for instance, a co-ordination mission has been set up in December 1993. Led by Hélène Gisserot, a national committee including representatives of the authorities, of federations of women's associations, of elected politicians, and of "experts" of various backgrounds, has drawn up a report: *Les Femmes en France (Women in France) 1985 - 1995*, addressed to the United Nations in July 1994. Though the description of the current situation of women is very interesting, the solutions suggested are a reflection of those proposed by the French government (see, in this issue, the article on the official report). They cannot satisfy us.

**OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS**, religious propaganda has intensified, and many states with religious constitutions lead real lobby work against women. The pope and the imams of various affiliations are trying, often with success, to impose a reactionary discourse. Remember that the Vatican is often, officially, only an observer at such meetings, but that it does not abstain from exerting strong pressures, as we saw at the World Conference on Population in Cairo.

Four regional conferences were held to prepare the conference in Beijing, followed by a synthesis meeting in New York, in April 1995. The four regions are Asia-Pacific,

Latin America and Middle-East, Africa, and Europe. The UN divisions may seem comical, when one knows that Europe includes both eastern Europe and north America (United States and Canada). The European conference was held in Vienna in October 1994. The French delegation was composed of H elene Giserot and her administrative workers, four representatives of the federations of women's associations, the CLEF (Co-ordination of the European Women's Lobby), where some feminists gather but is dominated by the women's associations, the CNFF (National Council of French Women), an old organisation dating to the turn of the century, the CNIDFF (National Centre for Information and Documentation of Women and Families), a governmental institution, not particularly active in the defence of women's rights. In short, the women's representation was a reflection of what one could expect from the Balladur government, then in power. Some NGOs are entitled to attend governmental meetings, in France, for instance, the Alliance of Women for Democracy or Young Women (originally Protestant organisation). We already know that the few advances made in the writing of the final texts in Vienna were erased in New York. Decisions must be reached unanimously, which allowed the representative of Malta to put her veto on the proposition of a Swiss group to include the right to abortion as a fundamental human right. Many official organisation seem not to be willing to go beyond the text adopted in Cairo on population, according to which "the necessity of planing is part of the control of demography, an essential part of development". The final text, officially presented in Beijing, is not available to date; everything indicates that it will really be minimalist.

### NGO forum: a platform for feminists?

Can the NGO fora that precede all these conferences make up for these deficiencies, stand up to these decisions that are contrary to the interests of the majority of women? The majority of NGOs are not feminist organisations, some are even openly reactionary. It seems that the presence of religious fundamentalists (particularly in Latin America) has become stronger in some of these associations. However, the role of NGOs has grown in the last years, and the debate on their utility should be deepened. The non-governmental aspect of these organisations can be attacked, when one knows that 40 percent of the income of the rich country NGOs come from public subsidies. The ties with local or donating governments cannot be ignored. Many contradictions face them on political grounds, especially as far as women's status is concerned; poverty, a curse for women, is often the result of a political process, so the question arises for NGOs: should one only alleviate pain or should one actively participate in the transformation of society, should one select the medium term or the immediate for one's actions? The organisations of the South and the North are often very different. Perhaps the consequences of such conferences are greater for the developing countries. All this makes it possible to say that it is definitely interesting to have a confrontation with the representatives of these organisations that act in the field, but that we should not have any illusions about the possibilities of co-ordinated action on the scale of continents, in the context of a forum under the banner of the UN. Real political disagreements divide these organisations.

The Europe conference shows that the limits are quickly attained. All organisations that had the means to pay for the trip could participate, and only a few eastern European orga-

nisations had their costs refunded. Therefore, Vienna hosted groups that were more feminine than feminist, not very militant, and even less involved in the great struggles. One can imagine that in other, poorer regions, the selection by resources is stronger yet. Also, the feminists imagined organising a "train for Beijing", taking on more women in each station. The idea is seductive, but who can be away for so long, and who can afford such a trip? The supremacy of Anglo-Saxon and American organisations was also revealed in the choice of languages in the commissions: English, which will cause the protest of the Spanish participants in the plenary sessions. In this kind of forum, one finds the near-professional activists of the large American NGOs. Contradictions are nonetheless expressed. For instance, in the abortion workshop, the friends from CADAC (Co-ordination for the Right to Abortion and Contraception) had to fight hard to obtain the right to free abortion, as this is not very compatible with the American health system. The difficulty, for the 1,500 participants spread out among the many workshops, to possess a global vision and to control the final text makes the democratic process unpredictable, with the experienced ones basically making the decisions. One may wonder whether the NGO forum is not only there to channel and eliminate the demands that are too disturbing.

### Beijing: a disputable and disputed location

Lastly, a new problem related to the choice of the country by the UN authorities has recently arisen. The government of Beijing is definitely very glad to benefit from the political and economic externalities of such an international conference, but is not willing to make the necessary commitments. The NGO forum is to be held at more than 60 km from Beijing, with almost no possibility of encountering the local women's organisation, with very little contact with the outside world. Less than 50 NGOs will be allowed, which strongly limits the possible exchanges. Already, many visas have been refused. Instead of the 30,000 women initially expected, it seems more likely that China will accept the entry of only 1,700. Straightforward bans await the Tibetan and Taiwanese organisations, as well as the lesbian organisations. It is now clear that feminists will be a minority in Beijing, even at the NGO conference.

Other voices and opinions have to be expressed. Amnesty International has published a report on the plight of women in 75 countries, pointing to three situations that put them particularly in danger: wars and armed conflicts, repression of their militant activities, and sexist discrimination. Amnesty intends to collaborate with — independent — human rights organisations that have carried out grassroots activities. It would perhaps be more effective for feminists to all express their opinions similarly independently. It is utopian to imagine that feminist organisations can, on their own, organise such a meeting, but each country should make use of the media echo that such a conference will definitely have. To use the institutions without be absorbed is always a difficult project.



# Turkey

## Fundamentalists in local government

In Turkey, 1994 was unquestionably the year of the Islamic fundamentalist Refah (Prosperity) Party. Ever since its victory in the municipal elections of 27 March 1994, Refah's management of local government, and the spectre of a seizure of power by the party, has been at the centre of public debates.

by Erdal Tan  
Istanbul, 17 June 1995

**IN FACT**, the score obtained by Refah should be put in context, as much in terms of its breadth (19% on a national scale) as in terms of its electoral progression (an increase of 4% in relation to the legislative elections of 1991). But the unanticipated swing to Refah in Ankara and Istanbul, which gave the fundamentalists control of the principal cities of the country, amplified the scope of their victory. Certainly, even there, it should be stressed that in Turkey the mayors are elected by a direct vote in a single round. The division of the traditional bourgeois parties and the social democrats allowed Refah to carry all before it in these two cities with scores of 25% and 27% respectively.

The progress of the fundamentalists can be explained partially by the impact of Refah on the Kurdish electorate, both in the Kurdish region of the south east and in the popular suburbs of the big western cities. Many Kurds who had voted for the left in 1991 have turned their backs on social democracy because of its collaboration with the repressive policy of the government. With the Kurdish nationalist current (DEP/HADEP) having boycotted the elections, they preferred to vote for the RP, which has always had a considerable weight in the Kurdish electorate and which seems to them to be the party most radically opposed to the regime. Moreover, the majority of Refah vote is a protest vote. Barely 1/3 of the electors voted for it because of its ideology and its Islamic programme. The social base of Refah is heterogeneous; conservative small traders and semi-wholesalers, popular layers of rural origin recently urbanised and living in the poor suburbs, sectors of the middle bourgeoisie linked to Saudi capital, some sectors of radical Islamic militants among the youth and the ultra-conservative layers of the small and middle provincial bourgeoisie. The exercise of municipal power by Refah has then certainly given it the means to extend its influence, but has also brought its internal contradictions to the fore.

Refah adopted a rather low profile in the first months of its municipal reign, but subsequently launched an aggressive ideological offensive, employing a strategy of tension. Several factors explain this. In reality, Refah has no serious social and economic programme to govern these modern cities of several million inhabitants, and still less a complex and industrialised country like Turkey. Having nothing to offer except demagogy on the defects and shortcomings of the system, it was inevitable that it would shift the debate onto the ideological plane. It is on the terrain of religion, culture and lifestyles that it has concentrated its offensive.

**DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN**, Refah wanted to "modernise" its profile so as to extend its appeal and reach new, less Islamicised, layers breaking with the traditional parties: hence the demagogy around its principle slogan, "the just order", which promised above all social justice. But this new look did not correspond to the reality of Refah, or in any case not to that of the old guard grouped around party president Erbakan. The party's attempt to appear more open and tolerant, impelled by its "modernist renovating" current, carried within itself a mortal contradiction. The muting of the Islamic identity was galling to the militants and traditional electors of the party. Moreover, even the party's young up and coming generation (the intermediate cadres), while taking on a more modernist aspect, are no less faithful to the Islamic identity, which is the cement of the movement. A reorientation became inevitable, so as to avoid being "overtaken from the right" by the more radical Islamic formations. Moreover, once Refah had arrived in municipal power, it was necessary to satisfy the aspirations of the traditional electorate and show that "something had changed". Finally, the only way to make the new electorate faithful to Refah was also to "Islamicise" it.

/continued on page 34



Ernest MANDEL  
1923-1995

## Our comrade Ernest Mandel

*As most of our readers already know, Ernest Mandel died on 20 July 1995. International Viewpoint presents here a modest and partial introduction to the life and work of this great revolutionary thinker, the main founder of our magazine, and its most prestigious collaborator.*

*In this dossier, François Vercammen and Salah Jaber, two of our regular collaborators, outline Ernest's extraordinary life and considerable written legacy. We also reproduce the obituaries published by the Frankfurter Rundschau (Germany), The Guardian (Great Britain), La Jornada (Mexico), Le Monde (France), El País (Spanish state), Le Soir (Belgium), and Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany). For reasons of space we are obviously unable to reproduce all the obituaries published in newspapers and magazines all round the world, some of international reputation, including The Times, The Times of India, The Independent, Der Spiegel, Die Tageszeitung, others of national or local importance. But all of them testify to the considerable notoriety of our comrade, to a fame which goes much wider than the workers' and revolutionary movements to which he never hid his allegiance.*

*The messages of sympathy from this last sphere are much too numerous to list, let alone reprint. But we were particularly touched by the messages printed in L'Unita, daily of the Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PDS, ex-Communist), Liberazione, the daily of the Communist Refoundation Party in Italy, Neues Deutschland, the publication linked to the German Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), and Economic and Political Weekly (Bombay, India). And by the messages sent to us by Militant Labour (Great Britain), Movement for Socialism (MAS, Argentina), Movement for the People's Participation (MPP, Uruguay), Movement ST-UIT (MST-UIT Argentina), Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, West Bank Occupied Territories), Socialist Unity Party (BSP, Turkey), Socialist Workers' Party (SWP, Great Britain), Workers Party (PT, Brazil), and Workers' Struggle (LO, France).*

*We warmly thank these comrades, as well as all those not cited here, especially all those comrades and partners with whom we work closely, and for whom Ernest's death was surely as painful as for us.*



**Ernest MANDEL**  
1923-1995

# Ernest MANDEL

## 1923-1995

*The main leader of the Fourth International during the post-war period has disappeared. An extremely creative Marxist theoretician, an unbeatable educator, a skilled orator and a tireless propagandist, Ernest always defined himself as a revolutionary militant in the workers' movement.*

*His deepest aspiration was to build and to lead — in the line of Lenin and Trotsky — an organisation, the Fourth International. And to make this organisation match up to the political and organisational tasks of the world socialist revolution.*

*By François Vercammen*

*Leader of the Belgian Socialist Workers Party (SAP/POS) and the Fourth International  
Brussels, August 1995*

**ERNEST MANDEL** was born in April 1923, the year which terminated in the irrevocable defeat of the revolutionary period in Germany. His German Jewish parents were already living in Antwerp, Belgium, but had returned to Frankfurt, Germany for the birth. Henri Mandel had fled Germany for Holland rather than serve in the 1914 war. He returned to Germany when the Kaiser (emperor) was deposed in November 1918. There he worked in the Berlin office of the Soviet Press Agency, newly created by the Bolshevik government. A member of the Communist Party of Germany, he became friends with Karl Radek, Lenin and Trotsky's ambassador to the German revolution. Shocked by the January 1919 assassination of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, Henri left Germany again, this time settling in Belgium.

The young Ernest lived through years of economic crisis and the threat of war. The misery of his working class environment, and his family's communist, revolutionary, anti-fascist and anti-Stalinist tradition led him at a young age to choose the camp of the working class and the oppressed. His father explained the news to him

every day, and introduced him to the strong Marxist tradition of the German workers' movement.

**ANTWERP** in the 1930s was a turbulent place. The lively, active workers' movement contained political struggles between social democrats, communists and Trotskyists. In the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SRP/PSR)<sup>1</sup> Ernest frequented the most avant-garde workers, the (often self-taught) leaders of mass struggles. The SRP was by now also the home of the central core of the exiled German section of the Fourth International (FI). All this made the party a frenetic, internationalist microcosm: passionate discussions, preparation of a newspaper for smuggling into Germany, organisation of contacts with those comrades struggling against Hitler in the underground, exchange of letters with Trotsky himself. This was the period which sealed Ernest's insoluble bond to the German proletariat, his belief in the possibility of a socialist revolution in Germany, and his constant "dialogue" with Karl Marx and Rosa Luxembourg. His conviction in 1944-45 that the German workers' hour had come, just as in 1918-

23, and even his "crazy faith" in the possibility of socialist renewal in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) when the Stalinist bureaucracy trembled in 1989-90, all stems from this initial period.

**THIS INITIAL EXPERIENCE** also gave him temerity, in his darkest moments, when, during the Second World War, he distributed leaflets to the German soldiers occupying Belgium. Or, once he was caught, his ability to convince his German guards, who turned out to be former members of the forbidden Social Democratic and Communist Parties, to let him escape. Or again in 1945, when he was liberated from a concentration camp, and he overcame a thousand obstacles in order to return to Belgium and rejoin his comrades in the party.

