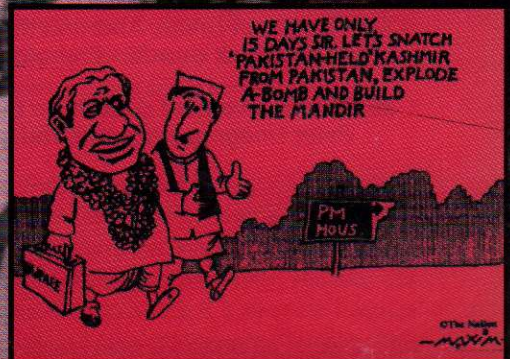


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Racism and resistance

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**Indian
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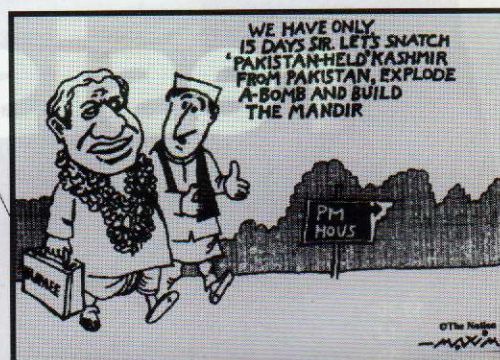


Racism and resistance p. 3-11

Marxist thinker and activist Ernest Mandel, one of the founders of **International Viewpoint**, passed away one year ago. A seminar on Ernest's contribution to Marxist theory will be held in Amsterdam on 4-6 July, 1996 to inaugurate the new Ernest Mandel Study Centre at the International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE). We will publish a report on the proceedings next month.



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Indian elections p. 25-28

Europol – the policeman's dream

The closing of the walls around the European Union and the removal of the internal borders between the member states is being followed by the building of a huge network of control and surveillance of the "undesirable" population as a whole. Maybe including you.

By Mads Bruun Pedersen



SECRECY IS THE SLOGAN UNDER WHICH THE governments of the European Union has been working for the last five years to fulfil the dream of a supernational European police force. There is little or no public information or discussion of the project. Civil liberties and basic human rights are being undermined and threatened.

The case of the Spanish Proposal

Shortly after Spain took over the Presidency of the European Union in July 1995, a working group under the EU Commission put forward a document which it had been working on for some time. It contained proposals for guidelines for the work of the analysis databases of Europol. These databases are supposed to be the spine of Europol's intelligence work.

Europol's Database

- Personal information about criminals and "potential offenders" is stored in the Information System at the Europol headquarters in the Hague, Netherlands. Europol staff and national police units have access to this information.
- Europol staff also have access to the Analysis Registers, a huge collection of non-personal information and "soft facts" about potential witnesses, potential victims, informers, contact persons and others.
- Only senior Europol staff (the liaison officers) have the right to consult the index to the system.

This document, which was presented to the governments of the EU countries but not the parliaments, outlined the criteria according to which personal information could be stored and processed in the central databases.

It was specifically stated that information about a persons political views, religious convictions, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and health situation should be able to be stored and processed!

Not just convicted criminals and wanted persons will be registered in the computer system. The Europol Convention authorises the creation of files on non-criminals and non-wanted person such as "contact-persons," "potential witnesses", and even "potential victims."

The Spanish proposal was not published for public debate. The intention was that it be circulated among a very small circle of politicians, civil servants and government representatives. For years now, these people have been working in secrecy to prepare the Europol Convention, which was finally signed by all EU countries on 26 July 1995. The current priority is drafting implementing directives for those parts of the Convention

which were left open. The level of secrecy is as high as it was during the drafting of the convention itself.

The Spanish proposal was, however, leaked to the press, creating an outcry in some EU countries, and questions to the relevant ministers in various national parliaments. As a result, the proposal was replaced by a draft prepared by the Italian presidency of the EU. This new proposal maintains the possibility of recording the same information as proposed in the Spanish original! "Lifestyle," "behaviour" and "movement" can all be recorded, according to regulations... which will be further specified at a later date in a special rule book!

This Spanish incident illustrates the way Europol works. And it reveals the way the decision-makers, bureaucrats and politicians who are developing Europe-wide policing actually think about our civil liberties and human rights. These people live in a world where they feel so powerful that they can strike off a few civil liberties, without expecting any resistance from us or inconvenience to them. The continuing development of Europol suggests that, unfortunately, they are right.

Union detectives

Secrecy has been the key word ever since German Chancellor Helmut Kohl raised the idea of a European police force at a European Council meeting in June 1991. His idea was integrated into Article K.1 #9 of the Treaty of European Union ("Maastricht Treaty"). This places the question in the "third pillar" of Maastricht: a matter of "common interest": to be negotiated at the inter-governmental level,



★ European Union

rather than of "Union interest", to be handled by the European Commission, with procedure subject to Community law.

The idea of a "European FBI" is not new. Politicians and police chiefs came together, from the late 1970s, in the TREVI group, a structure of working committees on fighting terrorism, crime, and narcotics. It was here that they laid the ground for a more structured Europe-wide police force. Serious discussion started in the late 1980s.

Operational tasks



Europol is presently designated as an intelligence service, without operational authority. But the reference to Europol in the "Maastricht" Treaty of European Union is care-

fully worded so as not to exclude future operational tasks being allocated to the body.

Article K. 1 (9) refers to "the organisation of a Union-wide system for exchanging information within a European Police Office (Europol)." And, in a separate Declaration on Police Cooperation, "Member States agree to consider, on the basis of a report, during 1994 at the latest, whether the scope of such co-operation should be extended."¹ No such steps have yet been taken. But this is mainly due to the slow process of ratifying the Europol Convention in the member states.

The Convention specifies the purpose of Europol as fighting "terrorism, unlawful drug trafficking and other serious forms of international crime." This last point is specified as including crimes connected with nuclear and radioactive substances, smuggling of illegal immigrants, theft of goods in transit from one member state to another, and illegal sale of

stolen motor vehicles in another state.

There is some conflict between the member states about the definition and priority of "terrorism" within Europol's mission. Greece and Spain in particular want to give high priority to this point, widened to include crimes against life, freedom from bodily harm and personal freedom, crimes against the state, and crimes against property. These crime forms have been added to the Convention as Annex 22. This means that they can be added to the primary tasks of Europol at a later date.

Police without control

There is no parliamentary or independent control over the implementation of the Europol Convention. The body is governed by a Board of Representatives appointed by the member states. Unlike other international organisations like the Council of Europe, there is not even the partial openness of the process through an obligation of report to a parliamentary assembly or democratic institution of any kind.

Disputes between member states over the interpretation of the Convention are to be resolved by the European Court of Justice in Luxemburg. Though Britain and some other states are strongly opposed to giving the European Court any role, which has so far proved to be a stone in the shoe of the project.

But in March 1996 the EU Justice and Home Affairs Council decided to move along with the rest of the implementing rules, and leave this European Court question to be solved later. Most member states seem to hope that Britain will give up its resistance when the moment comes to approve the whole project, and the implementation of Europol is waiting to be set in motion.

Walls and controls

Europol will not be the only European organisation devoted to the control of the population. The Schengen Agreement² has already contributed to the new, higher walls round "Fortress Europe." The number of asylum seekers able to make a claim in the European Union is declining drastically. The

holes in the wall have been plugged with visa requirements, carrier sanctions, harmonised asylum policy, and tighter border controls at the external frontiers.

The results of this policy are made visible from time to time, as refugees are found dead in containers, washed up on beaches, and when stowaways are thrown overboard when discovered.

A refugee must now protect himself not only from his persecutors, but also from those who try to take advantage of his vulnerability on the way to seeking asylum in an EU country. The more difficult it is to get inside the wall, the more desperate people get, and the easier it is for professional criminals to take advantage of them. A whole "industry" for "helping" refugees, and separating them from their money, has blossomed in the buffer states to the east and south of the European Union.

The internal walls between EU countries are being torn down, to facilitate the free movement of the workforce. But this has not reduced the authorities "need" to control the population. Border control has disappeared from the geographical internal borders, and been replaced by a generalised control over migration across the EU territory.

The Europol Convention is one device for ensuring these new mechanisms of control. The Schengen Agreement is another, introducing new measures for cross-border police cooperation, and shared information systems. There is the central EURODAC computer register of digitised fingerprints of asylum seekers. And the Dublin Convention, which sets standards for handling asylum applications. A range of other agreements set new standards for border control, customs co-operation, common telecommunication surveillance and message-tapping, and encryption of data transmission.

Separately and together, these measures constitute a very serious threat to civil liberties and basic human rights. Not just for refugees and immigrants, who are the first to feel the new system working, but for the residents of Europe in general. ★

Remember this?

- Russian left demonstrates against Chechnya war
- Salvador's FMLN becomes a single party
- Indian feminists debate the UN Conference on Women
- 1 million African Americans march in Washington DC

The bound collection of International Viewpoint costs only £5/\$ US 10 per year (1982-1995), plus 20% postage charge for orders of less than 5 volumes.



Notes

1. Mentioned in *States of Injustice: A guide to human rights and civil liberties in the European Union*, by Michael Spencer, London, Pluto (1995), p.158
2. See Albert Rochal, "Building fortress Europe," *International Viewpoint* #266, May 1995, pp. 30-31.

"I want to see my file!"

A public commission set up by the Norwegian parliament has revealed police surveillance of the left on a scale that even surprised even the most informed critics. Revelations of the intimate collaboration of leading members of the Labour Party with the police has sent shock-waves through the public. And many people have lost their illusions about the "neutral," "classless" nature of the state.

Anders Ekland

THE INTELLIGENCE AND SURVEILLANCE departments of the army and police were heavily compromised by their collaboration with the Nazis and quisling forces during World War II. After liberation, they were rebuilt almost from scratch, and staffed by reliable social-democrats linked to the wartime exile government in London.

Surveillance of communists was one of the major tasks of the new structures. The Labour Party had no scruples using the archives on communists collected by the Nazis during the war. Recent reports by a parliamentary commission show that this task has continued to absorb the Surveillance services.

Labour Party collaboration

Their firm grip on the Surveillance Police allowed Labour Party leaders to listen to tapes of the meetings of the Norwegian Communist Party. And when expelled members of the Labour Party formed the Socialist Peoples Party in 1960, they were put under immediate police surveillance. After 1968, Norway's influential Maoist movement was also the target of a massive surveillance programme.

The Lund Commission recently revealed the existence of over 50,000 personal files in the buildings of the Surveillance Department of the Norwegian police. The establishment is scandalised by these revelations. Why? Mainly because some conservative politicians have always been dissatisfied with the political monopoly that the Labour Party had over this business. They even suspected that they themselves were being surveyed! This is why the Lund Commission was set up in the first place. The Labour Party was strongly against any real inquiry.

Pressure for a real inquiry was also generated by the revelations of Ronald Bye, former General Secretary of the Labour Party, who was ousted from the party leadership

following a corruption scandal. Bye took his revenge by writing a series of books exposing the illegal surveillance that had been taking place, organised by Labour.

"Public opinion" began to favour an impartial inquiry. And it became near impossible for the establishment not to include well known leftwingers like Berge Furre professor of history, and former leader of the Socialist Left Party in the commission. This was a change from previous commissions, which had, obviously, consisted entirely of persons loyal to the establishment.

The scale of the operations

What most shocks the public is the scale of the whole affair. A special room was set aside in the building of the Norwegian Trade Union Congress, a special room was made for taping meetings held in the building, and writing resumes of the recordings. This went on routinely for decades! These reports were submitted to leading members of the Labour Party, including its General Secretary, and to the Prime Minister.

The surveillance of the newly-created Socialist Peoples Party, went so far that microphones was placed in the cottage of the party leader, with a police officer stationed nearby, monitoring every single word said inside.

There was massive phone tapping of all kinds of people suspected of participation in revolutionary, left-wing, or peace movement activities persons. Before 1960, much of this activity was illegal. After 1960 most of the phone tapping was formally legal. And special judges that handled such cases denied the police the opportunity to phone-tapping in fewer than ten cases! The rest of the time they just sat in the offices of the Surveillance Police and signed the documents presented to them for authorisation.

There was continuous photographing of

passports and registration of everybody who went to the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe, no matter what the purpose of the trip was. Every cultural event organised in the East by the Norwegian Foreign department was routinely reported to the Surveillance Police.

Employment blacklists

What shocked people most was the control exercised by the Surveillance Police over individuals' careers. A huge majority of people in Norway assumed that this kind of behaviour was limited to totalitarian regimes. "It couldn't happen here," they said.

In the iron-mines in Northern Norway, Surveillance decided who could get a job in the mines, and who couldn't. This had nothing to do with military or other "state secrets". But the Labour party did not want communists to influence the trade-unions. When a communist got the post of welfare-secretary of the coal-mines at Svaldbard, the Surveillance Department intervened.

Not the whole truth

The full extent of this blacklisting is still not clear. The Commission has only seen part of the archives, mainly police' files. The surveillance apparatus in the military has either concealed or burned their material and has in general been less cooperative. The Commission has depended on the willingness of former employees of the Surveillance services to talk to them, rather than having the power to summon witnesses, and take evidence on oath.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions. How much did the ministers of the successive governments know about all this? And who were the informers? Files were opened on people as young as 15, after police informers within the schools labelled them as Maoists.

Stop political surveillance!

These revelations are a useful reminder for those on the left anywhere who had any illusions about the "democratic" character of the modern capitalist state. Left forces in Norway are trying to build a movement of public opinion for the complete abolition of the Surveillance Police. Socialists and democrats in other countries should take note! ★

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Little England in Fortress Europe

Simon Deville analyses the new Asylum and Immigration Bill, the effects of which will be felt by all black people. The weakened and divided Conservative party is trying to play the race card in the run up to the General Election. But this legislation is also part of a co-ordinated Europe-wide attack.

THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTEGRATION of Europe is fraught with difficulties, but police and immigration authorities are finding it surprisingly easy to harmonise their repressive powers.

Changes to Social Security regulations, effective from February 5th 1996, withdraw benefits from in-country asylum applications (80% of the total) and all asylum seekers who are appealing an initial Home Office refusal to grant refugee status. These asylum seekers have lost their right to housing benefit, invalidity benefit and other means-tested benefits.

The Asylum and Immigration Bill will allow the Home Secretary to remove benefits from further categories of foreign-born residents, including those who have lived in the country for many years.

Britain's settled black community is largely the result of direct recruitment by British firms in the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean, to provide the labour to fuel Britain's post-war reconstruction. Although many black people arriving in Britain found themselves excluded from higher paid jobs, housing and even bars and restaurants, those coming from British colonies had the right to abode in Britain and, in general, the same formal rights as other British "subjects."

When recession came, successive Labour and Tory governments passed legislation restricting immigration (1965-71). Nevertheless, all those with the right to live in Britain continued to have the same rights to welfare and social benefits as those born in England, Scotland and Wales. The vast majority of the settled black community today are British citizens. In fact, there is no legal category of immigrant.

This will change with the Asylum and Immigration Bill. The Bill also establishes a "white list" of countries from which asylum applications will automatically be refused. The Home Secretary will decide which countries are "safe," without recourse to parliament. The initial list includes Sri Lanka and Algeria. Nigeria was only removed from the list following public outrage at the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa earlier this year.

Many Tories spout chauvinist rhetoric about European integration. But they are very happy with the Asylum and Immigration

Bill's "safe third country" rule, which allows Britain to refuse asylum requests from anyone who has passed through another European Union state, or one of the East European countries which have association agreements with the EU. This new provision is part of an intricate network of "co-operation" between European states in order to bounce asylum seekers as far back towards their country of origin as possible.

The Asylum and Immigration Bill will make it a criminal offence to employ a person with no legal right to live in Britain. This will not just make it impossible for many refugees to earn even a minimum income. But, as similar legislation in other countries has shown, it will encourage employers to discriminate against black people in general when choosing new workers.

Measures to speed up appeals procedures will make it extremely difficult for asylum seekers to prepare documentation for their cases, particularly since legal aid will also be withdrawn for many refugees.

To implement these laws, there will now be numerous forms of internal immigration checks. Black people will be repeatedly asked to prove their right to live in Britain. The Tory Party might have again shelved their desire to introduce compulsory identity cards, but this new bill will effectively oblige black people to carry proof of identity and resident status at all times.

Although they are not obliged to do so under the new legislation, a number of hospitals have written to doctors in their area asking them to check the immigration status of patients, before referring them to hospital for treatment.

These legal attacks are part of a wider state offensive on black communities. This will only escalate racist violence and assist the

growth of the far right.

CJA

The police have been given much greater powers under the Criminal Justice Act, at a time when there is increasing public concern about police corruption and violence, particularly police violence towards the black population. The growing list of deaths and injuries of black people in police custody has increased public disillusionment in the criminal justice system. Senior police officers are responding by trying to blame black people for violent crime. The head of London's Metropolitan Police has even said that he "understands" the "noble cause corruption" that leads his officers to falsify evidence against those suspects who would otherwise be acquitted by the courts.

Paramilitary policing has been increasingly present on the British mainland ever since the miners' strike of 1984. This authoritarian style "law enforcement" is particularly oppressive in the inner-city areas, where many of the black population live.

Unusually, Britain's anti-racist movement has been united in its response. The Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill (CAIAB) has won support from Church organisations, anti-racist groups, refugee organisations, the Trade Union Congress, and many national trade unions, including the two largest, the UNISON public sector workers' union and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). Top union leaders have done little to mobilise their membership on this question, but many branches have taken up racism and immigration issues, and co-operate with anti-racist groups at the local level. A number of public-sector union branches have adopted positions encouraging their members to refuse to implement any regulations that require them to check the immigration status of the population they provide services to.

The problem is Labour leader Tony Blair. He is determined to demonstrate that his party is now "tough on illegal immigration," and at least as repressive as the conservatives on questions of law and order. There are rumours that if the legislation is passed by the current government, an incoming Labour majority would only repeal parts of the legislation. ★



National Front on the offensive

It is one year since the National Front won control of the town councils in Toulon, Marignane and Orange, and tripled their number of municipal councillors. **Arnaldo Castelleras** of the anti-fascist group *Ras l'front* explains how the neo-fascists have launched their own "socio-professional" organisations to combat the trade unions, and are trying to elect their members onto the management and consultation bodies responsible for France's municipal social housing (HLMs). In all parts of the country, in every domain of life, they are on the offensive.

THE NATIONAL FRONT (*Front National*, FN) reacted to the November-December 1995 public sector labour militancy with a double discourse: criticising Prime Minister Juppé's counter-reforms, and criticising the "social agitation" of the labour movement. Workers' frustration was legitimate, the Front explained, but the "established" unions had no right to organise a mobilisation around the question. "Many National Front voters and sympathisers are on strike. It is our duty to show them the way in which they are being fooled" wrote the FN's *National hebdo*, 12/1995.