These existential challenges of his militant youth were surely at the root of his famous optimism and his human warmth. Not a naive faith in the goodness of the human soul, nor in the ideas of the philosophers of the enlightenment, but faith in the possibility that humanity, the weak and the strong, the courageous and

the cowardly, the downtrodden and the rebellious, would be as ready as himself to struggle on under the hard social conditions of capitalism, and thus win political consciousness. And faith that the most motivated and best organised of us can "make miracles" if we manage to link ourselves to the working class and youth, and to build a revolutionary party up to the tasks it will surely face.

## RESISTANCE AND DEPORTATION

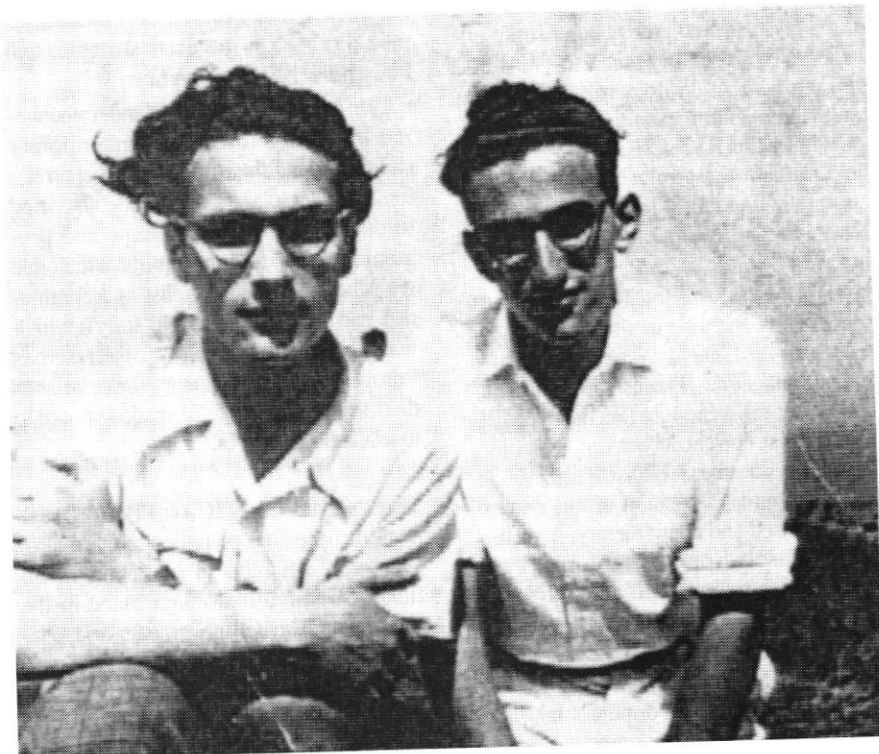
Ernest joined the SRP in 1939. The party had by this time become less marginal, and had participated in the general, sectoral and inter-professional strikes of 1933-36. There was a real implantation among the miners, metalworkers and dockers (longshoremen). But the party had suffered from the defeat of the workers in 1938, and was hit very hard by the repressive measures of May 1940 and June 1941.

The Belgian Trotskyist movement participated actively in the resistance to the occupation of the country by Hitler's armies<sup>2</sup>. The SRP paid heavily: many of its leaders and militants were to die in the Nazi camps across Germany. Ernest himself was arrested three times, the first time when he was caught distributing leaflets to German soldiers. He was imprisoned at St. Gilles, near Brussels, awaiting deportation to Auschwitz, but he managed to escape. He was arrested again in March 1944, after distributing leaflets at the Cockerill factories in Liege. This time he was sentenced to forced labour and deported

to a labour camp in Germany. He escaped, but was again arrested, and liberated from a second labour camp only in April 1945. He would certainly have perished if the concentration camp system had not been characterised by increasing bureaucratic confusion; his gaolers never realised that Ernest was Jewish.

The SRP had been decapitated at the beginning of the war. It was reorganised under the occupation by Abraham Léon. Born in 1918, Léon established clandestine structures, a communication system between cells and regions, and the publication of *La Voie de Lénine (Lenin's Path)* and the first resistance leaflets. He oriented the work of the Belgian section against the Nazi occupation along two fronts: internationalist and broad-based anti-fascist resistance, with the working class as the back-bone of the movement, and political work directed at the German soldiers, carried out in co-operation with our German comrades of the IKD<sup>3</sup>. The perspective, shared by the Fourth International as a whole, was to work for the transformation of the second world war into a socialist revolution across the European continent, as had been the context in 1914-18.

**ERNEST JOINED** the Central Committee of the party<sup>4</sup>. In November 1943 he participated for the first time in a meeting of the Fourth International: that of the newly-established Provisional European Secretariat. And in February 1944 he participated in the first European Conference



Ernest Mandel with his brother Michel after the Second World War

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of the FI. From that moment on, the twin pillars of his activity were the construction of a revolutionary party in Belgium and the construction of the Fourth International. He remained present in the leadership of both bodies for the rest of his life, although from the late 1960s onwards, his international activities became clearly dominant in his timetable.

From the outset, Ernest, together with Abraham Léon, proposed to the International the resolutions already adopted by the Belgian section on the problems of the day, including *The Tasks of the Fourth International in Europe* (February 1942), *The National Question* (dealing with the political consequences of the German domination over several of the other imperialist states) and a draft resolution on *The Revolutionary Liquidation of the Imperialist War* (clearly prepared together with Léon).

The European section of the leadership of the International thus began to rebuild itself<sup>5</sup>. But it was hit, again, by the arrests of Léon, Mandel, and the French leader Marcel Hic. Only Ernest would survive the camps.

In three years, Abraham Léon had transmitted his wide vision of society and the workers' movement, his militancy and his revolutionary optimism to his comrades of the underground struggle. Ernest's preface to the first edition of *Léon's Materialist Conception of the Jewish Question* (written in 1942) contained the martyred leader's credo: "Behind each reason for despair, search out the reason for hope".

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**IN 1943-44** Ernest and Abraham developed their analysis that the delay in the emergence of a revolutionary situation in Europe was not simply the result of the treason of the reformist leadership. They tried to explain why the Stalinists and Social Democrats were able to reinforce their political and organisational domination over a working class which shifted from passive to offensive behaviour, as was the case in Italy and France. They started from an analysis of the “general crisis of the workers’ movement”, where they identified an interaction between the role of the reformist leadership and the weakness of class consciousness. Ernest would refine and develop this dialectic interpretation throughout his life.

### **THE BELGIAN UNION MOVEMENT**

Ernest’s personal involvement in the Belgian workers’ movement, from his youth until 1965, was to prove an extremely fertile experience. It led to several of his principal political theses, shaped his particular conception of militant engagement, forged his remarkable capacity for theoretical, but rarely abstract, generalisation<sup>6</sup>, combined with a never-pedantic teaching style.

Isolated and marginalised by the early 1950s, the FI turned its forces towards “entryism” — participation in the mass reformist parties as an autonomous revolutionary current. Ernest joined the Belgian Socialist Party (BSP/PSB), and worked as a journalist for their daily newspa-

per *Le Peuple (The People)* in 1954-56. There he was ‘spotted’ by André Renard, Deputy General Secretary of the General Federation of Belgian Workers (ABVV/FGTB). Renard was an anarcho-syndicalist militant who had become a leader of the resistance, and the “idol” of the powerful left current in the trade unions. He integrated Ernest into the federation’s Research Commission, and found him a job as journalist at the metal-worker’s union daily newspaper *La Wallonie (Wallonia)*.

**THE TASK** was to reveal the power, the economic mechanisms and the real goals of the major capitalist groupings. Ernest also played a key role in the drafting of *Holdings and Economic Democracy*, one of the historical programmatic documents of the Belgian workers’ movement. He then helped draft the programme of structural reform which, despite all its ambiguities, was an opening towards an action programme aimed at a general strike.

Together with the other members of Renard’s team, Ernest tried to popularise the programme. The process familiarised him with the trade union movement from top to bottom, with its strengths and weaknesses, its day-to-day routine and its struggles, particularly the impressive general strike during the winter of 1960-61. He met with hundreds of delegates and militants, the cream of the vanguard at the time, and saw the conditions of exploited factory labour close up.

In Belgium this turn to entryism was the result of the party learning the lessons of the resistance and the general strike of 1950. We understood that it was in linking up with André Renard’s radicalised trade union, and in extending his influence within the BSP/PSB that we would help prepare the ground for a wide left current, which could be the trampoline for a Marxist-revolutionary party rooted in the working class.

During this period he also pushed successfully for the creation of two new weeklies, *La Gauche* (French, edited by Ernest) and *Links* (Flemish), which from 1956-7 onwards brought together a broad, pluralist left current of workers and intellectuals inside the Socialist Party. While the programmatic position of this current was confused and contradictory, it distinguished itself from the reformist right through a series of political and social struggles.

A remarkable success: we revolutionary Marxists had shown that, few in number, we could nevertheless take the political initiative on the grand scale, and place ourselves at the heart of the political

life of the workers’ movement. This lesson would not be lost. Ernest never stopped explaining to new comrades of the Belgian section the importance and validity of this strategy.

The 1960-61 strike and its immediate aftermath represented the high point of this wide anti-capitalist movement. After it was expelled from the Socialist Party in 1964-5, it gradually split into separate currents, which failed to form any new left socialist party with a mass character.

### **A REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY FOR EUROPE**

Deepening his reflection, drawing on the great debates of the workers’ movement during the 20th century, and at the same time working on his *Marxist Economic Theory* (first published, in French, in 1962), Ernest worked to elaborate a strategic plan for the socialist revolution in the developed capitalist countries of Europe. His self-interrogation, begun during the war, returned in force. How to explain (so as to burst through) this persistent reformist domination over the working class?

His analysis worked at both ends of the chain. What objective contradictions of the capitalist system could result in a new revolutionary situation, short of a new world war, which would be nuclear and imply mass destruction? And what subjective changes would characterise the adoption of an anti-capitalist and revolutionary consciousness by a working class living in a context of economic prosperity? How could Marxist revolutionaries take the lead in the class struggle, and how could they build their party?

In *Late Capitalism*<sup>7</sup> Mandel uncovered the motor forces of contemporary capitalism and their impact on social relations and the class struggle. He also tried to deepen his earlier strategic and programmatic conclusions through a dialogue with the left in the socialist and communist parties (particularly in Italy), which was at this time asserting itself across Europe<sup>8</sup>. The revolutionary wave in southern Europe in 1968-74 made it possible to test Ernest’s theses.

**THE NEW POLITICAL PERIOD** also made it necessary to integrate the consequences of a number of substantial modifications which had taken place in the societies and social movements of capitalist Europe. After for many years being the exclusive concern of small circles of militants, hundreds of thousands of militants would participate in this debate on the international scale.

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## TAKE-OFF: 1962-64

From the mid 1960s onwards, an increasingly important part of Ernest Mandel's public activities were in the international, rather than Belgian sphere. What started as a modest attempt to meet the new student radicalisation, which was starting to feel its way in politics, became an impressive effort to drag the Fourth International up to the level required by its historic vocation: to participate in the construction of a new socialist revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat.

It was in this period that Ernest came to know his first wife, Gisela Scholtz, a militant in the German SDS. She was to join the leadership of the international and the Belgian section, only to die prematurely in 1982.

Looking back, it is now clear that 1964-66 was a major turning-point, the coming together of three slow, cumulative evolutions which were to determine the objective context for the life of the International and of Ernest. Cracks were finally appearing in the leaden seal which American imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy - the victors of the second world war - had imposed on the world.

★ The victory of the Cuban revolution (1959), the defeat of French imperialism in Algeria (1962)

★ Working class revolts in East Berlin (1953), Poland and Hungary (1956), the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the end of the monolithic nature of the Communist Parties.

★ An clumsy rebirth of the strike movement in the imperialist countries.

A faint light shone through these cracks. With the inevitable exaggerations, our revolutionary optimism, much-maligned and often ridiculed by the disillusioned broader left, proved itself to be a powerful vector of analysis of the new situation. The Seventh Congress of the Fourth International (1963) fully appreciated the *Current dialectic of the world revolution* — the title of the central resolution.

“NINETEEN SIXTY-EIGHT” came unexpected. There was a simultaneous upsurge in all three sectors of the world revolution: neo-colonial, Stalinist-bureaucratic and imperialist. Our remarkable sensitivity to this reality was not the result of any kind of prophetic capacities. It was the result of our larger and more collective leadership system. The internationalist, globalist conception was closely linked to the activities of the International, its sections and its militants. Despite the political marginalisation inherited from the

“crossing of the desert” begun in 1938, the Fourth International had been able to link itself to radical struggles and revolutionary experiences of considerable political richness. And its exemplary behaviour contrasted with that of the dominant currents in the workers' movement.

**TO ORGANISE** a work brigade to Yugoslavia in 1950, (just when Stalin was trying to stifle the “Yugoslav road”) and to seize self-management as a lever of socialist renewal, to become the “delivery boys” of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) to help in the defeat of French imperialism, then to try to encourage the Algerian revolution to mutate towards socialism, to understand as early as 1960 the socialist element in the Cuban revolution, and to support, without prejudice, the Che Guevara-Fidel Castro leadership, then, with many others, to support the guerrillas in Latin America: the Fourth International was certainly small, never representing more than a minority, but it certainly didn't behave as a sect, preoccupied above all with self-preservation and self-proclamation.

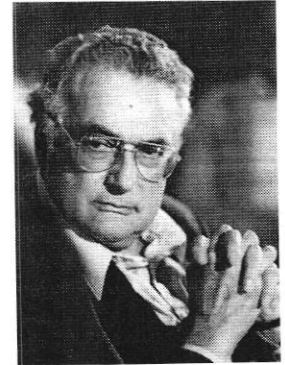
Ernest Mandel was involved in all these processes. Himself a product of this same evolution of the Fourth International, he had matured within a leadership characterised by a rich internal dialectic. This had familiarised him with all the great questions of this century. And by 1963 these intellectual gains had marinated in a quarter century of militancy in a mass workers' movement.

## LEADING THE INTERNATIONAL

The period from 1965 to the 1980s represents the highest point of Ernest's intellectual creativity and political influence on the revolutionary avant-garde and left intelligentsia around the world. This was linked to the change in the world situation and the increasing numerical and political weight of the Fourth International itself. Sections everywhere seized the new moments of struggle, interpreting them as elements of a world socialist revolution.

The frontiers began to close around Ernest. Refused visas by the Stalinist governments, he now faced bans on entry into the USA, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain (under Franco) and Australia.

Ernest's greatest joy was to realise that he had been able to act, together with a rejuvenated and renewed leadership team, in total harmony with the organisation. He carved a new space for the Fourth International, one rather larger than the actual forces we had at that time. He oriented the organisation beyond the hori-



zon of immediate struggles, to the wide historical perspective. He built political foundations solid enough to support this frantic militancy, breathed self-confidence into the movement. Ernest's contribution in these years is engraved in the history of the Fourth International. We need more distance from the events to analyse the extent and complexity of his contribution.

**AFTER 1968**, Ernest became known well beyond militant circles. He was to be found at all four corners of the world, at mass meetings, educational meetings, discussions on work in progress, and university courses. There must be thousands of “pirate” cassettes with Ernest's voice on the bookshelves of militants all round the world. Listening again to Ernest's lectures and speeches, you understand how his thinking developed through direct contact with a militant public, both critical and enthusiastic.

There was a “hidden face” of this overwhelming public activity. Ernest remained an organiser of the Fourth International and its Belgian section. He remained concerned by all the aspects of militant work, including the most “technical”, like translation, layout, fund-raising, animation of networks of sympathisers, and material infrastructure. He joined the International Secretariat in 1946, at a moment when Europe was still in ruins. He gave of himself to rebuild our sections on the “old continent”. Not just in Belgium, but in particular in the key countries, including the defeated powers, Italy

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and Germany. He then left for Asia, to re-establish contact with the Fourth International organisations in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, where the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Sri Lanka Socialist Party - LSSP) was gradually becoming the country's main working class party. He also gave considerable importance to relations between the International and the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP), a pillar of the pre-war and wartime Trotskyist

movement. And in the International as in the wider movement, Ernest always struggled for unity and against sectarianism. Indeed, the unity of the International was a preoccupation of his.

After participating in the labour brigade to Yugoslavia in 1950, he joined socialist intellectuals from both halves of Europe at the conference on the Yugoslav island of Korcula. He also participated in initiatives of solidarity with the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). Belgium became an important base for underground solidarity work.

He jumped with joy in 1962, when Che Guevara invited him to Cuba to participate in the 1962-3 debate on the economic-political orientation and construction of socialism.

**AFTER 1968**, Ernest's "diary" of face-to-face conversations, consultations, and organised discussion with revolutionary and anti-capitalist leaders and left intellectuals in all parts of the world never stopped growing. Many people came knocking at his door. In particular, he never missed an opportunity to meet an east European or Soviet "émigré", to absorb the experience of life in these societies - territories from which he was completely banned.

His personal notes, from internal meetings and conversations, his contributions to our internal debates (published in our various internal bulletins), his immense correspondence, and his articles in the

various publications of the International are a gold mine for future research.

He never stopped cultivating his wide range of interests. He had a passion for Spinoza, and dreamt of writing a book on the "permanent [bourgeois] revolution in Flanders/Holland in the 16th century". He was very interested in ethical questions, drew on the ideas of Ernst Bloch, who he considered to be "the greatest Marxist philosopher of the 20th century". He even "debased" himself in reading dozens of crime novels, as he would "confess" in the book he later wrote on this subject<sup>9</sup>.

**THREE FUNDAMENTAL** problems of this century formed the centre of gravity of his analytical work throughout this period: the dynamic of the contradictions of the capitalist system as a whole, the activity of the working class and the role of the workers' movement under advanced capitalism, and Stalinism.

He knew that Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism represented an exceptional step forward in political thought on this crucial phenomenon of the 20th century. Ernest made a powerful contribution to the modernisation of Trotsky's analysis, in contrast to the dogmatism of a number of Trotsky fans. He quickly became the Fourth International's report-writer on the subject. In 1957 he presented the report which was to become at the same time our balance sheet of Stalinism, and our proposals for a re-foundation<sup>10</sup>.

**HE FOLLOWED** with interest the various attempts at bureaucratic reforms in eastern Europe and the USSR, uncovering in his writings and speeches the economic and social foundations of that system. He constantly searched the horizon for signs of the political revolution, first in the USSR, later in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). At the end of his life more than ever, he considered that political clarity about the nature of "socialist democracy" was an absolute pre-condition for (re-)establishing the support of the workers, nationalities and youth of these countries for a socialist perspective, after the disastrous experience of "actually existing socialism"<sup>11</sup>

### THE FINAL STRUGGLE

Developments in the GDR, eastern Europe and the USSR after the collapse of the Stalinist regimes were an immense disappointment for Ernest, as they were for all the anti-Stalinist and genuinely socialist left. It was with strong personal reservations that he finally admitted that the process of restoration of capitalism



had made a significant step forward.

Ernest mobilised all his remaining energy for one last battle: to save the maximum from this debacle. He mobilised militant and financial resources to consolidate Marxist revolutionary cells in the former Soviet Union and eastern Germany. He fought to defend the "legitimacy of the October Revolution"<sup>12</sup> as well as the role and ideas of Trotsky in his new contacts with the post-Stalinist world. He participated in public debates in the former Soviet Union and eastern Germany, and met with leaders of the former ruling Communist parties. He was particularly proud to have aided in the publication of a new book on Trotsky by the former Communist Party's publishing house.

**HIS FAMOUS OPTIMISM** didn't blind him to the reactionary turn in the world situation. He knew from experience that the survival of the Fourth International, its revolutionary spirit and its organisational integrity depended more than ever before on the political conviction of its cadre and militants. Hence the preparation and publication of *Socialism or Barbarism, a manifesto for the Fourth International on the eve of the 21st century*.

His initial goal was to consolidate the political gains of the International in the face of the doubt which was attacking the left around the world. But he quickly understood that the upheavals underway would not just affect the balance of forces, but lead to deep transformations in the social structure of societies, states, classes, political forces, the cultural ambience, and consciousness in many, many countries. Preparing the Fourth International for the 21st century implied a substantial extension of our revolutionary Marxist programme, a refusal of all sectarianism and dogmatism, and a new political profile turned resolutely towards the future and the coming generations of militants.

**THE FIRST HEART ATTACK** in December 1993 did not stop him playing his role at the centre of the International. He hoped against hope for a reversal of the general situation, in particular through a breakthrough for the left in Brazil. And he raged against the barbarism of capitalism, the decline of the "classic" workers' movement, and the moral and political collapse of its traditional reformist leadership. He asked himself about the survival of the species after a nuclear or ecological catastrophe.

He continued to throw himself into his work despite the decline in his health.

"For the International, the sense of my life", he wrote in his last will and testament. He was comforted by his wife Anne, with whom he shared the last 13 years of his life.

Ernest is no longer with us. We mourn him, but at the same time we turn towards the revolutionary struggle. His life was a powerful call to take sides with the oppressed and the exploited, and to build a revolutionary socialist party and International. He leaves us a fabulous political heritage, which we will make use of - with a critical spirit - in the political and ideological struggles to come. Struggles which cannot be avoided in the redefinition of a programmatic and strategic alternative for socialism.



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1. Belgian section of the Fourth International, the forerunner of today's Socialist Workers Party (SAP/POS).

2. The different brands of Stalinist for many years claimed that this was not the case.

3. Internationalist Communists of Germany. The IKD comrade Monat-Widelin was responsible for this work, first in Belgium, later in France.

4. by now called the Revolutionary Communist Party.

5. The role of Michel Pablo, already important, was to grow throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

6. The January 1944 issue of *Quatrième Internationale* reproduced a 1943 article by Ernest (signed ER) called "The world crisis of the workers' movement and the role of the Fourth International". This article was the result of the RKP/PCR intervention in the sullen mass strikes of metal workers in Liege and Antwerp, and in the mines of Charleroi, in 1941-42. And of Mandel and Leon's participation in the secret meetings of the "committees of trade union struggle", a new workers' movement in rupture with reformism, and anti-capitalist despite its ideological confusion.

7. in his earlier works he uses the term 'neo-capitalism'.

8. "La Belgique entre néo-capitalisme et socialisme" published simultaneously in *La Gauche* and *Partisans* (Paris, Oct.-Dec. 1965), "Une stratégie socialiste pour l'Europe occidentale", in *Revue internationale du socialisme*, May-June 1965 (magazine edited by Lelio Basso).

9. *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story*, 1984.

10. "Montée, déclin et chute du stalinisme", *Quatrième Internationale*, December 1957. This report was presented to the Fifth World Congress of the Fourth International earlier that year.

11. *Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, a resolution adopted by the Fourth International in 1985. Ernest inspired the report and was its principle editor.

12. Notebook for Study and Research, Amsterdam

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# Rapid Survey of a Substantial Body of Work

Ernest Mandel belonged to a species that has become increasingly endangered in this second half of the 20th century: theoreticians of militant Marxism. He was able to combine untiring activity as a revolutionary leader with a body of intellectual work which it fulfilled the scholarly criteria for scientific research, and thus compelled respect from academic mandarins.

by *Salah Jaber*  
*Paris, July 1995*

**ACADEMIC MARXISTS** had as little in common with Ernest as the professional theorists of bureaucratic parties, in which a specialized "ideological department" combines the functions of ministry of propaganda and theological seminary. He was one of the people who conceives theoretical activity as an integral part of revolutionary activity — in the sense in which Marxist theory is a guide to action, as Engels said, and "theoretical production" is an essential, inseparable dimension of political struggle, not just speculative acrobatics.

Ernest Mandel was so entirely devoted to this struggle, to which he had decided to dedicate his life, that, even when he happened to write a little book on a "trivial" subject like crime stories, he produced a telling dissection of bourgeois society. The "Tartuffes" (revolutionary hypocrites) whom he denounced in his preface have never adequately acknowledged the value of this dissection.

His force of character and physical strength allowed him to escape from the Nazi concentration camps, which the two comrades of his generation whose intellectual abilities he admired most, Marcel

Hic and Abraham Léon, did not survive: both died before they were thirty. Ernest brought to his work an ardor enhanced by the sense of owing them a moral debt. He put the will to survive that saved him from the Holocaust in the service of a movement that, in the aftermath of the Second World War, seemed to be on the verge of dying out. Like Trotsky in exile, he threw himself into "uninterrupted work in order to ensure the transmission of the heritage". He redoubled his efforts when he jubilantly witnessed the new youth radicalisation of the 1960s. He set himself the task of "supplying the new generation with a revolutionary method".

In a half-century of unbroken labour, he often managed just the same to write "joyously", as he noted in the dedication of one of his books. He left an extraordinarily impressive body of writing behind him, which could easily fill several dozen volumes. He had a great capacity to write. Ernest was a man who could write letters, an article or a brochure or finish off a chapter of his current book while he was participating attentively and actively in a political meeting. But with him quantity never came at the expense of quality.

Whether or not one agrees with this or that conclusion, a political or theoretical work by Ernest Mandel is always a rich and stimulating document, even if it was only one of the personal discussion letters of which he wrote so many.

**HIS ERUDITION** was of a kind that the constant, cumulative progression of printed knowledge is putting further and further beyond human reach. It impregnated all of his spoken statements as well: he was someone whom one could listen to for hours, always with the feeling of learning more and discovering new horizons. And Ernest was certainly not a man to hug his knowledge jealously to himself. Not that he showed off his knowledge out of pedantry, far from it; but he felt a duty to pass on what he knew and to communicate his thirst for information as well as his intellectual passions. These concerns marked all his works.

An exhaustive bibliography of Ernest Mandel's writings — even if it were restricted to published works, books, brochures and articles, leaving out his voluminous correspondence — would be an undertaking on the scale of a doctoral dis-



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sertation. We can only mention here the high points, the most striking marks left along the trail, of this immense body of work, written in German, English or French, the three languages that Ernest used best (besides Flemish, his mother tongue).

**IN MAY 1960** Ernest completed, in French, his first major work, the one that would make his name as an internationally recognized Marxist economist with encyclopaedic knowledge. The book appeared in 1962 under the somewhat misleading title of *Traité d'économie marxiste* (which became *Marxist Economic Theory* in most of the many translations). A misleading title, because, in the style of Stalinist-inspired manuals, this scholastic title hid a gigantic effort (ten years of work, a fifty page list of works consulted) to breath new life into Marx's most important scientific contribution, which the Stalinists had petrified and twisted out of shape.

Ernest's goal, as he explained in the preface, was "to start from the empirical data of the science of today" in order "to reconstitute the whole economic system of Karl Marx" and "de-Westernise" it. On top of this he made a similar effort to reconstitute the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet Union and the problematic of transition to socialism. This first, refreshing work, was presented (already!) as "an invitation to the younger generation of Marxists", an invitation that was widely taken up to judge by the great success the book enjoyed.

## THEORETICAL AUDACITY

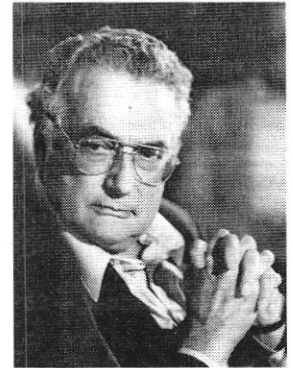
*Marxist Economic Theory's* theoretical audacity was to defend and illustrate the Marxist heritage. Only after having written it - and probably dissatisfied with its on-the-whole rather traditional analysis of what he still called "the epoch of capitalist decline", at a time when the post-war long expansive wave was reaching its climax, flouting most Marxists' predictions, did Ernest turn to the theory of long waves of capitalist revolution. He came to believe that this mode of production had after the Second World War entered a new, third historical phase (after the classic and imperialist phases). He drew the outlines of what he then called "neo-capitalism" in a 1964 article that was added as an appendix to later editions of *Marxist Economic Theory*. It was also included in the best known of his many pedagogical pamphlets, his *Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, which was first published in French that same year, 1964.