This is not the first time the FN has used a double discourse when it is overtaken by events. The party presents itself as *the* alternative, not to the government, but to the two-party oligopoly. Social movements are not the far-right's favourite fighting ground, to the point where party leaders cried conspiracy. "This is a displacement of the political debate from the national sphere, where the FN is unbeatable, to a make-believe social sphere"

Social-nationalism

On May 1st 1996, the National Front presented itself as the "trade union of the French." Party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen's newsletter *Français d'abord* (French First) chose the provocative title "Social means FN!" The party's militants organised May Day events under the slogan "May First: national, popular and social".

Le Pen has never shown much sympathy for the "labouring masses," due to their unpleasant tendency to vote socialist or communist. But, now that their affection for those two parties is declining, he is re-evaluating them... as potential FN voters. Hence the FN's May Day banners calling for a minimum monthly wage of 7,000 FF (£950)

and, of course "jobs for the French".

The FN recognises the battle over deregulation of the public sector, and the massive cuts in services, as a chance for them to pick up some discontented voters. Leading FN theorist Bruno Mégret recognises that "there is a certain lack of support for the FN among civil servants... [and yet] we recognise them as servants of the state, which is the spine of the Nation... The FN is committed to defending the state and, as such, can only conceive political activities which support, rather than attack, the servants of that state." As the anti-fascist group *Ras l'front* commented in their June magazine, the new thesis seems to be "civil servants = state = nation = National Front."

The party's proposals for civil servants are clear: "make the criteria of priority for citizens in recruitment untouchable, re-establish the impartiality of the administrative sector, re-place the state in its proper position, give the civil servants the tools they need to do the job, and re-establish their prestige in the eyes of the public." Obviously, these promises are combined with a number of obligations, notably "reserve, and limitations on the right to strike."

Mégret's promises to civil servants are part of an attempt to improve the party's image among manual and white collar workers. This re-orientation has already brought positive results for the party: a record number of workers and the unemployed voted for the FN during last year's elections. Having won these new supporters, the challenge for the far-right is to keep them. For many of those who vote Le Pen in protest, have neither read, nor agree with the entire programme of the National Front.

Party leaders disagree on how to stabilise the working class support for the FN. But a number of elements seem widely accepted in



National Front May Day demonstration, 1996, statue of Joanne of Arc, Paris

the party's inner circle.

First of all, of course, there is "the national preference," applicable in all domains of life, as the answer to all kinds of problems. The "French first" panacea enables the FN to propose order in social chaos, and rationalises the racist fantasies of a significant minority of the population.

"National preference" may not be legal, but it is the central element of FN policy in the towns where they dominate the municipal council, and wherever they are able to influence administrative bodies, including a worrying number of ANPE (state job placement centres). Those who implement this illegal, racist preference for the (white) French-born are by no means all militants of the FN. Which is all the more worrying... Cases of discrimination, including refusal to authorise marriages where one party is foreign-born, are increasing.

The FN has three times more municipal councillors than before the elections. Which gives the party unprecedented visibility in the local media. Their outrageous policies seem increasingly banal, even legitimised. They are present on school governors' committees, they have proposals about the municipal budget... everywhere you turn you see them.

Since the Nice Congress in 1992, the FN has been trying to intervene in the working class, with associations like *Fraternité française*, a charitable organisation running

soup kitchens, and distributing aid to the homeless... of certifiable French origin, of course.

But now the party has launched its own trade unions, in the police force, and in the public transport utilities of Paris (RATP) and Lyons (TCL).

The FN has also begun presenting candidates in elections to the management committees of HLM social housing projects. The programme of "Tenants' National Front" is strong on racism and obsessed with personal security. They propose, of course, "national preference" in waiting lists, and "peace and quiet in the projects, by expelling those tenants who disturb public order, and by preventing over-population of these apartments." The enemy is fairly clearly defined.

National Front ideas are also winning wider support. A recent *Le Monde* poll carried out by SOFRES suggests that 33% of the population agree with Jean-Marie Le Pen on immigration, 35% approve of his statements on security and justice, 31% support his initiatives "for the defence of traditional values. A second poll suggests that 45% of the population "dislikes" Arabs, the largest visible immigrant group, compared to "only" 42% en 1994, and 39 % en 1990. Just over 75% of the population in communes where there are few or no foreigners agree with statements like "there are too many Arabs in France," compared to about 45% of the population in municipalities where over 10% of the community is foreign-born.

Terrorising the right

Only a small number of conservative deputies and councillors are tempted to join the FN. But a much larger number are adapting their discourse to the right to minimise the danger of a FN challenge in the 1998 parliamentary elections. National Front votes

will hold the balance of power in a number of constituencies. The party's 1995 Summer School in Toulon outlined the strategy for eating into the conservative vote over the next two years. According to Bruno Mégret, councillors and deputies from the conservative parties (RPR and UDF) "have a choice. Either live in illusions, and be rudely awoken in 1998 by the National Front, or start making their acts more coherent with their ideas... Inside or outside [of the Front] they should work with us in a wide regroupment, to lift the country out of the rut."

It seems, however, that the Front's leaders hesitate between Le Pen's grand dream of replacing the major right parties, and a strategy aiming to integrate the party in a realigned right. This second strategy will presumably gain ground inside the FN

leadership to the extent that there are signs, from the outside, that the Front's ideas are more and more widely accepted on the right. Mégret can already list some progress: a number of RPR and UDF deputies recently signed a petition for the re-introduction of the death penalty; a number of recent parliamentary reports support FN thesis (Sauvaigo report on illegal immigration, Pic report on public housing); a number of anti-abortion amendments have been proposed in parliament. As the FN's ideologue boasts "all these are signs of the growing weight of our ideas in French society... real progress on the ideological front for the National Front."

Unfortunately, Mégret is not wrong. National Front ideas have never been so well received. The government could hardly be doing a better job in preparing the ground for the Front national. ★

The far right in Belgium

Vincent Scheltiens

"Jobs for our own people first!" That's the title of the new, "social" programme, launched by the Vlaams Blok on May Day in the east Flanders town of Aalst. In a sharp attack on the social democratic party, Vlaams Blok leader Philippe De Winter claimed that "we have taken their votes. Now we will take their symbols." He was referring to the social and cultural resistance symbolised by the struggle of the Aalst Catholic Priest Daens at the beginning of the century. After the symbols, "we will take [their] power," promised De Winter.

The fundamental motivation behind the "social" campaign is the Blok's inability to break out of the *cordon sanitaire* imposed by the other parliamentary parties at every level. This embargo has isolated the Blok, despite its 10% of votes in Flanders, more than 10 parliamentary deputies in the Flemish and Belgium parliaments, and hundreds of municipal councillors

The influential rightist monthly *Voorpost* confirms the strategic importance of De Winter's "left turn on the social front." The time has come to bite the Flemish social democrats: discredited co-managers of the austerity crisis. While keeping open to the possibility of a realignment with Flemish neo-liberals and the right wing of Christian Democracy, in a Flemish version of Forza Italia

All eyes are rightly concentrated on Antwerp. The port city is governed by a

grand coalition, ranging from neo-liberals to the greens and most of the red-green coalition. To maintain this bloc against the 18 fascist councillors, the left in this coalition has chosen, vote after vote, to accept budget and policy orientations determined by the non-fascist right. Except for Fourth International supporter Nadine Peeters the only left councillor who has refused to sign the coalition agreement of the majority bloc. She argues that the majority's repeated concessions will, sooner or later, enable the Vlaams Blok to capitalise on legitimate discontent with the council, and break out of their isolation.

In the French-speaking south of the country, the Front national (National Front) of Dr. Daniel Féret is losing momentum, and divided into factions, opposing "leader-for-life" Féret and retired judge Marguerite Bastien. Both groups have appealed to their spiritual leader, French fascist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, for "official" recognition.

Despite this marginalisation, and a series of corruption scandals, the National Front is continuing to put down roots in a number of new communes and districts of Brussels, the capital city. They are helped by the general climate: dominated by crisis, and influence by the government's obsessions with security and the "refugee problem". And by the continued decline in the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement in recent months. A gloomy picture. ★



Racism and Resistance in Europe

The face of Western Europe has been fundamentally changed by labor migration in the last few decades. But the racist far right apparently dreams of turning back the clock by whatever means necessary.

Ron Blom evaluates the strength of the far right in various European countries, as well as the organisations that exist to fight racists and fascists



AS SOON AS INDUSTRIALIZATION BEGAN IN Western Europe about the turn of the eighteenth century, people were pulled from Western Europe's periphery toward its industrial centers. Just before the First World War labor migration gradually began from Europe's colonies—now called the Third World—particularly from the Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco). By the end of the 1960s this immigration was at its peak. Estimates of the number of migrants who traveled from Turkey, North Africa and other Third World countries to Western Europe range from 20 to 25 million. At the same time migration continued inside Europe. Many Greek, Spanish and Italian "guest workers" tried their luck in Northern and Western Europe. The poor South supplied much of the labor force for Northern European factories. Often "migration chains" were at work: for example Anatolian agricultural workers went first to Istanbul and then as industrial workers to Germany.

With the "new international division of labor" and the beginning of the crisis in 1973-74, the labor influx came to a halt. It was replaced by farming out of parts of the production process to peripheral regions. European capital no longer drains the Third World's surplus population off to Europe, but instead uses its own countries' unemployed, unskilled and flexible workers. Cutting off labor migration was a protective measure in

order to maintain domestic jobs, wage levels and social services: in any event, this is how union leaderships argued for it. One result of union bureaucrats' defensive attitude was that it took them a long time to realize that "guest workers" were here to stay, and that the labor movement had to develop some kind of approach to them.

The decades after 1973 were a time of "family reunification", which has in turn been sharply restricted in the 1990s. Many of the immigrants had put down roots here and had few prospects in their homelands. Now a third phase has begun: social "integration" of minorities. Meanwhile illegal immigrants and refugees continue to arrive. Political refugees arrived regularly though in relatively small numbers in Western Europe after the Second World War, for example from Eastern Europe (just after the war and from Hungary in '56 and Czechoslovakia in '68) but also from other countries (Chile after Pinochet's coup,

Iran, Vietnam, in much greater numbers from ex-Yugoslavia, etc.). Today many "illegals" are refugees whose asylum applications have not been granted.

Immigrants are often unemployed (unemployment is 7% in the Netherlands on average, but 27% for Turks and 44% for Moroccans). If they do have jobs the jobs are usually unskilled, in processing plants, construction and the service sector. Nonetheless, since the early 1980s they have been targeted by an ideological offensive that blames them for the crisis.

Fortress Europe

The development of the European Union, a free-trade zone based on more or less open borders, means at the same time that there is more and more discussion about how to shut illegal immigrants out of Europe and its work force. On March 26, 1995 the Schengen accords took effect, and with them a sharply restricted immigration and refugee policy. Capital and goods can circulate freely on the European continent, but not labor. Here the emphasis is on controlling immigrants and refugees along with "terrorists" and "extremists." For years before 1995 police and "anti-terrorism experts" cooperated secretly (without any control by national parliaments or the toothless European parliament) in the "Schengen Committee" and (since 1975) the TREVI group (Terrorism, Radicalism,



Extremism, Violence International). "Aliens" papers are being checked more and more often. This has already led in France to an increase in racist identity checks, a number of deaths among young immigrants, and punishment of whole communities by means of large-scale police sweeps (for example, comprehensive identity checks of North Africans after bombings in Paris, based simply on "face value," i.e. skin color).



The definition of "illegal" has also been expanded to cover new groups. All over Europe, rights to social services are increasingly dependent on having the "right" papers. Employers are being made criminally liable for hiring illegals (though one may ask how rigorously this will be enforced). Each of the "Schengen" countries must compile a database with all "aliens" present on its territory, indicating each "alien"'s status. All "illegals" are supposed to be detained whenever they are found so that they can be deported as soon as their identities are established. Those without papers disappear immediately behind bars. All of this is accomplished with the Schengen Information System (SIS), an immense computerized surveillance system including files on more than five million mostly "undesirable aliens."

The Dutch and other European governments have devoted considerable thought to devising means of frightening off as many refugees as possible. Their efforts have been a big success. The total number of applications for refugee status in Western Europe fell from 700,000 in 1992 to 300,000 in 1994, in spite of the Yugoslav crisis. Total applications in the Netherlands fell from 52,500 in 1994 to 28,000 in 1995. Meanwhile more people than ever are being deported. The right of refugees to appeal a negative decision is being fiercely contested.

Fortunately, "Schengen" is not yet working at top efficiency. Countries are not yet able to identify refugees whose applications other countries have rejected, because they cannot agree with each other about how to install the Eurodac computer system, which can compare fingerprints. Also, refugees who arrive in the Netherlands by way of France or Italy are not always automatically sent back (as the law requires): the immigration judge sometimes blocks deportation because it is not clear that the refugees' appeals for asylum will even be considered in France or Italy.

Rise of the far right

The most important assumption behind all this legislation is clear: Western Europe is supposedly threatened by an "invasion" of immigrant and refugee hordes from the rest of the world, particularly North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Therefore the West has to protect itself by all available means from those who are trying to escape from hunger, repression and war. On the one hand illegals and immigrants in general form an underpaid, vulnerable part of the working class; on the other hand they can be blamed for social problems that arise as the welfare state is chipped away. French, Danish and British conservatives have not hesitated to use racist prejudices in order to increase their popularity. But in the words of Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the French National Front, people would rather have the original than a copy. The far right has thus been able to break through in one country after another.

On the local level in France, the National Front is clearly no longer a marginal phenomenon.¹ Only the unusual French electoral system ensures that it is at the moment no longer represented in the national parliament. In Antwerp, the largest city in Flanders (Dutch-speaking Belgium), the far right Flemish Bloc won a third of the vote in the last municipal elections. In Italy, Fini's neofascists were briefly represented in the cabinet last year. And in Austria Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party was able to win 22% of the vote in the last parliamentary elections.

One notable development is that these parties are winning working-class votes. They thus have a broader constituency than their "natural" electorate (farmers, the middle class, civil servants, etc.). In Austria 43% of industrial workers voted for the social democrats and 41% for the Freedom Party. During the first round of the French presidential elections in the spring of 1995, LePen did best among blue-collar workers (27% percent of them voted for LePen, 20% for the SP and 17% for the CP).² Another striking detail is that Haider's Freedom Party belonged until recently to the "Liberal International." Various "liberal" parties ("liberal" in the

sense of "pro-free-market") are evolving to the right. The popular Dutch "liberal" Frits Bolkestein has been openly appealing to anti-immigrant sentiment. In Germany too, Free Democratic Party leaders like Von Stahl are trying to win back the party's dwindling popularity by setting a nationalist, conservative course.

Luckily, despite many attempts by "revisionist" historians like Professor Ernst Nolte and British amateur historian David Irving to deny the Holocaust, the Nazi past is still generally taboo. The various far-right parties try as much as possible to avoid references to fascism in public (although many old collaborators with German and Italian fascism have found a home in their ranks). But thanks to the intolerance not only of the right but also scandalously enough of social democracy, hatred of immigrants continues to increase. Social democracy, at its wits' end in trying to reform the crisis-ridden economy, has buckled under and joined in spreading xenophobia.³ No wonder that firebombings take place, not only in Solingen in Germany but also in other countries.

Antiracism

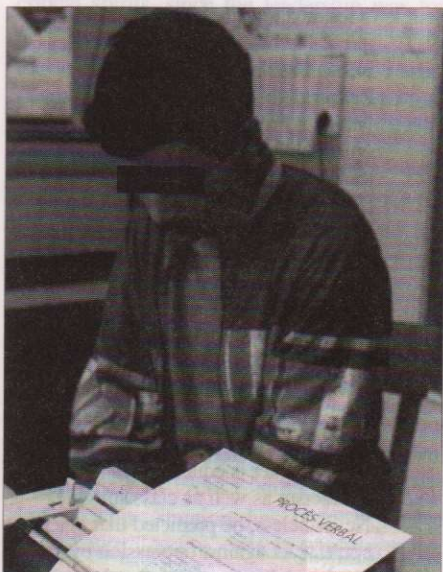
Among those trying to resist the rise of racism in Europe, three currents can be broadly distinguished. The first can be found in many European countries under the name "Anti-Fascist Action." It consists largely of young people who look to anarchist or "autonomist" traditions. What is valuable in their approach is that they favor "direct action" and do not avoid confrontation with the far right. Often, however, this takes the form of "Nazi-hunting" by small groups of dedicated activists. In part because of their ideological leanings they have no organized European network, but nevertheless they work in a more or less "pan-European" way. The two other currents require description at greater length. One current, consisting of the most mainstream organizations, includes the Anti-Racist Network for Equality in Europe (ARNEE); the other consists of initiatives linked to particular Marxist groups.

ARNEE was founded in 1992 as a direct response to persistent far-right violence around Europe and the formation of a far-right parliamentary group in the European parliament (the so-called "technical fraction," which has since fallen apart). The network consists of 15 or so of the major national anti-racist organizations of various kinds from ten different Western European countries. Several of them were formed on the model of the French SOS Racism, which came into existence in reaction to a wave of racist murders of young Arabs: it became known in the early



1980s above all through its symbol, a yellow hand with the words "Hands Off My Buddy."

The network adopted a manifesto at a 1994 conference in London calling for joint work against racism on a European scale. "We call on all victims of racism — Blacks, migrants, refugees, Jews, Moslems, Romanies—to link up across Europe," the manifesto says. It takes a stand against all restrictions of the right to asylum. "Everybody living legally in Europe must have the right to vote and be elected, whatever his or her nationality," it says. "Anyone born in a European country, as well as those with five years residence, must have the right to citizenship of that country and of dual citizenship." It also calls for an end to militarization of the North-South conflict and to exploitation of the South, for negotiations over cancellation of the Third World debt, for development cooperation on a basis of equality, and for solidarity.



Black leadership

There has been a major discussion in ARNEE on the issue of black leadership. The British member organizations in particular emphasize the importance of having blacks and immigrants in the leadership of all anti-racist movements, including in ARNEE's own leadership. The argument is that since blacks and immigrants are the main victims of racism, they should have a veto on all decisions that the network makes. It is of course a practical as well as major political problem that many of ARNEE's member organizations are largely white. In addition many Moroccans and Turks do not consider themselves black, understandably given that they often look more or less like Greeks or Spaniards.

"United for Intercultural Action: Network against Racism, Fascism and Xenophobia and

in Support of Migrants and Refugees"—UNITED for short—is a looser network that was founded in June 1993 in Cologne, Germany. Its newsletter reaches over 1200 Western and Eastern European groups that resist racism in one way or another. UNITED serves mainly as a means of exchanging information and coordinating activities that ARNEE's member groups and other anti-racist organizations carry out in different countries. For example, most European anti-racist organizations take part in events around March 21 (International Antiracism Day, when hundreds of thousands demonstrate each year in many European countries) and November 9 (the commemoration of Kristallnacht, the night in 1938 when the Nazis wrecked many synagogues and Jewish shops, killed hundreds of Jews and caused thousands to flee the country).

Front groups

The third broad anti-racist current is made up of left front groups that have made a name for themselves or play a more or less significant role at a European level. The grandfather of these front groups is the Anti-Nazi League, which dates back to August 1977, when the National Front tried to hold a big march in Lewisham, England. The British Socialist Workers' Party responded by organizing a militant counterdemonstration. 5,000 antifascists answered its call. In the action's aftermath the SWP brought together left-wing Labour Party supporters, revolutionary socialists and others to found the Anti-Nazi League. The ANL held many counterdemonstrations when the National Front or other fascists tried to march. It also supported big anti-racist rock concerts (Rock against Racism). Tens of thousands took part in ANL actions, a striking success.

Fascists and antifascists attracted somewhat less attention in the early 1980s under Thatcher, when the Tories along with their anti-labor austerity policies pushed through severe restrictions on immigration. But that did not prevent the British National Party (BNP), doubtless encouraged by the success of racists like Le Pen in other countries, from beginning to grow in the early 1990s. The

Anti-Nazi League also got a second wind and its actions grew once more. In 1993 60,000 antifascists demonstrated in Welling to demand that the BNP office there be closed: the number of racist attacks had risen since the BNP office was opened. Few were surprised when the police attacked the antifascists. The ANL neglected to provide enough marshals, leaving many demonstrators helpless in face of police attacks: this led to a conflict between the SWP-led ANL and the Militant Labour-led Youth against Racism in Europe (YRE).

Youth against Racism in Europe is known above all for the 40,000-strong demonstration it organized in October 1992 in Brussels, with contingents from Germany, Ireland, Britain, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Austria, the Netherlands and France. The YRE leadership in each of those countries is in the hands of British Trotskyist Militant Labour and its sister organizations. Several years ago Militant Labour also set up a black organization and newspaper named Panther UK. After a few years the organization collapsed, however, at least in part because of divisions between its black leaders and Militant Labour.

In principle it should be possible to work with these front groups in the context of a united anti-racist movement. In practice though this can be extraordinary difficult.

What perspective?

One of the big problems in antifascist work is that there are many anti-fascist *structures* (at local, regional, national and as we have seen even European levels), but no real antifascist *movement*. That has to do with the spontaneous character of much antifascist activity on the one hand and with political and organizational weaknesses on the other. Protests keep on happening, particularly against fascist gatherings. In February 1995 the Swedish trade unions organized a strike against racism. Hundreds of thousands demonstrate around March 21, etc. But it often turns out that the same politicians who are responsible for racist policies, even conservative prime ministers, speak from the stage at these big demonstrations. In between these big, unfocused demonstrations, mainstream anti-racist groups largely limit themselves to spreading information. On the other hand, the anarchistic Nazi-hunters and Trotskyist front groups can sometimes carry off dramatic actions or bring out big crowds, but their devotion to their own groups and tactics can get in the way of broader anti-racist movement-building and unity.

How can this situation be turned around? After all, the basis for a broad antifascist



movement does exist. Millions of people feel threatened by the rise of the far right. Tens of thousands are prepared to do more than attend a not very effective demonstration once every few months. But this does not automatically lead to building a movement or working out a strategy. The social basis for an antifascist movement can only be found among those who are fascism's targets: mainly immigrants, but also gays and lesbians, people with disabilities and others. This has to mean more



than raising abstract demands and inviting token representatives to joint discussions. The key requirements are self-organization and mobilization.

This brings us back to the whole discussion of "black leadership." As Malcolm X said in 1965: "If we are going to work together, the blacks must take the lead in their own fight. In phase one, the whites led. We're going into phase two now. This phase will be full of rebellion and hostility. Blacks will fight whites for the right to make decisions that affect the struggle in order to arrive at their manhood and self-respect. The hostility is good. It's been bottled up too long."⁴

The labor movement

The second strategic issue concerns the unions, particularly organized leftists and rank-and-file oppositionists in their ranks, as well as left intellectuals and feminists. Some of these people see the threat posed by the far right, but the threat is not adequately understood as a central problem that has to be tackled consciously. The changing multi-ethnic and cultural makeup of the West European working class has far increased the importance of fighting against racist prejudices.⁵ The question is how.

Sometimes among antiracist activists one gets a feeling of confusion and disorientation. Racist terror (such as setting immigrants' or refugees' houses on fire) is often unpredictable and unfathomable. Only rarely can the victims be directly protected. The enemy is often shadowy, since it rarely appears openly in public on the streets. Fascists reach their intended audiences with magazines, the Internet and other media; during election campaigns with fliers, TV ads and posters hung out of reach. In general they restrict their worst provocations to the media. When anti-fascists focus only on preventing Nazis from gathering in public and on the explicitly Nazi groups, they hardly make a dent in the far right's real political effectiveness. After all, even if all extreme-right organizations were

completely driven out of existence, that would not stop millions of people from having racist prejudices. As long as the economic sources exist that make this ideology proliferate it will continually take new organizational forms, either via existing bourgeois parties or independently. Therefore, in addition to fundamental social change, fundamental changes in consciousness are needed. Nor are programs in the schools enough. People have to learn to reject racism on the basis of their own experience.

Self-organization and solidarity

When people are afraid and feel powerless, when they cannot change anything and have no influence, then they are in danger of being attracted and enlisted by demagogues. But when by contrast they organize themselves to defend their own interests, they change their own consciousness in the process. They shape and change their own environment—mostly in the face of resistance. This is a simple lesson of experience. People who have taken part in initiatives from below are less easily won to authoritarian formulas. This has to be linked to concrete interests: preserving jobs and working conditions, affordable housing, opportunities for women and youth. It has to involve a real social movement.

For this reason the French strikes of November-December 1995 were a hopeful sign. Unlike before, immigrants hitchhiking to work were often given lifts. The experience of taking to the streets together for common interests blew away the racist atmosphere among much of the French population. Marseilles, France's second-largest city and a National Front bulwark, was the site of the most powerful strike movement. There was a real cultural shift.⁶ This is what we need to defeat the international of hate and build an international of hope. ★



Paris: "Marxists, Zionists off campus!"

Notes

(1) The National Front won 30-40% in major French cities such as Nice and Toulon and elected many mayors, e.g. in Orange.

(2) See A. Casterlleras, "The far right advances," *International Viewpoint* no. 267 (June 1995) and B. Schmid, "Gesplante Anhuengerschaft: Frankreichs Rechtsextremisten vor strategischen Problemen," *Sozialistische Zeitung* no. 7 (Mar. 1996) about the National Front's establishment of unions under its control particularly in the police.

(3) The French CP has adopted some of this racist language: its leader Robert Hue advocates "equitable division of the burden of immigrants" among different French towns.

(4) *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York, Pathfinder, 1965), pp. 207-08.

(5) Trotsky argued that black workers can be realistically expected to develop class consciousness "only when the white worker is educated" in antiracism as well as class struggle. Nevertheless, he predicted that blacks could react against oppression by playing a disproportionate role in the revolutionary movement—provided that the revolutionary party "carries on an uncompromising, merciless struggle not against the supposed national prepossessions of the Negroes but against the colossal prejudices of the white workers and makes no concession to them whatever." *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-determination* (New York, Pathfinder, 1978), pp. 29-30.

(6) B. Schmid, op.cit. The National Front had been advocating "ethnic and cultural separation" in society. Its newspaper *National Hebdo* (14 Dec. 1995) complained, "The political debate is being displaced from the national terrain, where the National Front is invincible, to the so-called 'social' terrain. The aim is to strengthen the left." LePen not only called for banning public sector strikes but called strikes in general an "archaic and ruinous means of settling social conflicts" and demanded jail sentences for strike leaders.



Back to Stalin

The 15th Congress of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) in late May adopted a series of measures and positions which represent a return to the Stalinist past. The introversion and decline of the party can only continue.

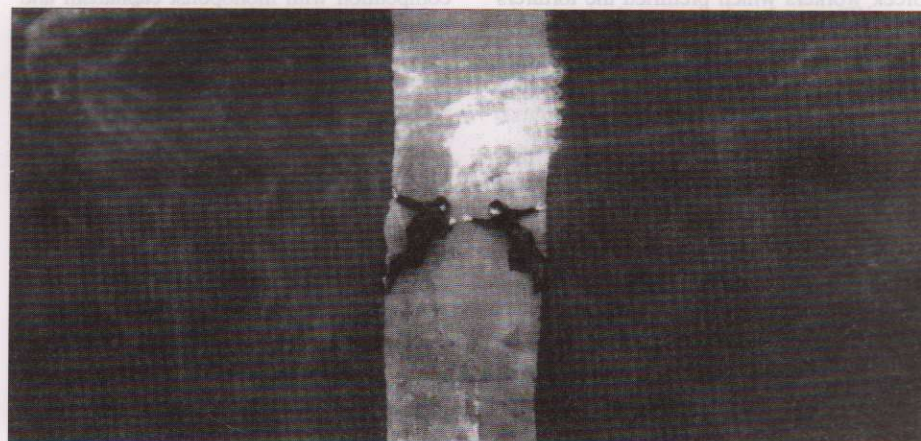
Ilyas Altinoglu

CONGRESS WAS UNANIMOUS (MINUS ONE VOTE) in its support for the leadership fraction. But this hardly indicates a definitive victory over critical spirits, since the leadership was too nervous to allow even its milder critics within the leading bodies to be re-elected. Parliamentary spokesman Kostopoulos and European Deputy Theonas were not re-elected to the central committee, after they dared express a few concerns about the KKE's alliances with other parties.¹ The same fate awaited a number of cadre, above all from the trade union caucuses of the party. Once he recognised the foregone conclusion, Building Workers' Union leader Kerassoudis refused to even take part in the election!

This show of force by the top leadership fools nobody. The crisis of Greek Stalinism, which began in 1968, is still tying the KKE down.² This situation has been explosive since 1989, when the KKE joined a right-wing government against the socialists (PASOK), and, of course, with the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, with which the Party had held particularly close relations: the Party was illegal in Greece for 30 years, during which time the leadership lived in the Soviet bloc countries.

There is nothing terribly original about the dynamic of the Stalinist crisis in Greece. Except, perhaps, that the KKE is one of the few Communist Parties in the world which has tried to solve its problems by a return to pure Stalinism. The situation has no parallel in the capitalist countries. And, after two years intensive diplomacy, the Party has been unable to find companions in what is left of the "international Communist movement."

In other countries, some Communist Party militants, particularly the older ones, are nostalgic about "the good old days" when uncle Joe was in charge. But this was only a desperate, sentimental refusal of reality in the



face of an apparently omnipotent, triumphant capitalism. Sometimes it was a call to re-evaluate the causes for the upheaval in the East. But this resolute move by the leading faction of the KKE is more than that. After a long absence, the articles of Stalin himself are reprinted in the KKE theoretical journal.

This is a thought-out strategy, a re-writing (as farce) of the Party's "third period," a period of errors, combined with the imposition of total silence concerning the "second period." Seven years after the KKE brought the right into government, the Party is mute concerning the evaluation of the period. Despite the fact that this move provoked two scissions in the Party, one to the left (NAR and Young Communists) and one to the right (Synaspismos).³ Since then, the KKE's electoral base has declined from a stable 10-12% to about 5%. And the Party has almost completely disappeared from the student movement, which it dominated in the 1980s.

The silence is in part due to the fact that the author of those sad events is the "historical leader" and father of the dominant faction in the party, Florakis. Though it is interesting to note that his speech to this Congress as President of Honour was judged so "balance-ist" by the current leadership that they broke with party tradition, and refused to publish it.

In April 1995 the Central Committee produced a document analysing the "overturning" of the "Motherland of Socialism."⁴ Apparently, the problem is that the "socialist" system was so "successful" that it "cultivated self-satisfaction" and "over-confidence" at the top. So, when imperialism was finally able "to buy the leading cadre of the party," no-one noticed, and no-one did anything.

Until this "overturn," the document insists, problems were "errors" and

deviations," but the Party was, generally speaking, always right.

The problem is, of course, that "the imperialist conspiracy" on its own cannot explain the collapse of the East European regimes. But the advantage of this simple theory is that it fits the leadership's claim that the KKE itself is also the object of a conspiracy of pretty much everyone else. "Plots" were what led to the Party's scissions. And the solution is to regroup and conserve the troops through appeals to their party patriotism, or their patriotism full stop!

Conspiracy theories are also useful in developing the Party's adaptation to the explosion of nationalism in Greece in recent years. Not only is the KKE surrounded, but the Party is the most dignified representative of a nation which is also "encircled" by enemies of all kinds. This conspiracy is often referred to, in a shorthand form, as "imperialism and its machinations".

The KKE has not simply adapted to the aggressive nationalist climate which the Greek bourgeoisie has successfully generated, but has tried to become the most radical expression of that nationalism, by giving it a false "anti-imperialist" gloss. In the current climate, the KKE does not hesitate to declare itself as "profoundly patriotic" and opposed to "cosmopolitanism".

The KKE did take a different position from the bourgeoisie over the Macedonian question. But only, they said, in the best interests of the nation. And without denouncing the aggressiveness which accompanied "official" nationalist policy towards this poor, northern neighbouring country of only 2 million inhabitants.

The KKE attitude did not save it from being attacked, for "treason," by the real nat-

ionalists, on the right. And it forced the Party into a guilty silence over the oppression of the slavo-macedonian and Turkish minorities here in Greece.

More seriously, the KKE was an important participant in the brainwashing of Greek workers which prettified the torturers of the peoples of former Yugoslavia. Milošević, Karadžić, Mladić and company were presented by the Party as “resisting imperialism.”



This miserabilist, nationalist, policeman's conception of current affairs is not confined to international questions. A few years ago, the KKE finally admitted that Greece was predominantly capitalist (and not “feudo-capitalist.”

The Party even claims that the “objective conditions” for socialism are “ripe” in Greece today. You might think that all that was needed, therefore, was a superhuman effort by the Party. Except that this Greek “monopoly capitalism,” Party leaders claim, is dominated from “foreign quarters,” and is only a “transmission belt for the application of the decisions of the multi-nationals.”

As a result, KKE strategy is to work for the purging of the state from all “imperialist” pressures and linkages. In the meantime, Greek state policy is portrayed by the KKE as always and everywhere “dominated” and “dependent.”

This is very clear on European questions. The axis of KKE criticism of European capitalist integration is not its bourgeois, anti-worker and socially regressive character, but the “foreign” nature of the European Union decisions imposed in Greece.

Other Stalinist parties make superficially similar nationalist criticisms of the EU. And the Greek bourgeoisie is not alone in blaming “The Commission,” “Maastricht” and Brussels, for unpopular measures, in an attempt to weaken opposition and avoid criticism. But what is special about the KKE strategy is its presentation of all criticisms as the appropriation of “national sovereignty” by Brussels, without the identification of a social base for these anti-worker policies in Greece itself. This is irresponsible and dangerous. Not only does it direct energy away from building Europe-wide mobilisations of the working class, but it presents a “unilateral rupture” with Brussels as a stage in the “front of democratic, anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist struggle.”

This is a new form of the KKE's traditional “stagist” strategy. The Party still claims that the real problem is imperialist,

European and monopolist diktat, which has prevented the development of “national sources” in Greece. Rupture with the EU, they claim, would “liberate these sources.” The next step would be for the nationalised sector and the Greek state to develop “in competition with monopolist capitalism and its enterprises,” rather than in collusion with them, as has so far been the case.

At the international level, this “rupture with the EU” will “open the way for our country's participation in international economic relations on better terms, and reverse the isolation and the economic, social and political marginalisation to which the European Community has condemned [us].”

All external constraints will apparently disappear in this new integration of Greece into the world market. “The standard of living will rise,” we are told. Though the KKE programme does not specify taking control of any of the levers of capitalism (even “monopolist capital”).

The modest splits in the KKE, however, are not the result of opposition to this thoroughly bureaucratic conception of socialism, and how to get there. Splits result from frustration with the party's sectarian approach to alliances. The KKE Programme states that “all collaboration with the other parties is excluded.” In other words, the KKE is the only party considered worthy of membership in the “patriotic” and “anti-imperialist” front. The right wing and the socialists are equally rejected as “essential pillars of the capitalist reconstruction,” while the other “small” parties, left and right, are classified as “reserve elements for eventual use as saviour of the political system.” For the KKE, differences within and between the other parties is nothing more than “the expression of inter-imperialist rivalry.” Though the KKE is particularly hard on Synaspismos, which was formed by a group which split from the KKE.

The solution, according to the new Party Programme, is the “reinforcement” of the KKE itself through a “front” with “social forces” which will gradually “free themselves of the domination exercised” by the other parties.

The mildly critical voices at this Congress, like parliamentary spokesman Kostopoulos, expressed reservations about this “five parties, two policies” line. The dissidents worried that adopting this sectarian line at a time when the political sphere is in decomposition (particularly the social democratic PASOK party) could increase the KKE's marginalisation.

The strange thing is that, so far, the patriotic and Stalinist line has stopped the free-fall in support for the Party, and has even

created a new audience for the KKE among some young people, particularly in the high schools. The Party's systematic criticism of the European Union has also won it a certain audience among those workers who are feeling the immediate effects of the bourgeois offensive, particularly in the framework of the implementation of the “Maastricht” convergence criteria.

In the long term, however, the repulsive Stalinism, and the sectarianism which brought the right to power in 1989 will prevent the KKE from shifting the balance of forces towards the anti-capitalist left.

And yet, rank and file PASOK members seem ready to struggle. The preparatory discussions for the forthcoming PASOK conference (which may well result in a split) show a wide consensus among militants that the economic policy of “their” “socialist” government is bad, and against the people. There is no organised resistance in PASOK, and no real alternative proposed. But the KKE will not be able to offer a solution for these militants as they break with PASOK's “Euro-modernist” and “national-populist” tendencies.

Sooner or later, the KKE's youth work, and their support for workers' struggles against “Maastricht” policies will create an explosive situation for the party's Stalinist leadership. Not only has the growth in youth support has come at the “expense” of a relaxation of Stalinist discipline and morality in the youth organisation, but the Party leadership has done nothing to prepare the rank and file for the change in line which will surely come. After all, in the 1930s, most Stalinist-led Communist Party's switched from “third period” sectarianism to “popular front” reformism. Trade union cadre like Kostopoulos want to prepare the troops for the inevitable shift. But the leadership still says no. ★

Notes

Unmarked quotes come from the Programme of the KKE, voted at this Congress.