Not wanting to be classified as a mere

illustrator of Marxism or to be consigned to the "historico-empirical" school of economics by "Western Marxists" or quasi-Stalinist theorists, Ernest wrote his most "philosophical" work, *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx*. (published in French, in 1967 under the title *La Formation de la pensée économique de Karl Marx*). This work intervened directly in the debate, very fashionable at the time, over the relationship between the young Marx and the mature Marx. (The period covered by the book ends just as Marx is about to write *Capital*). But it also made worthwhile contributions on other fashionable topics, such as "the Asiatic mode of production", the theory of alienation, and its relation to "industrial civilisation" (Ernest never accepted the term "post-industrial"). This work would be completed later with introductions to a new English edition of the three volumes of *Capital*, which appeared one after another in London in 1976, 1978 and 1981. (The three introductions were published together in one volume in Castilian ('Spanish') under the title *El Capital: Cien Años de Controversias en Torno a la Obra de Karl Marx*).

**EUROPE VS AMERICA** was first published in Germany, in 1968 (*Die EWG und die Konkurrenz Europa-Amerikai*). A milestone in Ernest's thinking about capitalism's third phase, the work concerns inter-imperialist contradictions between the United States and the Europe of the Common Market. As the German title indicates, these contradictions, and their monetary consequences, have considerable implications for the prospects for European integration. Out of date now, this work remains interesting because of the relevance of the problems it raises and because of its shrewd prediction that west European governments would tend toward protectionism once the generalized recession that he foresaw broke out.

**DURING** the first years after the great upheaval of 1968, several important theoretical texts by Ernest, the length of a pamphlet or a long article, were published in several languages. Most noteworthy were his lectures on bureaucracy (originally in French), his two texts on fascism and on the Leninist theory of organisation (originally in German), and many polemical works, often written in English, particularly those debating the theory of state capitalism in the USSR. In 1970 he published an anthology with a long introduction on a theme that was dear to him as a revolutionary and former trade-unionist: *Contrôle ouvrier, conseils*



*ouvriers, autogestion (Workers' Control, Workers' Councils, Self-Management)*.

In 1972, at last, Ernest Mandel's work on the third phase of capitalism was published in German. He would consider this book his magnum opus, and would rightly be proudest of it: *Der Spätkapitalismus* (the revised and updated English edition appeared in 1975 as *Late Capitalism*). It was an innovative work in several respects: particularly because of its updating and refinement of the theory of long waves (which it linked to the falling tendency of the rate of profit); its theory of crises; and its analysis of the connections between the third technological revolution, tendency to permanent innovation, and the arms race, on the one hand, and structural transformations of capitalism, on the other hand, in light of the laws of capitalist development that Marx discovered. *Late Capitalism* is above all the first serious attempt - the only attempt so far - to sketch an overall picture of contemporary capitalism, integrating the various dimensions such as social classes, the state and the world market. Themes which Marx intended to cover in *Capital*, but did not achieve.

The ambition was considerable, especially for one man on his own. The work that Ernest Mandel produced in the end can certainly be debated: how could it be otherwise, given the extreme complexity of the contemporary world and the multitude of issues he addressed? But it is undeniably a respectable and respected work. Irritated bourgeois economists have mostly preferred to ignore it rather than risk a

# *Ernest Mandel Study Centre*

The board and staff of the International Institute for Research and Education in Scientific Socialism (IIRE) are firmly determined to continue the tradition of living Marxism which Ernest Mandel so strongly represented.

The development and elaboration of a new emancipatory perspective in the best tradition of humanistic and non-dogmatic socialism is more needed today than ever before. To this end the IIRE board has resolved to create an Ernest Mandel Study Centre on the premises of the Amsterdam school.

The aim of this new Centre is to foster political studies for the emancipation and liberation of all oppressed peoples and groups world-wide. The guiding light of the studies will be the example of the open-minded, humanistic, democratic and scientific spirit that Ernest Mandel expressed in his own many works. We feel that the only real tribute we can pay our teacher for so many years is to guarantee the continuation and intensification of that great tradition of living Marxism. We envisage emphasising studies in the fields of economy, history and democratic rights.

We invite all those who learned from or otherwise benefited from the works of Ernest Mandel to assist us in continuing his efforts.



The IIRE Board

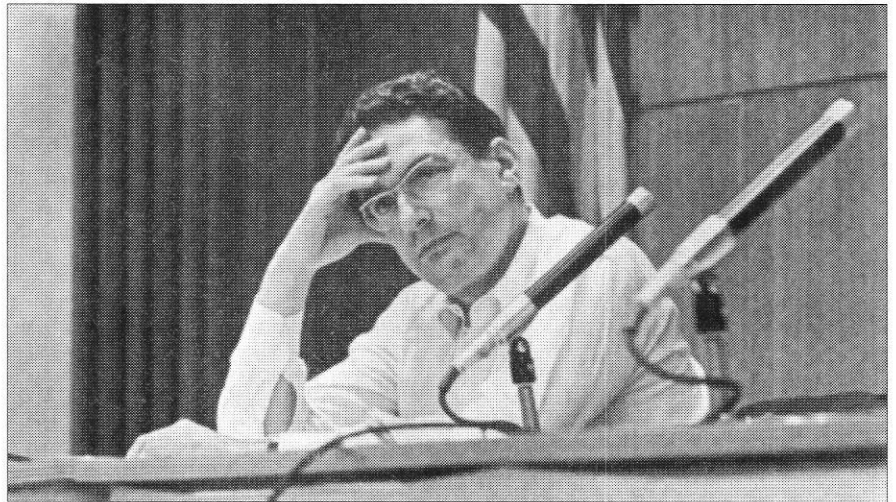
**Ernest Mandel  
1923-1995**

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Rutgers University (USA) 1968: Socialist Scholars Conference

Ernest Mandel founded the IIRE in 1983 as a unique study and education centre for activists in labour and liberation movements. In its 13 years of existence, hundreds of leading activists from a great variety of labour, women's, youth and other emancipatory movements all over the world have gathered in our centre for courses, conferences and seminars.

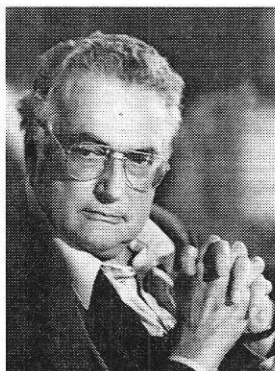
Under Ernest's chairmanship the IIRE published a series of Notebooks for Study and Research in English, French and Spanish. We also issued a series of international Working Papers, intended to stimulate deeper research on the pressing and complicated problems of modern capitalist society. Ernest

did not just contribute actively to the publication of his own work, but was a permanent, very critical but always loyal and stimulating sparing partner for all our other contributors. Many of the Notebooks have subsequently been translated into other languages, ranging from Japanese and German to Dutch and Portuguese.

Ernest gave hundreds of hours of lectures at our centre, on a wide variety of subjects. These lectures are available in tape form for visitors.

Continuing Ernest's work is the memorial he would have wanted. And creating a solid financial base for the IIRE's activities is one of the preconditions for doing so.

**Ernest MANDEL**  
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debate with its author. The book shows the intellectual scope of this man we have lost, undeniably the most fertile and universal Marxist mind of his age.

**IN ARTICLES** written in French for *Inprecor* beginning in 1975 and published in 1978 as *La Crise* (published in English as *The Second Slump*) Ernest tried to show that the generalised recession of 1974-75 confirmed the ebb of the long wave that he had foreseen; that it was thus an expression of a long-term depressive tendency; and above all that it was the ineluctable result of capitalism's internal contradictions and their cumulative exacerbation over a long period, not a simple accident due to "exogenous factors" (such as the oil crisis). The subsequent evolution of the world capitalist economy has largely borne out this "Mandelist" diagnosis. It has evoked growing international interest in the theory of long waves, which Ernest had done more than anyone to rehabilitate.

One relatively early result was that in 1978 the author of *Late Capitalism* was invited to give a series of lectures on long waves as the Alfred Marshall Lectures for that year at the University of Cambridge. An expanded and more worked-out version of these lectures was published in 1980 as *Long Waves of Capitalist Development: The Marxist Interpretation*. In this work Ernest returned to the theses he had already expounded in his magnum opus. He tried to make a link between long waves and "cycles of class struggle", and for the first time took strong excep-

tion to the idea of a cyclical sequence of long waves. The man who had for years predicted the crisis and the end of the post-war expansive long wave thumbed his nose at the capitalists by refusing to make the inverse prediction once the crisis had arrived. The turn from an expansive to a recessive long wave flows from the system's inherent contradictions, he explained, but there is nothing automatic about a turn back toward protracted expansion. For that the role of exogenous factors is indispensable.

**ON A COMPLETELY** different subject, articles written in French for *Inprecor* were collected and completed with unpublished chapters to make up Ernest's book *Critique de l'eurocommunisme* in 1978 (*From Stalinism to Eurocommunism* in English), followed by *Réponse à Louis Althusser et Jean Elleinstein* the year after. Also in 1979 a series of interviews with Ernest was published in London under the title *Revolutionary Marxism Today*, in which he passed judgement and made predictions on many different historical, theoretical, and current political issues. Giving his thoughts free range, the Fourth International's leader, speaking as such, showed his strengths as well as his weaknesses, which were noticeable above all in excessive optimism or defensiveness. Last of all in 1979 Ernest published in English his *Trotsky: A Study in the Dynamic of His Thought*. This essentially didactic work was devoted to the formation of the thought of the great Marxist whom Mandel venerated and constantly re-read, always marvelling anew at Trotsky's perspicacity.

The first years of the 1980s brought an ebb in struggles. They gave Ernest an opportunity in 1984 to write and publish in English his book on detective novels, *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story*. It was a rough sketch of the work on the relationship between capitalism and crime that death would prevent him from completing. Then he finished and published in 1986, again in English, *The Meaning of the Second World War*. This is not just a Marxist interpretation of this terrible mid-century (which shaped the young Ernest Mandel); it is also a fierce denunciation of capitalism "with a human face", and a penetrating reflection on key issues of the materialist conception of history. *The Place of Marxism in History*, (1986) a didactic presentation of Marxism's historical and intellectual genesis was the result of his teaching at the Amsterdam-based International Institute for Research and Education in Democratic and Scientific Socialism (IIRE), his first IIRE Notebook (the NSR series).

**ALSO IN 1986**, Ernest took on Alec Nove in *New Left Review* in a debate over the relationship between plan and market in a post-capitalist economy. He vigorously criticised the idea of "market socialism", and defended the revolutionary Marxist tradition's democratic socialist project. This debate, a new version of the irreducible conflict between the "realism" of reformist resignation and the "utopia" of revolutionary intransigence, continued until 1988 (Nove 1987; Mandel 1988; Elson 1988). It reflected the spirit of the time, the heyday of Gorbachevism. Ernest was one of the first to grasp that this was a



Brussels, 1 May 1982.

turning point in Soviet history, at a time when many people still tended to minimise it.

He was clear-headed enough not to have any illusions about Mikhail Gorbachev's chances of success, unlike many admirers of this sorcerer's apprentice of bureaucratic reform. (Khrushchev in his time had evoked identical hopes.) But he was mistaken, carried away by the revolutionary optimism that was typical of him, in underestimating the effects of decades of Stalinist dictatorship on the consciousness of the Soviet working class, and in overestimating its will to resist and the bureaucracy's will to resist the dynamic of capitalist restoration, over-determined by the global context. These merits and faults shine through clearly in the book Ernest wrote about Gorbachev, which appeared first in French in 1989 as *Où va l'URSS de Gorbachev?* (and in English as *Beyond Perestroika*).

**LIKE ALL OF US**, he was disappointed by the reactionary turn of events in Eastern Europe from 1990 on. He may have felt it more intensely than others, because of the intensity of the hopes that the thaw had given him, which ended in a debacle. He calmly finished the theoretical work on bureaucracy that he had been planning for a long time: *Power and Money: A Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy* published in London in 1992 [reviewed on page 30]. Events impelled Ernest to give this book a function that he had certainly not originally foreseen: to explain the roots of the Soviet and East European bureaucracies' restorationist turn, as he stressed in his introduction, criticising his own past errors of judgement along the way. It was also for him an opportunity to argue again the case for the self-managing socialism for which he had always fought.

He argued another case the following year by defending the Russian revolution against its detractors, whose ranks swelled in the wake of the Soviet debacle. This was his second IIRE Notebook: *October 1917: Coup d'Etat or Social Revolution?* Then he argued a third case, at the request of the German PDS' publishing house, this time in defense of Trotsky. Its title, *Trotsky als Alternativ (Trotsky as Alternative)* echoed former East German left-wing dissident Rudolf Bahro's book, which had made a stir in 1977. Ernest defends Leon Trotsky and his struggle passionately, though in a critical spirit, before the court of history. He shows that Trotsky's contributions were Marxism's only coherent response to the

major problems of the 20th century (except on ecological issues).

**MUCH WEAKENED** by declining health, in spite of a first stroke that he survived in December 1993, Ernest found the energy to finish preparing a new, revised and expanded edition of his book on long waves. Published in London shortly before his death, it was supplemented by two chapters in which Ernest reviewed the copious literature that had appeared on the subject since the 1980 edition. He returned at length to the debates raised by this literature, and re-affirmed his conviction that the conditions still do not exist for an end to the depressive long wave of this last quarter-century.

To conclude this rapid survey of an immense body of work<sup>2</sup> we cite the last lines of one of the most beautiful texts Ernest ever wrote: the preface, signed "E. Germain", to the first edition of the 24-year-old Abraham Léon's extraordinary work on the Jewish question, written two years before Léon's death at Auschwitz. These lines bear witness to who Ernest Mandel was and what his life meant:

*"Among those who learn the story of his life there may be some who will perhaps ask why a man of such remarkable qualities tied his destiny to a small revolutionary organization.... They will ask themselves: why did the Marcel Hics, the Martin Widelins, the A. Léons, who were among the most gifted European intellectuals, choose a movement which could promise them neither success nor glory nor honours nor even a minimum of material comfort, but which on the contrary demanded of them every sacrifice, comfort, including their lives, and which required long, ungrateful work, frequently in isolation from the proletariat to whom they wanted to give everything? And if they are able to recognize in these young revolutionists, along with their intellectual gifts, exceptional moral qualities, then they will say to themselves that a movement capable of attracting such men solely by the power of its ideas and the purity of its ideal and capable of leading those rationalist dialecticians to such heights of self-denial and devotion - is a movement that cannot die because in it lies everything that is noble in humankind".*



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1. The French-language sister publication of *International Viewpoint*. For a sample issue or subscription information write to PECL, PB 85, 75522 Paris cedex 11, France

2. In order not to make this article too long, we have deliberately not mentioned the many anthologies of articles written at very different dates, published thanks to Ernest's efforts or with his consent, such as *La Longue marche de la révolution* (1976), *De la Commune à Mai 1968* (1978), *Revolutionäre Strategien im 20. Jahrhundert* (1978), *Les Etudiants, les intellectuels et la lutte des classes* (1979), *Karl Marx: Die Aktualität seines Werkes* (1984), etc. We have also failed to mention the very many collective works to which Ernest contributed or that he himself edited, alone or jointly, such as *Fifty Years of World Revolution, 1917-1967* (1968), *Ricardo, Marx, Sraffa* (1984), *New Findings in Long-Wave Research* (1992), etc.

Ernest MANDEL  
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# The obituaries

*"We should dream and build utopias, just like Ernest Mandel":  
Three commentators discuss the Trotskyist leader*

*La Jornada, Mexico, 23 July 1995*

*by Angélica Abelleira*

**WHAT** was Ernest Mandel's dream? We asked three different analysts about Ernest Mandel, the author of Marxist Economic Theory, The Third Age of Capitalism and Delightful Murders, the member of the Fourth International and one of Trotskyism's most prestigious leaders.

They all said that Mandel had "never renounced utopia", far less his desire and will to construct that utopia. Right until the end, he kept in view the question "what can humanise this world we live in?". And he consistently answered "the proletariat, a revolutionary socialist transformation of capitalism". His dream always took the form of revolution, the transformation of society, democratic socialism, and human socialism.

**RESEARCHER** Sergio de la Peña stresses Mandel's contribution to political thought, with his series of analyses and critical proposition concerning the functioning of capitalism and the nature of 'real socialism'. In economic theory, his thought represents a creative elaboration, a reflection on "the problems that preoccupy all of us: the globalisation of capitalism and the alternatives, in terms of the formulation of a social project superior [to capitalism] which would end the conflict and prejudice which that ferocious system inflicts on humanity".

As for the dream revealed in *Power and Money*, Sergio de la Peña believes that, "for Mandel, the project of human socialism kept all its value as an alternative to 'real socialism' and capitalism. He thought that a deep, radical transformation would offer everyone a rich, creative, human life. He never renounced utopia, far less his desire to build that utopia. His passion for utopia was the principle force animating his immense capacity for work. Like Ernest Mandel, we should be able to dream of utopias, and to be irresponsible enough to try to realise them, and to suffer defeats. Defeats from which we can learn something.

'Real socialism' has left one lesson: its existence has obliged the world to change. We

cannot discard that reality. We must make it our starting point. The first socialist project lasted 60 years. Capitalism is 800 years old. We have plenty of time.

**UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR** Victor Flores Olea claims that, with Mandel gone, a whole "human, intellectual and revolutionary type is unfortunately becoming extinct. His image, his legend even,

have more in common with the militant revolutionaries of the first half of the century, and their conflict, than with the left-wing intellectuals of the post-war period". Flores Olea admits to "genuine admiration and praise" of Mandel, who, even when deep in economic and political problems of the second half of the century, "maintained the optimism, the vision of history — and of course the theoretical training — of those who first struggled to establish the principles of revolutionary socialism".

One thing never varied for Mandel: confidence in the capacities of the proletariat — in the USSR as well as in the capitalist countries — to transform bureaucratic dictatorship into a democratic socialist regime in the USSR, and to arrive at the same point in the

capitalist world through carrying through the socialisation which developed capitalism itself already make possible. "It would be easy to comment that Mandel's vision failed in both parts of the world," says Flores. "The socialist regime in the USSR has disappeared. It was not transformed. And in the rest of the world, the proletariat seems to have exhausted its reserves of revolutionary energy. But are

## LaJornada

things this simple? Who else will humanise this world we live in? A complex question, and one which Mandel wrestled with until the day he died. A question to which he always gave the same answer: the transformation of society will be the work of the proletariat, despite all the metamorphoses which it has undergone and will undergo in the future.

**POLITICAL SCIENTIST** Octavio Rodriguez Araujo believes that the Belgian theorist's critique of the USSR's Manual of Scientific Economy. "He built his critique on the basis of Western — i.e. non-Soviet — sources on the construction of capitalism. A remarkable work, which he was one of the first Marxists to attempt".

As for Mandel's conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as discussed in *The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx*, Rodriguez stresses that this was "a very different conception that that of the Soviets, who privileged the role of the Party, which they conceived as an avant-garde. Mandel insisted on the

role of the social classes, and conceived of the political leadership as something which meets the demands of the workers.

Despite Mandel's "faulty" — because "euro-centric" — conception of the state, Rodriguez supports his critique of Euro-communism, "which liquidated itself by becoming social-democrat, thus provoking the collapse of several Communist Parties. I am not a Mandelist, but I think he was one of the most lucid and critical theoreticians. History has shown him to have been right." And he concludes with the comment that the author of *Delicious Murders* had a "very solid theoretical base, and hardly ever made concessions... but he was not dogmatic. Dogmatism kills criticism and protects the status quo". And Mandel's dream? Revolution, the transformation of society, and democratic, human socialism. Which means a project of the mass, not of the elite.



Ernest MANDEL  
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## *Waiting for World Revolution: On the Death of Ernest Mandel*

*Süddeutsche Zeitung, Germany, 22 July 1995*  
by Elmer Altwater

**I FIRST MET** Ernest Mandel at the beginning of the 1960s, at a seminar organised by the Socialist Union of German Students (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund, SDS) in Munich. He was making a presentation on the theory of Karl Marx. An impressive event in the Adenauer period, when there was little talk of Karl Marx at German universities. Mandel's theoretical critique of capitalist society — perspicacious and brilliant in its rhetorical qualities — was something quite unusual in that period of the 'economic material'. And it was an important contribution to the elaboration of a theoretical basis for what would develop as the students' movement of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Mandel was born in Frankfurt. As a young man he was active in the anti-Nazi

opposition. They sent him to a concentration camp. A vehement critic of capitalism, he joined the Trotskyist International after the war. He soon came to be considered as its leading theoretical leader. To the point where one identified the Fourth International with him rather than him with the Fourth International.

Throughout his life he remained

**Süddeutsche Zeitung**  
MÜNCHNER NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN AUS POLITIK, KULTUR, WIRTSCHAFT UND SPORT

convinced of the need, and the possibility, of world-wide revolution. Whence his enthusiasm for the 1968 movement. Each strike, be it in Mexico or in Bangladesh, was to his eyes a contribution to the

strengthening of the revolutionary 'workers and peasants'. At the world scale. I heard him say this again a year ago, in a passionate speech in Brazil.

**WHAT ILLUSIONS**, one might think nowadays. But Mandel represented such a political danger to the governments of the United States, France, and to the Social-Liberal coalition [in West Germany] that they forbid him entry to their territory throughout the 1970s. He had just presented a doctoral thesis to the Department of Political Science of the Free University of Berlin. It was his work *Late Capitalism*, a work in tune with the times. The Jury had to move to Brussels to hear him defend his thesis. Which he did brilliantly. The bar on entry to Germany could not stop him passing his doctorate. But it did make it impossible for him to present himself for the post of professor at Berlin and Osnabrück.

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All the west did, during the cold war, was copy what had always been common currency in the 'camp of actually existing socialism'. As a leader of the Trotskyist international, Mandel was persona non grata. You could only find his works on the 'cursed bookshelves' dealing with the radical left and Trotskyism.

**AND YET**, Mandel's works, written in French and translated into all the languages of the world, were distinguished by their scientific rigour. Mandel had the spirit of an encyclopaedia, the erudition of a vast personal culture, in the traditional sense of the world. He was a brilliant intellectual. His analysis of the world capitalist economy are as evergreen as his critique of Soviet bureaucracy. And the fact that he wrote a social history of the

crime story, that he was interested in this domain too, shows the breadth of the fields he was interested in.

Having said this, there was never the shadow of a doubt about the essential goal of his writing: the revolutionary overthrow of the domination of the Soviet bureaucracy and the capitalist system. He considered the end of 'actually existing socialism' in 'the revolutionary year of 1989' as the confirmation of his analysis. But the fact that capitalist society comes out reinforced in the 'new world order', rather than weakened, this did not really fit in his political thinking.



## *Long Waves: On the Death of the Trotskyist and Revolutionary Ernest Mandel*

*Frankfurter Rundschau, Germany, 23 July 1995*

*Par Karl Grobe*

**ERNEST MANDEL** wrote penetrative analyses of the long waves of growth of capitalism, and of the rise and fall of Stalinism. He studied the social phenomenon of bureaucracy, and the social history of the crime story, with the same engagement. Ernest Mandel was a brilliant thinker, an incisive polemicist, a patient teacher and an impatient revolutionary.

The man all the dogmatists loved to hate, he carried a triple condemnation: Jew, Communist, and Trotsky-style Communist to boot. Thrice condemned, thrice distinguished: by the hate of the orthodox Communists, by the fear of the bourgeois conservatives (which earned him a ban on entering Switzerland, the USA, France, Australia and above all the Federal Republic of Germany), and by the recognition of broad-minded specialists in all the domains he expressed himself upon.

**IT IS STRANGE**, and revealing, that out of his abundant scientific work, the established media has touched almost exclusively his social history off the crime story (*Exquisite Murder*). One rarely finds references to his other books, but there are many reviews of *Exquisite Murder*. And among these we find those Marxist-Leni-

nists who refuse to see in the book anything more than ideology, since the author was not one of their own.

Born in Frankfurt in 1923, Ernest Mandel emigrated to Belgium with his family to escape the Nazi dictatorship. It was in Belgium that Mandel began his political activity. Nazi executioners arrest him as a militant of the resistance against the occupation of Belgium. He survived prison and the concentration camp. Settling in Belgium after the war, he taught most recently at the Free University of Brussels.

His German comrades, Communists and anti-Stalinists, knew him under various names, including 'Ernest Germain' and 'Walter'. He was a man who could never exclude the possibility that one day he would again have to live underground, if the political situation deteriorated. For this reputed theoretician was also a thinker of the International founded by Lev Trotsky after his expulsion from the Soviet Union.

But Ernest Mandel was never an ideologue of Trotskyism. He committed himself to an impressive examination of the 'dark years' of Lenin's companion and critic. [footnote in particular during

the Wuppertal seminar on Trotsky] How did we arrive at Trotsky's 'dark years' of 1917-1923? As early as 1905 Trotsky had foreseen the possibility of the centralism of the party's leading bodies and its general secretary developing behind the centralism of the party as such. How could he have supported such centralism, for years, knowing what he knew? Why did he keep what he had understood about the bureaucracy and the 'Thermidor' to himself for so long?

Mandel further developed the critique which Trotsky developed after these 'dark years'. This is the origin of Mandel's theory of the bureaucracy (*Power and Money*, 1993). This is not simply an academic work. Mandel was one of those who had recognised that after the Stalinist 'Thermidor' the proletarian revolution itself had been betrayed. He defended the concept of political revolution. He diagnosed the first signs of this political revolution in 1956, in Hungary and Poland, in 1968 in Czechoslovakia, and again in 1980 in Poland. These processes of upheaval would have tipped out of power the bureaucratic elite directed and incarnated by Stalin, but which in turn produced Stalin and the Stalinists.



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Brussels, June 1979. International meeting hosted by the SAP/POS to discuss the forthcoming European Parliament elections

**BUT MANDEL** was far from any simple opposition of 'democracy' and 'Stalinism'. His goal was the overthrow of capitalism, and the construction of a society free from class domination, in which, for the first time, equality and consciously planned social, ecological, economic and democratic policies would become possible. This is what distinguishes 'Trotskyism' from all the other forms of anti-Stalinism.

This kind of position required an exceptional intellectual discipline. He had to struggle against the seductive power of an uncritical 'defence of the Soviet Union, and with the same rigour, oppose any 'defence of democracy' equally lacking in critical spirit. On the one hand he was intransigent in his opposition to the Gulag and to the political and material expropriation of the people of the Soviet Union. And on the other hand he was intransigent in his opposition to the exploitation, racism, imperialism which he understood to be inherent to capitalism. He had to recognise the gains of the Russian revolution, and 'save' them against Stalinist deformation, and at the same time defend the gains of the French revolution and the social struggles in the industrialised countries.

Mandel fought at every level to achieve these objectives. At the last World Congress of his movement, he turned passionately against those dogmatists of all kinds, and of whom there has never been a lack in the periphery of his move-

ment. At other moments he attempted to discuss with those prone to dogmatism. In his international meetings with students, manual workers, university professors and political leaders he, who shone in many languages, knew how to listen patiently. And he argued with all his force of conviction, but without arrogance.

What made this man so dangerous that in 1972 he was only able to defend his the-



## *An Optimistic Critic of Capitalism* *The Guardian, Great Britain, 23 July 1995* by Tariq Ali

**ERNEST MANDEL**, who has died in Brussels aged 72, was one of the most creative and independent-minded revolutionary Marxist thinkers of the post-war world. His writings on political theory, world history and Marxist economics were translated into 30 languages and in every continent. In a series of specialist works — *Late Capitalism* (1975), *The Second Slump* (1978), *The Long Waves of Capitalist Development* (revised and re-issued in 1995) — he analysed the functioning of capitalism in the West.

sis at the Free University of Berlin in quite exceptional circumstances, without infringing the Fundamental Law? Why the ban on entering German territory (which finished by costing a Minister of the Interior his post in 1978)? What was the motivation for the resignation of conservative spirits from the PEN-Club in 1977, when Mandel was admitted to membership? Certainly not by fear of the force of his convictions. By fear of revolution? If so, we can be calm. This is not a period where that kind of revolution is imminent. And the groups which identify with Ernest Mandel are small, and carry less influence than he did.

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He was born in Belgium and educated at Brussels University and the Ecole Pratique des Haute Etudes in Paris. His father Henri, a left-wing socialist, had opposed the first world war and fled from Belgium to Holland to avoid conscription. Here he met the German communist Wilhelm Pieck, and both men rushed to Germany after the fall of the Kaiser.