1. Both are long standing Party cadre, former members of the Political Bureau, with their roots in the trade union sector.
2. The crisis was material at first, but has become increasingly a matter of programme. For the history of the KKE until 1994, see Tassos Goudelis, “Un grand parti en declin,” *Inprecor* #379, April 1994.
3. See *Inprecor* #295, 301 and 305
4. Never “collapse” or “dissintegration.” It seems that a number of leading members have lost their place on the CC for the sole crime of uttering one of the last two words.

Euro-Zapatistas in the concrete jungle

By Braulio Moro

A jungle in Berlin? If it sounds absurd, go and ride around for a while along the Friederichsstr., or explore the many square kilometres of construction — mostly office buildings for rent or sale — which the German government is promoting in what used to be East Berlin, in preparation for the relocation of its central offices from Bonn to Berlin.

A capitalist frenzy can be felt in the air, while the economy is still in recession and as the Kohl government has launched a brutal offensive against social and trade union conquests, a fact which may bring on a hot summer, if the unions decide to continue with their mobilizations against the cuts in social spending.

Berlin is just another face of the hydra that goes by the name of capitalism. It is governed by the laws of profit accumulation, and by the rule of the strongest over the weak. It is a jungle, a market-jungle, within which invisible, but no less real, walls are being erected every day.

In this urban jungle, from May 30 to June 2, more than 1,000 people from 26 European countries met in a European Continental *Encuentro* (Meeting) For Humanity and Against Neo-liberalism, which had been proposed by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) last January. What at first seemed like a utopian project — to bring together people from the whole continent to talk about neo-liberalism and the possible alternatives to it — was made possible by the strong convictions and the will of dozens and dozens of people who worked tirelessly in each country to organize the *Encuentro*.

Two faces of the Encuentro

The *Encuentro* must be evaluated in the context of the difficult situation in which international solidarity has found itself in recent years; the weakening of the trade unions; the crisis of most political organizations (of both the right and the left); and, of course, the political discourse of the Zapatistas themselves.

To bring together so many people, from different countries, with quite different backgrounds, and for them to have been able, in a few days, to begin to attune their experiences and concerns to a common wavelength — that, in itself, is a considerable achievement. Nobody, absolutely nobody, had previously had the audacity or the moral authority of the Zapatistas

to call such a meeting. Since this was the first experience of this type in Europe, the initial results were bound to be unequal and modest. But there are nevertheless very real results, and that is what matters now.

The *Encuentro* was organized around 12 general themes, including neoliberalism, women and feminism, Eastern Europe, internationalism, and migration. These themes were in turn divided into 35 working groups to promote deeper discussions.

Results?

A majority of the groups were able to produce written conclusions. Both in the working groups and in the closing assembly, all sorts of things could be heard. These ranged from crazy but sensible and necessary initiatives (like a "Ship for Chiapas") to truly incredible absurdities. For instance, participants refused to support the Lyons counter-summit to the G7 meeting. This had been proposed by almost all the French organizations present.

The conclusions reached will eventually help to promote discussions in each country and, above all, will permit the organization of some solidarity activities on a continental scale.

The almost complete absence of trade union and political organizations was one of the least positive aspects of the *Encuentro*. With the exception of a few members of a few such organizations, the trade unions and the left did not feel the need to join the Berlin initiative. This vacuum corresponds both to the social situation in Europe and to a terrible mistake by some of the organizing committees of the *Encuentro*, namely their decision not to invite trade unions or parties based on the flimsy argument that doing so could lead to the *Encuentro* being politically manipulated or "instrumentalized". Fortunately, this perspective was not included in the final declaration, which specifically states that "we are not all present, nor do we feel empowered to talk in the name of all" and which, therefore, calls on all "those who struggle for democracy, for freedom and for justice" to join the gigantic tasks which the struggle against neo-liberalism implies.

As in the Continental *Encuentro* of the Americas, held last Easter, the Berlin *Encuentro* created an occasion for the creation of links between people of different countries and to initiate a discussion on the type of coordinating networks that it would be possible to construct in Europe today. Thus, the more than 120 women

who worked around the theme "Women, Feminism" agreed to create an initial directory with which they will attempt to maintain regular communication.

One of the challenges posed by the *Encuentro* (and, on an international scale, by the Zapatista initiative) is finding a solution to the problem of how to bring some sort of coherence to an abundance of individual and specific initiatives, which combine both a great willingness to work and a rejection of anything that may seem as "political", as well as initiatives which, in some cases, carry out a sort of "uninformed solidarity".

For example, the writer Paco Igancio Taibo II gave an interesting lecture on "Writers and Social Resistance". More than 100 persons (around a tenth of the *Encuentro* participants) attended. It came as a considerable surprise that more than 60% of those present did not know who Taibo II was referring to when he mentioned Javier Elorriaga and Sebastián Entzin, two political prisoners in Mexico accused of belonging to the EZLN, who had been freed by the Mexican government in early June due to the pressure of national and international protests.

Of course, many organizations that participated in the *Encuentro* have a long tradition of work in the area of international solidarity and, furthermore, do not have an uncritical perspective. These include the inter-

Rebellion 1996

The Portuguese Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) will host an International Socialist Youth Camp in Amarante, from 20-27 July this summer.

This is the 13th annual camp prepared in common by the European youth organisations of the Fourth International. Over 1,000 participants are expected.

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national committees of the Basque country, the participants of the Madrid Platform for Solidarity with Chiapas, of the solidarity committee of Brescia, Italy, as well as several German committees. This critical spirit is an essential ingredient if something more concrete is to be attained in the medium term.

A small candle of hope

The Encuentro has permitted us to look at ourselves in a mirror. And realize how much is still to be done.

The road which may eventually lead us to the Zapatistas' new "international of hope" stops, for now, at the frontiers of Western Europe. In other words, apart from a few exceptional cases, participation by groups from Eastern Europe was very low. Furthermore, in spite of the repeated call by Guillermo Briseño, of the organizing commission of the Frente Zapatista in Mexico (who also brought a message from the mountains of southeastern Chiapas) underlining the importance of achieving a consensus on at least some practical measures of solidarity, the Encuentro was incapable of making a single concrete decision in this regard.

Nevertheless, this experience, with all its limitations, has planted seeds that may permit the calling of a second European Encuentro. Undoubtedly, the destiny of a second meeting will be largely determined by the situation in Mexico. But if this initiative — on the basis of the experiences of the people of Europe — manages to survive and grow, the Zapatistas will be able to rightfully add yet another item to the list of their achievements: building links so that the people of Europe may build their own "Enough!" against capitalism. ★

Translated by R. Bernabe

• The German model is dead!

Manuel Kellner

For many years, Germany was presented as a model for the other European countries to envy and try to emulate. The economy was dynamic, the currency was strong. The trade unions were strong, but moderate. They operated in a framework of social partnership, which enabled Germany to avoid social crises, and cushion the effects of mass unemployment.

The massive June 15th demonstration against the Kohl government's austerity offensive is a sign that we are witnessing the last days of the "German model." Kohl is firmly supported by the employers organisations. And the demonstration in Bonn was organised by the Trade Union Confederation (DGB) and the other social movements.

- The unions estimate that there are almost 7 million unemployed workers in Germany (official statistics claim there are "only" 4 m.)
- The industry of former East Germany (GDR) has been destroyed. There was no growth in the east's economy in the first three months of this year. Unemployment is higher than in the west of the country, and the standard of living is noticeably lower. Average wages are still only 85% of the west German level. Germany, the champion of monetary discipline, no longer meets the Maastricht criteria for monetary union!
- The government has made unprecedented attacks on a number of social gains, coupled with rebates, grants and tax cuts for the rich and the employers. All this in the name of "saving money." The employers are more and more aggressive. They increasingly demand wage cuts, and total flexibility.
- The Social Democratic Party (PDS) has not been perceived as a real opposition party for a number of years now. It presents itself as little more than the junior partner of the conservative government. The Greens have adapted to the demands of "the system." Their ecologist and pacifist image is less and less credible. The former east German Communist Party, reformed as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), is in a contradictory position. On the one hand, it needs to play the "rebel" in order to boost its support. But at the same time, it seeks to moderate its image, and demonstrate its willingness to take part in local and regional governmental coalitions.

It was Klaus Zwickel, President of the 2.7 million-strong metalworkers union IG Metall who first proposed the "Pact for Employment," offering to limit wage demands in exchange for the creation of 330,000 new jobs over three

years, better conditions for apprenticeships, and the maintenance of certain social benefits. He did so without the slightest consultation of the rank and file.

The "round table" of unions, employers and government promised "two million new jobs by the year 2000". All this without proposing any concrete measures.

The trade union federation (DGB) signed a common text with employers and the government ("Pact for employment and for maintaining Germany as a production site.") For the first time, the unions placed themselves within the neo-liberal coalition. They also agreed to a 3% cut in unemployment benefits (the government had initially proposed a 5% cut).

But once the regional elections were over, the governmental parties were no longer so determined to maintain even this co-operative relationship with the unions. The government arrogantly broke the Pact for Employment, and announced a new 50 billion DM cuts programme, half to come from the federal budget, and half from the Länder (regions).

The DGB abandoned the "round table." Since the end of April, the leaders of most sectoral unions have been supporting the development of what they call "a pact from below." In other words, mobilisation, but in a limited and tightly controlled fashion.

The rank and file dynamic has been both towards the autonomous organisation of this mobilisation, and towards a critique of the trade union leadership. There are also a range of student and trade union left initiatives against unemployment and marginalisation. There is now a debate in the unions on the question of a political strike, or even a general strike against the government.

There have been conflicts over the collective agreements in several sectors (textiles, chemical, steel, civil service), which have mobilised resistance against the most radical demands of the government and the employers. But the unions have accepted salary moderation (the average wage increase has been only 1.8%) without, of course, any of the government and employer concessions Zwickel promised from the Pact for Employment.

The Bundestag (Parliament) will soon begin to debate the latest austerity proposals. This is the moment to build on the June strikes, and construct a powerful, inter-sector movement. If we can do this by the time everyone comes back from their summer holidays, we might be talking about the beginning of a transformation of the balance of forces between labour and capital in the world's third largest economy! ★



A socialism for our time

After 1968, it was almost fashionable to be a revolutionary, and share the illusion that the revolution would be easy (a tea party). People were quick to demand "everything, right away". This happy consciousness could partly be explained as a result of the thirty ("glorious") years of almost uninterrupted growth after the war.

Today, after the disasters in Eastern Europe, many people are wondering if the revolution and socialism are still good ideas. Others are convinced that the world still has be changed, but doubt whether it still *can* be changed.

Daniel Bensaid

I. The right way to see the problem

Our model of a better society is not dead, particularly because we never thought that the regimes that fell when the Berlin Wall fell and the USSR disintegrated were models of anything. The fight for human emancipation does not consist in counterposing one model to another. It begins with resisting injustices, humiliations, and generalized contempt in a world where the richest 20% get 85% of the wealth while the poorest 20% share less than 2%. This market-based planetary order, which sows inequality and violence, is simply not acceptable.

Unemployment and massive social marginalization are glaring illustrations of the system's absurdity. The impressive growth of productivity, which makes it possible to produce five times as much wealth or more in less time than fifty years ago, could make it possible to devote the time saved to other things:



- to a drastic reduction of the work-week, to the transformation of work itself, which is the precondition for active participation by everyone in the life of the community; and

- to the satisfaction of social needs (housing, education, health care, culture). Who has the right to decide, and on what basis, that people are being taught too much and taken care of too well? Why is selling automobiles good for the economy and spending on health care bad?

This growing irrationality of the logic of capital (in which 700,000 new jobs make the New York stock exchange fall), which measures everything and organizes society on the basis of exchange of labour time, bears witness to the limits of this wretched measurement as soon as labour incorporates more and more knowledge which is more and more complex, so that labour becomes irreducible to abstract labour.

The ravaging of the environment and heedless pillage of non-renewable energy sources is another manifestation of this irrationality resulting from the inadequate measurement of social relationships. The frenetic hunt for short-term profits leads to neglect of the middle and long term (various kinds of pollution, deforestation, recycling of waste). The spirit of "live for today, tomorrow can take care of itself" destroys the solidarity between generations that is so necessary to reproduction of the species. Only an economy brought under political control and guidance, integrating long-term imperatives, would be capable of satisfying people's main social needs without devastating nature.

The current crisis has lasted since the 1970s; brief, episodic recoveries have not resulted in lower unemployment even in the rich countries. This is not a simple problem of corporate profitability. Profits have been restored, but without leading to productive investment and job creation. IN FACT, THIS CRISIS IS A GLOBAL CRISIS OF CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND OF REPRODUCTION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS. The bourgeoisie can overcome this crisis, but only at a high price for the exploited and oppressed. Already, under the pretext of globalization, a new division of territories and (economic, juridical and communicative) spaces is being carried out. This major transformation cannot take place peacefully. It is already being



accompanied by tragedies (Bosnia, Rwanda, Chechnya) which, far from being wars "out of the Middle Ages", are a logical part of this planetary reorganization.

Wars, unemployment, marginalization and ecological threats are the heralds of a future without a future. Already the illusions of progress, according to which future generations would necessarily live better than earlier ones, are beginning to crumble away. It is more necessary than ever to change the world. The role of revolutionaries is to act so that this necessity becomes possible.

II. A different idea of progress

It is true that the impressive development of technical knowledge and possibilities does not automatically lead to corresponding social and cultural progress. Under the reign of capital, progress and regression remain indissolubly linked. We must therefore define criteria of progress that are not reducible to the achievements of big industry or the "conquest of space". At the risk of oversimplifying, we should hold on to three essential points:

- Drastic reduction of the work-week (made possible by the enormous increase in productivity), which implies a radical change in our relationship to work and even in the content of work. This reduction in the proportion of our lives given over to constraining, alienated labour is the first precondition for the democratic development of society, so that all people will be able to exercise fully their responsibilities and control over the power centres. It is also the precondition for the free development of each individual. The admirable diversity of individual members of our species constitutes in truth an opportunity that we have to seize, not in order to celebrate the illusory, mutilated individuality of market-based conformism, but in order really to

Transformation and regroupment

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

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

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

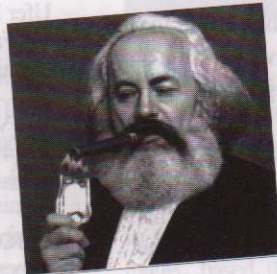
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develop a creative individual with steadily richer and more diversified personal and collective needs. In this way human beings could find their way back to the sense of play and bodily pleasures, which are subjected today to the principle of cost-benefit analysis and the dazed observation of mass spectator sports.

- The quality of the relationships between men and women (and vice versa) is another criteria of progress, inasmuch as it constitutes the first simultaneous experience of otherness (and of difference between the sexes) and of the universality of the species. [The translator has his doubts about this: isn't a female baby's first experience of otherness with her own mother?] More generally, wherever a relationship of domination and oppression of women by men continues to exist, the stranger, the alien, the person from somewhere else, in short the other will also be threatened.

- The point is in the last analysis TO WORK TOWARDS ACHIEVING A TRULY UNIVERSAL HUMAN SOLIDARITY, through a truly planetary flourishing of production and communication, by means of the enrichment of all through the appreciation of difference. Market universalization, dictated by the imperatives of capital, remains an abstract, contradictory, mutilated universalization. Under the dictatorship of the IMF, World Bank and WTO (particularly using debt as a their weapon), it fuels at the receiving end panics over identity, communalist withdrawals, religious fears, xenophobia and racism in general. Generous, Internationalist solidarity remains by contrast a fresh new idea.



III. What socialism do we want?

The point is not to turn one model in for another or draw up blueprints for a celestial city. The future must be invented as we go along, beginning from the real contradictions of the existing order. But every revolutionary project is in part a dream. We must dream in order to explore what lies hidden within the possible.

Imagine a world where we only work half-days. This means working differently: having the time to develop and educate oneself throughout one's life; escaping from fixed specializations; being able at one and the same time to be a worker as well as a poet, painter and musician. Today, in the professionalized "arts", "professionals" constitute a minority who do not always have anything to say, while the great majority of people who have so much to say never have a chance or the means to express it. Reducing the work-week is the precondition for a metamorphosis and withering-away of the social division of labour, in production as well as between the sexes.

- The socialism that we want means producing primarily to meet the needs of the greatest number of people, not as part of a blind rush after profits and privileges. It means working, dwelling and living differently. This prospect is inconceivable without infringing on sacrosanct private property in the major means of production and communication. How could we in fact adapt production to needs, be stewards of the natural environment for the long term, co-ordinate



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the efforts and free basic research from the criteria of short-term profit, if we continued to let competition and the market (let alone the notorious financial markets) make the short-term decisions behind citizens' backs? How could we pretend to guarantee the right to shelter without challenging private real estate interests? How could we ensure that gains in productivity would be used for development of health care and education (socialized rather than state-run) without attacking corporate despotism? Despite all the speeches lately about citizenship and despite trade-union rights (which are continually threatened), the reality of workplaces under the law of profit is management autocracy, not democracy.

The controversies around privatization and public services highlight the issue: is the goal to make services profitable at any price in order to swell the earnings of private firms that can do whatever comes into their heads, beyond any collective control; or is it to guarantee everyone equal access to certain basic goods (rights to food, housing, culture, etc.)? In short, we must recognize that *the right to live has to prevail over the right to own*. This does not imply a total state takeover of all major means of production and exchange; it means giving society the means to decide and control its own future.

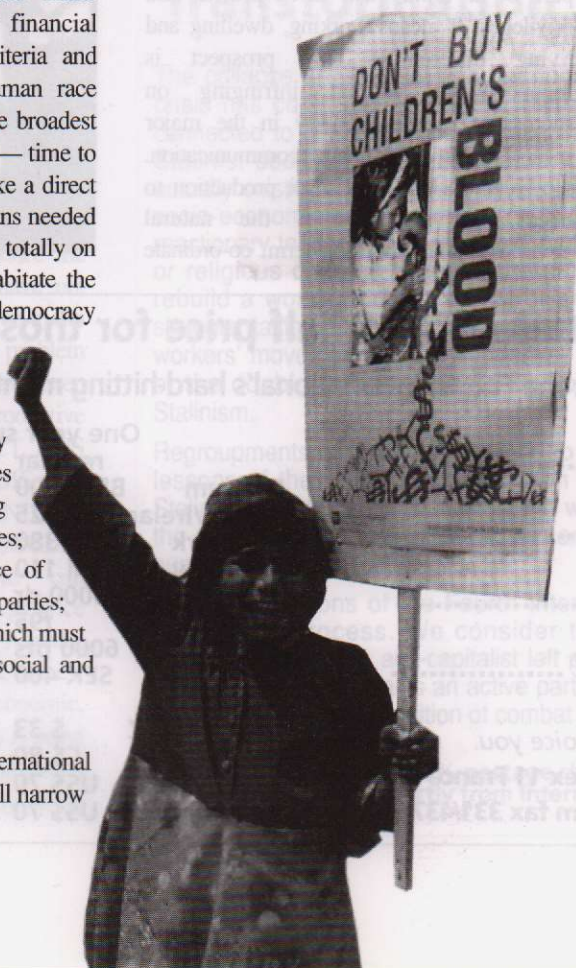
We want to foster the broadest possible democracy. Who in fact should make decisions: citizens together, or financial markets? According to what criteria and priorities? The future of the human race cannot be pulled out of a hat! The broadest possible democracy requires time — time to learn about major problems, to take a direct part in discussions — and the means needed to form an opinion without relying totally on experts. The issue is thus to rehabilitate the very idea of politics, and extend democracy from the institutional sphere to the spheres of production and culture, by generalizing self-management and control of representatives by the represented. This presupposes free, pluralist choice among different projects and programmes; full sovereignty and independence of trade unions and movements from parties; and the extension of democracy, which must not be merely political but also social and self-managing.

Finally we need to develop international solidarity in order to fight against all narrow

and exclusionary particularisms. We need to think and act as citizens of the world, in keeping with the initial ambition of the UNIVERSAL Declaration of Human Rights. This implies in particular everyday solidarity with the peoples of dependent and dominated countries who have suffered centuries of pillage and domination. Today this pillage is taking the form of debt, which allows the creditors to impose their conditions and dictates and to push so-called "developing" countries back down into underdevelopment. Within this general perspective, what kind of Europe do we want? The Europe of the Maastricht Treaty — the Europe of markets and currency, judges and bankers — in reality undermines the very idea of an open Europe, a Europe of sister- and brotherhood, a social and democratic

Europe.

These are only paths that head us in the direction of a different, livable future. Tomorrow's struggles really begin today. You know Bertolt Brecht's famous saying: Those who fight for a day are good, those who fight for many years are very good, but those who fight their whole lives are indispensable. This is also the socialism that we want: the socialism that makes the greatest possible number of human beings "indispensable". ★



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From Dayton to the Elections

All-Bosnian elections are supposed to be held before the end of September. The election is a keystone of the Dayton Accords, and the first test of the post-war period.

But as **Catherine Samary** explains, the date set has more to do with the demands of American politics than the conditions on the ground that are necessary if the vote is to be more than a charade.



THE ACCORDS FORESEE THAT THE IFOR (Implementation Force, under NATO command) will withdraw at the end of December, and it is necessary for Clinton, in the US electoral context, to be able to point to a minimal degree of normalization before his "boys" withdraw. It is especially necessary to leave before the shame of a Somali-style syndrome, or, even worse, a major confrontation.

So nothing will be done (particularly the arrest of war criminals) that would put the IFOR troops in a hostage situation or in the teeth of conflict. That is why it is said in Bosnia that the IFOR is UNPROFORizing (becoming like the UN command that NATO has replaced). The foreign troops are serving to ratify territorial divisions rather than unify the country.

It is difficult to imagine how the elections will be organized in this context – and when (or if) they will take place. The free movement of the population is a mirage at the moment. People (including refugees abroad) theoretically have the right to vote in the localities in which they were registered in the last census in 1991. Also, all voters should be able to register in their location of choice. But even visits to cemeteries by Muslim families in Srebrenica (in the Serb Republic of Srpska) or Capljina (in the Croat region of Hercegovina) has been forbidden by the local Serb and Croat warlords who led the ethnic cleansing of these towns. The return of refugees is impossible where they are not members of the majority community.

The implicit viewpoints of the great powers converge on at least one point: if

Bosnia-Herzegovina breaks apart (and this is undoubtedly an unstated assumption of the diplomats), it should not happen before the orderly departure of the IFOR. And it should not take an explosive, uncontrolled form. This is why the US, like the European governments, based themselves in Dayton on an agreement between Serb president Milosevic and Croat president Tudjman. Their meetings, even before the war, have aimed at redefining the ethnic borders of Serbia and Croatia to the detriment of Bosnia-Herzegovina, similar to what happened in 1939.

The NATO air strikes, far from having been anti-Serb, aimed at weakening Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic to the benefit of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. They succeeded; the recognition of the "Serbian Republic in Bosnia" in the Dayton accords meant the defeat of Karadzic, with the return to the territorial percentages accepted in the negotiations with the aid of the Croat and Bosnian armies. Too bad for the populations that did not receive their share.

Similarly, the Croat-Muslim federation, put in place under American pressure in March 1994, aimed at equalizing the military balance of power against the Serb nationalists, mitigating the martyrdom of the Muslims attacked on two fronts, and supporting the secular and Bosnian wing of the SDA (the dominant Muslim party) against its Islamic wing that is turning toward Iran. In the context of the Croat-Muslim alliance, it is the Croat army that has received most of the American aid. But it is understood that behind the scenes in Dayton, the Sarajevo govern-

ment was promised American logistical and military aid whose purpose, from Clinton's viewpoint, was to assure an equilibrium of forces as a condition for NATO withdrawal. But this whole arrangement is now in trouble.

A fragile arrangement

Normalization for Belgrade has meant suspending the Kosovo question for the moment (2). Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) have mutually recognized each other. And the Milosevic/Tudjman agreements on border issues have somewhat stabilized the situation. The pragmatic Milosevic is therefore, more than ever, a major trump card for creating a new Balkan order. This is why all the states of the European Union have recently recognized the YFR, including Germany. The latter is particularly interested in a regional peace because of its investments, but especially to be able to send the mass of refugees from the ex-Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, back home. Milosevic should get a few Deutschmarks for this.

But even though he has thereby been able to consolidate his position and sign the Dayton accords in the name of all Serbs, Milosevic still doesn't have the elbow room to push aside Karadzic, the warlord he himself helped to power. The Serbian Republic's budget is determined in Belgrade. Milosevic still must consolidate the police forces loyal to Belgrade against those of Karadzic's army and build an electoral base for the (Bosnian Serb) Socialist Party against Karadzic's SDS. To do this, Milosevic needs the ceasefire and the time the accords allow to apply the military aspects of Dayton and reduce the size of the Bosnian Serb army (to the benefit of the police, which he controls). And he has special interest in pluralist elections in the Srpska Republic. Several dozen parties have already entered the lists, and the Socialist Party appears to be the main opposition to Karadzic's SDS. The changes in the balance of forces are also leading to differentiation inside the latter party.

Karadzic's power, privileges, freedom, and even his life are now in play. He has been too visibly enriched by the war to be popular. But if he can present himself as a martyr (a victim of the great powers or of Milosevic), he might harness some solidarity. Meanwhile, Dayton has legitimized the reason he fought

Multi-ethnic alternatives

The only currents that are effectively fighting for Bosnian unity define themselves as the "democratic alternative."

In March 1996, some 70 representatives of political and civic formations and independent media from across Bosnia-Herzegovina (except for Herceg-Bosna) met in Tuzla. They emphasized the fact that the elections foreseen for the fall of 1996 would be among the last opportunities to break the totalitarian



logic which sees all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina represented by the three nationalist parties and their leaders. They demanded that the electoral commission of the OSCE guarantee all citizens the right to vote and be elected. They also demanded the creation of a common fund accessible to all duly registered parties and candidates, and that all parties and media be able to take part in the work of the electoral commission.

The Union of Social Democrats (OBSD - the organization of Tuzla's mayor Selim Beslagic) has proposed a regroupment of all the country's forces favorable to a united and democratic Bosnia under the slogan "Yes, For Bosnia-Herzegovina." Five opposition parties (Beslagic's organization, the Social Democratic Party, the Organization of Bosnian Muslims, the Croat Peasant Party and the Republican Party) should soon sign a coalition agreement for the elections. Also possibly joining are Circle 99 of Sarajevo, the Democratic Circles of Tuzla and Bihac, the Citizens' Forums of Zenica, Tuzla and Gorazde, along with the Liberal Party of Miodrag Zivanovic in Banja Luka, and opponents of the Pale parliament like Milorad Dodik of the Party of Independent Social Democrats.

The next meeting of the "Democratic Alternative" will be in Banja Luka. The proposed coalition is also open to Haris Sildjic's party. [CS]

the war - his Srpska Republika in Bosnia now exists, and is recognised. The balance of forces is not in his favor, but he can carry out a policy of provocations, blocking the establishment of common institutions throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, as specified in the Dayton accords, boycotting the elections and instigating a separatist referendum. He may even resign, if he can get serious guarantees of not having to face charges in the Hague and of having a healthy and peaceful retirement.

On the Croat-Muslim side, the situation is more problematic. By re forging the Croat army, recognizing the Serbian Republic in Bosnia and supporting the Milosevic/Tudjman agreements, the US has in fact consolidated a dynamic toward the establishment of Greater Croatia. The Croat defense minister, Gojko Susak, is a far right Herze-

govinian emigre who since 1992 has been directly responsible for the construction of the Croat statelet of Herceg-Bosna in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Tudjman's recent arrogance is a result of his sense of power and impunity after the ethnic cleansing of the secessionist Serbs in the Croat Krajina last summer. This military operation, committed in the shadow of the horrors in Srebrenica and with the obvious agreement of Belgrade, was accompanied by an immediate change in the Croat constitution; abolishing certain amendments favorable to the Serb minority (12% of the population at that time, but less than 5% today) which had been added under international pressure. Notably, this has allowed Tudjman to lower the Serb representation in parliament from 13 to three deputies. Tudjman would not have had a majority in the last elections without this measure, and with

Towards a different Europe! Alternative conference, demonstrations and other activities Amsterdam, June 1997

The Dutch Committee for a Different Europe invites you to take part in debates and actions for a social, green, democratic and feminist Europe.

At this moment two developments are taking place that are decisive for Europe's future.

- preparations for the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) are leading to the dismantling of public services and social security and rising unemployment in almost every EU member state.
- the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) has begun: the fifteen member states are negotiating to revise the Maastricht Treaty, the treaty that has propelled the European Union into its current credibility crisis. According to plan, these negotiations are supposed to end with the signing of a new treaty by the heads of government during their June 1997 Amsterdam summit.

Together the EMU and IGC will largely determine the character of the European Union and thus the daily lives of Europe's citizens. But discussion of these developments is going on mainly among politicians. For the moment there is no broad debate under way about the threats posed by European integration, like the plans for an EU defense bloc, with the "Europeanisation" of the nuclear arsenals of France and the United Kingdom.

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The Committee was initiated in April 1996. Members include • AMOK • ASEED Europe • Derde Kamer • Groen Links • Nederland Bekent Kleur • PSP'92 • SAP • Solidariteit • United for cultural action • Womens Global Network for Reproductive Rights. The committee will organize its first conference on October 19th, 1996.

the votes of Croats in the diaspora (and in Bosnia-Herzegovina). He continues to obstruct the activities of the Hague tribunal (promoting the warlords of Herceg-Bosna accused of war crimes in the Croat army). Tudjman's party (the HDZ, purged of its most pro-Bosnian Croats in 1992) that rules in the Croat regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina. And despite the Dayton accords, which privilege the Croat-Muslim Federation, he still supports Herceg-Bosna, which rejects all commonalities with Muslims.

Politics and identity in play

The Serbian and Croat approach toward Bosnia-Herzegovina has been based, since the beginning of the conflict, on one basic argument: there is no Bosnian nation; Bosnia-Herzegovina is an artificial creation of former leader Marshal Josip Tito, and so is the Muslim nationality claimed by almost half of the Republic's pre-war inhabitants. This historical view of Bosnia-Herzegovina is obviously false (3). As for the Bosnjaks identity, (the preferred term nowadays for the main Slav ethnic-national community in Bosnia, impregnated by Turkish and Islamic culture), they are no more artificial than the Croats (Catholics) or the Serbs (Orthodox); all three speak variants of Serbo-Croatian (4).

Their identity is historical, evolving, and the result of political choices. Many Serbs, Croats and Bosnjaks in Bosnia consider themselves Bosnians citizens first, and often consider themselves Yugoslav. The crisis and the war have forced new polarizations in which one's choice of identity isn't free, and depends on the type of state in which one lives. The new constitution and the coming elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not give an equal citizenship to Bosnians of mixed nationality.

Muslim Bosnians are polarized between those who feel themselves to be citizens of Bosnia first and vote for non-nationalist parties, those adopting a Bosnian nationalism, thus appropriating a Bosnia-Herzegovina denied them by Serb and Croat nationalism, and those whose primary identity is now Islamic (though not fundamentalist). The SDA (the dominant Muslim party) has incorporated this heterogeneity. It has two wings. The goal of one wing is the re-Islamization of those Muslims who "spend more time in the bar than the mosque". SDA leader and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic has never hidden his clear religious beliefs. But he knows that nearly half of the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina considered themselves atheists in 1991, with only 16% of Muslims (in the national sense) practicing Islam. Many join Serbs and Croats in opposing an Muslim

state.

This is why Izetbegovic constantly oscillates between two variants of the same policy: accepting the division of Bosnia and organizing a Muslim state or using the SDA and his power at the head of a secular and multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina to consolidate its Islamic component.

It has been in Izetbegovic's interest to confront strong Serb and Croat nationalist parties. This has made it easier to organize most of the population on an exclusively communitarian basis. This form of organization has a very strong tradition in the countryside, where the churches are more influential, mixed marriages are rare and the village communities are more juxtaposed than mixed.

The former prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, most incarnated the secular and pro-American wing of the SDA. This wing finds its identity in an attachment to Bosnia-Herzegovina rather than in religion. The war kept these two components of the SDA together, to demand aid from all who wished to give it. Now the party is breaking up; Silajdzic recently formed the Party for Bosnia.

The moment of decision

This is a decisive moment for imperialist domination of Bosnia. During the war, the Sarajevo government sought solidarity and military and financial aid from the Islamic countries, especially Iran. The US is now seeking to conciliate the Muslim world, and is finding bridges for its own diplomacy. Peace demands a reliable power in Bosnia to assure the stability of the Croat-Muslim federation. The Islamic component of the SDA and its links to Iran have become more problematic.

In fact, their Croat allies are not without arguments on the impossibility of coexisting with the fundamentalists, and have even kept Iranian arms from reaching Sarajevo. In Mostar, the capital of Croat Herceg-Bosna, the far right Croat militias have systematically impeded the reunification of the city after destroying its Muslim section.

The Bosnian president thinks that some of the Bosnian Croats (those with the military power) do not want a federation, but he doesn't want to say this publicly. He is therefore applying a tactic of undermining the federation, until the Bosnians say they have had enough (5). And the American secret services are finding ample collaboration among the Croats to expose Iranian support to Sarajevo in terms of money, people and fighters.

All this information, revealed in the American press, has left Clinton quite nervous and particularly undiplomatic in im-

posing his will. Imperialist activity is received more and more unhappily, even among those currents hostile to the SDA and any attempt at creating a Muslim state. The journal *Dani* writes: "American-Bosnian relations in regard to Iran have entered a new phase. The American ambassador Madeleine Albright has stated 'the messengers of hate must leave, whether they come from Pale or Teheran.' This leaves no doubt: America wants to choose for Bosnia not only its friends, but its enemies! Such policies are not subtle... They throw a glove of provocation in the face of the victims, placing the synonym for evil (Pale) and for a friend (Teheran) as close as Washington on the same level. Beyond the naivete of its view about this friendly aid [from Iran], this crude American dictates can be described as a Haitization of Bosnia-Herzegovina, leaving few options" (*Dani* #14, March 1996) (6).

The US has withdrawn aid it had promised to the Sarajevo government until the departure of the last Mujahaddin (there are reportedly several dozen fighters left). The dissolution of the State Agency (Sarajevo's secret service), as demanded by both by the Croat forces and the US, is the first result obtained by Clinton.

Will the political weakening of the SDA to the benefit of Haris Silajdzic's Party for Bosnia be sufficient to stabilize the federation? This depends on the international pressure imposed on Tudjman. The recent decision to delay Croatia's entry into the Council of Europe represents a (tardy) realization of the instability produced by the policies of Greater Croatia.

The consolidation of the Federation would be a better result than an outbreak of hostilities, leaving a rump Muslim state wedged between two hostile states — fertile terrain for the growth of fundamentalism. But such consolidation will not be the signal of a refounded, multicultural Bosnia-Herzegovina based on the equality of all its peoples and all its citizens. ★

Notes

1) Bosnjak expresses the secular attachment of this community to Bosnia-Herzegovina as a national identity rather than one marked by religion. The term Bosnjak should be differentiated from the term Bosnian, designating all citizens of Bosnia.

2) See "La Serbie dans la tourmente de la paix", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1996.

3) See "L'identité incertaine des Musulmans bosniaques," *Maniere de voir*, April 1996.

4) These are now considered three languages - Serb, Croat and Bosnian.

5) See *Dani*, French edition, n. 15, April 1996

6) Op. cit.

Instability and lost illusions

The first round of the Russian Presidential elections confirms a number of tendencies revealed during the December 1995 Parliamentary elections.

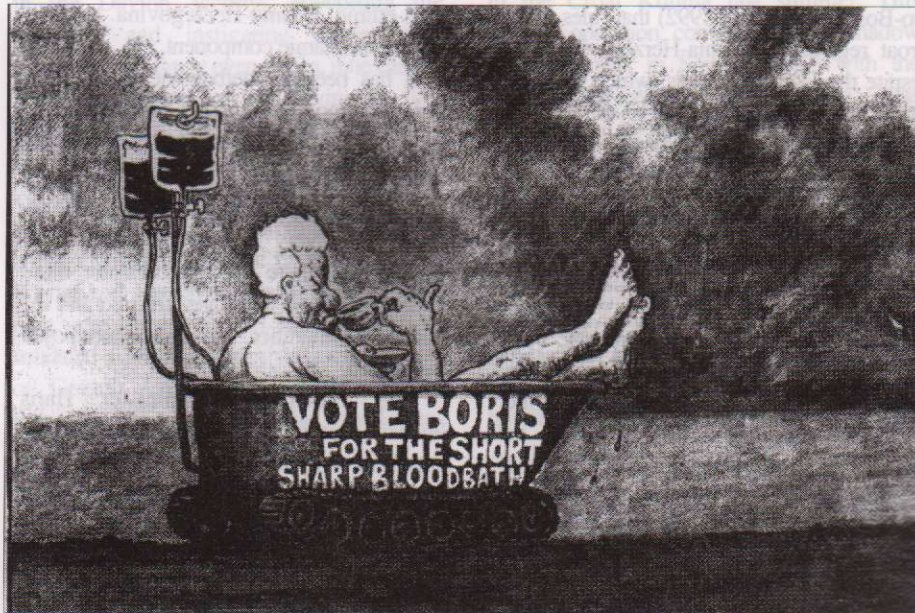
Livio Maitan

As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, but at a larger scale, there is a rejection of the regimes formed in the collapse of the bureaucratised, transitional societies. This is the result of the prolonged economic collapse, the tearing of the social tissue, the inexistence of even moderately efficient and genuinely democratic institutions, the emergence of new exploitative social layers, enriching themselves by all sorts of unscrupulous, even criminal financial and commercial operations, and the impoverishment of a large majority of the population.