Henri Mandel worked in Berlin for several months as a journalist for the newly-organised Soviet Press Agency. He became friends with Karl Radek, the Bolshevik emissary dispatched by Lenin to speed up the German revolution. Demoralised by the repression which followed the execution of Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, Henri remained a member of the German Communist Party for only a few more years. Then he dropped out of active politics and moved to Antwerp. It was here that his second son, Ernest, was born.

**MANDEL WAS 10** when Hitler came to power. Years later he told me: "My father made some very sharp comments at the time on the incapacity of the social-democrats and the communists to resist fascism. I remember him saying 'This will end very badly. It could be the end for our people'."

In 1939 Mandel joined a small Trotskyist group in Antwerp and was active in the Resistance during the occupation. He had been disgusted by the capitulation of the Belgian Socialist Party, whose leader, the deputy Prime Minister, made a public appeal to collaborate with the Nazis and was supported by an important section of the trade union apparatus. The official Communists published a legal paper under the Occupation, basking in the deadly rays of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

Mandel was arrested for the first time for distributing seditious leaflets to the occupying German soldiers. He had subsequently hidden to observe the effect of anti-fascist propaganda on the uniformed Germans. He was a revolutionary and a



Jew. The Nazis sent him to a transit camp for prisoners en route to Auschwitz.

**HE ESCAPED.** The circumstances in which he freed himself are revealed and made a permanent mark that fuelled his optimism about the capacity of ordinary people to emancipate themselves. Always a strong believer in his own capacity to convince anyone of the merits of socialism. Mandel started talking to the warders. The other Belgium and French prisoner were anti-German and treated the warders, veteran employees of the German state, as sub-humans. Mandel started talking to them and discovered that some had been members of the now-banned social-democratic and Communist parties in Germany. The warders, on their part, were impressed by the precocity of the 16-year-old boy in their charge and actually helped him to escape.

Even though he was soon re-arrested, the experience had made him an internationalist. He steadfastly refused to write off a whole nationality because of the crimes of its leaders. A lesson learned when our century was engulfed in what seemed then to be a permanent midnight was applied more recently in the war in former Yugoslavia. Mandel refused to permit his loathing of Milosevic and Tudjman to lead to a blanket condemnation of Serbs or Croats.

After the war, Mandel devoted most of his energies to building the Fourth International as a world party for the socialist revolution. He genuinely believed that conditions would favour the rebirth of a movement not tarred with the

crimes of Stalinism or the capitulation of social-democracy. During the late sixties and seventies, his polemical and oratorical skills (he spoke all the major languages of his continent) together with governmental paranoia led to his being barred from entering the United States, France, West Germany, Switzerland and Australia. He was deemed a threat to "national security".

**THE RESTRICTIONS** on his movements sent him back to his old typewriter. Pamphlets and books emerged at an amazing speed. He was a great educator. His pamphlet, *An Introduction to Marxist Economics*, sold half-a-million copies. And yet a great deal of his life was spent on dealing with the views of rival Trotskyist groupings. Often, when I rang him during the seventies, and asked a polite "How are you?" the reply was never the same: "I'm just finishing off a draft reply to the sectarians in Ceylon on the Tamil question" or "Fine. Have your read my reply to the IS Group on state-capitalism?" or "Those sectarian idiots in Argentina have caved in to Peronism. Crazy people. Don't they understand?" They never did. But Mandel never stopped trying to convince "crazy people" to tread the true path.

I was very close to him for the most important years of my life. Even after I left his movement in 1981, we remained close friends, despite our disagreements. Friendly relations were abruptly broken off for a year after the appearance of *Redemption*, my fictional satire on Trotskyism.

The central character, Ezra Einstein, was loosely based on him. "Tell me something," he said when peace had

*The***Guardian**

finally been restored, "why did you make me out to be so obsessed with sex?" I tried to explain that a true political Utopian would also be a sexual Utopian and that in fiction one had the right to imagine anything, but he shook his head in disapproval. He was capable of theorising on any subject under the sun, but not sex. This divide with the generation of '68 was never overcome.

**HE SUFFERED** a serious heart-attack a few years ago, which left him extremely frail, but up to the last he was thinking of new projects. "I can't decide what book to write," he told me last year. "A history of the European workers' movement or the permanent and eternal links between capitalism and crime." In the event he wrote neither.

Like many of his generation he was shaken by the restoration in Russia, though he tried to mask the fact with heady rhetoric. He knew the game was up for another four or five decades, but was fearful of "demoralising the cadre" and a pretence was maintained that nothing fundamental had changed. Life and the struggle went on just as before. The truth was that in the changed mood of present times his optimism had ceased to be infectious.



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## *Ernest Mandel, Economist and Trotskyist Leader*

*El País, Spanish State, 21 July 1995*

*by Jaime Pastor*

**ERNEST MANDEL**, the economist and leader of the Fourth International has died in Brussels at the age of 72. Born into a Jewish family in Frankfurt, his life and work were consecrated, from the moment in his youth when he became active in the anti-Nazi resistance, to the reconstruction of a radical, open Marxism, neither social democratic nor Stalinist. Mandel was also director of the Centre for Political Studies of the Free University of Berlin — Flemish section.

In his numerous writings, particularly those concerning the up-dating of the elementary concepts and categories of Marxism, he consistently rejected all form of dogmatism. *Marxist Economic Theory*, first published in 1962 [as *Traité d'économie marxiste*] enjoyed a wide distribution in several languages, and influenced an not insignificant minority among the new generation of critical economics. His other works include: *La formation de la pensée économique de Karl Marx*, *El Capital: cien años de controversia en torno a la obra de Karl Marx*, *Las ondas largas del desarrollo capitalista*, and above all *Le troisième âge du capitalisme*. Perry Anderson has called this last work "the first theoretical analysis of the post-war global development of the capitalist mode of production

conceived within the categories of classic Marxism".

Other important titles include: *El significado de la Segunda Guerra Mundial*, *Sur le fascisme*; *Contrôle ouvrier, conseils ouvriers et autogestion ouvrière*; *Critique de l'Eurocommunisme*; *De la Commune à Mai 68* and *Marxismo abierto*.

Expelled from the Belgian Socialist Party for "Trotskyism" in 1964, he was to later support the Cuban revolution, and showed his solidarity with Che [Guevara] in his polemic with Charles Bettelheim. In 1968 Mandel was expelled from France for his participation in May 1968. He was later expelled from both the Germanys for the same reason. In Spain he participated in several university and political forums of all kinds, giving a particular support to the Revolutionary Communist League, today Izquierda Alternativa (Alternative Left).

His double investment, as economist and as revolutionary, implied an intense level of activity, which had an effect on his health, particularly in the last years of his life. His rigour in the defence of his convictions, free of all sectarianism, and his admirable "optimism of the spirit" enabled him to win considerable affection and sympathy among all those who had the chance to come to know him. Despite any political differences.

# EL PAIS

**WITH THE ARRIVAL** of perestroika, Mandel wrote *Où va l'URSS de Gorbatchov?*, and later on *Power and Money: A Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy*. In these two works he exposes the contradictions of the Soviet system, and argues for a "third way", an alternative to bureaucratic planning and the restoration of capitalism.

His whole intellectual activity was intimately linked to his practical engagement in the Fourth International, of which he was one of the principle leaders.



Ernest MANDEL  
1923-1995



## *The Trotskyist thinker dies of a heart attack at the age of 73: Ernest Mandel, the itinerant of an obstinate militant*

*Le Soir, Belgium, 22-23 July 1995*

*by Jean Pierre Stroobants*

ERNEST MANDEL faded away in Brussels this Thursday, the victim of a heart attack. Marxist theoretician, economist, tireless militant, he was one of the most famous and prestigious members of the Fourth International, founded by Lev Trotsky in 1938. He took the wheel of the Belgian section after the second world war, and remained a militant until the end of his life, particularly within the Socialist Workers' Party (POS/SAP).

Through his political activities and his scientific work, Ernest Mandel was without a doubt one of the Belgian intellectuals the best known abroad.

Several months after his birth in Frankfurt, his family moved to Antwerp. He would later study in the capital, but also in the ULB (Flemish university in Brussels), at the Sorbonne (Paris), and in Berlin. Perfectly quadrilingual, he also understood Russian, which helped him to study the classical texts of socialism in the original.

At the age of 16 he became active in the workers' movement, and in 'the Fourth'. Later on he joined the resistance. He was arrested three times, and sent to a concentration camp.

Shortly after the liberation of Belgium, he joined the international leadership of the Trotskyist movement. From 1954 to 1963 he was a member of the economic commission of the Belgian General Labour Federation (FGTB/ABVV). He also wrote for *Le Peuple* and *La Wallonie*. But his relation-

ship with the classical left was always stormy. Mandel fustigated social democracy for what he considered to be its wheeler-dealing with the bourgeoisie and with capitalism. This no doubt explains why his thinking has never found real support or a real echo on the Belgian left, which has been traditionally suspicious of the Trotskyists. Nor was Mandel much more favourably disposed to the fleeting 'Eurocommunist' trend, which he demolished in a book in 1978.

## LE SOIR

Stifled in Belgium, Mandel attracted considerable audiences abroad. He was a friend of the revolutionary leader Che Guevara. In 1963 he was invited to participate in the debate on reforms under way in Cuba. He subsequently participated in numerous revolutionary meetings round the world, attracting the thunder of Germany, Australia, the United States, Switzerland and France, all of whom closed their borders to him.

His books too would make him famous far beyond Belgium's borders. Books like *Marxist Economic Theory* were presented at the time as a successful attempt to modernise the thinking of Karl Marx. Mandel taught economics at the

Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where he also studied the structure of capitalism and its crises (*La Crise 1974-1978*, Flammarion).

In 1984 he told *Le Soir* "After the liberation, the bourgeoisie, concerned with social peace and reformism, deliberately chose the path of expansion, full employment and social security. Nowadays, they are tempted to return to the ideas and practices of the 19th century, with the secret hope that the weakening of the labour movement by the economic crisis will enable them to avoid paying the price of this operation. In other words, the end of consensus".

At the time of his death, he was working on a book on the relationship between capitalism and criminality.

Advocate of self-management, how did he explain its disastrous results in Yugoslavia or Poland? "The self-management which failed was a system without political democracy"

More than any other cause, Mandel wanted to defend the cause of Trotsky. For over four decades, Mandel demanded of the USSR that it admit that Trotsky was neither a Gestapo spy nor a terrorist, as Stalinist propaganda had claimed.

The militant's last demand before his death was to be buried in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, near the wall of the Communards. A family ceremony will be held in Antwerp next week.



# Mandel, a great figure of Trotskyism

Ernest MANDEL  
1923-1995

*Le Monde, France, 22 July 1995*

by Laurent Mauduit

**ONE OF THE GREAT NAMES** of post-war Trotskyism has disappeared: the reputed economist Ernest Mandel, leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (of which the French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) of Alain Krivine is member), died following a heart attack in Brussels on 20 July.

Born 5 April 1922 in Frankfurt, Germany, Mandel's story is much more than the story of the organisation he was an activist in. Not that he didn't participate in any of its struggles. He participated in the resistance against the Nazi occupation of Belgium, alongside Abraham Leon, author of *A Materialist Conception of the Jewish Question*. Deported to a labour camp, Mandel managed to escape. After the liberation, he organised one of the currents of the Belgian trades union and socialist movement.

In the following years, his path matches that of his movement. As a supporter of the proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie and the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, he visits Yugoslavia to show that Tito is not the "fascist" Moscow claims. Later on he is in Cuba, discussing with 'El Che' [Guevara] and advising Castro.

After the events of May 1968, which he participated in Mandel was barred from entering France. He was excluded again from 1972 to 1981. But he took a crafty pleasure in playing cat and mouse with the police, holding dozens of secret press conferences in Paris.

Ernest Mandel was much more than one of the great figures of the post-war European far left. He was also an intellectual. His general cultural level was impressive. Which had an effect, not only on his own movement, but on the spirit of

the student movement of the 1960's. A professor at the Free University of Brussels, he was involved in every struggle in town.

He published an increasing number of articles in *France-Observateur* under the pseudonym Ernest Germain, to show the continued relevance of the Marxist critique of political economy.

The best-known of his many publications are *Marxist Economic Theory*, translated into 20 languages, and *Le troisième âge du capitalisme*. He was animated by one conviction: the technological revolution, presented by some of his critics as a way out for capitalism in fact only gives the system a passing breath of oxygen, because the massive substitution of 'dead labour' — in other words forced automation — undermine the very foundations of capitalism, which is governed by the law of value, or in other words by the exploitation of salaried labour.

His curious spirit drew him towards many other fields. He was always to be seen in a three-piece suit worthy of a petty-bourgeois, though he played more the role of travelling salesman of the permanent revolution. He was also a passionate reader of police and detective novels, devoted to the point of writing *Exquisite Murders*.

He was seriously ill for the last two years of his life. During his last visit in France he participated in a debate organised by the review *Politis* concerning Jacques Kergoat's book on Marceau Pivert.



## Le Monde

**A KNOWING AUTHOR**, Mandel was the great specialist of the theory of 'long waves' — cyclical movements affecting the capitalist economy — developed by the Russian economist Kondratiev. Mandel defended a purist conception of Marxism, of which Trotskyism saw itself as the continuation, against both the gradualist conceptions of the Communist Party, and the catastrophic conceptions of some other far-left currents at the time.

But he was not only an economist.

Ernest MANDEL  
1923-1995

# Power, money, Marxist theory

## *Power and Money: A Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy*

by Ernest Mandel, Verso (New York and London, 1992) 252pp., \$18.95/£11.95

reviewed by Charlie Post

*Against the Current*

Chicago, June 1995

Over the past forty years, Ernest Mandel has been a central participant in almost every major discussion and debate among Marxist scholars and activists. Whether the issues involved the character and limits of the post-World War II “long-wave” of capitalist economic expansion<sup>1</sup>, the structure of the capitalist state, problems of revolutionary strategy in the advanced capitalist countries, the problem of revolutionary organization<sup>2</sup>, the origins and nature of the bureaucratized post-capitalist societies<sup>3</sup>, Ernest Mandel has made seminal contributions to these discussions from a non-dogmatic, but militantly classical, Marxist perspective. Recently, others on the left have embraced more trendy and academically acceptable theoretical positions— neo-Ricardian economics, Weberian sociology or post-structuralist/ post-modernist “critical theory.” By contrast, Mandel has attempted to develop and extend the insights of historical mate-

rialism (the foundation of all social life in the social relations and material forces of production) to new problems and phenomena not anticipated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg or Trotsky.