At the political and ideological level, this has led to a sharp decline in illusions in the virtues of the "market economy and "western democracy" and a rapid fall in the influence of those circles of intellectuals who had most contributed to nourishing such illusions.

This rejection is expressed in different, partially contradictory ways. After a few years of critical thinking and mobilisation (1987-90) the growing chaos has led to depoliticisation. This has caused both the elementary reflect of condemnation of those considered responsible for dismantling the social advantages of the previous system, coupled with frustrations about Russia's decadence, and the role which the USSR played for decades on the international scene. The nostalgia which exists is not so much for the Stalinist period (particularly the 1930s), more for the Brezhnev period, when the sclerosis of the state coincided with economic stagnation, but there was no longer massive repression, and wide layers of the population experienced a growth in living standards. This sentiment is one of the reasons which led people, particularly those of a certain age, to vote for [the Communist leader] Zuzanov.

The events of the months leading up to the first round of the presidential election, and the days which followed, demonstrate the instability and the precariousness of the situation. Before last December's Duma (parliamentary) elections, Yeltsin took a series of



measures aiming to improve, at least a little, the conditions of the social layers most heavily affected by his outrageous "neoliberalism," in the hope of increasing his share of the vote. The measures included the removal from his team of several of the individuals most closely associated with the market reforms. After the results of the first round of the presidential elections, it took Yeltsin less than 48 hours to launch his incredible co-optation of General Lebed, his principle rival after Zuzanov, coupled with the demotion of a number of Lebed's opponents within the government, most notably defence minister Pavel Gratchev.

Yeltsin also used this occasion to re-integrate free-market partisans like Tchubais, who he had earlier expelled from government.

The deal between Yeltsin and Lebed, and the date at which the two men agreed to cooperate is still not clear. Lebed certainly criticised Yeltsin heavily during his campaign, but he also rejected "excessive etatism," and proposed economic policies similar to those of the President.

It is not clear how long this accord will last. Yeltsin may find Lebed's new position to be too dangerous, and seek to change the disposition of power round the throne. For his part, Lebed will certainly try to reinforce his position, so as to be able to try to succeed Yeltsin, and even accelerate the date of such a succession. Nor can we exclude the possibility that Yeltsin will make other tactical operations, for various reasons.

Zuzanov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) is different from the "ex-Communist" parties which now govern in Poland and Hungary. The Russian party has not accomplished the same process of revision and re-adjustment of its theory and politics, particularly where the past is concerned. The CPRF has an ambiguous character. It seems not to have learned some essential lessons about the failure of the bureaucratic transitional societies, and continues to seek common ground with nationalist, including far-right expressions.

Zuzanov himself is ambiguous. Moscow activist Aleksander Buzgalin calls him "a melange: social democratic in economics, etatist in politics, communist-Christian orthodox in ideology, and chauvinist in geopolitics."

Having said this, if Zuzanov became president, he would face similar problems to those of the ex-Communist parties now in power elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Given the current balance of forces, he would probably be pushed to make similar choices on the essential questions. Though, compared to the Polish and Hungarian parties, he might give a more important role to the state, take protectionist economic measures, and adopt a more autonomous foreign policy.

The second round of the election has not yet been held. But one thing is clear. Under Zuzanov, or under Yeltsin, Russia will have neither significant economic growth, nor sociological stabilisation. ★

Elections intensify India's instability

Kunal Chattopadhyay and Rohit Prajapati chart the resistible rise of Hindu communalism, and argue for a change of priorities on the Indian left

INDIA IS ALMOST UNIQUE AMONG THE LESS developed capitalist countries. Its ruling bourgeoisie has created an autonomous pole of capital accumulation and enabled the emergence of local, monopolist finance capital. All this while preserving a bourgeois democratic framework.

The pre-independence Congress was a bourgeois party that had established its hegemony over the anti-imperialist struggle. Its major failure was the rise of communalism, particularly aggressive Muslim communalism sponsored by the relatively weaker Muslim capitalists. The result, in 1947, was freedom with partition.

A lesser failure had been the inability to thwart a considerable degree of independent working class activity. But, thanks to Stalinist Comintern influence, the Communist Party of India did not challenge bourgeois hegemony. Instead, the CPI called for united Congress-Muslim League leadership of the freedom struggle. There was only a limited left challenge from the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (Fourth International), the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

In the immediate post-independence period, Congress enjoyed a strengthened hegemony. The party could claim to have brought freedom, and proposed a vision of a state-sector led third path, or mixed economy, between capitalism and socialism. This was backed up by real changes like land reforms, and economic growth due to the long post-war wave of expansion. Congress continued to play its pre-independence role of arbiter between the various classes, castes, and sectional groups.

In the long run, however, India's capitalist development created new political forces and generated an instability in bourgeois politics. On the one hand there were social conflicts between the most oppressed classes and castes and the exploiting elites. On the other hand, more disturbingly for the rulers, there

were fractures within the elite itself. The rise of new bourgeois parties did not symbolise attempts to create a stable two-party system. Rather, parties were formed by regional and sectoral capitalists (for example the agrarian parties) and by caste movements, like the anti-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu, which gave rise to the Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam, which became a regional bourgeois party with a specific social base.

Another source of social conflict was the struggle for caste equality. This included both mobilizations of the "untouchables", now calling themselves *dalits* (the oppressed), and the struggle of formerly relatively low castes that wanted increased social status and political power to match their economic advance in the transforming economy.

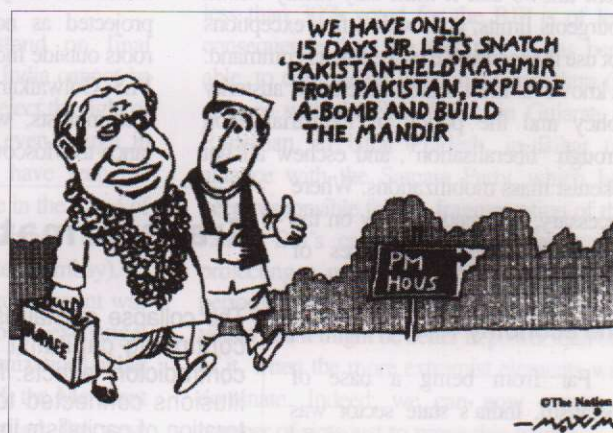
The apparent revival of the Congress in the 1970s and, after the debacle of 1977, into the 1980s, was based on a new kind of political strategy. While the industrial drive of the 1950s had faltered, the rhetoric of socialism was stepped up, and so was the cult of a charismatic leader. Along with steady big bourgeois support there were attempts to build a stable vote bank including the so-called core minorities, Muslims, *dalits* and "tribals". From 1971, elections increasingly took on a plebiscitary character.

By 1989, however, these efforts boomeranged. An alternative lower caste bloc was emerging, under the rubric of social justice. Muslim voters were alienated more and more, as Congress "secularism" was perceived to be a balancing of opposite communalisms. And in trying to play the Hindu communal card, Congress actually strengthened the historic force of Hindu communalism, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Two bourgeois options were tried out as alternatives to the Congress. The first was the Janata Party, which formed the government in 1997. But almost immediately, supporters of the RSS within the Janata Party began to unveil their own radical agenda, leading to the fall of the government.

Re-establishing itself as Janata Dal, the mainstream movement was able to exclude the Hindu communalists (Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP) from government, but only by the unnatural method of seeking support from the BJP on the right and the CPI and the CPI(M) on the left.

This fragile regime tried to create a stable basis for itself by the acceptance of the Mandal Commission Report, which advocated affirmative action for a large number of non-scheduled backward castes. The BJP



tried to halt this possibility by pushing on with its own rabid communal mobilizations. The government fell, and in the election of 1991, the Hindu communalist BJP moved into second position, behind Congress. The Janata Dal and its allies in the National Front occupied third position.

The left

In 1957, the CPI won a majority of seats in the Kerala provincial Legislative Assembly. But the central government used an undemocratic clause in the constitution to bring down the E.M.S.Namboodiripad government. The CPI concluded from this bitter experience that it could only govern in coalition with bourgeois partners. Sharp differences developed between those militants who claimed that "leftwingers in the Congress" were potential allies, and others who saw greater virtue in non-Congress bourgeois parties. This tactical question, more than the

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Sino-Soviet tussle, lay at the root of the split in the CPI.

The next landmark for the left came in 1967. Both wings of the CPI participated in coalition governments with bourgeois forces, notably in West Bengal and Kerala. The fall of these governments, combined with the attempts by the real Maoists in the CPI(M) to launch a peasant revolution and their eventual departure to form the CPI(ML), convinced the "mainstream" left of the need for greater moderation.



West Bengal is the best example of the strategy followed. A purely left front has been in power for nineteen years and has now been given its fifth turn, with a reduced majority. The state govern-

ment knows that it must stay firmly within bourgeois limits, and, with a few exceptions not use the legislative powers at its command. It knows it must follow even the austerity policy and the policy of industrialisation through "liberalisation", and eschew all but tokenist mass mobilizations. Where necessary, it is ready to rely on the bureaucracy and the forces of repression.

The economy

Far from being a base of socialism, India's state sector was created fully in accordance with the pre-independence plans of major Indian capitalist groups. They expected it to function until private capital was able to supplant it. Once the state sector was seen to have done its job, liberalisation policies were adopted, with the aim of privatization and the insertion of Indian capitalism in the world market on favourable terms.

But the long wave of capitalist depression brought in its wake the huge pressure of imperialist capital. Keeping Indian capitalism competitive called for a sharp right-wing turn. This combination of imperialist pressure and the needs of India's autonomous monopoly capital had a crucial influence in the development of the new economic policy of Manmohan Singh, finance minister in the Narasimha Rao government.

This policy failed in its stated objective of reducing the foreign debt, which rose from \$85.3 billion

in 1991-92 to an estimated \$97 billion in 1995-96. Foreign reserves contained a high proportion of borrowings and short-term, high-interest deposits by Indians resident abroad.

But Singh's real, though unstated goal of pumping wealth from the poor to the rich had greater success. Between 1987 and 1991 the average inflation rate had been 8.5%. It shot up to 13.5% in 1991-92, and 9.6% the following year. Foodgrain prices doubled. Prices of coal, electricity and cooking oil rose swiftly. Subsidies to education and public health were cut, with devastating effects, including the reappearance of malaria in epidemic form.

The Rise of the Fascist Option

Founded in the 1920s, the *Hindutva* ideology of the RSS rejected a territorial national identity for India. Non-Hindus were projected as non-Indians, with ideological roots outside India. The RSS's second leader, M.S. Golwalkar, extended this concept to the Communists, whose extra-territorial allegiance to Moscow made them as "un-Indian"

as Muslims or Sikhs.

At the heart of *Hindutva* was the myth of the thousand year struggle against Islamic domination. Muslims were the ultimate other, in contrast to which a chauvinist, militant Hindu identity was projected. Golwalkar approvingly cited Germany as "proof" that racial purity was necessary and even essential.

At the same time, the "true Indian" (read RSS) view of society was hailed for rejecting class struggle in favour of social harmony under the dictatorship of a moral elite emphasising "a faith to live by and die for". The reality of this harmony was the forcible suppression of subordinate, especially proletarian class identity as incompatible with *Hindutva*. This fascist ideology was buttressed by a fascist organization. The militant right-wing cadre force of the RSS made the cadre base of the CPI and the CPI(M) look positively thin.

The RSS grew only slowly in the early post-independence years. While it kept itself separate and built its petty bourgeois social base, the prospect of prosperity meant that its appeal was limited both with respect to this

base for a counter-revolution from below and to the Indian big bourgeoisie.

Through the 1980s, however, a mounting social and economic crisis and sense of frustration was channelled and given a false direction, targeting Muslims, Islam and "Marxism." In the generous interpretation of the RSS, this last abomination included all public expenditure in the interests of the toilers). The communalists proposed a vague economic nationalism, which was revealed to mean little more than protecting Indian capitalism. Based on Golwalkar's dictum, the RSS held that this protection could not be ensured within bourgeois democracy, as this made competition with communists and concessions in the face of resistance inevitable. As working class opposition to the new economic policy forced a slowdown in the reforms, this anti-democratic argument appeared plausible to

Transformation and regroupment

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



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

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

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increasing sections of the big bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation crystallised a much wider Hindutva identity. Riots were systematically used to consolidate right-wing militancy and to terrorise the Muslims. By forcing the Muslims into ghettos, the right created even more "evidence" that "Hindus likewise need to organize as Hindus". By 1982, that is, shortly before the launching of the new line, the RSS had 20,000 branches, the activities of which integrated over a million regular participants. Donations from members and sympathisers now exceeded Rs. 10 million annually.

The RSS now sought to win the support of the big bourgeoisie on its own terms, by showing its potential for mass ultra-right struggles and at the same time by projecting its faith in capitalist economic consolidation and dispelling all notions that communalism meant obscurantism and backward ideas in all spheres.

The Elections and After

The 1996 elections were fought by four type of forces. The Congress, the BJP and its allies, the National Front-Left Front combine, and a number of regional parties. The BJP alliance received less than 30% of the total votes, but with concentration in certain areas and the split in anti-BJP votes elsewhere, they received 195 seats (BJP 160, Shiv Sena 16, the rest to smaller allies like the Samta Party led by renegade socialists, the Haryana Vikas Party and the Sikh communal Akalli Dal). The Congress got 28% votes and 136 seats.

The six party NF-LF combine was badly trounced, coming third. It was by post poll alliances with diverse parties like the DMK, the Telugu Desam of Andhra, the AGP of Assam, the Tamil Maanila Congress, a Congress clone that split away only on the issue of with which party to ally in Tamil Nadu that it claimed the support of 185 members of Parliament.

The Indian president first invited the BJP, the largest single party and the leader of the largest single pre-poll coalition to form the government. BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee accepted, knowing full well that his government would fall as soon as it sought a vote of confidence in Parliament.

His calculations were the following. In the first place, the very act of forming a short-lived BJP government would placate the mass base, which was unwilling to see the party opt out from the beginning and sit as the opposition for one more term. The President's address would spell out the BJP agenda as official policy, and project a moderate, nationalistic and modernist face.

To give only one example, the BJP asserts that Muslims are separate because they live under their own family laws, forgetting conveniently that so do Hindus. It calls for a Uniform Civil Code. But by projecting this as a task of national integration, it was able to keep the others, who also swear by national integration, on the defensive. Only our party, despite its small size, has in alliance with feminists, launched the offensive, pointing out that we need a Uniform Civil Code based on gender justice for all women, not just to "integrate" Muslims.

A national workshop in late May early June took up the task of drafting alternative personal laws that are gender just, while combating the communal-fascist agenda. By opposing the Uniform Civil Code per se, CPI(M) and other left parties strengthened the RSS propaganda that they were backing Muslim fundamentalists in the guise of protecting minorities.

Similarly, the BJP's stand on final incorporation of Kashmir in India cannot be well opposed by parties that reject the right of nations to self-determination, even though, in Kashmir the past six years have seen the murder of over 40,000 people in the name of combating terrorism (Kashmir has a population smaller than Greater Bombay).

The coming of the BJP government was greeted by a buoyant stock exchange. Leading industrialists and organizations of big capital like CII, ASSOCHAM, the Merchant Chamber of Commerce hailed the new government. The newly hatched United Front, sponsored by the Left which however will keep out of government (at least that is the CPI(M) stand for the moment) was on the other hand greeted sceptically.

After the BJP government fell, the task of forming a government passed to the United Front, a post-election coalition. Parliamentary arithmetic compels the UF to seek Congress support. The Congress will not enter the government, and has made it clear that it will oppose any departure from its economic policy. Keeping out the BJP will therefore require an economic regime that all the UF partners except the Tamil Maanila Congress had condemned before the elections as a succumbing to imperialism and as an anti-people policy. The very act of taking support from the Congress, described so lyrically as the major party of the ruling class in all the left election manifestos of 1996, will discredit the anti-Congress and "progressive" image built up by the NF-LF bloc in the past years.

The election results showed that the strategy of building a lower caste vote bank has failed. The Janata Dal did very badly in

Uttar Pradesh state, and lost many seats in Bihar (these two key provinces, where low caste mobilisation has been strongest, elect 139 seats in India's 544 seat Parliament). And 19 years of non-reformism has cost the left its base in the industrial areas of Bengal, where the Congress won 8 parliamentary seats out of 42, and 82 of the 294 State Assembly seats (up from 41 seats in the previous state legislature).

The votes also showed low polling in places where the BJP is in power, disclosing popular antipathy where the real face of the BJP is known (only a little over 30% voted in Gujarat, where there was virtually a straight Congress-BJP contest).

A superficial survey of this data has led a number of analysts to say that the BJP is the real winner. This is an extremely short-sighted analysis. India does not have a system of proportional representation, so the fact that less than 30% voted for the BJP is of less consequence than the fact that it has been able, to consolidate itself in Maharashtra (in alliance with the Shiv Sena), in Gujarat, in Rajasthan, in Uttar Pradesh, in Bihar (in alliance with the Samata Party, which has been responsible for the fragmentation of the Janata Dal's caste based vote bank). By projecting a moderate face during its short period of power, it has sent a message to the voters that it might be better in power than out of it, when the more extremist elements will dominate. Indeed, we can now expect a number of riots just to prove this point.

The Indian left and working class movement is entering into a critical period. The crisis that the left faces is of our own making, and there is no short cut route out. The socialists (who have long dissolved their party into the Janata Dal) and other parties have repeatedly made compromises with the RSS. Despite the 1977 experience, in 1989 they formed the Janata Dal government with BJP support, which legitimised the communalists. Socialist leaders like Madhu Dandavate and Pramila Dandavate have in the past made deals with Shiv Sena to stand weak candidates in the other party's priority constituencies.