His latest work, *Power and Money: A Marxist Theory of Bureaucracy*, summarizes Mandel’s earlier investigations of the problem of bureaucracy. He reiterates his critique of Stalinist, social-democratic and bourgeois-liberal theories that deny the possibility of democratically organized workers’ power in the modern world. He maintains that bureaucracy — the usurpation of power by a minority of officials and experts — is not an “inevitable” product of complex, modern, “rational” societies. Instead, bureaucracy is the product of specific, historically limited relations among human beings and between human beings and the natural world— of specific social relations and material forces of production. Although his broad sweep often results in a lack of conceptual cohesion, Mandel defends and extends the classical revolutionary Marxist analysis of the labor bureaucracy in capitalist societies and the bureaucratic ruling groups in post-capitalist societies.

The emergence of bureaucracies in both the mass working class parties (social-democratic and Stalinist) and unions under capitalism and in the post-capitalist societies is rooted in the reproduction of the social division of labor between mental-supervisory and manual labor. In the case of the labor bureaucracy and the professional reformist parliamentarians, the reproduction of the division of labor between “head” and “hand” work flows from the episodic character of working class struggle. The demands of survival in capitalist society prevent the mass of workers from consistent activity in strikes, demonstrations and political life. The task of administering the institutions created by the periodic upsurges of mass activity, whether unions or political parties, falls to a distinct layer of full-time labor officials and parliamentary politicians. Removed from the daily humiliations of the capitalist labor process and free to work “for the workers’ cause”, the labor bureaucracy consolidates these and new privileges (higher incomes in particular) by excluding rank and file activists in the unions and parties from any real decision making power.

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*Charlie Post teaches sociology in New York City, has been active in the rank and file organizing in the American Federation of Teachers, and is a member of Solidarity and a supporter of the Fourth International.]*

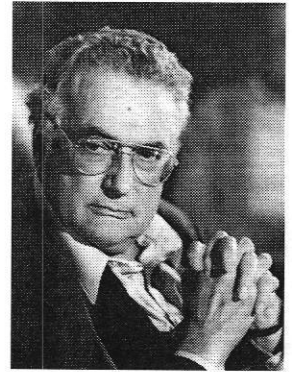
**Ernest MANDEL**  
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In the case of bureaucratic ruling groups in the post-capitalist societies, the reproduction of the mental-manual division of labor is rooted in the material scarcity that has marked all of the societies where capitalism has been overthrown. Isolated in relatively underdeveloped capitalist social formations, all of the anti-capitalist revolutions of the twentieth century have faced the dilemma of building a new, collectivist social order in the face of extreme poverty—not the conditions of abundance the Marxian tradition believed was a necessary precondition for the construction of socialism. A layer of full-time state officials separate from the mass of workers emerged first to administer the distribution of scarce goods and services among the population. The bureaucracy consolidated its control over the state institutions and the state owned means of production as all opposition, particularly from the working class or peasantry, was dispersed and disorganized by their single-party monopoly of political power.

The bureaucracies in both the capitalist and post-capitalist societies, as they consolidate their power and privilege, develop a distinctive world view—substitutionism. Fearing that new waves of workers' struggles in the capitalist countries, or active, democratic participation in social and economic life by the producers in the post-capitalist countries would

undermine the institutions that provide them with important material advantages over the bulk of the working class, both the labor bureaucracy and post-capitalist state bureaucrats claim that their continued, unchallenged power is necessary to defend the hard fought for gains achieved by workers in both the east and west. Thus the "dialectic of partial conquests" (establishment of ongoing workers' organizations in the west, the overthrow of capitalism in the east) gives rise to a privileged layer of full time officials who embrace an "organizational fetishism"—the belief that the preservation of existing institutions takes priority over advancing the struggles of the workers and their allies.

**FROM HERE** it is one short step to replacing the tumultuous self-activity and self-organization of working and oppressed people with the more staid methods of the labor bureaucracy (electoralism, bureaucratized collective bargaining, etc.) or the more barbaric methods of the post-capitalist bureaucracies (single party rule, repression, restriction on the rights to strike and organize, terror, etc.) as the best method of defending the interests of the working class. In sum, bureaucratic hegemony, whether over working class institutions in capitalist societies or over state institutions in post-capitalist societies, is



explained and justified ideologically by putting the "farsighted wisdom" of union officials or party-state bosses in the place of the democratic self-organization and activity of working people.

**MANDEL** spends considerable time pointing out the disastrous effects of bureaucratization on both the struggles of working people under capitalism and on the construction of a viable post-capitalist society. The social-democratic substitution of electoral politics and routinized collective bargaining for working class and popular mass action has led to a profound disorganization and passivity in the ranks of organized labor in the west since the Second World War. While such bureaucratic forms of "struggle" were able to "deliver the goods" in the form of higher wages, improved benefits, stabilized working conditions and increased capitalist state welfare spending during the "long wave" of expansion of the 1950s and 1960s, this strategy proved completely inadequate during the "long wave" of stagnation that began in the late 1960s. As the crisis of capitalist profitability deepened, social-democracy's substitutionism gave way to *realpolitik*—adapting to the new "reality" of declining living and working conditions:

**[T]he underlying assumption of present-day social-democratic gradualism is precisely this: Let the capitalists produce the goods, so that governments can redistribute them in a just way. But what if capi-**

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**talist production demands more unequal, more unjust distribution of the 'fruits of growth'? What if there is no economic growth at all as a result of capitalist crisis? The gradualists can then only repeat mechanically: there is no alternative; there is no way out.**

**(p.236)**

Eschewing militancy and direct action by workers and other oppressed people, the labor bureaucracy and reformist politicians in the west have *no choice* but to make concessions to the employers' offensive and to administer capitalist state austerity. The spectacle of reformist bureaucrats shunning the struggle for reforms has been repeated across the capitalist world in the last two decades with tragic results: from the concession bargaining of the US AFL-CIO officials, to the Mitterrand regimes' budget cuts, privatization and deregulation, to the subjugation of an ANC-COSATU led government in post-apartheid South Africa to what some have called the "sado-monetarism" of the IMF and World Bank<sup>4</sup>. The bureaucratization of the centrally planned economies in the east has had equally disastrous results according to Mandel. By substituting the party-state officialdom for the democratic decisions of workers and consumers; the Stalinized command economies are left without any mechanism for insuring the long-term and continuous development of labor productivity. While the post-capita-

list bureaucracies were capable of organizing *extensive* growth, forcing millions of uprooted peasants to labor in plants that merely reproduced the labor processes of the capitalist west, they floundered when faced with organizing *intensive* growth, replacing labor with new technologies and producing new items of consumption. Lacking either the "whip of competition" that ensures that each capitalist firm continuously reduces necessary labor through mechanization (with its deleterious effect on the rate of profit), or democratic control over economic decisions by "associated producers" with an interest in reducing their labor time and increasing the provision of the necessities of life, the bureaucratic economies are under no economic or political compulsion to develop new technique or economize on the use of resources. The result is that

**"a general lack of responsibility, and indifference to the factory's performance is therefore a characteristic feature of the system and threatens the USSR with stagnation and decline."**

**(p.42)**

The fate of the bureaucratic command economies in Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR tragically confirmed Mandel's thesis.

Mandel concludes *Power and Money* with an elaborate discussion of the conditions for the development of a viable democratic socialism following a victorious workers' anti-bureaucratic revolution in the east (as unlikely as that possibility may seem today). While Mandel concedes that commodity production and exchange will not be completely and

immediately abolished (particularly in agriculture), the changing boundaries of plan and market, like the character of the plan itself must be subject to the democratic decision of the "associated producers." Mandel's vision of a "self-administered" economy involves the articulation of democratic bodies (whose officials are elected by the entire adult population, subject to immediate recall and are paid the average salary of a skilled worker) at the international, national, industrial and office, factory or neighborhood level, where:

**Decisions should be taken at the level at which they can most easily be implemented And they should be taken at the level where the greatest percentage of people actually affected by them can be involved in the decision-making process.**

**(p. 213)**

Put simply, international and national bodies should be empowered to draw up the basic outlines of the economic plan (and the boundary between plan and market), while industrial, regional or plan-office bodies should decide how to implement their particular parts of the plan in consultation with those who will use their product<sup>5</sup>.

In order for democratic "self-administration" to be effective, the working class must be able to express their needs and desires in the planning process, and there must be mechanisms for the correction of social and economic miscalculations. According to Mandel, *political pluralism* — the right of all political currents (including ideologically pro-capitalist tendencies) to organize political parties, have



access (in proportion to their numbers) to the media and to organize demonstrations and other non-violent actions to advance their particular view point— is required to allow the working class, all its heterogeneity, to effectively control the planning process. Mandel also recognizes that formally democratic institutions and the rigorous guarantee of political rights for all sectors of the population, while a *necessary* condition for democratic socialist rule, is not *sufficient*. There are also crucial social and economic conditions, most importantly the radical reduction of working time for the mass of the population so that all “have the time to administer the affairs of their workplace or neighborhood” (p. 202). Such a reduction of the working day, so that most of humanity can spend 3-4 hours a day in the production of goods or provision of services and another 3-4 hours a day in the work of social self-administration (where everyone, and no one, becomes a “bureaucrat”), is premised on a fairly high level of material abundance and development of the productivity of labor. This, Mandel asserts, will only be possible when not only bureaucratic rule has been replaced in the east, but capitalism has been overthrown in a number of advanced industrial societies and their vast productive potential freed.

**WHILE MOST** of the ideas presented in *Power and Money* are developed in his other writings on the ex-USSR and the problem of bureaucracy, Mandel does present some new historical and theoretical insights. Sensitive to the “Green” critique of both capitalist and bureaucratic economies, Mandel’s analysis of the relationship of different forms of social and economic organization to the physical environment is original and provocative. Mandel address two objections to the Marxian vision of socialism raised by environmental activists in the last two decades. The first is the notion that the Marxian vision of a future society based upon the abolition of material scarcity would place an unbearable strain on the physical resources of the planet and lead to an ecological disaster. Mandel points to the scale of socially wasted resources under both capitalism and the bureaucratic command economies. The immediate abolition of the arms industry alone would free up tremendous resources for socially useful production (based upon renewable energy sources, environmentally safe technologies, etc.) that could provide an adequate standard of living for the bulk of the worlds’ population without thrusting new demands upon the

finite capacities of the earth. As the basic, material needs for physical security and gratification (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education) are met, priority can be given to meeting the non-material needs for “self-actualization” (cultural, intellectual and personal development), needs whose satisfaction do not require utilizing finite natural resources.

The second “Green” critique of Marxism, based upon the experience of ecological disaster in the former USSR and Eastern Europe, claims that centrally planned economies are no more ecologically friendly than market-capitalist economies. For Mandel, the destruction of the environment in the east flows from the same bureaucratic mismanagement that gave rise to systematic waste of labor power and other resources. In other words, the absence of any democratic accountability on the parts of central planners and industrial managers allowed them to systematically befoul the physical environment in the east. By contrast, a democratically planned economy has the potential to avoid the ecological disasters that characterize both capitalism and the bureaucratic command economies. Workers and consumers actively involved in formulating and implementing an economic plan have a direct interest in developing labor processes that will neither destroy the health of those directly involved in production, nor befoul the air and water that all must breath and drink.



1. Among his best known economic works are: *Marxist Economic Theory*, 2 Volumes (New York: Monthly Review, 1970); *Late Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1975); and *Long Waves of Capitalist Development: The Marxist Interpretation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

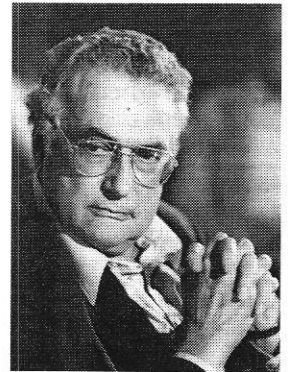
2. Among his political writings are: *Stalinism to Eurocommunism* (London: New Left Books, 1978); *Revolutionary Marxism Today* (London: New Left Books, 1979); and *Revolutionary Marxism and Social Reality in the 20th Century: Collected Essays* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1994).

3. Along with relevant sections of his economic writings, see: *On Bureaucracy: A Marxist Analysis* (London: IMG Pamphlets, n.d.); *Beyond Perestroika: The Fate of Gorbachev's USSR* (London: Verso Books, 1992), or his writings on the place of Marxism in the history of class society, “The Place of Marxism in History,” *Notebooks for Study and Research*, N° 1 (October 1986); *The Place of Marxism in History* (London: Verso, forthcoming).

4. A similar analysis of the dynamics of reformism is Robert Brenner, “The Paradox of Reformism” *Against the Current*, N° 43 (March-April 1993) 42-45.]

5. For a more detailed presentation see Mandel's “In Defense of Socialist Planning,” *New Left Review* N° 159 (September-October 1986), 5-38.]

Ernest MANDEL  
1923-1995



*“Understand that you cannot be happier than if you know that you have dedicated your life to this defense of human rights everywhere in the world; the defense of the exploited, the oppressed, the downtrodden, the despised. There is no better way to be a good human being in this world than to dedicate your life to this great cause. That’s why the future is with Marxism.”*

*Speech given at the New York Marxist School, 1993*

## Fundamentalists in local government

continued from page 8

**THE OFFENSIVE** of Refah has centred above all on symbolic questions; attempts to close down-town restaurant terraces where alcohol is consumed, changing street names, planning the construction of a large mosque on the central town square, removal from municipal parks of statues deemed "pornographic", ostentatious celebration of the conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans, collective prayers to find a solution to the lack of water, penny-pinching on the budgets of municipal theatres and ballets, nomination of Islamic cadres to key posts, nomination of secretaries in Islamic scarves to municipal positions (although those who do not wear scarves have not been dismissed) and so on.