The case of the Stalinist left is different. Formally they have always opposed communalism. In recent times, they have also begun to call the RSS fascist. But they have not made any serious analysis of what fascism means. Guided by the old theory of anti-fascist united front, they have differentiated the anti-fascist struggle from the struggle against the bourgeois economic offensive. Thus, the powerful mobilizations of 1991-2 against the new economic policy were halted

after the destruction of the Babri Masjid in December 1992 on the plea that now the anti-fascist struggle must take precedence. The inevitable result has been the disorientation of the working class.

The attitude of the left parties to riots are also meaningless. They never try to bring out counter mobilizations. Instead, they call on the state apparatus to be true to the secular constitution of India.

While calling in the army might save a few lives, it does not solve the political problem. Rather, it makes the state apparatus confident that the Hindutva forces are the coming power. This has been shown by the number of retired bureaucrats joining the BJP, by the communalisation of the police forces in a number of provinces, and the degree of Hinduization of the judiciary. For example, in the Sarla Mudgal case, Justices Sahai and Singh opined that the majority of the country be brought under a single codified personal law, to which no minority should claim exception. This is tantamount to claiming that Hindu personal law is the basis for a uniform civil code, and that Muslims must prove their patriotism continuously by accepting the domination of Hindu law.

Even more damaging was the case against Manohar Joshi. The Bombay High Court had ruled that his election should be annulled, as he had used communal propaganda, which is against the electoral law. The Supreme Court ruled that campaigning in the name of Hindutva is not necessarily communal.

Though the CPI, CPI(M) etc, talk about the class nature of the state, the empty way in which they use these words is shown by their failure to realise that in the last instance, the Supreme Court cannot be considered a defence against the fascists. Even to get partially favourable judgements, there must be extra-parliamentary mobilizations.

The Vadodara Kamdar Union (Baroda Workers Union, politically led by members of the Inquilabi Communist Sangathan), and the Ankleswar Bachao Samity, (Save Ankleswar Committee, also politically led by the ICS) have shown how this can be done. Fighting the BJP, contractors, Mafia, and bosses in a BJP ruled province, these organizations have used Public Interest Litigation as an adjunct to large scale

mobilizations, and have been successful in defending the interests of workers, tribals, and slum dwellers. Anti-communalism has been made an integral part of the defence of the rights of working people, and courts have been used as a terrain of class struggle, rather than being viewed as impartial, standing above the class war.

Most far left groups have virtually given up the battle by declaring that the major parliamentary left parties have ceased to be working class parties in any sense. If true, this

would mean that while the fascist threat looms large, the working class is to start from scratch. Fascism will not wait for that. But the bigger parties too have done little. Since the election results came out, their sole concern has been how to keep the BJP out of government through parliamentary manipulations. It is recognised by these parties that if the present parliament were to be dissolved right now, the BJP would gain more seats and might be in a position to form a government on its own. But the years and decades of class

collaborationism has now borne fruit. They are compelled to go in for support to a government that will disarm the working class further.

That the CPI(M) Central Committee withstood tremendous pressure to reject the offer to make West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu the prime minister of this combine or to join the government. This was certainly half a step in the right direction. But this must be followed up by concrete struggles. That perspective is yet to enter into their vocabulary. The RSP, a left-reformist party with semi-Trotskyist jargon, and the CPI(ML) Liberation, which considers itself to be a revolutionary alternative, though in fact it too has inserted itself into the caste-based electoral politics, have a formally more radical position. While they are too small to have a major impact, if they do mean to pose even a reformist left alternative, they likewise have to show in practice their alternative. The institutions painstakingly built up by the working class are still in existence. The only road ahead is to use these institutions, the trade unions, the parties, to build a workers united front, forge alliances with the different social movements, and launch an immediate fight back. If the Deve Gowda government lasts for two years (few expect it to last a full term) the breathing space will not become a last gasp only on condition that these battles are launched. ★



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South Korea: Crossroads capitalism

South Korea's consistent high economic growth rate is transforming the country into an important player in the world economy. To prepare for this new role, the regime has launched massive "globalization" and anti-corruption campaigns, to try to bring Korean business practice into line with that of its major partners (and competitors).

Terry Lawless reports from Seoul on the political consequences of this transformation.

THE MAIN RESULT OF THE PARTITION OF THE Korean nation in 1953 was what the Irish revolutionary James Connolly would have called a "carnival of reaction on both sides". The South has celebrated an authoritarian capitalist project of "modernization" in which protest and dissent were treated as the product of collaboration with the enemy communist regime to the north and harshly punished by long prison terms and even execution.

In April 1960, after obviously rigged elections, radical student protest forced the resignation of the corrupt, weak but American-supported government of Syngman Rhee, which had overseen a half-hearted period of reconstruction following the end of the Korean War. After a period of relative political openness, a military hardman, Park Chung-Hee emerged, consolidating his power in the aftermath of the military *coup d'état* of May 1961. Park dominated South Korean political life for many years, ruling in an increasingly arbitrary and personal manner, especially following the declaration of martial law in October 1972. From the mid-1960s, however, Park also presided over the beginnings of a belated project of economic expansion initiated, guided and financed by the state. He believed such state intervention was essential if the Republic was to continue to demonstrate itself as an important and



viable bastion of anti-communism.

In October 1979, Park was assassinated by the head of the Korean CIA, an event which touched off a second political crisis resolved once again by the imposition of martial law, in December 1979, this time initiated by a group of top army men around Chun Doo-Hwan. The arrest of Kim Dae-Jung as part of the military's consolidation of power was the signal for widespread protest, particularly in Kim's south-eastern hometown of Kwangju, beginning on May 18 1980. Through the 1980s, the memory of the brutality of the Kwangju Massacre on May 27 1980, when soldiers finally retook the city, was the half-hidden shame of a bourgeoisie which wished increasingly to see itself as modern, democratic and technologically sophisticated.

This image was not a delusion. The Republic, with its vast administrative bureaucracy, its massive armed forces, a ubiquitous CIA and total political censorship, had succeeded fairly spectacularly in achieving its major economic goals. By the early 1980s, Park's project had come to fruition: the Republic now possessed a

number of very large, internationally competitive *chaebols*, (Japanese style corporations) like Hyundai, Samsung and Daewoo. All had been nurtured under the watchful eye of the authoritarian state. The top five *chaebols* all predict annual turnovers of 100 trillion won (130 billion dollars) by the year 2000. Samsung and Hyundai have fixed a five year target of 160 trillion won per year.

Alongside this economic success story, a powerful student movement and a newly industrialized working class emerged, particularly during the 1980s. Student and labor radicalism were the inevitable bi-products of the bourgeoisie's authoritarian modernization. Together these two forces helped to prepare the critical social dynamite which blew up when Park began to organize for a handover of power to his classmate and crony, Roh Tae-Woo, in June 1987. Just months before the modernization campaign was to receive its crowning glory with the staging of the Seoul Olympics, the Republic was rocked by an unprecedented massive wave of student and working class protest. Roh and Park came within a hair's breadth of

touching off civil war. But they finally backed down and conceded most of the opposition's demands: free, direct, popular presidential elections; the release of political prisoners; freedom of the press; and greater rights for labor. The workers' movement used the crisis to assert some of its new-found strength, forcing new agreements in terms of wages and working conditions as the reluctant bourgeois regime stepped back from the brink. More strikes and labor actions



took place in 1987-88 than at any other point in Korean history.

But electoral opposition to Roh was still thoroughly bourgeois. And perhaps already complicit in the attempt to limit as much as possible the democratic

impact of 1987-88. Kim Young-Sam and Kim Dae-Jung, the two main opposition leaders, who together commanded 55% of the popular vote, failed to unite their forces in the election of 1988 and Roh became President anyway, garnering 37% of the vote. Worse was to come: in 1990, Kim Young-Sam joined with his former political opponents to form the new Democratic Liberal Party, uniting his Pusan-based political machine with that of the Teagu and Kyongsang-based one of Roh and Park. The US embassy in Seoul was particularly happy to see this union between bourgeois hard and bourgeois soft, believing that it represented the method by which the Republic could continue to function until well into the next century.

On December 18 1992, Kim Young-Sam defeated Kim Dae-Jung in an apparently straight-forward Presidential election campaign. In an effort to break with the corruption of the past, and also to begin preparations for taking a more active part in

the world economy, President Kim initiated a campaign of political openness. he revealed his own personal wealth - US \$2.1 million, and called on others to make similar disclosures. He also pushed through the Real Name Financial Transaction Act which threw a sudden and glaring light on the gargantuan fortunes criminally accumulated by members of the governing elite, including, not surprisingly, Roh and Park.

The arrests of Roh and Park in late 1995 are open to interpretation. They were either the necessary upshot of the campaign of greater openness, or a stop-gap measure to prevent the uncovering of 1992 slush money given by Roh to help Kim Young-Sam finance his successful bid for the presidency.

The subsequent widening of the prosecution charges to include the whole series of events around the declaration of martial law and the Kwangju Massacre in 1979-80 is again open to interpretation. Is this evidence of the consolidation of the rule of law or merely, as North Western University Professor Bruce Cummings recently argued in a lecture given at Seoul National University on Democracy and Civil Society in Korea, an attempt to break the regional grip of the Teagu-Kyonsang elite which has ruled Korea since the days of President Park? The coming months may tell.

April 1996 election

The parliamentary election on April 11th, 1996, took place amidst an atmosphere of growing disillusionment in the promises of anti-corruption which had carried Kim

Young-Sam to power in 1992. Nevertheless, Kim Young-Sam's New Korea Party won 139 seats, just eleven seats away from an absolute majority in the 299 seat legislature. Kim Da-Jung's National Congress for New Politics received 79 seats, Kim Jong-Pil's United Liberal Democrats, formed after he split from Kim Young-Sam's ruling party in 1994, came in third with 50 seats. The Democratic Party won 15 seats, five short of the minimum necessary to form a floor negotiation bloc. Enough of them switched to the NKP to allow Kim Young-Sam to present an absolute majority in time for the reconvening of the National Assembly on May 21. For now the ruling party has called off its highly successful campaign of recruitment, and intends to try to appease the two main opposition parties, both of which are upset about this perversion of the democratic process.

Why wasn't the New Korea Party rejected by more voters? One reason may have been the incursions by North Korea into the DMZ and its declared intention not to recognize the Armistice Agreement signed at the end of the Korean War. A more fundamental reason, however, was a lack of real choice among the main candidates: Kim Dae-Jung, the leader of the National Congress for New Politics and Kim Jong-Pil, the leader of the conservative United Liberal Democrats, for example, have been around Korean politics since the 1960s. Jong-Pil likes to call Park's 1961 coup-d'état a "revolution" since he himself had a central hand in it. Judging by reports, he has not changed much. He most recently went on record during a post-election meeting with the President urging a more vigilant attitude on the part of the government toward student radicals. Kim Dae-Jung came a close second to President Park in the elections held in 1971 before that old soldier tired of the risks of even limited democracy and declared martial law in the following year. During the course

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of this campaign, it was revealed that Kim Dae-Jung requires big payments from those who run for his party when a disillusioned candidate broke with him and announced this to the press. Disillusionment, in other words, seemed to help the government rather than the opposition. A bribery scandal which erupted only days before the election involving a close personal friend of the President had little effect. The low voter turnout of 70% benefited the ruling party rather than the opposition.

Korean politics is heavily regionalized. Korean political commentators often bemoan the lack of a strong bourgeois party culture in Korea: the fortunes of political parties rise and fall with whatever central figure is responsible for creating them, a situation which leads to a certain fluidity in the institutional histories of the main political forces as well as to what appears to be a high level of opportunism. Political candidates swap party affiliation readily in order to take advantage of the current balance of power. Even the bourgeoisie, it would seem, must learn "proper" bourgeois parliamentary democracy, after such a long period of military rule.

Judging by the fact that more than 100, mainly opposition candidates are being investigated for election law violation, it appears that the bourgeoisie is not learning those lessons particularly well. The "era of the three Kims" is not over.

Economic reform

On April 24 1996, less than three weeks after the election, President Kim announced "sweeping labor reforms". During a meeting held at Chong Wa Da, the Korean "White House", which involved representatives from business, labor and government, it was announced that a presidential commission for labor reform was to be established which will oversee the drafting of new labor laws. As the English-language daily Korea Times notes, the "labor reforms are closely related to

Korea's move to get due and relevant recognition from the international community on the occasion of its joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). From the standpoint of the working class, the most significant of the laws that will be reviewed are those which prohibit third-party intervention in labor disputes, the participation of unions in politics and the presence of more than one union in a given workplace. More generally, the basic framework of Korean labor laws which still follows that of the 1930 US Wagner Act will be replaced by the decisions of the newly-established commission which is itself modelled after the 1993 Clinton Dunlop Commission. The Korea Times noted that the revised labor code, which is designed to bring Korea into line with the labor standards required by the OECD and the ILO, will probably lead to the legal recognition of the progressive labor alliance, Minchu Nochong, or the Korean Council of Trade Unions (KCTU). This organization, which was created by dissident unions last November, remains illegal because of what the Times coyly calls its "overly progressive" line and its direct defiance of the current labor laws. President Kim invited members of Minchu Nochong to an earlier meeting which helped to set the stage for the current commission, but its representatives declined since the government had neglected in the meantime to recognize it as a legal entity. A Minchu Nochong representative told the Times that the labor reform will also see greater leeway given to entrepreneurs in employing workers. The conservative Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) has since endorsed the idea of allowing more than one union in a given work place and looks set to recognize the legitimacy of Minchu Nochong.

May Day

On May Day 1996, the two main union organizations held separate rallies in Seoul. During a rally in the Gymnastic Gym in the Olympic Park, attended by Kim Dae-Jung and Prime Minister Lee See- Song, the FKTU chair, Park In-Saing, called for the right for teachers and public servants to form trade unions. He again endorsed the idea that unionized workers be allowed to engage in political activism, and he told the crowd of 4,500 that the FKTU would fight the recent move by the government to revise labor standards since they favored the employers. In contrast, the rally organized by Minchu-Nochong in Pomarae Park attracted some 30,000 workers and what the Korea Times

described as "thousands of college students" who declared their solidarity with the dissident union. The significant difference in the size of the two rallies may help prod President Kim into keeping up the momentum for labor code reform. On a related note, it was reported in a survey carried out by the Korea Labor Education Institute involving 1,500 respondents that 23.6% said that they would support a labor party, should unions decide to form one. The Republic officially recognized May Day as a national holiday last year, dropping its former preference for the arbitrarily selected date of March 10. Most companies were closed; however, government agencies, schools and other state-run institutions without labor unions remained open.

At the same time that President Kim is calling for the establishment of a "symbiotic relationship" between business and labor, the government is making plans to crack down on what it sees as the "dangerous level" of leftist activism on university campuses. During a meeting of senior government inspectors on April 25, Moon Choong-soo, the senior presidential secretary for civil petition and inspection, announced a "campaign against the propagation of communist ideology on the campuses". Moon claimed that the wording of a manifesto issued by Chonhaknyon, an activist students' league, is a carbon copy of North Korean propaganda. The *Korea Herald* noted in an editorial on April 26 that the document issued by the Sogang University student council in Seoul contained quotations from the Communist Manifesto and Karl Marx's German Ideology. Seoul's Yonsei University was also identified as a campus at which student radicals were very active. While conceding that students are free to read Marxist literature individually if they choose to, the Korea Times editorial suggested that the presence of such quotations in a student handbook amounted to "collective indoctrination". Leaving aside the incongruity of this idea of "indoctrination" on the part of a newspaper that regularly provides its readers with liberal bon mots on its editorial page, this concession is still significant as an indicator of the new political culture in Korea. Until 1987, it was a crime to possess copies of Marx's *Capital*. ★

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Israel: Social Issues before Diplomacy

The international community is shocked by the result of the latest elections in Israel, and frightened by what seems to be a rejection of the peace process by the majority of the Israeli public. But do these elections really reflect a rejection of peace and compromise with the Arabs. And what was the real issue which divided Likud and Labour?

Michael Warshawski

BY ANY OBJECTIVE STANDARD, THE OUTGOING Labor government had loyally and successfully served the interests of the Israeli state: it began a process of normalisation with the entire Arab world, signed a peace treaty with Jordan, initiated economic and quasi-diplomatic relations with half-a-dozen other Arab states, withdrew the Israeli army from the Gaza quagmire and almost all of the turbulent Palestinian cities, obtained the recognition of the PLO and the virtual end of the Palestinian national struggle, restored Israel's image as a civilised and peaceful state, attracted foreign investors, reduced unemployment to less than 5% and achieved an annual growth of 6.2%, one of the highest rates of any "developed" economy.

Few governments in the world can boast such a positive balance-sheet, and yet the voters chose Benjamin Netanyahu over the internationally renowned and respected Shimon Peres. Does this reflect an unequivocal rejection of the peace process, as many observers seem to believe? Not at all.

These were simultaneous elections for the office of prime minister and for the Knesset (parliament). Previously, the Prime Minister has not been directly elected by the population. The aim of the new voting system was to reduce the weight of the smaller parties, and free the prime minister from their "coalition blackmail." In reality, almost the exact opposite occurred. Because, while the prime ministerial elections showed that Israeli society is, in one sense, split right down the middle, in another sense it is



fragmented: the new Knesset is composed of eleven parties.

The two main parties lost around 25% of their strength (Labor declining from 44 to 34 mandates, and Likud from 41 to 32). This clearly reflects the desire of a growing and substantial proportion of the population to express itself outside the framework of the two "major" parties.

The "universal" parties (Labour, Likud, but also the far Right (Moledet: 2 seats), the Zionist Left (Meretz: 9 seats) and the Third Way centrist party (4 seats), only won 81 seats in the Knesset, out of a total of 120. What happened to the remaining third is the most significant characteristic of these elections. These mandates went to "sectoral" parties: seven to the Russian immigrants list, 10 to Shas – a religious and communal party for the Mizrahi (Jewish immigrants from Arab and other Moslem, countries), 13 to other religious parties, and nine to the two Arab lists. What is more, at least one third of Likud voters voted less out of identification with the Likud programme than because they perceive the party as the best opposition to Israel's Westernised Labor elite.

In other words, the dream of the Zionist pioneers to manufacture a "new Israeli" out of the variety of diaspora communities and cultures has failed: Israeli society is not homogeneous, not even within its Jewish component. The country is still, and increasingly, a mosaic of cultural communities and ethnic groups.