But it should be noted that at each important symbolic attack the Islamic fundamentalist mayors have had to step back under pressure from public opinion, the media and the central institutions. In the social arena, the Islamic town halls have combined populist policies (sale of bread at reduced prices, improved municipal services, and so on) with practices typical of capitalist management (privatisations and layoffs in the municipal enterprises). Some mayors have even developed a taste for the management of public affairs and have pursued large scale municipal projects (construction of metros, urban planning, sewers, roads, and so on), favouring in the event the enterprises directed by fundamentalists close to the party, without neglecting collaboration with foreign investments (including from the West). All this, of course, involving some big commissions.

This election suited the state bourgeoisie perfectly well. It can exploit the situation either to totally integrate Refah into the system, softening its sharper "Islamic" edges, or to once again marginalise it, by revealing its incapacity to resolve problems, accelerating thus the disillusionment of the popular layers who had voted for it. The first process flows almost naturally, because of the corruption of Refah in its municipal strongholds and through a "moderate Islamicisation" of society with the agreement of the traditional parties of the centre right. The second process has two aspects. First, a project of reform of the political and electoral system and a restrained harassment of Refah by the secular bourgeois media. During the rerun of the municipal elections in three wards of Istanbul where the initial vote had been ruled invalid, fear of Refah pushed the secular electorate to cast a useful vote in favour of the best placed secular candidate. In other words, if an electoral system with two rounds was adopted, Refah could be cast aside by the regime.

**THE HARASSMENT** of Refah by the powerful and influential private television chains and the written press is done also henceforth in a more subtle fashion; the smallest deeds and gestures of Refah leaders and their new mayors are now brought to the screen, bringing into broad daylight their incompetence and amplifying the ziz-zags in their discourse. Accustomed to acting in the shadows, the party suddenly finds itself under the spotlight, which has considerably embarrassed it. Jolted from their routine, the party cadres have become even clumsier. Their authoritarian and totalitarian leanings have, then, quickly resurfaced and they have now developed an unabashed attitude of aggression towards their opponents, which has destroyed the credibility of their new "tolerant" image. Moreover, Refah projected itself as a clean party, in opposition to the corruption of the traditional parties, and as a party of the "poor" in opposition to the others who "defended the rich". But revelations on the illicit finances of the party, on the personal fortune of Erbakan, and above all press revelations (with proof) that Refah had diverted to its own funds some tens of millions of dollars

gathered from its own sympathisers under the form of a campaign of "financial aid for Bosnia", have dealt some very hard blows to this image.

Having said this, the new relationship of Refah with the media is not simply to the disadvantage of the fundamentalists. It will allow it also to address itself to wider layers. Some fundamentalists have also created their own private television stations to amplify their propaganda. So revelations on Refah's financial irregularities will not in themselves stop the party's growth in popularity, but could slow the rhythm.

Moreover, the image of the "clean party" is not Refah's sole argument; beyond the ideological domain, the fundamentalists' growth is fostered essentially by the economic, social cultural and moral crisis, as well as the international situation (in particular the Bosnian tragedy). The impasse on the Kurdish question is also an important factor. On this question, Refah follows a rather ambiguous policy. In essence, its position does not really differ from that of the state; territorial integrity and single national identity (but based on the religious community, rather than the nation) and opposition to the [insurrectionary] Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). In practice, on the other hand, Refah advocates reforms (teaching and television in the Kurdish language, suppression of the emergency legislation), combined with virulent critiques of "the common enemy of the Fundamentalists and the Kurdish nationalists". — Kemalism [the official ideology of anti-clericalism, nationalism and state-led modernisation]. But while Refah defends these positions in the Kurdish region, under the pressure of its local apparatus, it downplays the same themes in the west of the country and tries to give some sops to the army. And Refah deputies have even voted in favour of the lifting of parliamentary immunity for the Kurdish nationalist deputies of the DEP.

**THESE AMBIGUITIES** could place Refah in a very uncomfortable position in the future, for what it gains in sympathy among the Kurds of the south-west and Istanbul could well be lost among the conservative electorate of central Anatolia, who's support it competes for with the nationalist far right of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP). Refah tries to occupy also the terrain of nationalism, but with an anti-western and "third-worldist" discourse (with a few neo-Ottoman imperialist accents). But it is disconcerted by the rise of the MHP, which stresses pan-Turkism and national pride, and which attacks it for its positions on the Kurdish question. As for the centre right, incapable of surmounting its internal divisions, it contents itself to take up certain ideological and religious themes of the RP, so as to gain the confidence of this electorate, and present on its lists candidates linked to Islamic circles. Nonetheless, this does not stop these deputies from acting as submarines (as is the case currently during the parliamentary debates on the "democratic" reforms of the constitution). Moreover, this attitude is disastrous in terms of the ideological struggle against fundamentalism.

The evolution of Refah since its arrival in power in the municipalities shows that its future depends more on external factors than its own dynamic. Certainly, Refah mayors and leaders are going to attempt to continue this policy of implantation and of building nuclei in the state apparatus and their local fiefdoms. In particular they are going to accentuate their ideological offensive and try to score some points in this field, using to their advantage the deficiencies of the system. They will attempt to maintain and enlarge their electoral base while carrying out social policies in the areas they control.



# News Reports... News

Continued from back cover/ party elections, but she was prevented from taking power and placed under house arrest by the military State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

In her book, *Freedom from Fear* (Penguin, 1991) Aung San Suu Kyi spells out her political programme. It is one of western liberal democracy, founded on Buddhist ethics and sensibilities.

For the national minorities, she suggests that the removal of the dictatorship would resolve their grievances.

Much of the political initiative in recent years has been in the hands of the students living on the border and in Thailand, through the All Burma Students Democratic Front.

The NLD by comparison has been weak and divided. Some of its members have been participating in the SLORC's "National Convention" to draft a new constitution.

Most of the opposition has called for a boycott of this process, recognising it as a sham to legitimise military involvement in politics. How will Suu Kyi respond? A caged bird has been set free. Will it now be allowed to sing? And if so, whose tune will it choose?

by **K. Govindan, *Socialist Outlook*, August 1995**

## Fourth International Youth camp

This year's youth camp in solidarity with the Fourth International took place in France. The village of Launac, near Toulouse in the south-west of the country found its population doubled by the arrival of some 800 young people from all over western Europe and also from Poland and Slovenia.

The opening meeting was an occasion to pay tribute to Ernest Mandel, who had died just two days before the opening of the camp. Though Ernest's name was certainly less familiar to this year's participants than to militants of previous generations, the evocation of his life and political contribution moved the hall, culminating in the singing of the Internationale in (at least) the nine 'official' languages of the camp.

Every camp is an occasion for reinforcing internationalism, as participants explain the situation in their countries, and exchange their experiences of struggle against education cuts, racism and the growth of the far right, and attacks on women's access to contraception and abortion facilities. To make our international solidarity work as concrete as possible, the French comrades had made a special fund-raising effort so as to invite comrades from Chiapas, Mexico, and Dakar, Senegal to outline the situation in their countries, and the different forms resistance there is taking.

Adama Soumaré explained the disastrous effects of the IMF and World Bank-imposed Structural Adjustment Plan on Senegal. Together with the Swiss participants from Alternative Solidaire, he discussed the struggle of Senegalese students against the austerity measures, and presented the Swiss-run solidarity campaign to support victimised student activists.

Gabriel Ramirez reported from the struggle of the indigenous peoples in Chiapas state, southern Mexico, and gave his impressions of the Zapatista (EZLN) uprising. He also explained the sense of the Zapatista-led national consultation.

Those concerned with former Yugoslavia could also meet with Danish Member of Parliament Søren Søndergaard (Red-Green

Alliance/Unity List), one of the leading organisers of the International Workers Aid (IWA) Bosnia campaign.

For this camp the organisers had established a "permanent commission on international solidarity", which tried to bring participants from different countries together to plan common solidarity work over the coming year. Projects discussed included the organisation of an all-European "Caravan for Chiapas" and the co-ordinated preparation of demonstrations during the June 1996 G7 summit in Lyon, France.

While international solidarity remained the central theme of the camp, other themes selected by the participating organisations included young peoples' struggles today, equality of rights, racism, the new moral order, and the fight for women's right to choose.

Daniel Bensaid of the French Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) used the closing forum to sketch the lines of "the society we want", the criteria for assessing true egalitarianism, notably the elimination of oppressive relations between women and men.

Not all the exchange of information and experience took place in the forums and workshops. Comrades from the region organised visits to the city of Toulouse and a local vineyard, and included local specialities like cassoulet (meat and bean stew), confit de canard (duck in lard) and French cheeses on the camp menu. The Danish delegation organised a "night run" for 100 enthusiastic participants. Others participated in the "penguin football" competition, or danced to the music of some 10 local groups, playing free of charge as an act of solidarity with the camp.

Our camp can never really be an "island of socialism" for one week in the year. But we again proved that it is possible to provide a different setting for daily life. As in previous years, the evening of music, dance and games animated by the lesbian and gay participants encouraged all those present to reflect on how our behaviour is governed - and limited - by the sexual norms of society. The women-only space and party encouraged women to establish a solidarity and sisterhood between them.

Having come together to express our internationalism and live in solidarity, the task before us is to build and develop working links over the coming year. As well as the solidarity campaigns mentioned above, work is under way on a common pamphlet outlining the state of the education system across Europe, and the prospects for student resistance.

To get involved in these activities, and to reserve your place for the thirteenth camp next year, contact your local youth organisation in solidarity with the Fourth International. Write to *International Viewpoint* for the address of the nearest group to you



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## 1.2 m. Mexicans respond to EZLN

Some 1.2 million Mexicans participated in the 27 August "national consultation" initiated by the Zapatista movement. With 41% of the votes counted as IV went to press, 56% of respondents had declared support for the central proposition that the Zapatista National Liberation Army transform itself into a political force.

The massive pre-consultation discussions, the creation of over 1,000 voting stations, and the counting and analysis of the results — without one cent of public finance — is an event without precedent in Mexico. EZLN leader Subcomandante Marcos had previously said that the consultation could only be considered a success if at least 600,000 Mexicans, representing all regions of the country participated. In the event, 400,000 people participated in the capital city alone. While the response was much stronger in the more indigenous, more peasant southern states (Chiapas, Tabasco, Oaxaca, Veracruz) than in the industrial, 'white' north, participation was clearly nation-wide.

"The provisional results demonstrate that the Zapatistas are not isolated", IV's Mexico specialist Braulio Moro reported on 30.08.95. "Large sectors of the population... have sent a clear, precise message to the Mexican government: We want democracy and we will not wait passively and patiently."

While a majority of participants seem to support the transformation of the Zapatistas into a political force, there is less support for the idea of a merger of the rebels with other political forces into a wider left organisation (48% against, 43% for).

"When the EZLN announced this initiative in mid-June, some of us doubted the sense of the project, in that they proposed to realise the consultation at the international level too," continues Braulio Moro. It is now clear that the Zapatista leadership was right.

"Obviously, the fact that a large layer of the population, despite its discontentment with the crisis in the country, remained outside the consultation should be something that leads to the redoubling of efforts to integrate such people into the popular democratic bloc which is emerging, not without difficulty, in the country."

Direct negotiations between the government and the Zapatistas will continue on 5 September in San Andres de las Pobres, in Chiapas state.

## British Bosnia Solidarity Campaign

An estimated 5,000 people marched through central London on 22 July, in the country's biggest demonstration yet in support of multi-ethnic Bosnia.

Marchers demanded "Stop the rape of Bosnia!", "Break the arms embargo!", and "End UN collusion with genocide". Many marchers carried placards with the slogan "UN out!", though others seemed to be equivocal on this question.

Speeches demanded the lifting or breaking of the embargo in order to enable the mainly Moslem government in Sarajevo to acquire arms.

The march and meeting were called by the Alliance to Defend

Bosnia-Herzegovina, Workers Aid for Bosnia, the Muslim Solidarity Committee, and the Jewish Socialist Group. Dozens of other groups supported the march, including Socialist Outlook (British section of the Fourth International) and International Workers' Aid.

The various groups have now established a broad Bosnia Solidarity Campaign "to continue the political struggle for a multi-ethnic Bosnia and against genocide and fascism".

As yet, the campaign has neither address nor telephone number. For more information contact Socialist Outlook. : 0181/800 7460

## Dutch Internationalists Congress

*Delegates, party members and guests from all over the country met near Utrecht on 17-18 June for the first part of the 13th congress of the Socialist Workers' Party (SAP — Netherlands section of the Fourth International).*

*The congress reflected many of the same debates and differences as the recent congress of the Fourth International (see International Viewpoint #268), as comrades try to grasp the new political situation. 30% of delegates supported a minority counter-resolution concerning tasks and perspectives.*

*The main resolution dealt with tasks and perspectives in the framework of the offensive of the right, European unification and the resistance of the left. Congress also discussed the reorganisation of SAP publications, including the production of a common monthly with a number of other publishers, originally from the anarchist-autonomous tradition, but having developed their political thinking since. Other aspects of the reorganisation of our press could also include a new party bi-monthly. The minority however presented a resolution to improve the current monthly, Grenzeloos ('Without Frontiers', 'Without Limits'). Discussion on the press and on building the organisation will continue in the second part of the congress in September.*

## Burmese Opposition leader freed

Aung San Suu Kyi's unconditional release from house arrest on 12 July 1995 has raised the spirits of opponents of the ruling military junta. Yet the release of the Nobel Peace Prize winner may reflect the self-confidence of the regime, rather than its weakness. Several of the armies of the seven ethnic minority groups in revolt have concluded separate peace agreements with the regime, relieving some of the pressure on government forces in the strategically important border regions, where tens of thousands of Burmese, mainly students and young Buddhist monks, fled after the 1988 repression of the brief "pro-democracy" movement.

The student refugees found protection and common cause with ethnic minority armies which have been fighting separatist struggles against Yangon (Rangoon) for decades. These two forces formed a National Coalition Government for the Union of Burma. The regime had succeeded in making its two bitterest enemies into friends!

Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won 392 of the 485 seats in the 1990 multi-

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