These elections confirmed that Jewish-

Israeli society is split into two subcultures: one Westernised and mostly affluent, and another which lives with strong feelings of being oppressed by the first one and threatened in its culture, identity and traditions. This is the prevalent mood among both the Mizrahi (non-European Jews) and religious Jews – though it bears a different character in these two communities. The defeat of Shimon Peres is not so much connected to his political program as much as it is to the rejection, and even hate, of the "Western" elite by these communities.

This is definitely not a new phenomenon, and it was at the root of the loss of power by Labor between 1977 and 1992. Indeed, the exception was the victory of Labor-Meretz in 1992, due to extraordinary circumstances, not least among them the personal popularity of Yitzhak Rabin.

In other words, the vote for Netanyahu was a vote against Shimon Peres and against Labor, and not necessarily a vote for an alternative policy with regard to Israeli-Arab relations. It is no accident that Netanyahu's campaign stressed his support for peace and his commitment to respect the agreements signed by the Labor government. He took this approach not only because he knows that he does not have any other choice, but also because he felt that peace is popular, including in his own constituency.

It is precisely for these reasons that Netanyahu will have no difficulty in forming a government backed by a large majority in the Knesset. Religious parties believe that he

will not be an obstacle to their aspiration for more "Judaism" and less "Americanism." Centrist parties will help him to moderate his own extremists, in order to maintain a reasonable stance towards the peace process. It is likely that the new prime minister will more or less walk in the footsteps of the outgoing government with regard to both the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian channels (though the latter may be pursued at an even slower pace).

After all, the US administration wants it, Israeli business wants it and the majority of the Israeli public wants it. In any event, if the negotiating process were to be stopped, everything indicates that the new government would be confronted by a new wave of bombings, or a new mass uprising, or both. That would be suicidal from the perspectives of the government's public support as well as from that of the interests of Israeli business and US global policy.

The changes which the government is expected to make will be more on the internal Israeli level: more religious legislation, less liberal reforms protecting individual rights and a return to blatant discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, who had experienced a substantial improvement in their treatment by the Jewish state in the last four years, in a range of matters, including the budgetary allocations to Arab municipalities.

The main challenge facing both the Likud and the Labor Party will be to try to rebuild a sense of national unity and common national identity. While it is most improbable that the gap between the two parts of the Jewish-Israeli nation will develop in the next four years into a real cultural war, there is no doubt that without a serious attempt to deal with this problem by the ruling elite in and around the two big parties, Israel will be faced with an acute social crisis of major proportions. The future of Israel and its role in the Middle East depends to a large degree on the capacity of its political, intellectual and spiritual leaders to cool down the embers of this latent war.

During the last fifteen years, the Labor Party leadership closed its eyes to the problem, while the Likud leadership played with fire. If no attempt is made to smother the flames, there will eventually be a conflagration, and both Right and Left Zionism will be overwhelmed by a fundamentalist movement which will signify not only the end of Israel as a modern Westernised state, but also the end of any prospect of normalisation in the Middle East. We may one day remember the Israeli-Arab conflict with nostalgia, as we compare it to the



horrors of an inter-religious war between Islamic and Jewish fundamentalism.

The fear of such a development may be the reason why one can hear voices from each of the two political camps appealing for a "national unity" government composed of the two main parties. Though such a government does not seem a likely prospect for the near future, it can no way be excluded in the medium term. A "national unity" government would certainly be the best way for Netanyahu to compel his hard-line friends to accept the continuation of the political process opened up by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres.

The Arab Vote

If anything should moderate the sadness that has taken hold of many in the wake of Netanyahu's victory, it is the election results among the Palestinian population in Israel.

Only three months ago, everyone expected an unprecedented rate of participation in the elections by Palestinian citizens, with some even predicting it would exceed the 80% voter participation traditional among the Jewish-Israeli population. Pundits predicted an all-out mobilisation in favour of Shimon Peres, and a majority of Palestinian votes being cast for the Labor Party. The elections were perceived as the climax of a long process of Israelisation of Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the end of their national aspirations as an integral part of the Palestinian people.

But the results of the latest elections challenge this pessimistic analysis. The participation rate was massive, but somewhat less than predicted and certainly less than among the Jewish electorate, which voted in unprecedented numbers. This was the direct result of the bombing of Lebanon, an initiative the government took one month before the elections, hoping to gain thousands of "floating" Jewish voters, but

completely indifferent to the impact of such aggression on the Arab electorate.

The war in Lebanon also explains the more than 10,000 blank ballots cast in the prime ministerial elections in the Arab sector. All the Arab parties – with the exception of Abna el Balad, (a component of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality – National Democratic Assembly bloc) called in the end for a vote for Peres as the "lesser evil." The Palestinian population, sensing that Peres was going to lose, finally mobilized in the last three hours of voting. Nevertheless the war demobilised a part of the electorate, and a significant minority refused to vote for Peres.

In the end, almost 80% of the Arab electorate supported Peres, double the rate of the Jewish population. In an outrageous, racist display of bad faith, Labour leaders wasted no time after Peres' defeat to brazenly accuse Israeli Arabs of having sabotaged Labour's victory!

More significant in the long-term are the results of the Knesset elections among Israel's Arab citizens. 60% of votes were taken by the two national, non-Zionist lists, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (led by the Communist Party (CP)/National Democratic Assembly), and the United Arab List (composed of the Democratic Arab Party of Abdel Wahab Darawsh and a part of the Islamic Movement). This is nearly double the proportion the non-Zionist, Arab lists received in 1992. The remaining votes were taken by various Jewish parties, particularly the Labor Party (24%), which had placed three Arab candidates in "safe" positions on their list.

The Bloc led by the CP got more than 120,000 votes (5 deputies, including a Jewish deputy, Tamar Gojansky, and the leader of the Democratic National Assembly, Azmi Bishara). The United Arab List got more than 60,000 votes (4 deputies, of whom two are

Islamic leaders). So there is little evidence of an irreversible Israelisation of the Arab population.

The fact that the Peres-Labor campaign invested all its efforts in Peres' campaign proved destructive for the party's Knesset campaign, and led to discrete deals where the Arab lists quietly lent their support to Peres in exchange for more votes in the Knesset elections. Nevertheless, we must look for deeper reasons for the transformation in Palestinian voting patterns, which few had foreseen two months ago.



Only those who did not follow the campaign closely might think it exaggerated to note that the entry of the Democratic National Assembly made all the difference. This is, however, exactly what happened. Week after week, a soporific and apolitical campaign was politicised, infused with energy and became a tool of popular mobilisation. For the first time in ten years, one witnessed campaign rallies attended by thousands, full of passionate debate. These debates were also carried out in written form, with communiqués and counter-communicués. Hundreds of activists went door-to-door to mobilize support. The militant nationalists recently regrouped in the DNA exposed the Palestinian public to a new discourse, and this language spoke to the Palestinian masses: it was a language that was neither defensive nor apologetic, but rather demanded recognition, equality and the recovery of Arab and Palestinian identity. This was a radical democratic program, which refused to ignore the rights of women and which did not shrink from challenging the racist and discriminatory structure of the Jewish state. And it was apparently just what the women and men of the Galilee, the Negev and the Arab Triangle wanted to hear. It was the DNA which doubled the votes of the CP-led list, and no one, except for some outmoded bureaucrats, can deny it. It is not just Azmi Bishara (number four on the list) and Wassel Taha (number 6) who owe thanks to the DNA activists, but also at least two CP deputies as well.

The present question is how to capitalise on the successful election campaign, as much from the point of view of the entire Palestinian population as from that of the DNA. The next months will be crucial for the formation of a new national leadership, democratic and progressive, among the Palestinians in Israel, and although there are many problems to be resolved, the enthusiasm generated by the electoral campaign and its results allows us to be reasonably optimistic. ★

• Why did Likud win?

Michel Warshawski of the Alternative Information Centre explains how Israel's military establishment sabotaged the Labour election campaign

Six months ago, Shimon Peres' Labour Party was massively popular, and the right was apparently defeated and on the defensive. Almost no-one was ready to question the "peace policy" after the assassination of Yitsak Rabin. Labour could claim the credit for increased international status, normalisation of relations with the Arab world, and a real improvement in personal security for Jewish Israelis. In the occupied territories, there were no substantial acts of resistance to Yasser Arafat.

Unsurprisingly, Israel was also experiencing fast economic growth, and the standard of living of most of the population was rising. Shimon Peres thought this was the perfect moment to call a general election. The election he has just lost.

His first mistake was to make "National Unity" the main axis of his campaign, and resisting anything which would polarise Israeli politics. Rather than exploit the anti-right wing sentiments and mobilisation provoked by Rabin's assassination, Peres formulated a programme which aimed to show that between Labour and Likud there was no basic difference. He even arranged public meetings with far-right settlers in the occupied territories, to reassure them that, after a final Israeli-Palestinian settlement, most of the Zionist settlers will remain under Israeli sovereignty.

The result of this tactic was to provide his opponent, Benjamin Netanyahu, with the popular legitimacy he lacked. And to enable the Likud leader to argue that the contest was not for or against peace, or for or against "Rabin's legacy." Instead, Netanyahu was able to axe his campaign around questions of "what peace do we want?"

One reason for Labour's "mistake" is that a strong wing of the party leadership was always opposed to Peres' "hasty" New Middle East policy, and very content indeed with a Peres campaign that was, basically, "Likud politics and Labour rhetoric".

To confront the right wing, Labour could have developed an offensive campaign against the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip, and in favour of a new relationship with the Palestinian Authority. Labour could have proposed

speeding up the peace negotiations, and demonstrated a willingness to make compromises and gestures of good will on the ground. But, in the end, a substantial part of the Labour leadership either supported or was too frightened to confront the military wing of the Israeli ruling class.

Peres' other big mistake was to authorise the assassination of the fundamentalist resistance leader Yihya Ayash. This murder ended the de-facto ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, leading to a wave of bloody suicide operations which jeopardised the real progress of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements in terms of personal security of Israelis. By deciding to assassinate Ayash, Peres eliminated the Israeli public's perception of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement as a success story.

As was confirmed in the election campaign, unlike Rabin, Peres and his advisors are simply too weak to say no to the demands of Israel's security service chiefs. The security establishment is well represented in the Labour leadership, where it has done everything possible to put brakes on the negotiation process with the Palestinians. The Army and Security Service chiefs have, on several occasions, succeeded in reversing government commitments made in the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

It makes little difference whether there was a conscious plan by the security establishment to provoke the fall of Shimon Peres and the rise of Benjamin Netanyahu, or only unrelenting pressure on the Labour leadership to adopt a policy which the security chiefs could find acceptable. In either case, it caused Peres to lose the election. Once the Labour government's "peace policy" was identified with a decline in personal security, the right wing parties could unleash their propaganda.

Peres' defeat reflects the victory of the military wing of the Israeli ruling class, at the expense of the capitalist wing. The military conception which dominated the first 40 years of the state of Israel has again taken precedence over the concept of normalising relations with the Arab world as part of the new world order. ★

book notes

The Transition in South Africa by Carl Brecker (1996)

Brecker proposes a Marxist analysis of the current situation in post-apartheid South Africa, just over a year after the historic election which gave the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies 82% of the vote and made former Robben Island prisoner, Nelson Mandela, President.

Why have things gone wrong?, Brecker asks. "Why is it that a government which contains leading members of the Communist Party the COSATU trade union federation is not able to satisfy the elementary needs of the masses, like decent housing and education?"

Brecker places the blame for the failure of the ANC-led revolution on the compromise with the former whites-only government and other bourgeois parties, including Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party. This compromise was brokered principally by the late SACP leader Joe Slovo.

The SACP's strategy, Brecker argues, flows from its subservience to the idea that the national democratic revolution was a necessary first step which could not be stepped over but, if enforced by a revolutionary subject, could create a "revolutionary democracy" somewhere between a bourgeois state and a more egalitarian society. In reality, the "non-capitalist" monster in southern Africa looks suspiciously like... unbridled capitalism.

Brecker re-states the revolutionary left argument for "permanent revolution." "Although the struggle would begin on the terrain of democratic revolution it would, of necessity, in order to achieve its democratic goals against an intransigent bourgeoisie transform into socialist revolution. Given the underdevelopment character of Apartheid capitalism, and the urgent social needs of the black majority, the mass demand for immediate solutions to their urgent problems (land, health, housing, jobs, etc.) could not be met without dispossessing the bourgeoisie. This would be a combined and uninterrupted revolution." The struggle for socialism was, in this sense, very much on the agenda at the moment of "transition."

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Churches Firebombed

Over 50 African American churches have been firebombed since late 1989. Some suspects openly boasted of their membership in the Ku Klux Klan and other racist terror organizations. Yet on May 21, the Clinton administration's assistant attorney general for civil rights told a House Judiciary Committee hearing the arsons were "isolated incidents."

The National Council of Churches has revealed very different findings, with far fewer resources at its disposal. "25 firebombings targeted Black churches that have a history of struggle against racism. Ten attacks in 1995 and 1996 were timed around Martin Luther King Day," Bishop Melvin Talbert told reporters. He also reported that local police and other authorities reported firebombings as electrical fires and quickly painted over racist epithets without church consent. They even accused Black pastors of burning their own churches.

"Without exception," Talbert concluded, "the victims of these hate crimes said they felt intimidated by the very forces they had hoped would provide them with protection and would alleviate their anxieties." ★

Source: Workers World

Abortion threat

On 26 May the European Parliament voted to cut aid to countries and organisations which "encourage infanticide, forced sterilisation, or abortion as a means of birth control". This machiavelian amalgam was the work of Carlos Casini, member of the fundamentalist Opus Dei society, and Pope John-Paul II's Special Counsellor at the UN Cairo Conference on population. The motion was introduced into the Brussels Parliament by the European Peoples Party (EPP), the grouping of conservative and Christian Democratic parties.

Source: CADAC, France

Stop press

Liverpool dockers on the road to victory!

International solidarity with sacked dockers has caused Liverpool port's main customer to shift all its traffic elsewhere.

SHARES IN THE MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR Company (MD&HC) fell 49 pence in the first hour of trading after the latest news broke. Their key customer, Atlantic Container Line, would withdraw from the Port of Liverpool on Saturday June 22nd! Their decision is a direct result of the international solidarity which has characterised this nine month old dispute, which started when 500 dockers were sacked for refusing to cross a picket line called to defend working conditions. ACL, which links European ports to the North American coast, will now call at Thamesport.

The move follows the rejection of the dock company's latest, "final" offer of 60 jobs, possibly rising to a 100, with redundancy payments of 25,000 pounds for the majority of the 329 men formerly directly employed by MD&HC. The written offer excluded any provisions for the 80 Torside men whose original sacking provoked the dispute.

At a jubilant mass meeting on Friday 21 June, dockers continued their demand for full reinstatement and vowed to target the Canadian shipping lines, CanMar and Cast, which compete with ACL. Andrew Weir Shipping is another likely casualty, its vessels already suffering a near-total boycott of Liverpool trade in Portugal plus go-slows in Italy and Greece. In mid-April, the line told *International Freight Weekly* it would consider leaving Liverpool. Two weeks later, an internal company memo warned the "Master of the City of Manchester" that in view of escalating damage to Andrew Weir containers whilst in the care of MD&HC, any such damage should be notified to Andrew Weir "immediately and not at the completion of operations".

ACL's departure has been predicted for six months, but only materialised after industrial action escalated in Sweden and in Liverpool.

Last December, rank-and-file members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) on the US East Coast refused to cross a picket line set up in a Newark blizzard by three Liverpool dockers, delaying an ACL vessel for four days. The shipping line sought an injunction to force longshoremen back to

work, but then threatened to leave Liverpool if the dispute was not resolved by 15 January. A series of such deadlines came and went while Mersey Docks tried using the US courts against its own former shop stewards, and then threatened legal action against the ILA for loss of revenue, should ACL leave Liverpool.

More recently, Swedish dockers imposed a 12-hour go-slow on all ACL boats in Gothenburg. In Stockholm, most members of the Dockers Union donate one hour's salary every week to a Liverpool strike fund. "The response of the lads is tremendous," reports Björn Bjord, National Secretary of the union.

On June 6th, Sweden's second largest daily newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, published a two page article on the Liverpool strike, placed next to the sports pages, so as to reach as many working class readers as possible. "Sports and jobs are just the same" said dockers Ronnie Bibby and Peter Atkinson. "Only by sticking together is it possible to win fights like this."

In the last two weeks, Liverpool tug crews have refused to cross dockers' picket lines. ACL took the risk of navigating under their own steam. A CanMar ship attempted the same, but dropped anchor in the Mersey after drifting towards a sandbank. Other boats suffered 12-hour delays.

By mid-June, ACL had had enough. But the Bishop of Liverpool was appealing through the media for dockers to reconsider the redundancy package. He even faxed US dockers' leader John Bowers, the ILA President, asking his intentions. In view of his public concern with unemployment and its social consequences, the Bishop's intervention in favour of their redundancy has led dockers to wonder who gave him the ILA fax number.

Mersey Docks' stance is fluctuating rapidly. Port operations director Bernard Cliff, who has led the dispute in public, told BBC local radio the company had the resources to deal with the loss of trade. But in another radio interview, the Chairman of Liverpool Ship Owners and Port Users' Association, Terry Malone, called on other customers to "hold the line and keep faith" in the dock company, an indication of just how

much is at stake. Bernard Cliff told the *Liverpool Echo* that "the impact could run in many hundreds of jobs, possibly a thousand, not in Mersey Docks alone but in supporting industries such as haulage firms, shipping agents and the like. There is no doubt the decision will have serious job implications."

The propaganda war now seeks to blame dockers for potential job losses amongst other port employees who have chosen to continue working alongside the scabs.

But the job implications of ACL's move depend on how long the shipping line stays away, and there is no evidence that ACL has made anything more than a temporary arrangement. As a small East Coast port, Thamesport can't conceivably rival Liverpool for size or location. Their own managing director, Robin MacLeod, told the *Echo*: "ACL has had good service in Liverpool and has been a very major customer there. They would be silly to rush away, but if it becomes impossible they may have no choice." Furthermore, the port authority at Thamesport is Medway Ports Ltd, 100% owned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company!

Meanwhile, the international pressure on the port of Liverpool increased with the arrival of an ITF inspector with a mandate to prevent shipping lines from using seafarers to perform dock work. Sacked dockers are convinced that crews on the North Irish ferry service between Liverpool and Belfast have been lashing and unlashng containers on the boat deck. Mr Brian Allen immediately obtained a promise from the Dutch owners Wagenborg that they would instruct crews not to perform dockers' work. Over the next weeks the ITF inspector will target all shipping arriving in the port. ★

Source: LabourNet in London and Peter Lindgren in Stockholm

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The Mersey dockers' World Wide Web page including their newspaper, *Dockers Charter* is on the Internet at <http://www.gn.apc.org/labournet/docks>